

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute of Language Studies**

**Language Use and Identity of Children Born to the
Tigrigna Speaking Community Living in Addis Ababa**



By

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**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute of Language Studies**

**Language Use and Identity of Children Born to the
Tigrigna Speaking Community Living in Addis Ababa
A Sociolinguistic Study**

**A Thesis Presented to the School of Graduate Studies
Addis Ababa University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Sociolinguistics**

By:

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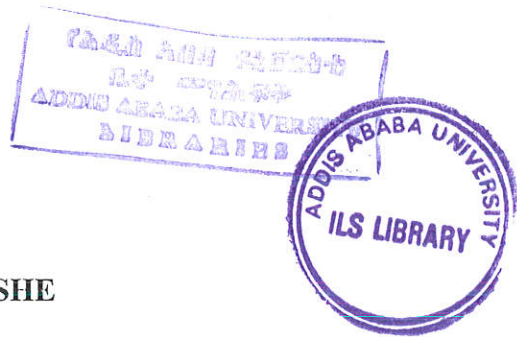
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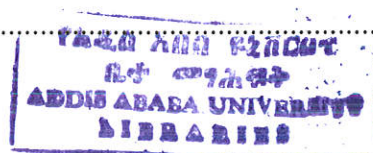
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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the Tigrigna language maintenance among the children born to the speakers of the language, residing in Addis. Thus, the study examines whether the Tigrigna speaking community in Addis transfers their language to their children and maintained it among their children or not. The study also examines the relationship between the children's competence in the language and their ethnic identity. To answer these questions, the children's proficiency in the language, their language use, their identity and their attitudes towards the language were investigated in a self-reported questionnaire filled by 126 children and in an interview with 16 parents. Accordingly, the study reveals that although most of the Tegar parents speak their own language (Tigrigna) at home, the children are mostly using Amharic and are rapidly losing their ethnic language (Tigrigna). In addition, even though some previous literature suggests that ethnic identity and language ability are strongly related, the findings from this study do not support this hypothesis. Instead, this study reveals that the relationship between ethnic identity and language ability of the children is negligible that almost all of the respondents reported their strong feeling of identity and their positive attitude towards the language, despite their poor proficiency in it. The results from both the questionnaire and the interviews, therefore, indicate that the target children are in a language shift from Tigrigna to Amharic and the target language is not maintained among the children of the target community. Finally, the study also points out that if the Tigrina speaking community regards the language maintenance as desirable, then explicit steps need to be taken.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tigrigna is a language spoken in the Northern part of Ethiopia (Tigray region) and in Eritrea as well. According to Johnstone (1993), as stated in the *Ethnologue*, 13th ed., it is spoken by 4,150,000 people in Ethiopia; by 1,900,000 people in Eritrea; and by around 10,000 people in Israel. In general, in all countries, it is spoken by 6,060,000 people as a mother tongue. When we see its language family it is grouped under the Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Ethio-semitic particularly North Ethio-semitic language family. It is a national official language in Asmara and a regional official language in Ethiopia (Tigray region). Hence, it is used as a medium of instruction in primary schools both in Tigray region and in Eritrea as well since the downfall of the DERGUE Regime. It is also given in higher institutions such as in Mekell, Asmera and Addis Ababa universities at degree levels and at diploma level in teacher training colleges in the Tigray regional state.

Nevertheless, the people of Tigray continuously move from their region towards the central part of the country particularly to Addis. It is common all over the world that people always move to big cities and capital cities of their respective countries. This happens for different reasons and mainly for economic reasons such as looking for better job opportunities, for better access to health, for education, etc. These Tigrigna speaking people establish their families in places like Addis where Tigrigna is not widely spoken. So, the children born to these families do not have chances to learn their mother tongue unless they learn it at home from their parents.

It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Tigrigna speaking families are living in Addis. So, unless these parents transfer their language to their children, it is pretty obvious that the target language is losing hundreds of thousands of speakers. This number could exceed millions of speakers in the next generation, and the second or the third generations of these families will entirely speak Amharic. Worst of all, this time,

most of the target children cannot communicate with their grandparents and other relatives who come to Addis for a visit. Therefore, nothing is more frustrating both for grand- parents and for the grandchildren than being unable to communicate to each other. Therefore, this issue of losing communication in the family must be studied and must be dealt with publicly. According to Fillmore (1991), to allow the language of the home to be lost is to jeopardize the well-being of our children and, ultimately the well-being of our society children who do not develop and maintain proficiency in the home language run the risk of losing their ability to communicate well with parents and grandparents. If the parents do not teach their children about their values and culture through their mother tongue, then it is unlikely that the children will learn them in the school or outside their home in general. Lambert (1990) states, “If children are not given the opportunity to learn their parents’ language (s), then their sense of personal identity and culture may be at risk”. It is obvious that language carries the custom, the culture and the social values of the ethno-linguistic group. So, losing a language means losing all the aforementioned attributes.

The writer of this study was motivated to study the problem from his own personal experience. His mother who doesn’t speak Amharic came to Addis to visit her two children. Unfortunately, she failed to communicate with her grandchildren even if she had many things in mind to share to them. So, this scenario triggered the interest of the writer to assess the problem.

1.2 The language and its speakers

In referring to the language and its speakers, there is no agreed up on terminology. A Tigrigna speaker from Tigray region is referred to as Tigraway (male), Tigraweyti (female), Tigrawot or Tegar (plural) and the term Tigrigna is used to refer to the language. On the other hand, the Tigrigna-speaking people on the Eritrean side commonly refer to themselves as Tigrigna or Bihér-Tigrigna (which means nation of Tigrigna speakers) to distinguish themselves from the Tigrigna speakers in Ethiopia (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigrinya_language). However, according to Amanuel (1982) the word “Tigrigna” itself is an Amharic word. Amanuel pointed out that his claim of the

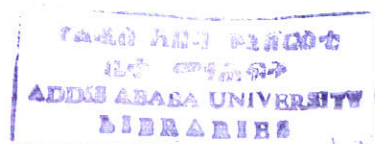
term “Tigrigna” could easily be proved from the fact that almost all the 19th century scholars who came to Ethiopia have identified the language as “Tigray” in their books. Among the scholars Amanuel cited are Debtera Matewos, Padre Francesco de Bassano, among others. Debtera Matewos used the term “Tigray” in his Bible of 1866 and Padre Francesco de Bassano called his Tigrinia-Italian dictionary as Vocabolario Tigray-Italiano. As stated in Amanuel (1982), Bassano even ventured to say that calling the language Tigrigna was Amharicism.

On the other hand, some non-Tigrigna speakers are confused with the term “Tigre” and “Tigrigna”. They usually use the former term to address to the Tigrigna speakers of both in Tigray region and in Eritrea. However, there are distinct ethnic groups in Eritrea whose language and speakers are referred as "Tigre". Tigrigna is closely related to the Tigre language, spoken by the Tigre people but Tigrigna and Tigre, although close, are not mutually intelligible. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org>, the two groups (Tigrigna speakers in Ethiopia and in Eritrea) are often referred to under the combined name of Tigray-Tigrigna. Nevertheless, the growing animosity and war of recent years has led to a greater contrast in the two groups and has led to a greater distinction between their distinct ethnicities.

Throughout this study, the researcher uses the term Tigrigna to refer to the language; the term Tegarù to refer to the speakers of the language; and the term Tigray to refer to the region in Ethiopia where Tigrigna speakers are found. The term Tigre may be used to refer to the distinct Semitic Eritrean language and its speakers when it is necessary to mention.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Language is not only a means of communication rather it goes beyond that. It carries the social values, culture, custom, identity, etc. of the speakers. So, studying about language maintenance is also studying about the preservation of the above social attributes. Hence, one-way of studying about the transfer of a language is investigating whether children use the language or not. However, a study investigating the extent to which the Tigringa



language has been lost or maintained across the speaking community in Addis, on which this research (study) focuses, has never been done and this study seeks to fill this gap. Omaru (1993) made the following remark on the importance of language in knowing ones own histories and experiences of grandparents.

Because of language barriers, my generation is unable to relate to our grandparents and learn their thoughts, personal histories and experiences. After my grandmother's death, I will not have another chance to know her...what happened in her life? What did she believe in? Dream of? Think of? (Omura, 1993)

The experience of Omura is a common phenomenon throughout the world especially among children living in a multilingual society. This is true to children who were born to parents who immigrate to a place where their mother tongue is not widely spoken. This can easily be seen in big cities especially in capital cities like Addis where a continuous movement of people with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds takes place. In such situation, the use of mother tongue is usually limited at home and the children may lose their mother tongue and even their ethnic identity in the long run. This danger of language and identity loss among the children must be studied thoroughly. Language is known to have an effect on ethnic identity in that retention of a mother tongue or a home language acts as a strong connector to the ethnic community for such persons as compared to those who do not retain the language. Kalbach and Kalbach's (1999b), as stated in the Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal 22-JUN-05, reveals that ethnic-connections declines as the use of the ethnic language decreases. For example, a person who speaks an ethnic language is thought to be more ethnically connected than one who is more assimilated, in that s/he speaks mainly the dominant language. Thus, as the use of their ethnic language declines, individuals may tend to be less ethnically connected.

What are the powerful forces that prevent children from learning their home language and becoming proficient bilingual speakers? It is obvious that researches have shown that the benefits of being bilingual are great, not only in terms of job opportunities and increased cultural awareness, but in terms of social and cognitive development (Harding and Riley, 1986). Children who learn to speak more than one language learn to "play with language". The ability to switch linguistic codes and eventually think in more than one language increases conceptual development. However, some researchers are very

concerned that because the pressure to assimilate to the dominant language is so great, young children are not learning the language of their own families. The consequences of this language loss pattern can be very costly and what Sharon Omura experienced with her grandparents is, in fact occurring between children and their parents of the Tigrigna speaking families in Addis.

Children can learn both the dominant language (Amharic) and their mother tongue (Tigrigna). As stated above, bilingualism is an asset not a liability – an asset that needs to be protected. So, the writer has seen the importance of conducting a study on the language use and identity of children born to Tigrigna speaking families living in Addis Ababa. Specifically, the study will answer the following questions:

1. How do the children rate their proficiency in Tigrigna?
2. Do the target children use the Tigrigna language?
3. How do the children identify themselves?
4. What is the attitude of the children towards the language?
5. Do the parents exert effort in transferring their language to their children?
6. Is Tigrigna maintained among the target children?
7. What measures should be taken to maintain the language among the children?

1.4 Hypothesis

1. Most of the children do not use the language and they don't care about the language (Tigrigna) and their identity.
2. Parents are not doing their best to teach their children about their language and their ethnic identity.
3. Thus Tigrigna is not maintained among the target group in Addis.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study can be listed as follows:

- To disclose whether children of the target ethnic group living in Addis use Tigrigna language or not.
- To show how often the children use the language and how proficient they are in the target language.

- To investigate the relationship between language ability and ethno-linguistic identity of the children.
- To investigate the attitudes of the subjects towards the target language.
- To show whether the target community maintained the language or not; and
- Finally, to recommend some of the possible ways of maintaining the language.

In general, the study examines issues of language and identity as they relate to the language transmission and maintenance among the target community.

1.6 Significance of the Study

As it is discussed above, language is not merely a means of communication rather it is also a powerful carrier of values and the primary vehicle for socialization. It is also one of the most significant symbols of any culture and ethnic identity. Therefore, the speakers of the language are believed to be the primary beneficiaries of this study, for it plays a great role in maintaining the language. Eventually, the communication barrier between the target children and their monolingual relatives will be solved. It will also create awareness among parents and children about the significance of learning their language and maintaining it.

In addition, this study is of great value and assistance to others who wish to study the language on related topics. It can also be used by students as a reference to see the points surrounding language proficiency & use and the imperatives of maintaining a language; and finally about the complex relationship between language use and ethnic identity.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Though the problem is believed to be widely spread all over the big cities in the country, this study will not go beyond Addis Ababa. So, all the subjects of this study will be from Addis Ababa due to time constraints and financial limitations. The reason why Addis Ababa was chosen is that, next to Tigray region, most of the Tigrigna speaking families are living here in Addis. Therefore, this study will cover both parents and their children starting from the age of 12 of the said community.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

There are, of course, some limitations to this study. The first limitation is that the pool of subjects is small, so that it may be difficult to generalize the results of this study. The second limitation is that this study is mainly dependent on the quantitative methods (questionnaire) used and the concept of language and identity are difficult to measure using only quantitative methods. In addition, the very subjective nature of self-rating instruments was also another limitation of the study that the respondents may evaluate their own language proficiency lower or even sometimes higher than their actual language proficiency. The fourth and last limitation is the method of evaluating the level of Tigrigna maintenance that the present study only examined one dimension of language use (the home and the family domains), in order to gain a better understanding of the language maintenance of the target children.

1.9 Definition of terms & concepts

An understanding of the terminology used in this study is necessary in creating a clear understanding regarding language use and identity and then regarding language maintenance among the subjects. For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined the following terms.

Language Maintenance - is defined as the degree of stability of language patterns when large populations acquire a new language (Fishman, 1972). In the case of this study, language maintenance is used to refer to the transmission of Tigrigna and the degree of proficiency of the target children in the target language.

Language Shift - refers to a situation in which habitual use of a language by a group is replaced by habitual use of another one (Rivera-Mills, 2000). In the case of this study, language shift refers to the replacement of Tigrigna by Amharic in Addis Ababa.

Language Attitude - is disposition, feeling or position with regards to the maintenance of the language. In this study, attitudes may range from very positive to very negative, as well as indifferent

Language use - the use of a language in different domains with various interlocutors: intimate, known and unknown in various places or contexts: home, school, public areas in various language functions: personal use, oral & written Communication.



Linguistic competence/proficiency – the ability to communicate effectively in a given language. In this study, linguistic proficiency is measured subjectively by the children on a scale from 1 to 5, from very well to not at all, in each of four areas: understanding, speaking, writing and reading.

Tegaru-is the term referring to the Tigrigna speaking family or community in general

Tigraway (male) - is a person who speaks Tigrigna

Tigraweyti (female) - is a person who speaks Tigrigna

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, the principal conceptual issues underlying the study are briefly defined and discussed. These are language and ethnic identity, language use and function, language maintenance and shift, language attitude and its role in maintaining a language, the factors for language maintenance and shift, and finally the consequences of losing a language. The discussion of these concepts was made based on different literary works and research findings on similar issues. Discussing such related concepts is very important in understanding and analyzing the linguistic situation of the children born to the Tigrigna speaking families, their identity and the attitude they hold towards the target language described as their mother-tongue or home language.

2.1. Language as a Marker of Identity

Kroskrity (2000) defines identity as "the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories," and further explains that though other, non-linguistic criteria may play a significant role, language and communication often provide "important and sometimes crucial criteria by which members both define their group and are defined by others" (p. 111). So, for Kroskrity, language is the most important factor in identifying a person or a group of speakers.

Similarly, Clarke J. (2005) on his paper entitled "language and the construction of identity in Russia", as cited in <http://www.cerc.unimlb.edu>, stated that language is a critical component in the construction of identity. He further explains that if identity is seen as a set of characteristics that define an individual or a group, then language is an important means by which these characteristics are communicated. According to Clarke, the identity of an individual person is defined by his social affiliation and the language used in his social environment, transmitted to him by social and linguistic interactions, forms his linguistic identity. Linguistic identity means the identification with a language and its speakers as well as the identification with linguistic varieties such as dialects or sociolects and their speakers. On the other hand, other scholars claim that there is one to

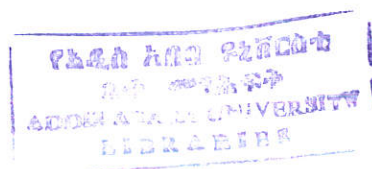
one relationship between language and identity. Ulibarri (1972), as cited in <http://si.unm.edu>, for instance, supports this kind of relationship.

In the beginning was the Word. And the word was made flesh. It was so in the beginning and it is so today. The language, the Word, carries within it the history, the culture, the traditions, the very life of a people, the flesh. Language is people. We cannot conceive of a people without a language, or a language without a people. The two are one and the same. To know one is to know the other. (Ulibarri 1972)

Fishman (1985), just like Ulibarri, claims that there is an inseparable and co-dependant linkage between language and identity. However, Edwards (1996) in his work on social identity maintains that language is not a necessary component to retain identity and he suggests that more important than individual indicators or markers of identity is the maintenance of what he describes as ethnic boundaries. So, maintaining the boundaries that signify a given group is more important than specific practices that we might engage in, such as carrying out particular cultural protocols or speaking our own language. Edwards makes the point that language is only one of a number of indicators of identity and that identity is not dependent on one indicator alone but several, often overlapping markers, of which language is but one. Therefore, the loss of the language does not necessarily equate to a loss of identity (J. Edwards, 1985).

Weedon (1987) on his part, states that language though deeply rooted in personal and social history, allows a greater flexibility than race and ethnicity, with a person able to consciously or unconsciously express dual identities by the linguistic choices they make - even in a single sentence (e.g., through code-switching). Through choices of language and dialect, people constantly make and remake who they are.

Schmid (2002), in her study of German Jews who had migrated to Anglophone countries, suggests that language use and loss are strongly influenced by speaker attitudes towards the language. These attitudes may be based largely on the individual's perception of how the minority group is perceived by the majority group and vice versa. She argues that what matters is the speaker's identity and self-perception... Someone who wants to belong to a speech community and wants to be recognized as a member is capable of



behaving accordingly... On the other hand, someone who rejects that language community ... may adapt his or her linguistic behavior so as not to appear to be a member any longer (Schmid, 2002, p.191-192).

In addition, Verkuyten and de Wolf's (2002) on their study, although not specifically about language and identity, nonetheless noted the importance of the issue. The study describes how second generation individuals with Chinese heritage living in the Netherlands account for their ethnic identity. In it, participants presented knowledge of a Chinese language as a central marker of ethnic identity. Language was viewed as so central, in fact, that "in one group it was argued that you are a 'fake' ... Chinese when you do not speak and understand the Chinese language" (Verkuyten & de Wolf, 2002, p.386). Castells (1996) also shares the above idea:

Language is commonly understood as a primary resource for enacting social identity and displaying membership of social groups. Language has always played an important role in the formation and expression of identity. The role of language and dialect in identity construction is becoming even more central in the postmodern era, as other traditional markers of identity, including race, are being destabilized (Manuel Castells 1996)

Therefore, It is not surprising that language and dialect have assumed such a critical role in identity formation. As Castells (1996) notes, in the current era, language signifies historical and social boundaries that are less arbitrary than territory and more discriminating (but less exclusive) than race or ethnicity.

2.2. Ethnic Identity

There is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity and many scholars on the topic come out with their respective definitions for ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the most widely used definition of the concept is the one developed by Phinney (2003). She maintains that, "ethnic identity is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one's identity, or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group" (p. 63). From her perspective one claims an identity within the context of a subgroup that claims a common ancestry and shares at least a similar culture, race, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin. She goes on to add that, "Ethnic identity is not a fixed categorization, but rather is a fluid and dynamic understanding of self and ethnic background. Ethnic identity is

constructed and modified as individuals become aware of their ethnicity, within the large (socio-cultural) setting” (2003, p. 63). Similarly, Noels, Pon, and Clément (1996) define ethnic identity as “a subjective feeling of belongingness to a particular ethnic group” (p. 246). Therefore, according to these authors, ethnic identity is not something permanent that can be objectively evaluated.

Isajiw (1990) on his part provides a practical, operational definition of ethnic identity. He divides ethnic identity into external and internal aspects. External aspects of ethnic identity involve observable behaviors such as: 1) speaking an ethnic language, practicing ethnic traditions etc.; 2) participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendship networks; 3) participation in ethnic institutions; 4) participation in ethnic voluntary associations; and 5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations. Internal aspects involve attitudes, feelings, ideas and images. Internal aspects of ethnic identity can be further divided into cognitive, moral and affective elements. The cognitive element involves subjective knowledge of group values, and of the group’s heritage and history. The moral element involves feelings of obligation and commitment to the group. Similarly, the affective element is comprised of feelings of attachment to the group, especially when compared to other groups.

2.3. Language and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is closely related to a heritage language (Baker, 2001). Baker claimed, “A language’s symbolic status is also important in language vitality. A heritage language may be an important symbol of ethnic identity...” (p. 69). In other words, one of the main markers of belonging to a particular ethnic group is language; that is, “through language, ethnic identity may be expressed, enacted and symbolized” (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 113). Tse (1998) remarked that many ethnic minorities regret not having learned their heritage language and believed that proficiency in their language would help them gain access to their own ethnic group. This means that language has an effect on ethnic identity in that language retention of a mother tongue or home language acts as a stronger connector to the ethnic community for such persons as compared to those who do not retain the language.

Many other authors see language as a marker of ethnic identity. De Vries (1990), for example, sees the maintenance of a language as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the maintenance of ethnicity, and language shift as an indicator of weakening ethnic identity. Further, he argues that change in language behavior can allow a person to “pass” from one ethnic group to another, or to end up “without an ethnic identity” (p.235). In this view, the presence of a language is necessary for an ‘authentic’ ethnic identity.

On the other hand, critics argue that this “language-as-identity” philosophy does not account for groups that do not use the heritage language as a marker of ethnicity. There has been a great deal of research that investigate the relationship between the mother tongue or the language spoken most often at home and ethnic identity. Lopez (1978) examined factors related to ethnic identity, and found that “ language shift does not imply anything about loosening ethnic bonds” (p. 275) and that language maintenance was not required for maintaining one’s ethnic identity. Pease-Alvarez (2002) also encountered evidence similar to that found by Lopez. Pease-Alvarez found that although there was a strong link between Mexican identity and Spanish language use, the shift toward using English in the families’ households did not necessarily mean that they had abandoned their Mexican identity.

On the other hand, a study of Hispanic families by Guardado (2002), found evidence conflicting with that posed by the studies of Lopez and by Pease-Alvarez. Guardado discovered that the respondents’ ethnic identity played an important role in determining either the maintenance or loss of the Spanish language by the children. The families in the study also expressed the importance of their culture; literature and songs associated with their ethnic language in helping the children maintain their Spanish. Guardado also found that while all four of the families had a strong ethnic identity, the families in which the Spanish language had been lost were much less emphatic about the ethnic identities of their children.

The result of the study by Cho (2000) also suggested that competence in heritage language has a positive effect on both relationships with other heritage language speakers and on development of a strong ethnic identity. “Those who had ‘strong heritage language competence’ and a strong sense of who they were, were strongly connected to their ethnic group, and had greater understanding and knowledge of cultural values, ethics and manners” (p. 338). Heritage language competence also helped the respondents understand their own ethnicity and to participate fully in cultural activities. On the contrary, those with weaker heritage language competence tended to avoid contact with other Koreans and to participate less in cultural activities, often reporting feelings of isolation and exclusion from members of their own cultural group.

Similarly, the study by Kalbach and Kalbach (1999) reveals that ethnic-connectedness declines as the use of the ethnic language decrease. For example, a person who speaks an ethnic language is thought to be more ethnically connected than one who is more assimilated, in that he/she speaks mainly the dominant language. Thus, as the use of their ethnic language declines, individuals may tend to be less ethnically connected. This reinforces the idea that assimilation occurs over generations as the use of the ethnic language declines in favor of the use of the dominant language.

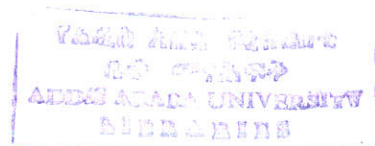
Tse (1998) proposed a four-stage model of ethnic identity development focusing on attitudes toward the heritage and majority languages. The four stages in Tse’s model included Unawareness; Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion; Ethnic Emergence; and Ethnic Identity Incorporation. Tse discussed the model in relation to development of mother tongues and included comprehensible input and group membership as important factors in mother tongue development. Utilizing various qualitative studies, Tse considered the possibility of mother language acquisition during each stage of ethnic identity development. She found that during the first stage, Unawareness, comprehensible input would be sufficient for a learner to acquire the mother language, since the learner’s unawareness about being part of an ethnic group makes membership in a group a non-issue. The first stage, Unawareness, includes a relatively short period when ethnic minorities are not conscious of their minority status. This stage normally lasts until minority children go to school and leave their ethnic enclave.

In the second stage, Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion, minority children may feel ambivalent or have negative feelings or attitudes toward their ethnic culture, and this may happen while they prefer to be identified with members of the main society. In this stage Tse stated that a person might receive the comprehensible input, but would probably not achieve membership in an ethnic group necessary to acquire the mother tongue. The third stage, Ethnic Emergence, is a period when ethnic minorities realize that they belong to their minority ethnic group and begin to explore their ethnic heritage. In this stage, ethnic minorities have some conflicts because they accept their ethnic heritage but also favor the dominant group. During this stage, the ethnic minority is likely to become more interested in his or her ethnic language and culture. Therefore, if comprehensible input is available, then it is likely that mother tongue acquisition can occur at this stage. Finally, in the fourth stage, Ethnic Identity Incorporation, ethnic minorities strongly identify with and join their ethnic minority groups and are able to resolve many of their ethnic identity conflicts. During this stage, ethnic minorities embrace themselves as members of their ethnic group and become proud of their ethnic identity. In this last stage, Tse maintained that a strong determining factor of mother tongue development was the value placed by the ethnic minority group on proficiency in the mother tongue.

2.4. Language Use and Function

Language use is perhaps the most significant external or practical variable in language acquisition and loss. For most, languages are not their own rewards; they must serve a functional purpose or they will not be used or perhaps never even acquired (Fishman, 2001a). Therefore, it is obvious that Language use in all domains (home, education, workplace, religion, etc.) ensures maintenance of that language.

There is a separation of languages into different domains of use. A speaker might use a first language (L1) in the home and family domain, for instance, and a second language (L2) in school or work, with friends, in leisure activities, or in wider society generally. Fishman (2001a) divides these into powerful and less-powerful domains. Powerful domains include employment, higher education, mass media and government institutions,



while less-powerful domains include family, friends, neighborhood, community institutions and in some cases pre-school or elementary education. The label 'less-powerful' is the family-neighborhood-community, which is a significant one. Specifically, Fishman argues that support for a language at the 'less-powerful' is crucial for its maintenance, as it provides a "real life" context and motivation for its use. Moreover, since minority groups have the most control over these domains, they are the context for the most realistic and practical language maintenance strategies. He suggests that residence in communities with high co-ethnic concentration and/or communities with strong family-neighborhood-community links increases the likelihood of language transmission and maintenance. This closeness with other members of the group points to the importance of the use of the language in intra-group interaction. According to Fishman, if communication norms change, such that members wish to establish communication in L2 rather than L1, the chances of L1 transmission to the next generation will be drastically reduced. For this reason, intra-group communication norms and behaviors are significant factors in language transmission, and maintenance or shift.

Similar to that of Fishman, (Edwards 1996) stated that the most important domains of language use are the domains of necessity. He points out that once a language ceases to operate in these domains, little can be done to recapture them, so that bilingual communities will then gradually become monolingual: 'people will not indefinitely maintain two languages when one will serve across all domains' (p.110).

Language can also carry symbolic or instrumental meanings. Those who continue to use a language for its symbolic meaning might speak of its "sacred heritage," their "roots" or "the language of their forefathers" (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1987). In contrast, a language with instrumental meaning is important for attaining a goal such as school achievement or employment. Children may develop an 'importance level' hierarchy which places the instrumental (school) language above the emotive (home) language (Chumak- Horbatsch, 1987).

2.5. Language Transmissions and Maintenance

Language transmission is the process of passing on a language to young children, and happens in the home or family context where as language maintenance occurs after transmission, and when the language is used in the community. In other words, language maintenance occurs when a language manages to maintain most of its functions (e.g. home, school, religion) and role in society despite the presence of other powerful languages (Fishman, 1991).

There are many arguments for the maintenance of languages but this paper will focus on the categories by Thieberger's (1990) who brought together the many reasons why languages should be transmitted and then maintained. These are: (a) group integrity and group membership, (b) identity, (c) cultural heritage, (d), social-humanitarian and economic implication, (e) assimilation, and (f) cognitive development and academic achievement.

a. Group Integrity and Group Membership

Integrity refers to the factors that keep the group together; membership denotes the factors that identify someone as being part of a particular group. Criteria for membership in an ethnic group may include ancestry, religion, and many aspects of social culture and behavior (Fishman, 1991). Since most ethnic groups have a distinct language or dialect and these linguistic characteristics can be necessary attributes for membership in the group, we can suppose that the mother tongue is a key criterion for ethnic group membership. In other words, ethnic-group members can identify more closely with those who share their language than with those who share other major aspects of their cultural background, such as religion. As discussed in the first two sections above, Taylor (1977) on his part argued that language can be a stronger cue to an individual's own sense of ethnic belonging than inherited characteristics (such as skin color), since acquired characteristics may be attributed internally rather than externally.

b. Identity

As pointed out in the previous section, language is seen as one of the most important keys to ethnic or group identification. Language is generally regarded as a salient dimension of ethnicity, and as such is one of the most important articulations of ethnic identity both at an individual and at a group level (Ulibarri 1972). This is one of the many reasons why many ethnic groups consider the loss of their language as symbolizing the loss of their identity as a group.

c. Cultural Heritage

Maintaining the individual's sense of cultural heritage is a strong argument for language maintenance. This argument follows directly from the previous sections, where it was discussed that language is an important factor in the preservation of group integrity, and a clear marker of ethnicity and group identity. It has also been argued that language is a strong carrier of a group's cultural heritage.

Williams (1981) includes language as a specific cultural activity. He proposes that one definition of culture is "the informing spirit of a whole way of life, which is manifest over the whole range of social activities but is most evident in 'specifically cultural activities'—a language, styles of art, kinds of intellectual work" (p. 11). The reference to "communication" in Williams's definition clearly highlights the importance of language as a medium for culture. This means that the loss of language can mean losing touch with cultural heritage. For most people, language is the carrier of culture. Therefore, people who do not have contact with their heritage language are outside their culture.

Fishman (1996) also stated that: The most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language. Take it away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. The culture, according to Fishman, could not be expressed and handed on in any other way.

d. Social-Humanitarian and Economic Implications

These social-humanitarian and economic arguments are strong reasons for encouraging the maintenance of community languages. According to Thieberger (1990), what many people do not take into account is the price paid by the people who migrate to another country and the fact that the price is higher when the dominant language in the host country is a different one than their own. The price paid, according to Thieberger, occurs in terms of the language disabilities suffered by the first generation; the language stripping that the group suffers; the de-culturing or loss of their culture experience; and the inevitable discrimination, prejudice, and educational, social, and economic disadvantages that the group has to suffer.

e. Assimilation

A minority group identifies with the dominant culture by giving up some of its special characteristics in favor of adopting those of the dominant culture. In this section on assimilation, two problems involved in language shift have been highlighted in Thieberger (1990). One is a generational problem, that is, that language shift most affects the generation of migrants who left their native country at a young age, the children born in the new country, and the subsequent generations. This is because they are the ones who are exposed to the dominant language from a young age and they are most influenced by the pressures brought on them by the dominant language and culture. The other problem was that there was also the trans-generational problem of impoverished ethnicity and incomplete enculturation into the host society.

f. Cognitive Development and Academic Achievement

One of the major arguments for language maintenance originates from research on the cognitive development of children. It is generally accepted now that speaking more than one language leads to enhance cognitive abilities. More recent studies have indicated that there are advantages accrued from being able to speak more than one language. Children who speak more than one language have been found to be more flexible and more capable of divergent thinking while also being more sensitive to the meta-linguistic aspects of communication than their monolingual counterparts (Lambert, 1980).

2.6. Language shift

According to Edwards (1996), when cultures come into contact and competition over resources develops, language shift is inevitable. Language shift will also move to favor the language that provides the most power, prestige and economic gain. This pertains not just to Tigrigna but occurs with all small and mostly indigenous languages worldwide.

Hoffman (1991:186) stated that “when a community does not maintain its language, but gradually adopts another one, we talk about language shift while ‘language maintenance refers to a situation where members of a community try to keep the language(s) they have always used’”. Hoffman also observed that under certain cultural, social and political conditions, a community might opt to change one set of linguistic tools for another. This phenomenon is acute in the case of migrant communities.

As pointed out in (Fishman, 1991), the majority of language shift occurs from languages spoken by socially and politically marginalized groups, and in states that require knowledge of a common, national or official language. According to Fishman, this marginalization can include physical and demographic dislocation, social dislocation and cultural dislocation. Physical and demographic dislocation occurs when speakers are physically separated from the linguistic community, through migration or colonization, for example. In these situations, opportunities for functional use of the mother tongue in neighborhood and community settings are reduced. Social dislocation is indicative of the unequal distribution of power among linguistic or cultural communities, and may result in educational or economic disadvantage for certain communities. Finally, cultural dislocation occurs when groups are “enticed and re-routed” from customary areas and ways of being, thus cleaving speakers from historically and culturally embedded languages (Fishman, 1991, p.62).

Finally, intensive use of and exposure to the dominant language in everyday life is an important element in the shift to the dominant language. Hence, living in urban settings ensures constant exposure to and use of the dominant language. In Aboriginal

communities, the requirements of schooling (and often the workplace), as well as the intrusion of the media, also result in intensive use of and exposure to the dominant language.

It has already been noted above that the most important domains occupied by a language are the domains of necessity. When a language no longer occupies these domains, it can be said to be in a state of decline brought about by language shift, which is characterized by the increased functions of one language and the decreased functions of the other language. According to Baker and prys Jones (1998), language shift is further characterized by a lessening of the number of speakers in a language, a decreased saturation of language speakers in the population and a loss in language proficiency. Edwards also stressed that the first condition for language shift is bilingualism, with its associated increase in code-switching and code-mixing. If bilingual speakers regard their mother tongue as inadequate for domains like education and specially employment, the situation may arise where they only use the language in home and cultural activities, thereby speeding up the shift towards the other language.

Schumann's (1978) 'acculturation' model also shows that higher status groups will tend not to learn the languages of lower status groups. Lower status groups, according to Schumann, have three options open to them - giving up their own lifestyle and values (assimilation), as is often the case in migration from different regions or parts of a country to big cities and capital cities of the country; rejecting the culture of the dominant group (rejection); or taking a positive view to both their own and the dominant group's culture (adaptation). Language maintenance is, therefore, likely in the latter two options, rejection and adaptation. In the case of rejection, a minority group may have discovered that the attainment of the higher status language has not brought any socio-economic benefits with it. Such groups may then, according to Schumann develop strategies to foster use of the minority language and to improve proficiency in the minority language.

2.7. How to know language maintenance and shift?

There are many ways of measuring shift and maintenance. Fasold (1984) says that when a speech community starts employing a new language in domains previously reserved for the old one, language shift is in progress, domain being simply defined as institutional contexts such as family, workplace, friendship, etc. in which one language variety is deemed to be more appropriate than another.

Another method to study whether language shift is taking place is to look at age distribution trends in the data. According to Fasold, one indication of shift would be if the older speakers report more use of one language and the younger speakers more use of another. If genuine shift is taking place, a larger proportion of older speaker would be using the declining language than of younger speakers. Fasold points out that age and intergenerational differences in language proficiency have a significant impact on maintenance or shift in an immigrant community.

Finally, the extent of language shift and maintenance would also depend on the language proficiency of the members of the community. If they increasingly become incompetent in their ethnic language or the language they habitually use, this would signal a potential for language shift, particularly if the older members are not passing on the language to the younger ones.

2.8. Factors for language maintenance and shift

Conklin and Lourie (1983), as stated in Baker (1993), gave a comprehensive list of factors that may create language shift. This list essentially refers to in-migrants rather than indigenous minorities, but many factors are common to both groups.

Factors Encouraging Language Maintenance	Factors Encouraging Language Loss
<p>A. Political, Social and Demographic Factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large number of speakers living closely together 2. Recent and/or continuing in-migration 3. Close proximity to the homeland and ease of travel to homeland 4. Preference to return to homeland with many actually returning 5. Homeland language community intact 6. Stability in occupation 7. Employment available where home language is spoken daily 8. Low social and economic mobility in main occupations 9. Low level of education to restrict social and economic mobility, but educated and articulate community leaders loyal to their language community 10. Ethnic group identity rather than identity with majority language community via nativism, racism and ethnic discrimination <p>B. Cultural Factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mother-tongue institutions (e.g. schools, Community organizations) 2. Cultural and religious ceremonies in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Small number of speakers well dispersed -Long and stable residence -homeland remote -low rate of return to homeland and/or little intention to return -Homeland language community decaying in vitality -Occupational shift, especially from rural to urban areas -Employment requires use of majority language -High social and economic mobility in main occupations -High levels of education giving social and economic mobility. potential community leaders are alienated from their language community by education -Ethnic identity is denied to achieve social and vocational mobility; this is forced by nativism, racism and ethnic discrimination -Lack of mother-tongue institutions (mass media, leisure activities) -Cultural and religious activity in the

<p>home language</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ethnic identity strongly tied to home language 4. Nationalistic aspirations as a language group 5. Mother tongue the only homeland national language 6. Emotional attachment to mother tongue giving self-identity and ethnicity 7. Emphasis on family ties and community cohesion 8. Emphasis on education to enhance ethnic awareness or controlled by language 9. Low emphasis on education if in majority language 10. Culture unlike majority language culture 	<p>majority language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ethnic identity defined by factors other than language -Few nationalistic aspirations -Mother tongue not the only homeland national language, or mother tongue spans several nations -Self-identity derived from factors other than shared home language -Low emphasis on family and community ties. High emphasis on individual achievement -Emphasis on education if education in mother tongue community -Acceptance of majority language education -Culture and religion similar to that of the majority language
<p>C. Linguistic Factors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mother tongue is standardized and exists in a written form 2. Use of an alphabet which makes printing and literacy relatively easy 3. Home language has international status 4. Home language literacy used in community and with homeland 5. Flexibility in the development of the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mother tongue is non-standard and/or not in written form -Use of writing system which is expensive to reproduce and relatively difficult to learn -Home language of little or no international importance -Illiteracy (or aliteracy) in the home language -No tolerance of new terms from

language (e.g. limited use of new terms from the majority language)	majority language; or too much tolerance of loan words leading to mixing and eventual language loss
---------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In general, Choudhry and Verma (1996:391) rightly pointed out factors like numerical strength of the minority group, their time and pattern of settlement and length of stay, their social and political power, their socio-economic status and linguistic factors such as the patterns of language use in various domains, attitudes and motivation towards the mother tongue and the dominant language of the host community, and political factors influencing language planning in education play a vital role in determining the retention or loss of the mother tongue among minority groups.

2.9. The Role of Language Attitudes in Language Maintenance and Shift

One of the important factors that impact on shift and maintenance of language is attitude (Gardner, 1985). Attitude refers to “a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behavior” (Baker, 1992:10). So, according to Baker, attitude represents internal thoughts, feelings and tendencies in behavior across a variety of contexts. Language attitudes, then, have a significant role to play in the survival or decline of languages, because the status people accord to languages, how they feel about those languages and what they are prepared to do about those languages are key factors in language growth, maintenance and shift.

In the life history of a language, attitude may be crucial. In language growth or decay, restoration or destruction, attitude may be central. The status and importance of a language in society and within an individual derives in a major way from adopted or learnt attitudes (Baker 1988:112).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) also argue that motivation to learn a language is determined by the learner’s attitudes towards the group associated with that language. Further, in

order to be successful, the learner must be “psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour which characterize members of another cultural-linguistic group” (p.3). If the learner is not prepared to do so, or is attitudinally hostile towards the cultural-linguistic group, he or she is unlikely to be successful. Significantly, Gardner and Lambert (1972) pointed out that the family provides the context for attitude formation and the language choice of a family, as well as how that family uses the language, has a great impact on whether a heritage language is lost or maintained over generations.

Webb (1992) on his part points out that there is a direct link between language preferences and language attitudes: “It is generally accepted that one’s choice of socio-linguistic variants, varieties and languages is conditioned by one’s attitude to individual speakers and groups, by one’s personal goals, ideals, social ambitions, and by one’s knowledge of the conditions of social intercourse. Language preferences can therefore be an indicator of language attitudes”(p.438).

Fasold (1984: 148) also suggests that the attitude towards a language is often the reflection of the attitudes towards the members of that speech community. People's reaction towards a language variety reveals their perception regarding the speakers of that variety -- their social, political and economic backdrop.

2.10. Consequences of losing a language

A number of advantages to an individual of developing his or her mother tongue in addition to the dominant language have been addressed in many literatures. Among these are increased cognitive development and academic achievement, more occupational opportunities, a strong sense of one’s own cultural identity, a more positive self-concept, and stronger ties with family and community through the sharing of values (Fishman, 1996; Tse, 1998). According to these authors, the mother tongue of a group provides speakers with a connection to their cultures and their pasts, and allows for stronger relationships with older members of their communities and families.

On the other hand, aside from losing the aforementioned benefits that come with language shift, loss of mother tongue can have some negative consequences in the social and familial spheres. One of the results of the language loss over as little as one generation is often conflict of the younger generations with older family members due to a lack of linguistic ability or understanding of the mother tongue (Baez, 2001).

In a study by Cho (2000), Korean students who had experienced loss of their mother tongue reported exclusion from their own ethnic group due to their lack of linguistic skills in Korean. From phone interactions to business transactions, the participants of the study reported that they had had negative experiences because of their inability to communicate in Korean, and in many cases went to great lengths to avoid contact with other Koreans.

Fishman (1996) also expressed what is lost in the disappearance of one's mother tongue over time. He linked language to culture, stating that a large part of what makes up a culture is expressed in the language of that culture, making the language the only vehicle by which the components of a culture can be passed on to subsequent generations. He further maintained that the three main components of positive ethno-linguistic consciousness are the sense of sanctity, kinship and moral imperative. "That is what they would lose if they lost the language. They would lose a member of the family, an article of faith, and a commitment in life. Those are not little things for people to lose or a culture to lose". In general, language shift results the loss of all the advantages of language maintenance discussed above.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study and includes the research design, recruitment of participants and respondents' profile, data collection techniques and instruments used, the procedures or steps taken to carry out the project, and finally the chapter concludes with an overview of the statistical methods used to analyze the data of the study. The methods include analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson's correlation. The first one (ANOVA) helps to reveal the differences and similarities between groups based on factors like age, gender, educational background, parents' ethno-linguistic group and the children's visit to Tigray region whereas the second method was used to investigate the relationship among the variables: proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the target children. The statistical method is used to answer the research questions stated in chapter 1.

3.1 Research design

This study mainly employs quantitative research design for the analysis of the data collected on the questionnaire. However, it also used the qualitative research methods to obtain the benefits of both types of research and then to ensure the greatest possible detail regarding the topic. This is because; data collected through different techniques are likely to produce more valid and reliable findings than data from one source only. Nevertheless, since qualitative work generally requires much time for both the collection and the analysis of the data, the interview was limited to only 16 parents. The data was collected sequentially in two stages: the first stage used a self report questionnaire to collect quantitative data, while the second used focus group interviews to collect qualitative data. Hence, the two methods were used by distributing questionnaire for 126 children investigating their language proficiency and use, identity and attitudes and finally by interviewing the 16 parents about their children' language use, proficiency in Tigrigna and about their efforts in transmitting and maintaining their ethnic language to their children. The next section describes the participants of this study and explains the reasons for recruiting the children of the target community who



were born and grew up in Addis. It also contains demographic information of the respondents, such as their age, gender and their educational background.

3.2 Recruitment of participants

3.2.1 Sampling

The sample chosen for this study is limited to the Tigrigna speaking families and their children who are permanent residents of Addis. Indeed, this community are scattered in all parts of the city (Addis) and so it became quite difficult to choose an appropriate sample. However, during the course of the search for a suitable sample, two high schools and Addis Ababa University, which were believed to consist many children from the target community, were discovered.

Therefore, recruitment of participants into the study was mainly made in two senior secondary schools (Tikur Anbesa & Shimelis Habte senior secondary schools) and Addis Ababa University (AAU here after). The reason why the researcher mainly focused on the above two high schools and AAU, was that he believed that many children of the target community were attending in these schools than in any other secondary schools in Addis. In addition, since the researcher completed his secondary school in Tikur Anbesa senior secondary school, it was also simple to contact the target group easily with the help of his former teachers. Children aged 12 and above were chosen as they use language with ease and as they know to differentiate the use of language according to the situation while children below 12 years of age are still in their formative stage.

Generally, the researcher used purposive sampling to select children and families who met the following criteria:

1. The children must have been born and raised in the metropolitan area and, currently reside in the same place. They also need to be above the age of 12.
2. The children must have at least a single parent whose first language is Tigrigna.
3. At least one of the parents must have been born in the Tigray region or in Eritrea and must consider themselves bilingual in Tigrigna and Amharic and must have been in the metropolitan area for at least the age of their child.

In all, the researcher included a total of 142 participants, 16 of whom parents and 126 of whom were children. The children filled out the questionnaire and the parents participated in the interviews, and used the data to compare the children of the target community with strong mother tongue competence to those with weak or no mother tongue competence.

3.2.2 Respondents' profile

The respondents to the questionnaire were 126 children of the Tigrigna speaking community living in Addis whose ages were 12 years and above. For an easy analysis, the different age groups were divided into two main groups (see table 3.1). The groups were differentiated by age and about two-third (65.1%) of the respondents were in the first (12-20 years) age group whereas the second age group (21 and above) consisted of 44(34.9 %) respondents. When we see the gender of the respondents, sixty-nine (54.8%) of them were females while 57 or 45.2 percent of them were males. All of the respondents were born in Addis but only few of the respondents were born in different places other than Addis and the questionnaire filled by these respondents were rejected for this study only focused on those who were born in Addis. The vast majority of the respondents had never lived in Tigray region or Eritrea for a long.

With regard to the educational background of the respondents, all of them were students as they were recruited from two high schools and Addis Ababa University (AAU). The majority of the respondents were both from TIKUR ANBESA and SHIMELIS HABTE senior secondary schools. Hence, all of the subjects were students of their respective school. To put it in figure, slightly more than two-third (84 or 66.7 percent) of the respondents were students of the two high schools while 31 or 24.6 percent of the subjects were attending for their first degree in AAU. The other 5(4%) of the respondents reported attending for their postgraduate degree whereas the remaining 6 (4.8) reported to be diploma students (see table 3.1).

When we see the parents' ethno-linguistic group, as can be seen from the table below, the majority (97 or 77 percent) of the respondents reported that they were from parents

of the same ethnic group (Tegaru) while the remaining 29 (23 percent) of them were from mixed families. When we say mixed families, it is to mean that either the father or the mother of the children is Tigraway/weiti but not both of the parents belong to the target ethnic group. The children from families of mixed ethnic groups were included in the study to see the difference in their language use and identity with those from the same family

Variables	Categories	Number	%
Gender	Female	69	54.8
	Male	57	45.2
	Total	126	100
Age	12-20	82	65.1
	21+	44	34.9
	Total	126	100
Educational background	Secondary level	84	66.7
	Diploma level	6	4.8
	Bachelor level	31	24.6
	Masters level	5	4
	Total	126	100
Parents' Ethno-linguistic group	Both are Tegaru (same)	97	77
	Mixed	29	23
	Total	126	100

Table 3.1: Respondents' demographic profile

3.3 Data collection techniques and Instruments

3.3.1 Questionnaire

A five (5) page self-report questionnaire was administered to the respondents. In total, I administered 150 copies of the questionnaire in the two high schools and in AAU however after coding, 24 copies of the questionnaire were either not returned or removed from the sample because they were incomplete or because the respondent did

not meet the eligibility criteria, leaving an n of 126. The questionnaire asked the participants to comment on their personal profile, language proficiency, language use, identity and their attitudes towards the language.

Many Scholars have used language self-rating instruments to evaluate children's language maintenance. However, language self-rating instruments are very subjective that respondents may evaluate their own language proficiency lower or even sometimes higher than their actual language proficiency. Hence, this could be taken as a limitation of the present study. The researcher used five point Likert scale and hence there were five choices for each item of the entire four variable viz. proficiency, language use, identity and attitude. The items in Tigrigna proficiency of the children, ask about the degree to which they can understand, speak, read and write in the target language while the items in the usage of Tigrigna, ask the respondents how frequently they use the language with different interlocutors. On the other hand, the questions in the identity section inquire into their perceptions of their ethnic identity whereas the attitude items ask about the children's attitude towards Tigrigna language. The five choices in both the identity and attitude items pertain to level of agreement: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree.

3.3.2 Interview

The fact that interview generally requires a larger investment of time for both the collection and the analysis of the data, makes it necessary to work with smaller number of informants and in this paper, only 16 selected parents were involved. The interviews were open-ended, to allow the subjects more freedom. By allowing the parents who were the focus of this research to tell about their children's language use, proficiency and their own efforts in transmitting their language to their children, the researcher hoped to come to a greater understanding about maintenance and shift of Tigrigna language in Addis. This interview would thus help to gain some insight into the parents' effort and how those efforts have impacted the maintenance of Tigrigna or the shift to Amharic among the target group in Addis. The interview was conducted in Tigrigna and then translated in to English for the analysis purpose

3.4 Procedure

To examine the language maintenance of the children, I first prepared an instrument of 46 items that record personal profile, language ability, language use, identity and attitude of the respondents towards the language. The questionnaire was prepared initially in English, and then translated into Amharic so that the participants could complete it in the language of their choice: Amharic, or English. Once the participants of the study were identified and contacted, the researcher then administered to each respondent the self-report rating questionnaire. During the meeting, the researcher explained about the study in detail and the respondents gained general information about it. Most questionnaires were administered individually and a few individuals completed it in a group setting. Interviews were also conducted in Tigrigna and after each interview was conducted, the researcher translated the result into English. Finally, the data was transferred into the SPSS software by the means of which the different computations were carried out and the sums scores for each of the four variables: proficiency, language use, identity and attitudes were obtained.

3.5. Methods of data analysis

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed using quantitative methods and all the statistical analyses in the present study were done using the SPSS 12.0 software. The SPSS program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to analyze answers to the questions on proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the subjects. First, to insure the reliability of the data, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the proficiency, language use, identity, and attitude portions of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha is often used by social scientists to test the internal consistency of the domain of instruments. If the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, the instrument is determined to be reliable (Aron and Aron 1994). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of proficiency, language use, identity and attitude are greater than 0.7; therefore, all the questionnaire data are reliable. Table 3.2: shows the results of Cronbach's alpha for the four variables of the questionnaire.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Proficiency	.927	5
Language use	.906	10
Identity	.714	6
Attitude	.790	11

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics – Cronbach's alpha of the various variables

Second, the frequency distribution, percentile and mean were computed and used to determine the respondents' proficiency, language use, identity and attitudes towards the target language. Thirdly, in order to see the effect of various factors on the different variables (i.e. the relationship between dependent and independent variables), the analysis of variance (ANOVA) two-tailed was used. ANOVA helps to examine the relationships between the factor scores of the dependent and the independent variables of age, sex, educational level, visiting to Tigray region and ethnic composition of parents in this case. The results of these two techniques indicate whether the difference between two or more groups' means is statistically significant or not. Fourth and last, Pearson's correlation (two-tailed) test was used to investigate the correlation among the four variables (i.e. among proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the respondents towards Tigrigna). The result of Pearson's correlation also indicates the degree of linear relationship between two dependent variables. In order to calculate correlations between the scores from the four variables, the total scores for each section of the questionnaire were calculated (see the following tables for the values of the choices in each statement of the four variables respectively).

Table 3.3 and 3.4: show the scale of one to five points, which is used for calculating scores for proficiency and language use respectively. The self-assessment for overall ability also used a five-point scale: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor, and No Ability.



Proficiency	Point
No ability	1
Ability to understand/use only a few words or phrases	2
Ability to understand/use only a simple conversation	3
Ability to understand/use most words	4
Ability to understand/use almost all the words	5

Table 3.3: Points for each proficiency items

Frequency in language use	Point
Never	1
Rarely	2
Sometimes	3
Frequently	4
Always	5

Table 3.4: Points for each frequency in lang. Use

The identity and attitude questionnaire was in the format of a Likert scale, consisting of 17 statements to which the subject responds on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores for all questions were then averaged, with the highest possible score being 5, and signifying the strongest ethnic identity and positive attitude. Table 3.5: also shows the scale of one to five points, which is used for calculating score for identity and attitude items. The values for the choices of the negative identity and attitude items were reversed in that from strongly disagree to strongly agree they take points 5 to 1 respectively i.e. strongly disagree=5, disagree=4, undecided=3, agree=2, and strongly agree=1.

Degree	Point
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Undecided	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

Table 3.5: Points for each degree in the identity and attitude statements

To summarize, this chapter explains the methodology used to measure language maintenance and identity of the target children via a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The next chapter will report the results of the present study based on these methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Results of the Questionnaire

This study is about the maintenance of Tigrigna language among the target community residing in Addis and is based on reports of language proficiency, language use, identity, and attitudes of a number of children. Accordingly, detailed information has been elicited on the use of the ethnic language (Tigrigna) in various domains by the children; and special attention was also paid to the degree of the children's proficiency in the language. In addition, identity and attitude items were also included in the questionnaire. Therefore, this chapter presents the results from the statistical analyses performed using proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the participants. The result of each item in each of these variables was interpreted using the percentile and frequency distribution. First, the result of each item was literally interpreted and then, the meanings and implications were also analyzed at the end of all items in each variable.

4.1.1 Self-assessment of the respondents' proficiency in Tigrigna

Self-assessment of proficiency could be an important predictor of language use and it is obvious that the more the children are proficient in the language the more they will use it. In fact, this will be proven when we see the correlation between language use and language proficiency in the analysis of the relationship between the variables. In this part, an attempt was made to present a description of the extent of the children's proficiency in the language (Tigrigna). For this purpose, language proficiency was divided into a number of functional categories including various skills such as understanding, speaking, reading, and writing abilities of the children. In order to get an overview of the respondents' competency in their ethnic language (Tigrigna), they were asked to rate their proficiency in the four skills and the questionnaire covered almost the whole length of the proficiency, from those who do not understand Tigrigna to those who use it everyday. The 126 respondents to the questionnaire were asked to provide the range of competency levels for each skill as follows:

- (1) the extent to which they could understand a conversation;
- (2) their own perceived level of proficiency in speaking and reading the language;
- (3) the extent of their written competence in the language.



Accordingly, the proficiency results of the respondents in all the four skills were discussed one by one as presented in the following tables:

Table 4.1 indicates that, 42 (33.3 %) of the respondents could understand everything said in the language, whereas, 47 (37.3 %) of them reported that they could comprehend most of what is said in the target language. Still, 24 (19%) of the respondents replied that they understand simple conversations and 6 (4.8%) of them only few words or phrases. But the remaining 7(5.6%) of the subjects could not understand the language at all. As can be seen in the result for the other skills, those who do not understand Tigrigna well, rate themselves lower on the average in all other areas in the language as well. In fact more than two-third of the respondents have a very good understanding of the language and the mean of the respondents' understanding is 3.88, which is greater than the average but this could partly because Tigrigna is closely related to Amharic- the dominant language of the children.

Table 4.1: Respondents' ability to understand Tigrigna (N=126)

When I listen to people speaking in Tigrigna	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I can't understand it at all	7	5.6	5.6	5.6
I can understand only a few words or phrases	6	4.8	4.8	10.3
I can understand simple conversations	24	19.0	19.0	29.4
I can understand most of what they say	47	37.3	37.3	66.7
I can understand everything they say	42	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Mean =3.88

Mode = 4

Variance =1.210

Median =4.00

Std. Deviation = 1.100

When we see the speaking ability of the subjects, there is a big difference between the result of their understanding and their speaking ability of the language. Unlike in that of understanding, only 13 (10.3 %) of the respondents reported to use the language without any problem i.e. they can say anything they want to say in the target language whereas, 33 (26.2%) of them replied that they can say most of what they want to say but still with difficulty to express their ideas fluently. On the other hand, 35 out of 126 (27.8%) stated that they could hold only simple conversation; while 32 (25.4%) of the subject children reported that they could say only a few words or phrases and the remaining 13 (10.3%) reported that they did not have speaking ability at all. As can be seen in table 4.2, there is a similar division between the percentage of respondents who speak Tigrigna perfectly and those who cannot speak the language at all (13 or 10.3% in each case). The result in this table clearly shows that those who speak Tigrigna well and those who can speak most of what they want to say, all together are only 36.5% of the participants and this figure is only less than half of the respondents. Therefore, we can conclude that the majority of the participants were found poor in speaking Tigrigna.

Table 4.2:Repondents' speaking ability in Tigrigna (N=126)

When I speak in Tigrigna	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I can't speak it at all	13	10.3	10.3	10.3
I can say only a few words or phrases	32	25.4	25.4	35.7
I can hold only a simple conversation	35	27.8	27.8	63.5
I can say most of what i want to say	33	26.2	26.2	89.7
I can say anything I want to say	13	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Mean =3.01 Mode = 3 Variance =1.352
 Median =3.00 Std. Deviation = 1.163

Table 4.3 shows the reading ability of the target group and as many as 28 out of 126 or 22.2% of the children admitted that they cannot read Tigrigna text at all and 35 (27.8%) of them can understand only few words or phrases when they read texts in Tigrigna. 29(23%) of the respondents reported that they can only understand simple writings and 19(15.1%) of them replied that they could understand most of what they read but only 15(11.9%) have asserted that they understand everything they read. This number is really insignificant and it is obvious that most of the target children have poor reading ability, although they are slightly better in reading than in writing and the main reason for this could be that they are not learning Tigrigna at school aside from the parents' poor effort in training their children how to read in the language.

Table 4.3: Respondents' reading ability in Tigrigna (N=126)

When I read any Tigrigna text	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I can't read it at all	28	22.2	22.2	22.2
I can understand only few words or phrases	35	27.8	27.8	50.0
I can understand only simple writing	29	23.0	23.0	73.0
I can understand most of what I read	19	15.1	15.1	88.1
I can understand everything I read	15	11.9	11.9	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Mean =2.67

Std. Deviation = 1.302

Median =2.50

Variance =1.696

Mode = 2

As can be seen in table 4.4 below, the lowest result in the proficiency of the children among the four macro-skills was found to be the writing skill of the respondents. Almost half of the subjects indicated that they couldn't write in Tigrigna at all and still a great

number (38 or 30.2%) of them admitted that they could write only few words or phrases. 12 (9.5%) of the respondents reported that they can write only simple sentences, while 8(6.3%) of them claimed that they can write most of what they want to write and only 11 (8.7%) of the whole subjects were able to write anything they want to write in the target language. From this result, we can deduce that the vast majority are either poor or do not have writing ability at all. Similar to that of reading, the main reason for poor writing skill of the subjects could be the fact that Tigrigna is not given at school for the target children residing in the metropolitan.

Table 4.4: Respondents' writing ability in Tigrigna (N=126)

When I write in Tigrigna		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	I can't write it at all	57	45.2	45.2	45.2
	I can write only a few words or phrases	38	30.2	30.2	75.4
	I can write only simple sentences	12	9.5	9.5	84.9
	I can write most of what I want to write	8	6.3	6.3	91.3
	I can write anything I want to write	11	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Mean =2.03

Std. Deviation = 1.265

Median =2.00

Variance =1.599

Mode = 1

In response to the overall Tigrigna ability question, the majority (49 or 38.9%) of the subjects rated themselves as good, 31(24.6%) of them as poor; 23(18.3%) as very good; 12(9.5%) rated as excellent and finally, 11(8.7%) admitted that they don't have any ability in the language. The most striking feature of table 4.5 is the set of figures in the first two rows, indicating no ability and poor competence in the language. This means it is very difficult for all these children to communicate with their relatives who are monolinguals in Tigrigna or they cannot communicate in Tigrigna at all.

Table 4.5: Respondents' overall ability in Tigrigna (N=126)

Over all I rate my ability in Tigrigna	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I don't have any ability in Tigrigna	11	8.7	8.7	8.7
Poor	31	24.6	24.6	33.3
Good	49	38.9	38.9	72.2
Very good	23	18.3	18.3	90.5
Excellent	12	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Mean =2.95 Mode = 3 Variance =1.166
 Median =3.00 Std. Deviation = 1.080

In general, most of the children classify themselves as no ability, poor or good, but those who rated themselves as very good or as excellent users of the target language were very few or insignificant. Even in their answer to question number 8, “Which language do you speak best now?” all of the participants unanimously answered Amharic. So, the respondents' dominant language or the language they speak best is Amharic. This clearly shows that Tigrigna is not maintained among the target community particularly their children. Fasold (1984) stated that language maintenance and shift depends on the language proficiency of the members of a community. In other words, the incompetency in one's ethnic language is an indication of language shift (See also Rouchdy 1992 as cited in <http://www.linguistik-online>). Thus, based on Fasold's idea (see p.18 of this paper), when we see the overall proficiency results of the respondents, we can conclude that they are shifting from their ethnic language (Tigrigna) to Amharic.

The children were also asked to list some of the factors that helped or hinder them in having good or poor Tigrigna proficiency. The main factors that helped those who rated their overall Tigrigna ability as excellent, very good, or good, were the following:

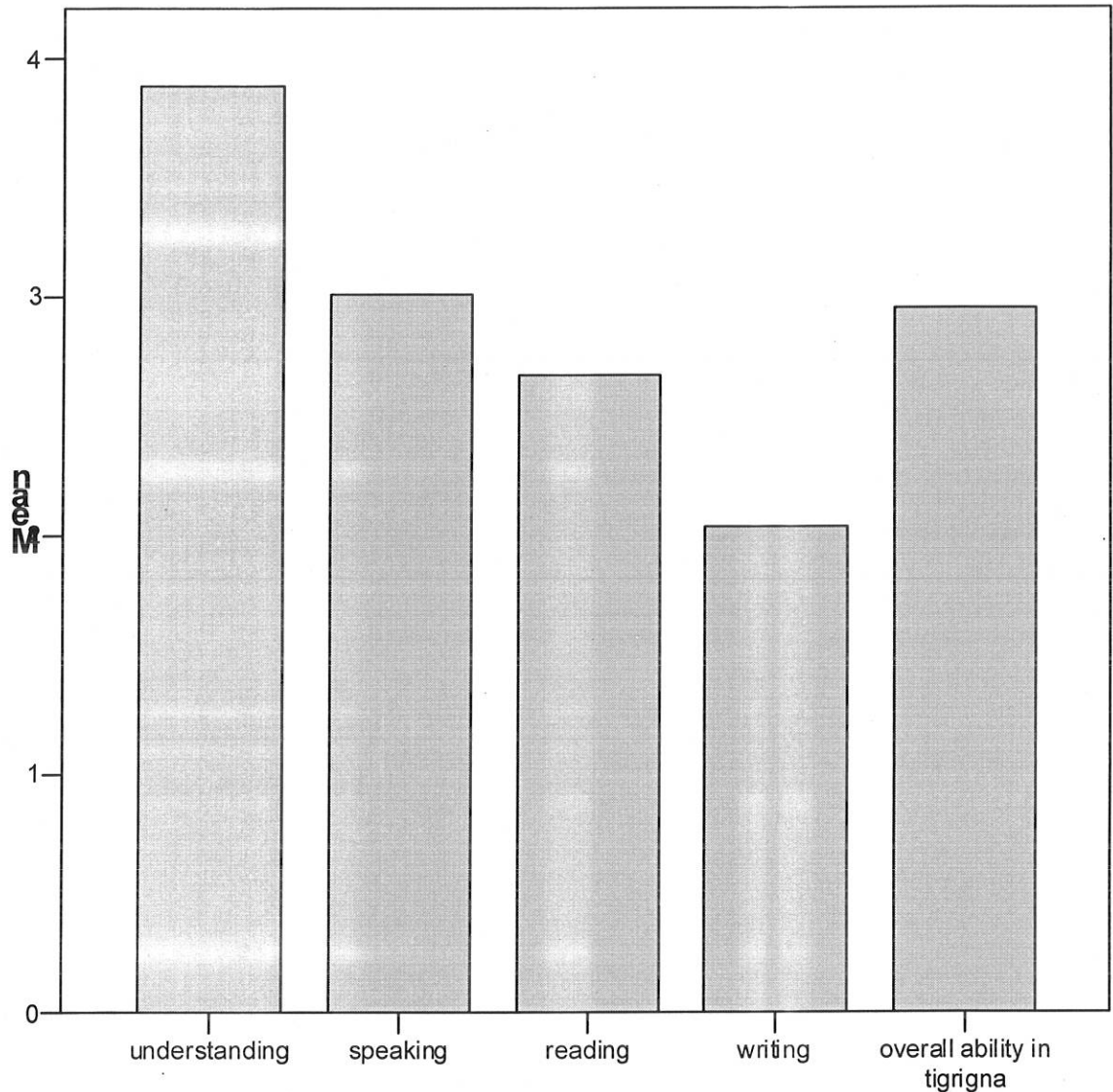
- Family's support or encouragement
- Speaking Tigrigna with friends and family members at home
- Visiting Tigray region and using the language with grand parents and other relatives
- Watching television and listening to music in the language
- Reading Tigrigna books, magazines, journals, newspapers, etc.
- Exposure to the speakers of the language including neighborhoods
- Parents' use of the language at home in talking to their children and among themselves
- The children's interest and curiosity to learn the language
- Its' similarity to Amharic.

On the other hand, the factors mentioned as hindrances by the respondents who reported poor or no overall ability in the language were more or less the reverse or the opposite of the above-mentioned factors and includes the following:

- Lack of encouragement from parents
- Lack of practice in the language outside home
- Lack of exposure to the speakers
- Lack of interest
- Parents' use of mainly Amharic at home.

As can be seen from the following bar graph, in terms of respondents' rated ability in Tigrigna, their highest score was for understanding, followed in descending order by speaking, reading, and writing, especially their Tigrigna proficiency in reading and in writing is not very impressive. Thus, the majority of the participants were found relatively good in their understanding of the language than in the other skills and this could be attributed to different factors such as parents' poor effort in teaching their language to their children, the children's interest to learn the language and above all, absence of schools which can teach the language to the target children, etc.





Graph 1: Respondents proficiency in Tigrigna

4.1.1.1 The relationship between participants' demographic factors and their proficiency in Tigrigna

In order to see whether or not there was a consistent difference in the proficiency of the participants, the data was analyzed in terms of their age, sex, educational background, parents' ethnic composition and the children's visit to Tigray region. In analyzing these, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and computed. The result of this

factor analysis is presented in table 4.6. When the proficiency of the participants is examined by age; a difference can be appreciated between the two age groups. As can be seen in table 4.6, there is a statistically significant relationship between age and proficiency of the participants [$F(2,124)=8.554, p < 0.004$]. The older informants (21+) were shown to have a better overall competence in the language than the other lower age group (12-20). This clearly implies that the older children are more proficient in the ethnic language than their younger ones. There are several explanations for this: parents have a greater control over the linguistic input directed at the firstborn, and the presence of older ones whose language is increasingly affected by the dominant language may make the younger child's control over the ethnic tongue less secure. As stated in Fasold (1984), age and intergenerational differences in language proficiency have a significant impact on language maintenance and/or shift. He further explained that if the older speakers report more proficiency and use of one language than the younger speakers, then this is a clear indication of language shift. Overall, this finding suggests that there is a decline in the language proficiency of the participants from the older to the younger age group and this is an indication of language shift.

However, table 4.6 shows that there is no significant relationship between sex and proficiency of the respondents ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, the p value for educational background was also found to be greater than 0.05. Therefore, both sex and educational background of the respondents could not bring change in the language proficiency of the participants. On the other hand, the same table shows the statistically significant relationship between parents' ethno-linguistic group and proficiency of the target children [$F(2,124)=11.942, p < 0.001$]. Accordingly, children from the same family (whose parents are both Tegar) were found to be more proficient in Tigrigna than those from mixed family (whose only single parent is Tigraway/weyti). Similarly, a statistically significant relationship was also obtained between language proficiency and participants' visit to Tigray region [$F(2,124)=11.812, p < 0.001$]. Therefore, children who most frequently visit the region were found to be relatively more proficient in Tigrigna than those who rarely or not visit the region. In general, the three factors: age, parents' ethno-linguistic group and their visit to Tigray, affect the proficiency of the subjects, whereas

the other two factors: sex and educational background do not affect the proficiency of the target group in the target language. Among the many list of factors given by Conklin and Lourie (1983), as stated in Baker (1993), low rate of return to homeland and/or little intention to return was mentioned as a factor of a language shift. Therefore, this idea of Conklin and Lourie directly supports the finding of this study that visiting to Tigray region in this case, promotes language maintenance by developing the proficiency and language use of the subjects (see table 4.6 below).

Table 4.6: Factor analysis of the children's proficiency in Tigrigna (N=126)
Dependent variable =Proficiency

Independent variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	219.354	1	219.354	8.554	.004
	Within Groups	3179.947	124	25.645		
	Total	3399.302	125			
Sex	Between Groups	1.678	1	1.678	.061	.805
	Within Groups	3397.623	124	27.400		
	Total	3399.302	125			
Educational background	Between Groups	169.917	3	56.639	2.140	.099
	Within Groups	3229.385	122	26.470		
	Total	3399.302	125			
Parents' ethno-linguistic group	Between Groups	298.622	1	298.622	11.942	.001
	Within Groups	3100.680	124	25.005		
	Total	3399.302	125			
Visiting to Tigray region	Between Groups	954.592	4	238.648	11.812	.000
	Within Groups	2444.710	121	20.204		
	Total	3399.302	125			

4.1.1.2 Visiting to Tigray region

Frequency of visits to Tigray region was measured by the question “how often do you visit Tigray region?” Responses were coded that almost half (62 out of 126 or 49.2%) of the respondents reported that they have never visited the region; 33(26.2%) of them replied that they rarely visited the region; 19(15.1%) visited the region sometimes, whereas those who frequently and those who always visit the region were only 9(7.1%) and 3(2.4%) respectively (see table 4.7 below). The frequency of such visits, as discussed above, promotes their proficiency and use of the target language and hence, it is believed to have a positive effect upon the four variables (proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the subjects) and then up on the maintenance of the language among the target speech community in Addis. Thus, this question was asked to see the contribution of visiting the region in developing the proficiency of the children; their use of Tigrigna; their ethnic identity and their positive attitude towards the language as well.

Table 4.7: Frequency of respondents' visit to Tigray region (N=126)

ITEM	Responses										Total
	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
How often do you visit Tigray region?	3	2.4	9	7.1	19	15.1	33	26.2	62	49.2	126

Statistics

Mean =1.87

Mode = 1

Variance =1.136

Median =2

Std. Deviation = 1.066

4.1.2 Respondents' Language use

The investigation of language use was limited to domains and spheres of intra-family interactions and an interaction with friends, which would best illustrate the displacement or retention of the language. The test of language maintenance is of course the extent to which the ethnic language is used among the family members and among friends of the younger generation. Broadly speaking the domains such as home, family, and friends are associated with informality, intimacy, and everyday affairs in which people can use the language regardless of their proficiency. In addition to the above reason, the use of the target language in the metropolitan is very limited in other domains i.e. it is not widely spoken in the streets, offices, churches, schools etc. Therefore, the right place to check the use of Tigrigna by the target community is in the home domain and with friends of the same ethnic group outside the home of the respondents. Hence, this part focuses on the language use of the target children with all family members and with their intimate friends from the same ethno-linguistic group.

Table 4.8: Frequency of Respondents' use of Tigrigna with different interlocutors

ITEM	Responses										Total
	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
S1	30	23.8	24	19.0	41	32.5	16	12.7	15	11.9	126
S2	10	7.9	13	10.3	36	28.6	40	31.7	27	21.4	126
S3	5	4.0	2	1.6	31	24.6	35	27.8	51	40.5	126
S4	3	2.4	6	4.8	36	28.6	33	26.2	48	38.1	126
S5	4	3.2	9	7.1	30	23.8	38	30.2	45	35.7	126
S6	12	9.5	15	11.9	42	33.3	24	19.0	33	26.2	126
S7	6	4.8	12	9.5	20	15.9	20	15.9	68	54.0	126
S8	47	37.3	30	23.8	20	15.9	8	6.3	21	16.7	126
S9	1	.8	5	4	16	12.7	36	28.6	68	54.0	126
S10	1	.8	-----		16	12.7	34	27.0	75	59.5	126

Statistics

S1	S2	s3	S4	s5
Mean=3.3 Median=3 Mode=3 Std. Deviation=1.292 Variance=1.668	mean =2.52 median =2 mode =2 Std. Deviation=1.171 variance = 1.372	Mean =1.99 Median = 2 Mode =1 Std. Deviation 1.048 Variance =1.097	mean =2.07 median =2 mode =1 Std. Deviation =1.037 variance =1.075	mean=2.12 median=2 mode=1 Std. deviation=1.078 variance=1.162
S6	S7	s8	S9	s10
Mean=2.6 Median=3 Mode=3 Std. Deviation=1.260 Variance=1.587	mean = 1.95 median = 1 mode = 1 Std. Deviation=1.232 variance = 1.518	Mean =3.59 Median=4 Mode =5 Std. Deviation=1.46 Variance 2.132	mean =1.69 median =1 mode = 1 Std. Deviation 0.899 variance= 0.807	mean=1.56 median=1 mode=1 Std. Deviation= 0.775 variance=0.601

Statement 1: My parents communicate in Tigrigna with me (N=126).

In response to this statement, 30 (23.8%) of the subjects reported that their parents always communicate in Tigrigna with them whereas those who replied frequently, sometimes, and rarely were 24(19%), 41(32.5%), and 16(12.7%) respectively. However, the remaining 15(11.9%) of the respondents admitted that their parents have never talked to them in Tigrigna (see table 4.8). From this result we can see that only a very small number, less than 1/4 (23.8 percent), of the parents were reported to always use Tigrigna with their children and the rest 76.2% of the participants confirmed that their parents do not always talk to them in the target language. So, the parents were not doing their best in transferring their language to their children. It is obvious that, unless the parents always or frequently use the language with their children at home, it would be unthinkable for the children to master or to have very good proficiency in that language. This is because the language is not widely used in Addis aside from the home of the family, which is the right place to learn the language.

Statement 2: I communicate in Tigrigna with my parents (N=126).

With regard to this statement, it was only 10 (7.9%) out of 126 respondents who asserted that they always spoke Tigrigna with their parents while in a slight difference, 13(10.3%) of the subjects reported that they frequently use Tigrigna in addressing their parents. Still 36 (28.6%) of the target children were those who reported that they sometimes use the language in talking to their parents and 40(31.7%) of them rarely use Tigrigna when they were speaking to their parents. Finally, the remaining 27(21.4%) admitted that they never

use Tigrigna when they talk to their parents. It is not surprising that the majorities of the participants do not always or frequently use the language at home because the majority of the parents were also reported that they don't use their first language with their children.

Statement 3: I communicate in Tigrigna with my brothers & sisters (N=126).

The result for this statement shows that only 5 out of 126 respondents answered that they always use Tigrigna with their siblings at home, while only 2 or 1.6% of them frequently use the language and 31 or 24.6% said that they sometimes use the language when they communicate with their brothers and sisters. Still, 35 (27.85%) of the participants stated that they rarely speak Tigrigna at home with their brothers and sisters, whereas the majority of the subjects (51 or 40.5%) asserted that they have never used the target language in their communication among brothers and sisters. Therefore, a vast majority of the children do not always or frequently use the language with their brothers and sisters and this clearly shows that the language is not maintained among the target community in Addis. This is because, if the current children are not proficient and if they cannot use it at least at home, it is unlikely to expect that these children would transfer the language to the next generation and rather this is a best example of language shift (See Fasold 1984, Fishman 2001a, Edwards 1996).

Statement 4: I communicate in Tigrigna with my Tegararu friends (N=126).

The language usually used with friends was asked directly in statement 4 and only 3 (2.4%) of the respondents always use Tigrigna when they meet their Tegararu friends and 6 (4.8%) of them frequently use the language with their friends whereas, 36 (28.6%) of them asserted that they sometimes use the language in speaking to their friends. It is also noted that 33 of the subjects rarely use the same language in their conversation with their friends, and finally 48 (38.1%) of them stated that they don't use the language at all. With this result, we can see that the large number of the respondents is not using the language in their conversation with their friends even though they come from the same ethnic group.

Statement 5: I use Tigrigna in my daily conversation at home (N=126).

In this statement, we can see the result that only a small number (4 or 3.2%) of the subjects always use Tigrigna in their daily conversation at home, while 9 (7.1%) of them frequently use Tigrigna in the same domain. However, 30(23.8%) of the respondents affirmed that they sometimes use the language in their daily conversations at home whereas, 38(30.2%) of them stated that they rarely use the language in their home conversations and the majority (45 or 35.7%) of the target group admitted that they never use Tigrigna in their daily conversations. Similar to the above results, this result also shows that the great majority of the participants don't use Tigrigna in their daily conversation at home.

Statement 6: When I want to share something personal with my family members, I use Tigrigna (N=126).

This statement was all about how frequently the subjects use Tigrigna when they want to share something personal with their family members. In this case, 12(9.5%) replied that they always use the language; 15(11.9%) of them stated that they frequently use Tigrigna; 42(33.3%) of them reported that they sometimes use Tigrigna when sharing personal issues with their family members. On the other hand, a considerable number (24 or 19%) of the respondents admitted that they rarely use the target language and finally 33(26.2%) of them confirmed that they never use Tigrigna in talking to their family members about their personal issues. Hence, from this result we can understand that the use of Tigrigna is very limited even when the target groups share their secrets to their family members.

Statement 7: When I want to share something personal with my Tegaruru friends, I use Tigrigna (N=126)

Similar to Statement 6, this statement measures the frequency of the language use of the children when they discuss something personal to their Tegaruru friends. The result shows that very few 6(4.8%) of the subjects reported that they always use the language; 12(9.5%) frequently; 20(15.9%) sometimes; and again the same number (20 or 15.9%) indicated that they rarely use Tigrigna when talking about personal issues with their friends of the same ethnic group. But the vast majority (68 or 54%) of them reported that

they never use Tigrigna in discussing their secrets with their friends. It is clear then that most of the target children do not use Tigrigna when they talk about their personal issues to their friends.

Statement 8: My parents encourage me to use Tigrigna (N=126).

This statement tries to see the encouragement that the children received from their parents so as to use Tigrigna. In their response, a great number (47 or 37.3%) of the respondents confirmed that their parents always encourage them to use their ethnic language; 30(23.8%) of them stated that their parents encourage them frequently; while 20(15.9%) of them asserted that they sometimes get encouragement from parents, and 8(6.3%) of them received only rare encouragement from their parents as far as their use of Tigrigna was concerned. However, the remaining 21(16.7%) of the children admitted that their parents never encourage them to use Tigrigna. From this result, we can see that even if the number of parents who always or frequently encourage their children to speak Tigrigna was very great, still the number of those who do not totally encourage their children was also considerable.

Question 9: How often do you read Tigrigna texts, books, magazines, etc? (N=126)

With regard to the question of reading practice of the children, only one (1) out of 126 subjects replied that s/he always reads Tigrigna texts; 5(4%) of them frequently read texts in the target language whereas, 16(12.7%) of them reported that they sometimes read Tigrigna texts. On the other hand, 36(28.6%) stated that they rarely read texts in the language but more than half (68 or 54%) of the respondents admitted that they have never read any text in Tigrigna. As can be seen from the figures above, the great majority of the target children reported that they don't read Tigrigna texts and that is why most of them were found poor in their reading skill in Tigrigna (as we have seen in the discussion on their proficiency in the language). In fact there could be many factors for this :one is the very fact Tigrigna is not given at school for the target community; second, lack of access to Tigrigna texts; the third reason could be the parents' poor effort in training their children on reading any text in the language; the fourth, parents' poor reading habit in Tigrigna; the fifth reason could be the limited provision of reading texts (which can fit

the age of the children) in the target language; and finally the interest of the children could also affect their reading practice in the target language etc.

Question 10: How often do you write in Tigrigna? (N=126)

In answering this question, only one respondent claimed that s/he always writes in Tigrigna; 16(12.7%) of them sometimes compose in Tigrigna whereas, 34 (27%) of them reported that they rarely write in their ethnic language and finally, a great majority (75 or 59.5%) admitted that they have never written in Tigrigna. Therefore, we can infer from this data that the majority of the respondents do not practice writing in Tigrigna and eventually most of them were poor in their writing skill using the target language. This is mainly because, the children did not learn the language at school and it also shows the poor effort of the parents in training their children how to write in their mother language (Tigrigna).

Language used with grandparents

The respondents were asked to indicate the language they most often use with their paternal and maternal grandparents. Table 4.9 shows that 38 (30.2%) of the respondents reported that they use both Tigrigna and Amharic when they communicate with their grandparents; 37 (29.4%) of them replied that they always use Tigrigna in talking to their grandparents, whereas, the remaining 31 out of 106 (24.6%) of the subjects always use Amharic in talking to their grandparents. From this result, as can be seen in table 4.9, it is clear that the conversation of the majority of the respondents with their grandparents was either only in Tigrigna or in both Tigrigna and Amharic. This could be because of the simple reason that the grandparents were not proficient in Amharic or it could be due to the children's intention to make their grandparents more comfortable when they use their first language. Nevertheless, the number of respondents who reported using only Amharic was also considerable. The main reason for these children to use only Amharic with their grandparents could be either the grandparents were bilinguals (proficient enough both in Tigrigna and Amharic) or the children had no ability to communicate in the target language.

Language used with father/uncles

The subjects were also asked about the language they use with their fathers and uncles. As can be seen in table 4.9, more than half (65 out of 124 or 51.6%) of the subjects always use Amharic in interacting with their respective fathers/uncles, and 46 (36.5%) of them replied that they use both Tigrigna and Amharic, whereas, the remaining 13 (10.3%) of them asserted that they always use Tigrigna in communicating with their fathers and uncles. When we compare the language use of the children with their grandparents and with their fathers/uncles, they use more Tigrigna with the grandparents than they do with their fathers/uncles. In contrast, the subjects also use mostly Amharic when they converse with their fathers/uncles than they do with their grandparents. As previously mentioned, the main reason for this difference could be the very fact that the grandparents were less proficient in Amharic than their sons (the fathers of the respondents).

Language used with mother/aunties

In response to the question about language use of the children with their mothers and aunts, majority (63 or 50.4%) of the subjects indicated that they always use Amharic, but 46 (36.5%) of them replied that they mix Amharic with Tigrigna (use both Tigrigna and Amharic) when they talk to their mothers/aunts. On the other hand, it was only 15 (11.9%) of the respondents who always use Tigrigna when they communicate with their mothers and aunts. Here again, there is a slight difference of the Tigrigna use of the children with their mothers/aunts and with their fathers/uncles i.e. the respondents use more Tigrigna with their mothers/aunts than with their fathers.

Language used with siblings

As shown in table 4.9, 62 (49.2%) of the respondents always use Amharic when they communicate with their older siblings, while 53 (42.1%) of them use a mixture of the two languages in talking to their older brothers/sisters. However, it was only 3(2.4%) of the subjects who reported that they always use Tigrigna when talking to their elder siblings.

When we see the language use of the participants with their younger siblings, an overwhelming majority (71 or 56.3%) of them stated that they always use Amharic; 45(35.7%) indicated that they use both Tigrigna and Amharic whereas only 2 out of the 118 respondents asserted that they always use Tigrigna with their younger brothers/sisters. From these results we can understand that the respondents mostly use Amharic with the younger siblings than they do with their older siblings and the younger siblings tend to use either only Amharic or a mix of the two languages, compared to the older brothers/sisters, who relatively use mostly Tigrigna. It is clear then that there is **marked difference** between the respondents' use of Tigrigna with their older and younger siblings. Hence, this finding shows that there is a shift away from Tigrigna towards Amharic among the younger age groups when speaking to siblings.

Language used with cousins and children in the family under 5 years old

When we see the result of the respondents' language use with their cousins, more than half (70 or 55.6%) of them always use Amharic in their conversations, while 49 (38.9%) of them use both Tigrigna and Amharic. Finally, the remaining 2 (1.6%) of the respondents stated that they use Tigrigna in talking to their cousins. Still, the number of those who always use Tigrigna in their communication with their cousins is insignificant, which means almost none of the subjects, was conversant in the target language. On the other hand, almost half of the subjects 62(49.2%) out of 108 responded that they always use Amharic in speaking to the children in the family under 5 years old. It was also shown in their response to the same question that 46 (36.5%) of them use both Tigrigna and Amharic when they talk to the children. However, no one of the subjects indicated that he/she always use Tigrigna in talking to the children under 5 years old. This clearly shows that the subjects mostly use Amharic in talking to their siblings under 5 years old. Thus, learning Tigrigna for these children will be very difficult unless they are made to practice (to talk to) in the language at home at their early stages (see table 4.9 below).



Table 4.9: Respondents' most often used language with different family members

28. What language do you use when speaking to the following relatives?	Language used								Total
	Always Tigrigna		Both Tigrigna & Amharic		Always Amharic		Others		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Grandparents	37	29.4	38	30.2	31	24.6	--	--	106
Father/uncles	13	10.3	46	36.5	65	51.6	--	--	124
Mother/aunties	15	11.9	46	36.5	63	50.4	1	.8	125
Elder brother(s) & Sister(s)	3	2.4	53	42.1	62	49.2	--	--	118
Younger brother(s) & Sister(s)	2	1.6	45	35.7	71	56.3	--	--	118
Cousins	2	1.6	49	38.9	70	55.6	--	--	121
Child in your family Under 5 years old	--	--	46	36.5	62	49.2	--	--	108

Generally, from table 4.9, it is pretty obvious that the use of Tigrigna for intra-family communication is declining rapidly from the older to the younger age groups. Nearly 30% of the respondents used Tigrigna to speak to their grandparents, compared only to 1.6 percent with their younger siblings and cousins. In other words, there is a difference in the language most often used by the respondents and their family members in the home domain depending on their ages. It is clear then that the use of Tigrigna with family members decreases with the age of the interlocutor i.e. the younger the interlocutor, the less the language is used. For instance, while about 29.4% of the subjects speak in Tigrigna to their grandparents; the figure decreases to 11.9 percent for mothers/aunts, 10.3% for fathers/uncles; 2.4% for their elders and 1.6% for both their cousins and their younger siblings and finally, none with the children in the family under five years old. Therefore, we can conclude that the subjects use less Tigrigna with the young age groups as compared to the old age groups.

The respondents indicated that they always use Amharic or a mixture of both Amharic and Tigrigna with both younger and older siblings (see both tables 4.8&4.9). Hence, the use of the ethnic language (Tigrigna) by the respondents with their older and younger siblings is not remarkable (2.4% and 1.6 % respectively). It is clear then that the variance in language use across all age groups is an indicator of language shifting from the ethnic language either to Amharic or to a mixture of the two languages. Fasold (1984) pointed

out that one indication of language shift would be if the older speakers report more use of one language and the younger speakers more use of another. Fishman, (2001a), on his part, divided language use domains into two: powerful and less powerful domains (see p.23 of this paper). In his explanation of these domains, he stated that the less powerful domains are determinant factors for the maintenance or shift of a language. i.e. if the use of a language declines in all of the less powerful domains, then there is a clear language shift and little can be done to recapture it. Similarly, Edwards (1996) shared the idea of Fishman by referring these determinant domains as the domains of necessity. Therefore, we can conclude that the children are shifting from Tigrigna to Amharic when they interact with their family members at home and the chances in other domains would also be the same trend, given their drastically declining proficiency in the mother tongue. This sharp decline in the use of Tigrigna across the family members can be mainly because the children were educated and have been exposed only to Amharic language aside from other reasons.

4.1.2.1 The relationship of language use with the demographic factors

In order to find out the language use difference among the participants, different factors were considered and analyzed. The independent factors include: age, sex, educational background, parents' ethno-linguistic group and the subjects' visit to Tigray region. The analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable (language use) and the aforementioned independent variables was made based on the analysis of variance (ANOVA). Table 4.10 presents this relationship. As can be seen from the table, the p value for age, sex, and educational background is greater than 0.05. So, we can say that there is no statistically significant relationship between language use and the above three factors. In other words, age, sex, and educational background were not strong factors to affect the language use of the respondents. Hence, these factors cannot bring change in the language use of the target children. In contrast, the fourth and fifth factors show statistically significant relationship with the language use of the participants [$F(2,124)=10.051, p < 0.002$] and [$F(2,124)=13.485, p < 0.001$] respectively. The first relationship means that respondents who were from the same family reported to use Tigrigna more frequently than those who were from mixed family. Therefore, parents'

ethno-linguistic group was found to be strong factor to the language use of the subjects. This is due to the fact that if the parents are from two different ethno-linguistic groups, it is natural that the language used at home will be only the dominant language. With respect to the second relationship, it can be understood that the more frequent the subjects visit Tigray region, the more they frequently use the target language. Thus, visiting Tigray region develops the children's use of Tigrigna with their family members and with their friends of the same ethno-linguistic group (see table 4.10 below).

Table 4.10: Factor analysis of language use of the respondents

Dependent variable =language use

Independent variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	71.867	1	71.867	.931	.337
	Within Groups	6640.497	124	77.215		
	Total	6712.364	125			
Sex	Between Groups	17.203	1	17.203	.221	.639
	Within Groups	6695.160	124	77.851		
	Total	6712.364	125			
Educational background	Between Groups	264.060	3	88.020	1.147	.335
	Within Groups	6448.303	122	76.766		
	Total	6712.364	125			
Parents' ethno-linguistic group	Between Groups	702.426	1	702.426	10.051	.002
	Within Groups	6009.937	124	69.883		
	Total	6712.364	125			
Visiting to Tigray region	Between Groups	2644.003	4	661.001	13.485	.000
	Within Groups	4068.361	83	49.016		
	Total	6712.364	87			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



4.1.3 Respondents' perceived identity

Aside from the focus on Tigrigna proficiency and language use of the respondents, the study also looks at their actual feeling of ethnic identity. It has been theorized that the preservation of one's own language is an important vehicle for the maintenance of a group's ethnic identity and consequent feelings of collective identity and self-esteem (Taylor, 1997). In fact there is no agreement among scholars in the field with regard to the concept of identity in relation to language. Some claim very strong or one to one relationship (See Kroskrity 2000, Clarke 2005, Ulibari 1972, Fishman 1985, Verkuyten & de Wolf's 2002, Castells 1996, Baker 2001, Tse 1998, Guardado 2002 in the 2nd chapter of this paper), while others reject this and rather conclude that there is little or no relationship at all (see also Edwards 1996, Weedon 1987, De Verries 1990, Lopez 1978, and Pease-Alvarez 2002). The second chapter to this thesis briefly defined and discussed the principal concepts of the study including ethnic identity and its relation to language in reference to the above sources. Therefore, this controversy will also be proved in the following discussions. Several identity items were included in the questionnaire to check the perceived identity of the target group and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 4.11: Respondents' Opinion on Identity Statements

STATEMENTS	Responses										Total
	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
S1	17	13.5	31	24.6	8	6.3	53	42.1	17	13.3	
S2	29	23	46	36.5	20	15.9	25	19.8	6	4.8	
S3	62	49.2	33	26.2	25	19.8	4	3.2	2	1.6	
S4	9	7.1	14	11.1	11	8.7	45	35.7	47	37.3	
S5	48	38.1	48	38.1	25	19.8	4	3.2	1	0.8	
S6	81	64.3	33	26.2	5	4	4	3.2	3	2.4	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistics

S1	S2	s3	S4	s5	S6
Mean=3.17	mean =3.53	Mean =4.18	mean =3.85	mean=4.1	Mean=4.47
Median=4	median =4	Median = 4	median =4	median=4	Median=5
Mode=4	mode =4	Mode =5	mode =5	mode=4	Mode=5
Std. Deviation=1.1.315	Std. Deviation=1.184	Std. Deviation 0.967	Std. Deviation =1.240	Std. Deviation=0.88	
Variance=1.729	variance = 1.403	Variance =0.34	variance =1.537	variance=0.775	

Statement 1: To be a true Tigrāwāy / Tigrāweytī, it is necessary to speak

Tigrigna (N=126)

As can be seen in table 4.11, 17(13.55%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the idea of the statement; 31(24.6%) of them agreed; 8(6.35%) were undecided with the idea, whereas, 54(42.1%) of them reported that they disagree with the statement and finally, the remaining 17(13.5%) of the target children stated that they strongly disagree with the statement. Therefore, for the majority of the respondents language and identity are not related i.e. for these children being unable to speak Tigrigna doesn't mean that they don't belong to the Tigrigna speaking community .So, the fact that they have poor proficiency in the language doesn't affect their ethnic identity. Language is important but not sufficient condition for the maintenance of ethnic identity and language shift is not an indication of weakening ethnic identity (see Edwards1996, Weedon 1987,De veries 1990,Lopez 1978,Pease-Alvarez 2002 in the 2nd chapter of this paper). Thus, the finding of this study is also supported by all these authors that language shift does not imply anything about loosening ethnic bonds (identity) and that language maintenance was not required for maintaining one's ethnic identity and ethnic identity can still be maintained even if the community has shifted to Amharic.

Statement 2: I am still a true Tigrāwāy /Tigrāweytī without necessarily speaking Tigrigna (N=126)

With respect to this statement which is the opposite of the previous one, 29(23%) of the subjects have strongly agreed; 46(36.5%) of them agreed on the statement; 20(15.9%) of the children were undecided; 25(19.8%) indicated that they disagree with the statement, whereas, the remaining 6(4.8%) have reported they strongly disagree with the idea of the statement. Here again, it is obvious that the majority did not associate their identity with

their proficiency in the language and they reflected their strong belief that they are still Tegarū regardless of their skill in their ethnic language (Tigrigna).

Statement 3: I perceive & describe myself mainly as Tigrāwāy / Tigrāweytī

(N=126)

In response to this statement, 62(49.2%) of the children have strongly agreed with the idea; 33(26.2%) agreed; while 25(19.8%) of them stated that they were undecided. Still very few (4 or 3.2%) of them indicated that they disagreed and the remaining 2(1.6%) of the respondents replied that they strongly disagree with the idea of the statement. In other words these few children do not believe on their Tigray identity. In contrast, the vast majority asserted that they perceived themselves as Tegarū; however, there was also a considerable number of the children who found it difficult to decide on their ethnic identity. The reason for this could be many: first, if these children were from mixed family, it could be difficult to them to choose from the identity of their parents instead, they might prefer to be neutral when it comes to their ethnic identity. It could also be because the children have their own perceived identity different from their parents' identity or the children might have the idea that we all human beings are the same, no difference at all and they may politicize ethnic identity as a concept or it could also be because of their identity crisis.

Statement 4: I often wish I belonged to a different ethnic group (N=126)

When we see the response of the children to statement 4, 9(7.1%) of them reported that they strongly agree with the statement, which means that the respondents were not happy to be Tegarū, instead they prefer they belong to a different ethnic group and still other 14 (11.1%) of the respondents admitted that they agreed with the statement, altogether 23(18.2%) of the children frankly reported that they don't want to be Tegarū but 11 (8.7%) of the subjects were undecided on the statement. However, those who disagreed and those who strongly disagreed with the statement were 45(35.7%) and 47(37.3%) respectively. Therefore, we can infer that most of the children were found to have strong feeling of their ethnic identity.

Statement 5: If I could choose, I would choose to be a member of my ethnic group. (N=126)

In response to this related statement, the number of the subjects who strongly agreed and those who merely agreed was the same, equally 48(38.1%) each; 25(19.8%) were those who did not decide on the statement whereas, those who disagreed and those who strongly disagreed were 4(3.2%) and 1(0.8%) respectively. As was seen before in the result of other identity statements, the result of this statement also shows that the great majority of the respondents have strong feeling of their ethnic identity.

Statement 6: Children must be proud of their ethnic language and ethnic identity (N=126)

Table 4.11 shows that almost two-third (81 or 64.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the idea of this statement; 33(26.2%) replied that they agreed; 5(4%) were undecided; 4(3.2%) disagreed and finally 3(2.4%) of them reported that they strongly disagree with the statement. It is clear to conclude then that majority of the children were proud of their ethnic language and ethnic identity.

Generally, despite the respondents' poor proficiency in the language, the investigation of their self-perception of identity shows that a much larger percentage of them expressed strong feeling (sense) of identity and considered themselves to be completely Tegarau. From this we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between identity and language competency of the respondents (see also Edwards 1996, Weedon 1987, De veries 1990, Lopez 1978, and Pease-Alvarez 2002).

4.1.3.1 The relationship between identity and the demographic factors

Like in the previous variables, the respondents' sense of identity was also analyzed in terms of the demographic factors such as: age, sex, educational background and parents' ethno-linguistic group. To see this relationship, ANOVA was employed and computed as can be seen in table 4.12 below. The result in this table shows that the p-value for age, sex, level of education, and visiting is greater than 0.05, the cut-off for the relationship to exist i.e. relationship exists if and only if the significance (p-value) is less than 0.05.

However, since the p-value for the aforementioned four factors is >0.05 , these factors cannot affect or cannot bring change in the perceived identity of the target children. On the other hand, as can be seen from the same table, the significance (p-value) of the parents' ethno-linguistic group is less than 0.05 [$F(2,124)=14.250, p < 0.001$]. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between identity and the parents' ethno-linguistic group. This means children who were from families of the same ethnic group were found to have stronger feeling of identity than those who were from mixed families. This could be because these children found it difficult to favor either of their parents' ethnic identity. But this might not mean that the children have negative attitude to either of the ethnic identity of their parents, rather, it could be because of their preference to remain neutral (see also p.61 in statement 3).

Table 4.12: Factor analysis of the subjects' perceived identity
Dependent variable =identity

Independent variables		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	.528	1	.528	.044	.833
	Within Groups	1475.416	124	11.899		
	Total	1475.944	125			
Sex	Between Groups	23.644	1	23.644	2.019	.158
	Within Groups	1452.301	124	11.712		
	Total	1475.944	125			
Educational background	Between Groups	30.717	3	10.239	.864	.462
	Within Groups	1445.227	122	11.846		
	Total	1475.944	125			
Parents' ethno-linguistic group	Between Groups	152.127	1	152.127	14.250	.000
	Within Groups	1323.817	124	10.676		
	Total	1475.944	125			
Visiting to Tigray region	Between Groups	92.139	4	23.035	2.014	.097
	Within Groups	1383.806	121	11.436		
	Total	1475.944	125			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.1.4 Respondents' Language attitude

According to Fasold (1987), methods for determining subjects' attitudes about language can be direct or indirect. A typically direct method requires subjects to state their opinions about a given language in reply to a questionnaire or interview questions that simply ask about their feeling towards a language or another. A totally indirect method could be one in which the subjects are unaware of the fact that their language attitude is being tested. Given the relatively big number of the target population, the researcher chose the first method. Accordingly, a questionnaire was distributed to the subjects in the two highschools and Addis Ababa University. The result of the attitude items is presented in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Respondents' Opinion on attitude statements

STATEMENTS	Responses										Total
	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
S1	55	43.7	56	44.4	12	9.5	1	0.8	2	1.6	
S2	4	3.2	3	2.4	1	0.8	45	35.7	73	57.9	
S3	7	5.6	7	5.6	4	3.2	32	25.4	76	60.3	
S4	51	40.5	67	53.2	6	4.8	2	1.6	--	--	
S5	57	45.2	56	44.4	8	6.3	3	2.4	2	1.6	
S6	3	2.4	3	2.4	7	5.6	38	30.2	75	59.5	
S7	45	35.7	62	49.2	15	11.9	1	0.8	3	2.4	
S8	5	4	33	26.2	10	7.9	34	27	44	34.9	
S9	2	1.6	11	8.7	17	13.5	60	47.6	36	28.6	
S10	45	35.7	39	31	29	23	13	10.3	--	--	
S11	80	63.5	38	30.2	7	5.6	--	--	1	0.8	

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistics

S1	S2	s3	S4	s5
Mean=4.28	mean =4.43	Mean =4.29	mean =4.33	mean=4.29
Median=4	median =5	Median = 5	median =4	median=4
Mode=4	mode =5	Mode =5	mode =4	mode=5
Std. Deviation=0.796	Std. Deviation=0.889	Std. Deviation 1.132	Std. Deviation =0.643	Std. Deviation=0.82
Variance=0.634	variance = 0.791	Variance =1.281	variance =0413	variance=0.673
S6	S7	s8	S9	s10
Mean=4.42	mean = 4.15	Mean =3.63	mean =3.93	mean=3.92
Median=5	median = 4	Median=4	median =4	median=4
Mode=5	mode = 4	Mode =5	mode = 4	mode=5
Std. Deviation=0.889	Std. Deviation=0.84	Std. Deviation=1.307	Std. Deviation 0.956	Std. Deviation= 1.001
Variance=0.79	variance = 0.705	Variance 1.708	variance= 0.915	variance=1.002
S11				
Mean=4.56				
Median=5				
Mode=5				
Std. Deviation=0.676				
Variance=0.457				

Statement 1: It is important for children to learn to speak Tigrigna (N=126)

In the first attitudinal statement, 55(43.7%) of the respondents have strongly agreed; and with a slight difference in number, 56(44.4%) of them agreed on the statement; 12(9.5%) could not decide on the issue whereas, 1 (0.8%) and 2(1.6%) were those who reported that they disagreed and those who indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement. Hence, most of the children were found to have positive attitude towards learning the target language and the number of those who oppose this idea were insignificant.

Statement 2: Speaking Tigrigna is not important to me (N=126)

With regard to the attitude of the children towards speaking their ethnic language (Tigrigna), 4(3.2%) strongly agreed with this statement; 3(2.4%) of them confirmed that they agreed on the idea of the sentence; while only one respondent out of 126 could not decide on the given level of agreement. On the other hand, 45(35.7%) asserted that they disagreed with the statement and more than half of the children (57.9%) stated that they strongly disagree. From this result, we can conclude that almost all (except 8 out of 126 or 6.4%) of the target children have shown a positive attitude towards learning their ethnic language.

Statement 3: I don't care if Tigrigna was lost altogether (N=126)

In this statement, the number of the subjects who strongly agreed and those who agreed was equally 7 (5.6%) for each. This means, 14(11.2%) of the children replied that they don't care if the target language was lost. In other words, these children were not concerned with the death of Tigrigna as a language and this clearly shows their negative attitude towards it. On the other hand, 4(3.2%) of them were undecided, while the remaining 32(25.4%) and 76(60.3%) of the children were those who disagreed and those who strongly disagreed with the given statement respectively. Therefore, we can understand that the overwhelming majority were concerned about the language and they did not want to lose it.

Statement 4: It is important to be able to speak Tigrigna language (N=126)

This statement is the reverse of statement 2, and the response of the children is as follows: 51(40.5%) of them strongly agreed on the idea of the statement, 67(53.2%) of them agreed; while 6(4.8%) could not decide; and 2 of them stated that they didn't agree with the given idea; however, no one was reported to strongly disagree with the statement. Like the results in statement 2, here, most of the children expressed their positive attitude towards speaking Tigrigna and for the great majority of the subjects speaking Tigrigna was found to be important.

Statement 5: It is important to me to preserve the Tigrigna Language (N=126)

In this statement, 57(45.2%) have strongly agreed and 56(44.4%) agreed; while 8(6.3%) were undecided. On the other hand, 3(2.4%) reported that they disagree with the idea, whereas 2 out of 126 stated that they strongly disagree with the statement. This result tells us that most of the children wanted to maintain the target language and this is also the reflection of their positive attitude towards the language.

Statement 6: It is not important to me to maintain the language and identity of my ethnic group. (N=126)

To check the consistency of the respondents' answer, opposite statements (one positive and the other is negative) were provided. Hence, this statement is the negative form of statement 5 with little modification. When we come to the responses, 3(2.4%) strongly agreed and still the same number 3 (2.4%) agreed on the statement, while 7(5.6%) of them were undecided. Other 38 (30.2%) indicated that they did not agree (disagreed) and more than two-third (75 or 59.5%) of them reported that they strongly disagree with the statement. Obviously, this result shows that almost all of the subjects expressed their positive attitude when it comes to the maintenance of the language and their ethnic identity.

Statement 7: I will encourage my children to speak Tigrigna (N=126)

This statement tells us about the future of the language among the target community. In their response to this statement, 45(35.75%) asserted that they strongly agreed; 62(49.2%) of them agreed on the idea of the statement, which means this great number of the children, were interested to transfer the language to their children in the future. On the other hand, 15(11.9%) of them could not decide (undecided) while 1 out of the 126 children reported that s/he disagreed whereas, the remaining 3 (2.4%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement. From this result, we can deduce that most of the children have positive attitude towards the language and wanted to encourage their future children to speak the language.

Statement 8: I sometimes feel shy or ashamed speaking Tigrigna (N=126)

With regard to this statement, 5(4%) of the children strongly agreed; 33(26.2%) of them indicated that they agreed with the statement and this means that 35 out of the 126 respondents reported that they felt shy when they speak Tigrigna. The 10(7.9%) of the subjects were undecided, while 34(27%) of the children disagreed and 44 (34.9%) of them stated that they strongly disagreed and that they didn't feel ashamed speaking the target language. Therefore, the majority of the subjects did not feel shy or shame when they use the language.

Statement 9: The usefulness of Tigrigna is limited (N=126)

This statement measures the respondents' attitude towards the usefulness of the language and 2(1.6%) of them strongly agreed while 11(8.7%) of the children agreed on the statement. This means that 13 out of the 126 subjects believed that the language has limited use. On the other hand, 17(13.5%) of them were undecided; 60(47.6%) of the respondents have disagreed while the remaining 36 (28.6%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement. In this result it can be seen that the majority believe that Tigrigna is useful to them.

Statement 10: I feel comfortable communicating in Tigrigna (N=126)

With respect to this statement, 45(35.7%) of the target group replied that they strongly agreed; 39(31%) agreed; 29(23%) could not decide (undecided) on the statement, but 13(10.3%) of them disagreed with the statement. From this result, it is quite clear that the majority was comfortable communicating in Tigrigna and that means they have positive attitude towards the language.

Statement 11: Now, I want to improve my ability in Tigrigna by using it (N=126)

The desire for improvement in Tigrigna language skills was examined by looking at the informants' interest to improve their Tigrigna language skills (understanding, speaking, reading and writing). The subsequent responses revealed the extent to which the informants were prepared to backup their hope for the improvement of their ability in the language with personal concrete action. In this statement, almost two-third (80 or 63.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed; 38(30.2%) reported that they agreed to improve their skill in Tigrigna, whereas 7(5.6%) of them were found to be undecided, but no one reported that s/he disagreed and it was only one out of 126 who strongly disagreed with the idea. Therefore, almost all of the subjects reported that they really want to improve their proficiency in the target language and this definitely emanates from their positive attitude towards Tigrigna.



Generally, the participants show a very positive attitude towards Tigrigna. They are all interested in promoting the use of Tigrigna and in improving their ability in it. It is stated in many sources that language use and loss are strongly influenced by speakers' attitude towards the language. It is also stated that attitude determines the motivation to learn a language and is one of the factors that affect language maintenance and shift (see Schmid 2002, Gardner 1985, Baker 1988, Gardner & Lambert 1972, Web 1992). Holmes (1992), on his part, strengthened this idea that Positive attitudes within a group towards its language may slow shift, while negative attitudes may lead to a lack of effort towards active language maintenance. The majority of the subjects in this study said that it was important to maintain their own language and to pass it on to their future children. However, the results in the language proficiency & use of the subjects indicate that they are shifting from Tigrigna to Amharic. This contradiction can be explained in several ways. According to Fishman, 1972 and Fasold, 1984, overt positive attitudes towards a language do not necessarily lead to maintenance efforts. Many of the respondents may claim that it is important to them, yet they do not speak any Tigrigna to their family members. i.e positive attitudes but very little action taken in maintaining the language. In addition, negative attitudes are not always overtly expressed and one possible, explanation for this discrepancy between stated positive attitudes and their actual language use could be the unstated negative attitudes towards the language. Thus, overall positive attitudes towards the maintenance of Tigrigna do not lead directly to the use of the language.

4.1.4.1 The relationship between demographic factors and attitude of the respondents

In this section we are going to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between the subjects' attitude towards the language and the demographic factors. To this end, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been employed to process data on subjects' attitude responses towards the language in terms of their age, sex, level of education, parents' ethno-linguistic group and their visit to Tigray region. Table 4.14 shows the result of the relationship between the participants' attitude and their demographic factors.

As can be seen in table 4.14 ,the significance (p-value) for age,sex, and level of education is greater than 0.05.Thus, these factors do not affect the attitude of the subjects towards the language. In other words, there is no attitude difference of the participants because of the above factors. In contrast, the p-value for the last two factors is less than 0.05 [F (2,124)=3.939,p < 0.049] and [F (2,124)=2.910 ,p < 0.024] respectively. So,we can conclude that parents' ethnolinguistic group and the children's visit to Tigray can affect the attitude of the respondents positively. Specifically,respondents from the same family reported more positive attitude towards the language than those from mixed family. Similarly, participants who frequently visited the region were also found to have more positive attitude towards Tigrigna than those who rarely or not visit the region at all (see table 4.14 below).

Table 4.14: Factor analysis of respondents' attitude towards Tigrigna

Dependent variable =attitude

Independent variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	6.105	1	6.105	.182	.670
	Within Groups	4149.672	124	33.465		
	Total	4155.778	125			
Sex	Between Groups	36.312	1	36.312	1.093	.298
	Within Groups	4119.466	124	33.222		
	Total	4155.778	125			
Level of Education	Between Groups	117.924	3	39.308	1.188	.317
	Within Groups	4037.854	122	33.097		
	Total	4155.778	125			
Parents' ethno-linguistic group	Between Groups	127.940	1	127.940	3.939	.049
	Within Groups	4027.838	124	32.483		
	Total	4155.778	125			
Visiting to Tigray region	Between Groups	364.721	4	91.180	2.910	.024
	Within Groups	3791.057	121	31.331		
	Total	4155.778	125			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.1.5 Correlations among the four variables: proficiency, usage, identity, and attitude.

This study of language use and perceptions of identity can usefully help know the interrelationship among language proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the respondents. The correlation among the four variables was investigated using the Pearson's correlation in the SPSS software. Pearson's correlation reflects the degree of linear relationship between two variables. The main objective of looking at the data of correlation was to ascertain whether there was any relationship between the informants' perceived level of competence in Tigrigna, and their language use, their feelings of identity, and their attitude towards the language.

Significance (P-value) is a statistical term that tells us how sure we are that a difference or a relationship exists. Nevertheless, significance does not tell us about the strength of the relationship. In other words, we might be very sure that a relationship exists, but we can't be sure whether it is a strong, a moderate, or a weak relationship. A correlation can differ in the degree or strength of the relationship. Zero indicates no relationship between the measures and when $r = \pm 1$, it indicates a perfect relationship and the strength can be anywhere between 0 and ± 1 . Hence, the stronger the relationship, the closer the value of r comes to ± 1 . Several authors come out with their respective guidelines for the interpretation of correlation. However, this study is based on the interpretation by Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs (1988). According to this source, the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is interpreted as presented in the following table.

Correlation	Negative	Positive
Negligible	-0.3 to -0.1	0.1 to 0.3
Low (small)	-0.5 to -0.3	0.3 to 0.5
Medium(average)	-0.7 to -0.5	0.5 to 0.7
High (large)	-1 to- 0.7	0.7 to 1.0
Perfect	-1.0	1.0

Interpretation of Pearson's correlation coefficient

As can be seen from table 4.15 below, Correlation was obtained between perceived language ability and language use. The P-value of the children's proficiency and language use is less than 0.05. The P-value of 0.05 provides cut-off value wherein a correlation is considered statistically significant if it is less than 0.05 and if not, there is no correlation (Aron and Aron 1994). Accordingly, there was highly significant correlation between the participants' use of Tigrigna and their ratings of their ability in that language. In other words, the higher the children rated their ability in Tigrigna, the more frequently they reported speaking to their partners in Tigrigna ($r = 0.701, N=126, p < 0.001$).

On the other hand, even if the correlation between the respondents' Tigrigna proficiency and their perceived identity was statistically significant, the relationship is very weak or almost negligible ($r = 0.290, N=126, p < 0.001$). As can be seen in the discussion above, if the value of Pearson's correlation (r) is between 0.1 and 0.3, then the correlation is negligible. It is generally agreed that there is a relationship between language and ethnic identity. Nevertheless, ethnic identity does not always coincide with the language used. It has been claimed by Eastman and Reese (1981), that language and ethnic identity should be related through the concept of "associated language". "It does not make any difference whether we know, speak, or just claim an ethnically related language as long as there is one we can somehow associate with. We assert that the knowledge and use of language and the act of self-ascription are not strictly related behaviors. What language we know and use and what self-identity we claim may be quite unrelated. Yet language is an aspect of our self-ascription." (p.109) This implies that the language we associate ourselves with need not be one we use in our day-to-day lives.

In contrast to this, previous studies showed a strong relationship between proficiency and ethnic identity that those who had high proficiency in their ethnic language expressed more pride in their identity than those who had less competency in the language (see Smolicz 1992 & Cho 2000, in the 2nd chapter of this paper). However, the result of this study doesn't show this relationship and there is no difference in the

identity of the respondents based on their proficiency in the language and this supports the idea of Eastman and Reese (1981). The correlation between proficiency scores and the attitude scores of the participants was also found to be statistically significant. However, the strength of this relationship was also very low ($r = .326, N = 126, p < 0.001$).

When we see the correlation between language use and the identity of the informants, there is significant relationship but it is still very low ($r = 0.326, N = 126, p < 0.002$). The other correlation seen was between language use and attitude of the respondents but, similar to that of the previous correlations, the value of the Pearson's coefficient is negligible ($r = .225(*), N = 126, p < 0.035$). While people may hold specific attitudes to languages which will either positively or negatively influence how well they learn those languages, or express distinct preferences for the languages they wish to use in different situations, their actual language use may very well contradict their language attitudes and preferences (Eastman 1992:111). In contrast, Web (1992) showed a direct relationship between language preferences and language attitude. Nevertheless, the finding of this study supports the idea of Eastman that the target children in this study revealed strong positive attitudes towards Tigrigna, though they were not competent users of the said language.

Finally, the correlation between identity and attitude of the participants was found to be relatively higher ($r = .466(**), N = 126, p < 0.001$) next to the correlation between proficiency and language use of the children. So, we can conclude now that identity and attitude have the influence to each other, i.e. the stronger feeling of identity the participants reported, the positive attitude they also indicated towards the language. However, we cannot know the direction of influence because the significance only tells us about the existing relationship but not the cause and effect relationship. The point is just because there is a correlation; we cannot say that the one variable causes the other (see table 4.15 below).



Table 4.15: Correlations among the four variables: proficiency, usage, identity, and attitude.

Variables		Proficiency	Lang. Use	Identity	Attitude
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.701(*)	.290(*)	.326(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.001	.000
	N	126	126	126	126
Lang. Use	Pearson Correlation	.701(*)	1	.326(*)	.225(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.002	.035
	N	88	88	88	88
Identity	Pearson Correlation	.290(*)	.326(*)	1	.466(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.	.000
	N	126	88	126	126
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.326(*)	.225(*)	.466(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.035	.000	.
	N	126	88	126	126

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Interview Results

The second part of this chapter presents the findings of the interview results conducted with selected parents. The interview was designed to supplement the main source of the data in this study (the questionnaire). One of the main objectives of the interviews was then to facilitate the exploration of issues addressed by the questionnaire. However, due to the time required for both collecting and analyzing the data, the interview in this study is limited to only 16 parents. The importance of conducting an interview with the parents are the following: First, they are the ones who easily know the language that their children frequently use at home and hence, this interview strengthens the outcome of the questionnaire answered by the children on their language proficiency in Tigrigna and their use of the language at home. In addition, the parents have their own role in the maintenance of the language and it is mainly their responsibility to transfer or teach their language to the children. Therefore, this interview also focuses on the efforts made by the parents in transmitting the language to their children and maintaining it among the target children. Generally, the interview questions revolve around the following points:

- Parents' language use with their children and among themselves
- Children's language use with their siblings at home.
- Children's language proficiency in the eyes of the parents
- Parents' language choice to use with their children and the reason why
- Parents' effort in teaching their language to their children
- Whether the parents worry about the young children losing their language or not
- Possible solutions suggested by the parents

4.2.1 Parents' language use with their children and among themselves

- What language(s) do you speak to your husband/wife at home?

Linguistic behavior at home does not only concern parent – child interaction. It also has to do with the language spoken between spouses and it is evident that when the parents use the language to each other, their children can also learn about it. In response to the above question, 9 out of 16 interviewees replied that they only use Tigrigna in

communicating with their respective spouses at home, while the remaining 7 respondents said that they mostly use Tigrigna and sometimes Amharic with their respective husband/wife at home. Therefore, we can understand that the parents are using mostly Tigrigna in their communication among themselves.

- In which language do you talk to your children? And what language do they use to talk to you? If different from yours, why?

When asked which language the parents used when addressing their children, only six (6) of the participants reported that they use Tigrigna most of the time with their children whereas ten (10) of them admitted speaking mostly Amharic when they talk to their children at home. Among the parents interviewed, the majority admitted that they mostly use Amharic with their children. From this result, we can understand that the use of Tigrigna by the parents with their children declines as compared with their spouses, as presented above. In other words the parents reported to use less Tigrigna with their children than with their respective spouses. This could be because of the less Tigrigna proficiency of the children.

Now we need to look at the children's language use with their parents. The data are based on the parents' report of language used by their children, though the validity of the parents' report was confirmed through questionnaire filled by the children. When we see the response of the parents, 13 out of the 16 parents replied that their children talk to them in Amharic even if the parents talk to them in Tigrigna. However, only three (3) of the parents asserted that their children use both Tigrigna and Amharic. According to the parents, the majority of the children were reported to use only Amharic and only very few were reported to use both languages. Some of the respondents reported that they spoke to their children mostly in Tigrigna, but their children responded to them entirely in Amharic, whereas, other interviewees said that they communicate with their children entirely in Amharic. Some added that since these children were Tegar, they did not like to address them in Amharic, only using Amharic words when Tigrigna terms were unavailable, too long, or not understood by the children. According to one Tigraweyti mother, she did not speak much Tigrigna to her children, who were all adults at the time



of the study. She recalled that she spoke mostly in Tigrigna to them when they were young children, but when they started school, the Tigrigna they spoke at home became less and less. As to why the children use Amharic when they were talked to in Tigrigna, the parents suggested the following possible reasons: the first reason was the poor Tigrigna proficiency of the children. So, even if they understand the language (Tigrigna), the children prefer to reply in the Amharic in which they are proficient enough. The second possible reason was the children's minimum interest to use the language. In sum, this clearly shows the language shift of the children and it is very difficult to say that Tigrigna is maintained among the target children (See also Fasold (1984) & Rouchdy 1992 as cited in <http://www.linguistik-online.>).

4.2.2 Children's language use with their siblings at home

- What language do your children use to speak to each other at home?

When we see the language use of the children in interacting to each other, as reported by the parents, all of the parents unanimously reported that their children speak with their siblings using only Amharic. This is not far from the response given by the children respondents in the questionnaire that almost all of them reported that they use mostly Amharic when talking to their brothers and sisters. Thus, this is a clear indication that Tigrigna is not maintained among the target children in Addis and rather the children have completely shifted to Amharic.

4.2.3 Children's language proficiency in the eyes of the parents

- How proficient are your children in Tigrigna?

Parents were also asked about the proficiency of their children in Tigrigna. In answering this question, almost all, except three of the parents who claimed that their children were good in the language, admitted that their children were poor in Tigrigna. All the parents said that their children could understand spoken Tigrigna but according to the parents' belief, the children have difficulty in speaking the language and this was the main reason

that the children prefer to answer to their parents only in Amharic while the parents talking to them in Tigrigna. Generally, the children were reported to have limited competency in the language.

4.2.4 Parents' language choice to use with their children and the reason why

- Which language do you prefer to talk to your children at home? Why?

When we see the language choice of the parents to talk to their children, 11 out of the 16 interviewees preferred to use Tigrigna with their children at home while the remaining five (5) chose both Tigrigna and Amharic in interacting with their children at home. As for the parents who preferred Tigrigna for addressing their children, they insisted on the fact that if Tigrigna was not spoken at home, it is risked being lost by the young generations in Addis. "We speak Tigrigna at home; they have enough Amharic at school and when they are with their friends," said one of the interviewees, while a mother added: "they will have enough opportunities to learn Amharic later." One father still preferred to speak Tigrigna than Amharic, but at times found himself speaking Amharic to his children so that they could understand him. This father strongly believed that all Tegar children should speak Tigrigna, and said, "when people speak Amharic to me and I know they are Tegar, I tell them, 'Speak to me in Tigrigna, please.' It is a shame to be Tigraway/weyti, and you don't want to speak your own language." According to this father, if the parents don't instill their language to their children, they will shift into Amharic, because they don't practice it in their homes, they don't practice the language they should know. The parents are at fault, because from the time they are little, they begin to speak to them in Amharic. Another respondent blamed herself for not exposing her two older children to Tigrigna at a young age, and now tired teaching them Tigrigna. However, this mother believes that there should be community schools to teach the children Tigrigna.

On the other hand, the parents who preferred to use both languages at home tried to justify their use of both languages by stating that their children only used Amharic, and that it was normal and useful to address them in Amharic as well as in Tigrigna. One

interviewee confirmed this by stating “I address them in both languages and I do it out of habit; and I sometimes think that they would not understand if I only speak Tigrigna.” In contrast, another respondent stated “I use both languages with my children because they understand both.” In general, we can see that the majority of the parents preferred to use Tigrigna with their children at home.

- In your opinion, how important is for your children to be able to speak Tigrigna?

Respondents were given the chance to explain the importance of maintaining an ability to speak Tigrigna. All of the respondents feel that it is important for their children to maintain their ability to speak their ethnic language (Tigrigna). Reasons for the importance of maintaining Tigrigna can be summarized as follows: to provide the means for cross-generational communication in Tigrigna (especially between the children and their grandparents); to reinforce their ethnic identity or awareness of their identity, that Tigrigna is the mother tongue of the respondents; the need to use Tigrigna when visiting Tigray region and to interact with friends, family and colleagues who speak Tigrigna; and the importance of speaking more than one language. The parents saw a great importance in learning Tigrigna, because aside from helping their children in schools and in their chosen future career, they believed that Tigrigna was part of who they are, and that’s part of their culture.

4.2.5 Parents’ effort in teaching their language to their children

- Do you encourage your children to speak Tigrigna? How?

The parents were also asked if they encourage their children to speak Tigrigna and to indicate the efforts they had made to maintain Tigrigna in their home. The parents seem to be making, or have made in the past, various efforts to maintain Tigrigna in their homes. The primary means through which the parents attempt to maintain the language was by using mostly Tigrigna at home with their spouses and children. Almost all of the respondents reported this practice and five of the parents stated that they were trying to teach their children to read and write in the language. However, most parents said that

such efforts were unsuccessful that after practicing them for an initial period, the children easily got bored and became uncooperative.

Some parents stated that in their spare time, they enjoyed spending time together, usually at their home listening to music and watching television in the language. These parents stated that their family members enjoyed watching television and listening to music in Tigrigna. In fact, some of the parents did not hide that their children were more interested in watching television and listening to music when it is in Amharic rather than in Tigrigna, but when their parents were around, they would watch or listen to music in Tigrigna. Some parents also said that they take their children with them to some meetings and cultural festivities of the ethnic group, in order for them to hear the language and become aware of the cultural practices. On the other hand, other parents indicated that they send their children to visit Tigray region so that the children would be exposed to the language and to the culture of the group.

One informant recalled that when the children were younger, he and his wife spent an hour everyday in which the family spoke to each other in Tigrigna. He said he enjoyed this practice, but this did not continue, as the children grew older. Generally, the participants believed that if the target population would instill in their children the importance of Tigrigna, and if the young people would try to make a difference by learning the language, speaking it, and even teaching it, this would greatly help the situation that the youngest generations face in losing the language of their parents.

- Have you found it difficult teaching your children the Tigrigna language? Why?

In answering this question, all the parents admitted that it was difficult for them to teach their children their language (Tigrigna). The main reasons for this difficulty mentioned by the parents were the following: the first reason was lack of interest or carelessness of the children that since they understand the language, they don't think that the other skills were also necessary. They consider themselves as proficient enough in the language simply because they have good understanding of it without even trying to speak it. In addition, due to their poor proficiency in the language, they feel shy and prefer to answer

or reply in Amharic even when their parents spoke to them in Tigrigna. Hence, the children's poor speaking skill in the language can be considered as the main reason for them not to use the language. Therefore, despite their efforts, the parents reported that their children are still very poor in the language especially in the skills other than understanding the language.

4.2.6 Parents' concern about their language

- Do you worry about your children losing Tigrigna?

With respect to the parents' concern about the future of their language, not all of them were worried about it. The 12 out of 16 parents expressed their great concern that Tigrigna could be lost among the young generation residing in Addis, while the remaining 4 participants claim that the language will not be lost. The reasons of these optimistic parents were the fact that Tigrigna at this time is used in the media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, journals etc and according to them, all these media and press products will give the children exposure to the language aside from the parents' efforts. Another reason given by these parents was that the children are not living in a confined island rather they are living in the capital where there is a continuous movement of the Tigrigna speaking community and this was also be considered as an exposure for the children. These participants also wished that 'our children would learn the language in school and use it among themselves and when they visit Tigray region'. They also expressed their willingness 'to take an active part in an organized effort to preserve and promote the language'. In contrast, the parents who reported their great concern argue that regardless of these facts, if the children were not interested they would not improve their competency in the language. It is unlikely that the children would have good speaking proficiency without practicing speaking the language. In general, the majority of the parents were worried about their language that their children may not transfer it to the next generation for the reason that the children themselves were poor in the language.

4.2.7 Possible solutions suggested by the parents

- In your opinion, what do you think are the solutions to maintain Tigrigna among the target children in Addis?

The participants were also asked about the possible solutions and their comments are presented as follows: Most of the participants noted that it was mostly the parents' responsibility to teach their children about their language (Tigrigna), that the parents could encourage their children in many ways: by using the language with their children all the time; by providing them with different Tigrigna texts and encouraging them to read in the language; by making them visit Tigray region; by creating (establishing) cultural festivals which can bring all the target children together so that they can use the language and about their culture; etc. Besides, the parents indicated that they would also like to see community schools to help the children more by offering Tigrigna for those whose parents wanted them to develop their language at a younger age. They suggested that opening community schools have great contribution in maintaining the language. According to the parents, aside from teaching the language, the schools would also create an opportunity to bring the children together so that they could use the language among themselves with out any fear or shyness.

In general, parents clearly value having their children a good proficiency in Tigrigna language and that the Tigrigna language was very important to most parents. This was shown in their responses to the above questions that all interviewees replied that the language was really important to them and their children. From the parents' perspective, the continuity of the language was certainly important.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Tigrigna language maintenance among the Tigrigna speaking community residing in Addis particularly among their children. The study also investigated how the language is related to the ethnic identity of the children. Thus, understanding the language use and identity of this group is important in both raising awareness among the families and communities about the transmission and maintenance of the language (Tigrigna) to the next generations of the target community in the capital.

Turning firstly to the overall results of the questionnaire discussed in this paper, we have seen that the overall participants' proficiency in Tigrigna was average but when we see their competency in each of the four macro skills, they reported relatively better understanding in Tigrigna than in the other skills: speaking, reading, and writing in the language. In other words, the highest competency of the majority of the subjects was in their understanding the language followed by speaking, reading and writing the language in a descending order. Therefore, the competency of the majority in the last three skills of the language was found poor and goes down with the age of the of the respondents i.e. the younger respondents indicated lower proficiency in the language than their elders and this shows that the target children are loosing their language (Tigrigna).

With regard to the use of Tigrigna among the groups, they reported that they mostly use Amharic in interacting with their family members and this was also supported by the parents' response in the interview. Among the family members, the participants' highest use of Tigrigna was reported with grandparents, and the next higher use of the language was with their parents. On the other hand, the participants reported the lowest use of Tigrigna with their siblings especially with the children in their respective family who were less than five years old. It was also noted that parents spoke Tigrigna less frequently



with their children than they did with their spouses (partners). This means that Tigrigna, in the target community, is becoming to be the language of adults as opposed to the language of children. This decline in the use of the language with the age of the interlocutors is a clear indication of the language shift of the subjects in favor of either Amharic or a mixture of the two languages: Amharic & Tigrigna and hence the target language is not maintained among the target group. In general what we observe is a pattern of language shift from Tigrigna to Amharic taking place over the children of the target community in Addis Ababa.

On the other hand, despite their low proficiency and usage of the language, the majority of the subjects reported their strong sense of ethnic identity. They also reflected their positive attitude towards the language and expressed their interest to improve their competency in the language. This was evident when the preservation of Tigrigna was found to be a very important consideration for the majority of the informants, with 89.6% of them being in agreement with the assertion 'It is important to preserve the Tigrigna language'. When we see the factor analysis of the variables, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that the children's proficiency in Tigrigna has shown a positive relationship with their age, their parents' ethno-linguistic composition and their visit to Tigray region. This relationship was not, however, reflected on the sex and educational level of the subjects. Similarly, the respondents' language use was also positively related with the parents' ethno-linguistic composition and the children's visit to Tigray region. In other words, both the parents' ethnic composition and the children's visit to Tigray region affect the use of Tigrigna by the children. However, the participants' age, sex, & educational level did not show any relationship with the subjects' use of the target language (Tigrigna).

When we come to the identity of the informants, it was shown that the only factor affecting their ethnic identity was their parents' ethnic composition which means those from the same family reflected stronger feeling of identity than those from mixed family. The rest of the demographic factors did not show any relationship with the identity of the participants. With regard to the children's attitude towards the language, it was shown

that it has a positive relationship with the parents' ethno-linguistic composition and the children's visit to Tigray region. But the other factors did not affect the attitude of the participants towards the target language.

Finally, the correlation analysis shows a strong and statistically significant correlation between the subjects' proficiency and use of the target language. This means that children who were more proficient in Tigrigna reported that they frequently use the language than those who were less proficient in it. Similarly, a statistically significant correlation was also observed between the identity and attitude of the participants, which means that, identity and attitude of the subjects influenced each other. On the other hand, the correlation between the Tigrigna proficiency and ethnic identity of the target children was found to be negligible and the majority of them asserted that their poor proficiency in the language doesn't affect their feeling of identity, that they do not consider it necessary to speak Tigrigna in order to have a Tigray identity.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that the target children are shifting from Tigrigna to Amharic and most of them don't use the target language at all. This is mainly because of the environmental factor that the target groups are exposed only to the dominant language and according to Fishman (1991), an intensive use of and exposure to the dominant language in everyday life is an important element in the shift to the dominant language. Language transmission, as defined by Fishman (1991), happens in the home or family context. However, as reported in this study, most of the children use only Amharic at home even when their parents talk to them in Tigrigna. This kind of language shift can also be seen as related to a lack of proficiency among the members of the younger generation of the target community in Addis (see for example Fasold 1984, & Rouchdy 1992 as cited in <http://www.linguistik-online>). Most of the parents speak mostly Tigrigna among themselves but they use mainly Amharic when they talk to their children. The children are then brought up almost as Amharic monolinguals with only limited comprehension of their parents' language and little or no speaking ability. They increasingly become incompetent in their ethnic language (Tigrigna) and this signals their

language shift. Thus, those children who understand their language but do not speak it will make no contribution to the future of the language or it is unlikely that they will transmit the language to their next generation. Hence, since much of the decrease in the language competency is exhibited by the younger generation, this issue needs to be addressed today before it is too late.

In general, this study has come out with the following findings:

- ⇒ The children of Tigrigna speaking parents in Addis Ababa are seen to demonstrate a profound pattern of language shift towards Amharic. This is environmentally driven and takes place over the course of generations.
- ⇒ Despite the respondents' better competence in understanding the language, the majority of them were found poor in their speaking, reading, and writing skills in the language.
- ⇒ The majority of the respondents do not use the language even with their family members at home rather they reported that they mostly use Amharic in communicating with their family members.
- ⇒ The children's proficiency and use of Tigrigna decline in relation to the age of the respondents.
- ⇒ Children's visit to Tigray region develops the subjects' proficiency in Tigrigna, their use of the language and their positive attitude towards the language whereas the children's sex and their educational level did not affect any of the four variables: proficiency, language use, identity and attitude of the respondents.
- ⇒ Parents' ethnic composition affects the children's proficiency, language use, identity and attitude towards the language. i.e. Children from the same family were found better in all these variables than those from mixed families, as far as the target language was concerned
- ⇒ The vast majority of the participants expressed their strong feeling of their ethnic identity and their positive attitude towards the language.
- ⇒ A strong and statistically significant relationship was found between the respondents' proficiency in Tigrigna and their use of the language and a very low correlation was also shown between the informants' Tigrigna proficiency and their attitude towards it. However, the correlation between the respondents' proficiency in Tigrigna and their

feeling of identity is negligible which means that the ethnic identity of the children remains strong even though their competency in the language is very limited.

- ⇒ There is a statistically significant relationship between the children's identity and their attitude towards the language and very low (weak) relationship was also found between the subjects' language use and their feeling of identity but the relationship between the respondents' use of Tigrigna and their attitude towards it was found negligible.
- ⇒ Though most of the parents showed their concern and interest in the maintenance of the language, and tried to encourage their children to use it in their communication at home, yet they themselves do not always use the language with their own children. Therefore, this simple interest and concern or encouragement alone is meaningless unless it is supported by a concrete action. Thus, the parents are not doing their utmost efforts particularly in using their language with their children and then in transferring it to them.
- ⇒ Finally, from the results of the subjects' proficiency and their use of the language, we can deduce that the children are shifting from Tigrigna to Amharic and hence, the target language is not maintained among the target group.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has served to further our knowledge regarding the Tigrigna language maintenance or shift among the target group. So far, we have seen the children's proficiency in the language, their language use, their sense of identity and their attitudes towards the language. All these variables are discussed based on the participants' response to the questionnaire and to the interviews conducted with the parents. Accordingly, the findings of the study are also listed above and the following are recommendations for the children, families, communities, researcher and the media.

Recommendations for the children

The children of the target community must practice speaking, reading and writing in the language with their parents at home and with their friends from the same ethnic group. They should also respond in Tigrigna when their parents talk to them in the language, otherwise, they are creating damage on their language, which they cannot afford to lose.

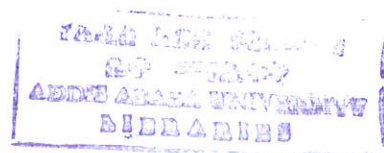
Recommendations for Families

This study has some important implications for families who hope to pass the Tigrigna language on to their children. First, it is essential to expose the children to the Tigrigna language and it is not enough to have Tigrigna speaking parents if they only speak Amharic or any other language around their children. Parents should not be afraid to use Tigrigna with their children for different purposes and for different domains. It is absurd to think about maintenance of Tigrigna while the parents are using Amharic with their children. Therefore, the parents are called urgently to use Tigrigna with their children in different domains. Using Tigrigna in various domains sends a clear message about the language to the younger generation-that the language is theirs. Since, the children are unlikely to get any Tigrigna input at school or in any other domain, parents need to make a conscious effort to use the language for a variety of communicative purposes, to show the children that the language is valued, and to expose the children to it, in a more positive light. In addition, the parents must provide their children with different Tigrigna texts and must encourage them to read various texts in the language. Besides, whenever possible, it is good to have their children visit Tigray region as it is proved that their visit to the region develops their proficiency and their use of the language.

With respect to the mixed families, both parents must teach their children their respective language, particularly every parent of the target ethnic group need to work hard in transferring and maintaining the language for it is possible and useful for their children to learn more than one language.

Recommendations for the Community

Communities also play an important role in the linguistic socialization of their children. Communities have the power to show children how much value a language has, and to encourage the maintenance of a child's ethnic language. Thus, members of the target community must become proactive in encouraging families and their children to maintain their language. They must organize language schools or at least tutorial classes for their



children to learn the language in the weekends in the nearby schools. This would bring the children together and use the language among themselves. The community must be aware that to maintain a family's language is to give a child a connection to his or her parents, grandparents and other relatives in their ethnic community. This bond, along with having a shared language within a family does much to ensure that a family's values are passed on to their children because communication between generations is not a barrier.

Recommendations for Research

In the first chapter of this study, it was made clear that this study has some limitations in terms of its scope and others. Therefore, a very comprehensive study is needed on the same topic or on related topics. It would also be interesting to repeat this study at other big cities out of the Tigray region, and see if other children from parents of the same ethnic group are similar to those living in Addis or not. The intergenerational difference in the Tigrigna competency of the target group also needs to be studied so as to know whether the language is maintained or not.

Recommendations for the media

The media also plays an important role in creating awareness among the target community about the situation of their language and its intergenerational transmission in the target places. Therefore, the media in the language such as the ETV, and other Radio broadcasts must start talking about the language. They must promote the language and teach the children about the importance and about the values of learning the language.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS**

Dear participants,

This questionnaire is designed to assess the use of Tigrigna language among the children born to the Tigrigna speaking families living in Addis. The researcher wants to get this information for his study of the master's program in socio-linguistics. Therefore, your frank and honest opinion or answers to the given questions are of great importance for the success of this study. The information obtained will only be used for research purpose and will be kept confidential (i.e. your response will be anonymously analysed). The result of this study will definitely have its own contribution on the maintenance of the language among the target speaking communities. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your cooperation.

General Instruction:

Please read each statement or question carefully and choose the answer, which most closely matches your present view. Please be as honest as possible for there are no right or wrong answers. You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you do not wish to answer.

I. Personal profile

1. Sex: M _____ F _____ Age _____
2. Place of birth _____
3. Are you a student at present? Yes _____ No _____
4. If yes, what level? _____
5. If no, check the appropriate space regarding your educational background:
_____ completed elementary school
_____ completed high school
_____ graduated from Teacher's/vocational Training Institute
_____ graduated with: Diploma _____ BA _____ MA _____ Ph. D _____ other _____

6. What is your home language (mother tongue)?

7. What other languages do you speak? _____

8. Which language do you speak best now? _____

9. What is the mother tongue (1st language) of your : father _____
mother _____

II. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Please put a mark in the box before the statement that best describes your Tigrigna language ability.

10. when I listen to people speaking in Tigrigna,

I can understand everything they say (excellent)

I can understand most of what they say (very good)

I can understand simple conversations (good)

I can understand only a few words or phrases (poor)

I can't understand it at all (no ability)

11. when I speak in Tigrigna,

I can say anything I want to say (excellent)

I can say most of what I want to say (very good)

I can hold only a simple conversation (good)

I can say only a few words or phrases (poor)

I can't speak it at all (no ability)

12. when I read any Tigrigna text,

I can understand everything I read (excellent)

I can understand most of what I read (very good)

I can understand only simple writing (good)



I can understand only a few words or phrases (poor)

I can't read it at all (no ability)

13. when I write in Tigrigna,

I can write anything I want to write (excellent)

I can write most of what I want to write (very good)

I can write only simple sentences (good)

I can write only a few words or phrases (poor)

I can't write it at all (no ability)

14. Overall, I rate my ability in Tigrigna as:

Excellent

Good

I don't have any ability in Tigrigna
(no ability)

Very good

Poor

15. If your answer to number 14 is other than poor (excellent or very good or satisfactory), list three factors that helped you to achieve your proficiency.

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

16. If your answer to number 14 is poor, mention at least three reasons or factors that hinder you or keep you from learning the language

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

III LANGUAGE USAGE

Put a mark on the spaces provided to indicate your choices or answers

N o.	Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
17	My parents communicate in Tigrigna with me					
18	I communicate in Tigrigna with my parents					
19	I communicate in Tigrigna with my brothers & sisters					
20	I communicate in Tigrigna with my Tegarü friends					
21	I use Tigrigna in my daily conversation					
22	When I want to share something personal with my family members, I use Tigrigna					
23	When I want to share something personal with my Tegarü friends, I use Tigrigna					
24	My parents encourage me to use Tigrigna					
25	How often do you read Tigrigna texts, books, magazines etc					
26	How often do you write in Tigrigna?					
27	How often do you visit Tigray region ?					

The following question is designed to find out the language you most often use with your family members at home. Put a mark under the language you use with the relatives respectively

28. What language do you use when speaking to the following relatives?	Always Tigrigna	Both Tigrigna & Amharic	Always Amharic	Others
-Grandparents				
-Mother/aunties				
-Father/uncles				
-Elder brother(s) & Sister(s)				
-Younger brother(s) & Sister(s)				
-Cousins				
-Child in your family Under 5 years old				

Appendix B

Interview Guide:

- Parents' language use with their children and among themselves
- Children's language use with their siblings at home.
- Children's language proficiency in the eyes of the parents
- Parents' language choice to use with their children and the reason why
- Parents' effort in teaching their language to their children
- Whether the parents worry about the young children losing their language or not
- Possible solutions suggested by the parents

Interview questions:

1. What language(s) do you speak to your husband/wife at home?
2. In which language do you talk to your children? And what language do they use to talk to you? If different from yours, why?
3. What language do your children use to speak to each other at home?
4. How proficient are your children in Tigrigna?
5. Which language do you prefer to talk to your children at home? Why?
6. In your opinion, how important is for your children to be able to speak Tigrigna?
7. Do you encourage your children to speak Tigrigna? How?
8. Have you found it difficult teaching your children the Tigrigna language? Why?
9. Do you worry about your children losing Tigrigna?
10. In your opinion, what do you think are the solutions to maintain Tigrigna among the target children in Addis?