



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**Assessment of Project Communication Management
Practices: The Case of Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL
Ethiopia)**

By: Hela Tilaye

**Research Project Submitted to Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of Master of Arts
Degree in Project Management**

Advisor: Mengistu B. (Phd)

**April 2024
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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Advisor _____ Signature _____

Certification

This is to certify that Hela Tilaye has carried out this Project work entitled “Assessment of project communication management practices: The case of Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia)”. The Project work is original and is suitable for the award of Master of Arts Degree in Project Management.

Advisor: Mengistu B. (Phd) .

Declaration

I, Hela Tilaye, hereby declare that this research work titled: “Assessment of Project Communication Management Practices: The Case of Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia)” is my original work which has been conducted by me under the guidance and supervision of Mengistu B. (PhD). I also declare that all materials and sources used for this project research have been accredited appropriately. I am also declaring that this work has not been submitted for the award of any academic Degree or Diploma Program in this or any other institution.

Name: Hela Tilaye

Signature _____

Date _____

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

SIL -	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIL AIM -	Summer Institute of Linguistics Affiliated International Ministry
NGO - Non-	Governmental Organization
FGAE -	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia

Abstract

The study attempted to assess the project communication management practices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia). The study is a case study focusing on SIL Ethiopia, an international NGO that works on language development and translation. The study assessed the communication management practices of SIL Ethiopia by examining the activities and methods used for internal and external communication, cultural diversity and communication, communication channels, communication barriers, and project success and communication management in SIL Ethiopia. Primary data for the study was collected through questionnaires and interviews with project team members. The findings of the study indicate that communication management has a significant impact on project success and that the organization uses effective and efficient communication channels and methods. However, it was also identified by the study that some challenges and barriers in communication exist, such as geographical distance, language differences, cultural clashes, and lack of consistency and feedback. The study also provides some recommendations for improving the project communication management practices of the organization, such as providing training, standardizing communication practices, adopting new technologies, and considering local contexts and cultures.

Keywords: *project communication management, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia), internal and external communication in international NGO , cultural diversity and communication channels, project success and communication barriers*

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

This study assesses the project communication management practices in the case of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia). In this introduction chapter, the background of the study, the background of the organization, the problem statement of the study, the research question of the study, the objectives of the study, the definition of key terms, the significance of the study, scope, and limitation of the study and organization of the study are discussed briefly.

1.1. Background of the Study

Communication is the life of a project. Just as blood flows and pumps oxygen through the body to sustain life, so does communication for projects (*Čulo & Skendrović, 2010*). Communication is one of the most critical factors in project success. Without the right communication plan and communication management strategies, a project can go downhill quickly (*Galli, 2021*).

The success of a project is highly reliant on effective communication management. *Zulch (2014)* explains that the single most significant factor affecting the success of a project is the communication ability of the project manager. Effective project managers spend about 90% of their time communicating with team members and other project stakeholders, whether they are internal (at all organizational levels) or external to the organization (*Čulo & Skendrović, 2010*). Project managers need to have the skills to apply active and effective communication which is a well-established manner to overcome issues and tough junctures during the project (*Taleb et al., 2017*).

Communication management is the fundamental knowledge area of project management that determines the required processes to be carried out to properly generate, collect, distribute, store, and retrieve project information in a timely manner (*Project Management Institute, 2013*). *Čulo & Skendrović (2010)* defines effective communication and efficient communication. While effective communication is providing the information needed in the right format, at the right time, and with the right impact, efficient communication means providing only the information that is needed. A communication delay is not only ineffective but also the cause of project delays and conflicts.

Effective project communications ensure that the right information reaches the right person at the right time and in a cost-effective manner. As (*Mikhieieva & Waidmann, 2017*) states good communication is structured in a way that helps to minimize or even avoid unexpected delays and misunderstandings, prevent duplication of efforts, discover issues, implement preventive measures, and deal with all mentioned above in an effective way. Communication is the key to keeping team members, managers, and stakeholders informed and on track to pursue the project objectives, as well as to identify issues, risks, misunderstandings, and all other challenges to project completion (*Muszynska, 2015*). However, effective communication is not a matter of only transferring information from one person to another. It involves two or more people who can clearly express their views and understand the focus or purpose of the conversation, while also allowing each person to get their point.

1.2. Background of the Organization

SIL International is a faith-based non-profit organization. It has over 80 years of global experience. SIL Ethiopia, a branch of SIL International, was established in Ethiopia in 1973, making 50 years of service in the country.

SIL Ethiopia being an international NGO, it is composed of an international community. The leaders, staff, project managers, project staff, and stakeholders of the organization are incorporated from different countries of the world, making SIL Ethiopia a multicultural and multilingual organization. Ethiopia, being a multicultural country comprising more than 80 languages and cultures, makes even the local staff of the organization to be multilingual and multicultural.

SIL Ethiopia is registered under two organizations, SIL Ethiopia and SIL AIM, which both have various projects being undertaken currently. SIL AIM has Seven Projects that are currently being implemented under the supervision of the Director of Language Programs AIM. Whereas SIL Ethiopia under the Language Programs Development Director are Four Projects that are being implemented currently in different regions of Ethiopia.

As SIL Ethiopia is an international organization, English had been used as the working language of the organization. This means most of the communications both oral and written within the organization or outside, are being communicated in English. In addition, since the staff members

of the organization are composed of different nationalities, they are not using their mother tongue.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Communication is the process of acquiring all relevant information, interpreting this information, and effectively disseminating the information to persons who might need it (*Zulch, 2014*). For effective implementation of projects, that they would be able to achieve their objectives and to recommend evidence-based applicable solutions, it is very important to assess communication management practices and challenges of projects. (*Abebe, 2020*)

Effective communication is crucial for project success. Reports revealed how the lack of communication could affect a project 's progress, where it was found that nearly 74% of the problems occurring in the project were caused by ineffective communication (*Sirviö & Tihinen, 2005*). In addition, ineffective communication results in conflict and misunderstanding between communicators which in turn may affect the progress of the project.

An international organization is composed of people from different parts of the globe. This makes the organization a multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural organization. The Leaders, Project Managers, Project Staff, and Stakeholders of multicultural and multilingual organizations need to develop skills in effective communication to attain the strategic goals of the projects or the organization. To meet the goals of an organization and healthy progress of work, there must be one general language that all the members of the organization may be required to be able to speak to communicate. This in turn means that the members of the organization are challenged to use a language that may not be their mother tongue or native language. In addition, for effective communication, they are also challenged not only to speak their non-native language but also to learn the culture, way of speaking, body language, etc. of that language.

SIL Ethiopia has already accomplished various projects. However, there are some issues related to communication management that are causing the projects to lag in schedule and in meeting the objectives under the budget constraints. Therefore, this study aims to assess the practices of communication management, the project's practice, and the relationship between communication management and project success.

Though there have been a number of research's about finding the critical success factors of projects, the effect of project communication management in the performance of projects has received little attention in the literature, especially in a developing country context like that of Ethiopia. With this in mind, the study will attempt to fill this knowledge gap by assessing the project communication management practices of SIL Ethiopia.

1.4. Research Questions

This project work aims to address the following research question:

- I. How does SIL Ethiopia manage its projects 'internal and external communications?
- II. Does cultural diversity affect communications in project activities?
- III. What are the communication channels practiced by project professionals of SIL Ethiopia?
- IV. What are the communication barriers in SIL Ethiopia projects?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. General Objectives

The general objective of the study is to analyze the practices, processes and challenges of communication management in the case of SIL Ethiopia projects.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

- ◆ To assess the practices of internal and external communication of SIL Ethiopia projects.
- ◆ To assess how cultural diversity affects the communication of SIL Ethiopia projects.
- ◆ To assess the channels of communication of SIL Ethiopia projects.
- ◆ To assess the challenges and barriers of communication in SIL Ethiopia projects.

1.6. Significance of the study

The researcher believes the outcome of this study primarily benefits SIL Ethiopia by revealing the practices, challenges, and barriers to project 's communication management. The organization being multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural, this paper aims to assess how cross-culture is affecting the communication process. The other significance of the study is for further research in the area of communication management of projects in Ethiopia. This study could help as a springboard for those who could be interested in doing similar research in Ethiopia.

1.7. Scope of the study

This study focuses on the project communication management practices in the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia). As mentioned in the background of the organization section above, the organization is registered under two organizations namely SIL Ethiopia and SIL AIM with a total of eleven projects. Due to time and resource constraints, this study focuses only on one wing of the organization, which is registered as SIL Ethiopia, having four projects. The geographic scope addresses all the five area offices of the projects namely Addis Ababa (the headquarters of the organization), SNNP Region, Benishangul Gumuz, and Konso Regions.

1.8. Limitation of the study

As mentioned in the previous chapters, Communication management in projects is a very vast and crucial element in the study of project management. Due to the short period of time given for this project work, this study is limited to one NGO. Therefore, generalization cannot be made as all the findings and recommendations are based on the selected NGO.

1.9. Definition of significant terms

Project Management: is a temporary endeavor that has final deliverables which are constrained to a finite timescale and budget. (*Association for Project Management, 2023*)

Project Management Success: focuses on the project process and the successful accomplishment of cost, time, and quality objectives. It also considers the way the project management process was conducted. (*Baccarini, 1999*)

Project communication Management: Abeza (2021) states project communication management includes the process required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information.

Effective communication means that the information is provided in the right format, at the right time, and with the right impact. (*Čulo & Skendrović, 2010*)

Project stakeholders: are individuals and organizations who are affected by the project. (*ProjectEngineer, 2019*). Whereas (*Baccarini, 1999*) defines stakeholders as those who are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or successful project completion.

Communication Channels: are means of communication that are used to transfer information from one person or organization to another. There are various channels of communication such as meetings, telephones, emails, reports, etc.

Communication Barrier: any hindrance or obstacle to effective communication.

Cross-cultural communication is communication between two or more people or organizations with different cultural backgrounds.

1.10. Chapter Layout

The structure of this paper is illustrated as follows:

In Chapter 1, an overview of the study context and an explanation of the research problem will be presented. This chapter addresses the research objective to be achieved, the research question to be answered, and briefly explains the importance or contribution of the research.

Chapter 2 is for review of the literature of the theoretical argument from secondary sources such as journals, articles, etc.

Chapter 3 describes how the study is carried out in terms of research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods, and the methods of data analysis.

The results of the analysis to be generated using the data and results from the procedures set in Chapter 3 are presented in Chapter 4.

Finally, chapter 5 concludes with overall findings and provides recommendations. Besides, the limitations in carrying out this study will also be included as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to review literature of the theoretical and empirical argument from various secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and websites.

2.1. Theoretical Review

2.1.1. What is Project Communication?

Association for Project Management (2023) defines project management as the application of processes, methods, skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve specific project objectives according to the project acceptance criteria within agreed parameters. Project management has final deliverables that are constrained to a finite timescale and budget. It has definitive start dates and end dates that make it different from ongoing work or business operations (*Watt, 2014*).

(PM & Landau, 2023) defined project management has 10 knowledge areas which are key aspects of project management that should be overseen by project managers so they can plan, schedule, track, and of the project team and project stakeholders. They continued to elaborate on these knowledge areas, which are: Project Integration Management, Project Scope Management, Project Time Management, Project Cost Management, Project Quality Management, Project Human Resource Management, Project Communication Management, Project Risk Management, Project Procurement Management, and Project Stakeholder Management.

This study is focused on one of the above knowledge areas of project management which is project communication management. Communication is the heart of implemented projects, where project managers spend 90% of their time communicating with project participants (*Taleb et al., 2017*). Communication management ensures that there is information flow which is essential for the success of a project. Therefore, the ability to communicate well is a critical quality that project managers and project teams need to develop.

Although communication plays a key role in project management, it is not an easy endeavor. Communication is not a matter of just conveying and receiving information rather it is reaching a common or mutual understanding. The communicator of information needs to make sure that the

receiver gets what is being said, the intention of the information, and the meaning of what is being said; otherwise, the information might bring unintended results. Reaching mutual understanding, however, does not mean that the communicators are agreeing on everything.

Effective communication is vital to the success of projects, programmes, and portfolios; the right information must be transmitted to relevant parties, accurately and consistently to meet their expectations (*Čulo & Skendrović, 2010*). Communication management plays a great role in verifying that all stakeholders are well-informed of where the project is at and where it aims to go. It also ensures the stakeholders are informed of what is expected of them for the attainment of the goal of the project. In addition, the internal stakeholders, which are staff, need to be communicated with effectively. An employee cannot do anything or become constructive in his/her work unit unless he or she knows what is to be done, when is the task to be accomplished, and who else is involved. The staff members who have this information become centers of power.

2.1.2. Communication Planning

As *Čulo & Skendrović (2010)* defined a communication plan allows the project manager to document the approach to communicate most efficiently and effectively with stakeholders. Communication planning involves ways of delivering information to important stakeholders and how the responses and opinions of stakeholders will be managed. Communication planning helps the project manager and project team identify what, when, how and to whom to share the information. It helps in prioritizing information that needs to be conveyed by ranking information by its importance.

Watt (2014) explains, that every project needs accurate communication plans, but the type of communication varies from one project to the other and he continued to explain his argument with example, will information be distributed via mail or email, is there a shared website, or are face-to-face meetings required? The communication management plan documents how the communication needs of the stakeholders will be met, including the types of information that will be communicated, who will communicate them, and who will receive them; the methods used to communicate; the timing and frequency of communication; the method for updating the plan as the project progresses, including the escalation process; and a glossary of common terms.

The communication plan should outline the following:

- Who (lines of communication – sender and receiver – responsibility and authority)
- What (scope of communication and format)
- When (schedule)
- Feedback (confirms message received and understood – document control)
- Filing (retrieval, storing, disaster recovery)
- How (email, document, telephone, meeting, presentation) (Burke, 2003).

Čulo & Skendrović (2010) illustrated in their study, that one of the key components of planning the project's communications is to determine and limit who will communicate with whom and who will receive what information. The information that is typically used to determine project communication requirements includes Organization charts, Project organization and stakeholder responsibility relationships, Disciplines, departments, and specialties involved in the project, Logistics of how many persons will be involved with the project and at which locations, Internal information needs (e.g., communicating across organizations), External information needs (e.g., communicating with the media, public, or contractors), and Stakeholder information from the stakeholder register and the stakeholder management strategy.

Without a sufficient project communication plan, it's impossible to keep all responsible parties up-to-date on the changing status of the project. There's a lack of transparency which eventually leads to inefficient, counterproductive decisions that will hinder the aims of the project in question. With effective communications in place, it's easy to maintain transparency across all parts of project management so that the best decisions are made, which will translate into efficient project delivery.

2.1.3. Formal and Informal Communication

On organizational structure communication may be transmitted either formally or informally.

- **Formal communication:** a flow of information through formally established channels in an organization. Formal communication is mostly vertical communication. That is, it is mostly initiated by managers. This communication could be written or oral.

Based on the direction pattern of communication, formal communication has four basic communication lines (Tubbs & Moss, 2008).

1. Vertical Communication flow: can be either Top-Down or Bottom-Up communication flow.

1.1. Top-down communication flow: can be defined as communication from superiors to subordinates. The communication may be work direction or assignments, instructions, guidance, and commands.

1.2. Bottom-Up Communication flow: is communication in an organizational hierarchy where a subordinate communicates with the superior. This communication may be delivering reports, complaints, and grievances.

2. Horizontal Communication flow: communication between colleagues who are at the same level in an organizational hierarchy. This information exchange could be between people from various departments. This communication helps for a good flow of work and cooperation among members of the organization.

3. Diagonal Communication flow: is an exchange of information between people at different organizational levels. These communicators may be from various departments.

- **Informal Communication:** is communication which is based on relationships formed in the organization. It is mostly a result of social interaction between members of the organization. Informal communication is mostly horizontal communication. As (Watt, 2014), informal communication is important for establishing personal trust among team members and with the client.

One form of informal communication in an organization is called grapevine communication. Grapevine takes place within the organization, and it is an informal, unofficial, and personal communication channel or system. It is a complex web of oral information, and it generally spreads rapidly and touches all the members of the organization. (Srivastava & Purohit, 2021)

2.1.4. Channels of communication

Dow & Taylor (2008) state that there are different ways of communication:

- Oral communication takes place in the form of meetings, discussion groups, talks, interviews, announcements, and conversations, both face-to-face and over the telephone.
- Written communication takes place through letters, emails, circulars, memoranda, and minutes of meetings.

- Non-verbal communication may convey powerful messages in the business world by employing gestures, appearance, or attitudes.
- Electronic communication makes it possible to send messages all over the world at a very high speed. Messages may be sent and received using computer terminals, electronic mail (email), and fax facilities.
- Visual communication takes place by means of presentations, DVDs, and videos.

As elaborated above and discussed in detail by Watt (2014), methods of communicating can take many forms, such as written reports, conversations, emails, formal status reports, meetings, online databases, online schedules, and project websites. However, several factors need to be considered before deciding the communication methods you'll choose to transfer information. These factors are,

- The timing of the information exchange and if there is a need for updates.
- The technologies available that could help keep everyone notified of project status and issues.
- Staff experience with technology. If the project team members and stakeholders are experienced at using this technology, or they need training?
- And how does the project team function? Are they located together or spread out across several campuses or locations?

2.1.5. Types of Communication in Project Management

There are two major types of communication in project management, which are internal communication and external communication. (Dow & Taylor, 2008)

1. **Internal Communication:** is a transfer of information between active participants of a project which includes the project managers, team members, and staff of the organization at the organizational unit.

In the normal day-to-day operation of firms, internal communication is vital for the proper functioning of an organization (David, 2011). The communication that is made internally can be in the form of meetings, reports, and different coordination activities. Firms also use modern technologies like SharePoint and wikis to integrate internal communication and to fill the gaps in communication.

2. **External Communication:** is a flow of information between team members of a project or project manager with external stakeholders who do not actively participate in the project. External communications involve communications between the organization and the outside world- with customers, shareholders, the media, and members of the public (Zulch, 2014).

The similarities and differences between internal and external communication can be in terms of actual content, objectives, media channels used, level of transparency, tone of voice, focus, length of content, and how frequently the messages are sent.

Content - The type of content contained in internal and external communication is very different. Internal communication focuses on sharing internal updates, business strategies, and employee-related info which is often needed daily. Ultimately, external communication focuses on marketing messaging, PR, customer support, and building a brand reputation with external audiences.

Objectives - Internal communication aims to inform, engage, and align employees to help them arrive at a single destination - a place of growth. Perhaps that destination is a revenue increase. The single overarching goal is important to make all departments, irrespective of what they do and how different they might seem, all connected and part of something bigger. External communication aims are similar as they informs, engages, and help promote the brand, so there is one clear value proposition to attract customers, build brand reputation, and maintain positive relationships with external stakeholders. The internal branding used to motivate customers shouldn't be that different from the external branding used to stimulate sales.

Channels - The channels used between internal and external communication are similar, for example, email, SMS, and WhatsApp. Internal communication sometimes uses internal Facebook or other social media sharing platforms for internal content. On the other hand, external communication channels include websites, social media platforms, traditional media outlets, and other channels.

Confidentiality and transparency - In summary, internal communication is confidential, and external communication is transparent. It is uncommon for employees to share sensitive information inside the company, such as strategies, financial details, or upcoming projects.

External communication aims to build credibility, trust, and openness with stakeholders. Internal seeks to do the same, but from within the company itself.

Vocabulary - Most businesses use acronyms, industry-specific jargon, abbreviations, and phrases. This is because those inside the organization will understand the words used. This is all perfectly normal. However, when communicating with the outside, using press releases, TV ads, radio ads, website content, etc., it's best to remove jargon and go for simple, intuitive words and phrases. Express ideas clearly, concisely, and in a way that any audience easily understands.

Content length - If you are paying employees, it's fair to expect they will pay attention, so internal comms tend to be longer. It's fair to send a 200 words email to employees once in a while and expect it to be read. An organization can create a collective memory by recording processes, systems, and ceremonies. Making relevant information available to employees whenever they need it. Additionally, internal communication allows for future reference and learning from past experiences by documenting decisions, project updates, and changes. There are various types of external communication, like advertising to customers, communicating with journalists and suppliers, and making sure shareholders and investors stay on board. The amount of information relevant to each of these groups is very different. A YouTube ad or TV Ad tends to be no longer than a couple of minutes. While annual reports aimed at shareholders might be 50 pages long.

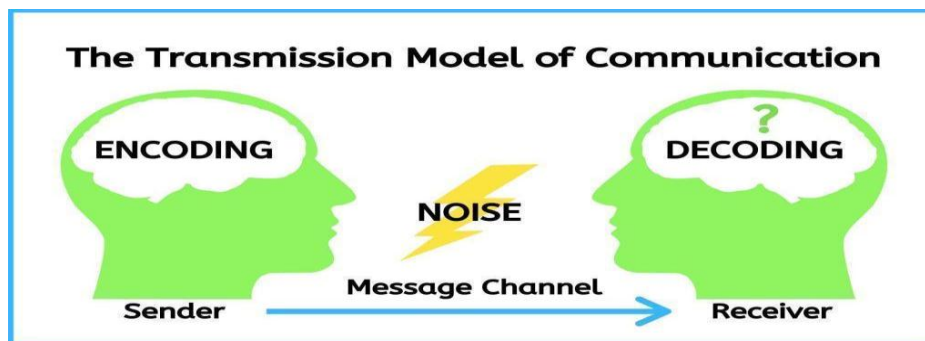
2.1.6. Communication-Process Model

Communication-Process Model conveys how information is being transferred between individuals, groups, and organizations. It is a simplified model which conveys how communication is transmitted or the process of communication. There are various types of Communication-Process Models, however for this study we will see the three major Communication-Process Models these models are;

- Linear Transmission Model,
- Interaction Model and
- Transaction Model.

1. **Linear Transmission Model:** Describes communication as a one-way process.

Figure 1 Linear Transmission Model.



Source: Pressbooks (2023)

- ❑ Sender: is a person, group or organization interested to convey information or message. In a group or organization level an individual may transfer information on behalf of a group or organization.
- ❑ Message: The information that a sender is transferring to a receiver.
- ❑ Receiver: The person to which information is conveyed.

2. **Interaction Model:** Describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts (Schramm, 1997). This model includes feedback, which makes communication a more interactive, two way process.

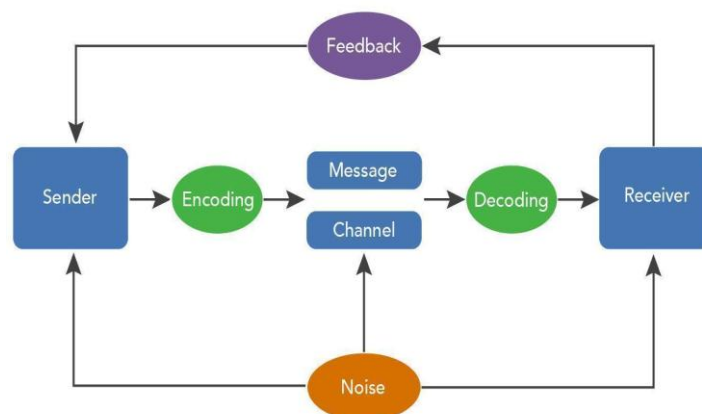


Figure 2 Interaction Model

Source: Lumen Learning (2023)

- ❑ Encoding: is the process by which the message is translated from an idea or thought into transmittable symbols. The symbols may be words, numbers, pictures, sounds, or physical gestures and movements. (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014)
- ❑ Channel: The media or medium through which the information is conveyed to the receiver.
- ❑ Decoding: The way the receiver interprets the message that the sender tried to transfer (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014). The decoding process has a lot to do with the receiver's perception which may be the same or different from what the sender of the message intended to convey. Perception can be defined as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. (Robbins, 2004)
- ❑ Noise: Anything that interferes with the communication process.
- ❑ Feedback: Is a response of the receiver to the sender about the message transferred.

3. **Transaction Model:** Describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts (Pressbooks, 2023).

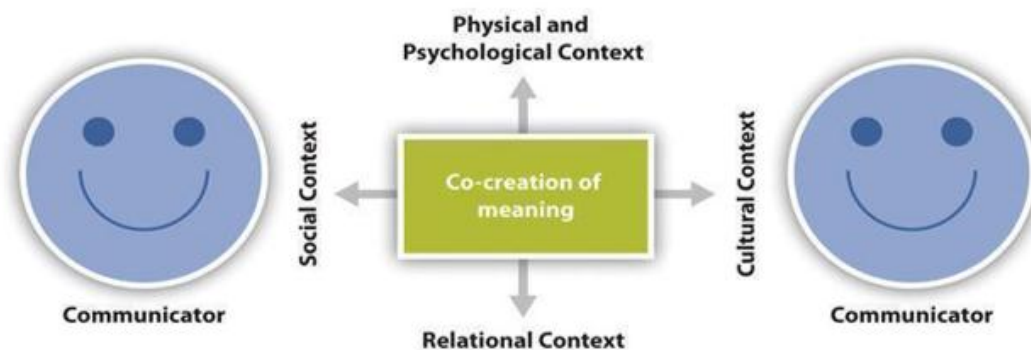


Figure 3 Transaction Model
Source Lumen Learning (2023)

- ❑ Communicator: A person, group or organization engaging in communication or exchange of information. In this model both communicators are sender and receiver of messages simultaneously.

❑ Physical and Psychological Context: (University of Minnesota, 2023)

- Physical Contact: includes the environmental factors in a communication encounter.

- Psychological: includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter.

❑ Social Context: Social context refers to the stated rules or unstated norms that guide communication (University of Minnesota, 2023).

❑ Cultural Context: includes various aspects of identities such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and ability which influences communication. (University of Minnesota, 2023)

❑ Relational Context: includes the previous interpersonal history and type of relationship we have with a person. We communicate differently with someone we just met versus someone we've known for a long time. (University of Minnesota, 2023)

2.1.7. How does Communication Fail in Projects?

When your communication strategy fails to function the way it's supposed to, it affects the quality of the work delivered and leaves your clients dissatisfied. Here are some reasons why communication fails in most project teams:

Inadequate planning- If you fail to plan out a suitable communications strategy, you'll end up with an unpleasant scenario where the wrong channels are used at the wrong time. For example, if email is the sole medium of communication in project management, then urgent requests won't be addressed in time. It's important to establish a proper project management plan for different purposes.

Lack of transparency- When team members are not aware of updates and the project's progress, communication gaps arise. Not everyone needs access to everything but creating a culture of trust and transparency within the project team ensures that team members share their opinions and concerns.

Failure to refine over time - No matter how fitting your project management communication strategy proves to be today, along the line, you'll discover scenarios you never planned for.

Failure to refine your project management communications strategy over time will result in having a communications blueprint that's ill-suited to handle the growing needs of your project management process.

2.1.8. Communication Barriers

In different types of projects, it is common that some troubles take place between the project participants during different project phases, which cause delays and conflicts. These issues can be caused by improper communication and incorrect exchanged messages (*Ismail et al., 2017*). These obstacles are communication Barriers that prevent effective communication. These obstacles could be language, cultural, physical, and emotional barriers. A study by (*Wakeway, 2021*) categorized the barriers to communication into six points. Which are:

1. **Dissatisfaction:** If you are frustrated or have lost interest in your career, you are far less likely to communicate effectively.
2. **Inability to listen to others:** Active listening is an integral part of successful communication. Whereas selective listening can be a big hindrance in the communication process.
3. **Lack of transparency:** It can be found to be difficult to communicate something when there is a lack of transparency and confidence which is a communication barrier.
4. **Communication styles:** Different communication styles by different people can be interpreted in the wrong way which can be a communication barrier.
5. **Conflicts in the workplace:** which is a common thing in any organization, the inappropriate way of resolving conflict may cause people to take sides.
6. **Cultural differences and language.**

As *Hunley et al. (2018)* explain, international teams, by default, have members from different parts of the globe. This means the members are likely to speak different native languages. These languages may have varied styles and contexts. However, for the team to be effective, it is important that the members use a common language for general communication. This often means that members are using a language that is secondary to their native language. The use of a secondary language can be challenging and can lead to frustration and mistrust within the team.

Culture can affect the ways of communication. The main issue is that messages are composed or ‘coded’ in one cultural context, sent, and then received or ‘decoded’ in another cultural context (*Mikhieieva & Waidmann, 2017*). The skills involved in being an effective communicator vary dramatically from one culture to another (*Meyer, 2014*). This is because communication is not just with verbal but also involves writing, nonverbal which involves body language and facial expressions and virtual communication. International organizations and teams with multinational members having diverse culture and language backgrounds can be either challenged or blessed or maybe both.

The challenges may be caused by the language barriers (accent, word construction) and the way of interpreting non verbal communication like gestures, vocal tones and facial expressions. One example could be the difference in interpreting eye contact and vocal tones. In Ethiopian culture, looking directly at your seniors’ eyes is considered rude whereas in a Western culture it may be interpreted as if the person is lying or trying to hide something. On the other hand, in the horn of Africa, in Somali culture speaking out loud could be quite a normal style of communication which could be found uncomfortable to other cultures.

As *Kumbakonam (2016)* explains, not all barriers to communication are caused by people. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. Messages can be blocked by environmental factors, such as the physical setting or the situation where communication takes place. The condition of the meeting hall might make people lose their focus from what is being communicated. In addition to that, physical distance can be a communication barrier between communicators in a project.

An article by *Čulo & Skendrović (2010)*, Micro-managing everything on the project as one of the communication obstacles which is to mean that when managers design very detailed project plans and start pushing themselves and the team to get every task done in the most incredible detail. This style of project manager stifles the entire communication process as a result of getting too involved with the details. The team soon realizes that a dictator has taken over the project, and they typically refrain from saying too much, or worse yet, can’t wait to leave the project. This style of management leads to mistrust and eventual frustration. The project manager usually only releases information on an “as-needed” basis and, as a result, the team becomes less creative or unwilling to come up with great ideas.

2.1.9. Cultural Diversity and Project Communication

Effective communication with people of different cultures can be challenging because of each culture molds individuals differently. People's ways of thinking, hearing, seeing, and interpreting the world around them are all shaped by culture. Thus, words could be interpreted differently by persons of different cultures, even though they may speak the “same” language (Norris, 2009). In such cases where languages are different, translation eases the process of communication. However, this can be made ineffective by cultural differences, which could lead to misinformation and misunderstanding. People of different cultures will vary in their views of the means and forms of communication in various contexts and situations.

Culture is a prominent aspect in all of these cases, and it can be interpreted in two ways. One way is that culture was borrowed from Western languages. In this way, culture aims to make people civilized and to enhance their minds with art, literature, and education. This varies within different cultures, as in the European culture, Shakespeare is considered an icon. However, Voltaire Sartre is an icon and representation of French culture. In a broader sense, culture's meaning refers to activities that refine the mind and define the ordinary aspects of life: greetings, choosing to exhibit emotion, physical distance from others, and eating/drinking habits. The definition of culture is further simplified by Khan (2014), who defines culture as a collective mentality within a group of people that differentiates them from others. Baumüller (2007) offers a broader definition by stating that culture is the pattern of skills, knowledge, behavior, and beliefs that society creates and imparts onto future generations. A way to unite such differences in culture is through cultural pluralism (Muszynska, 2015; Baumüller, 2007).

Communication and culture are two distinct concepts, but they have a direct relationship. Communication can be defined as basic human contact or the sharing of thoughts and feelings with another individual. Communication becomes a key tool for learning, teaching, transmitting, representing, and preserving culture (Deresky & Christopher, 2011). Communication is the avenue through which cultural characteristics are constructed and shared. In essence, culture is the outcome of social communication. Also, the reverse is true, in that communication practices go a long way towards constructing, shaping, preserving, and transmitting culture (Deresky & Christopher, 2011). In a project, communication is essential because a project unites a team of experts. For one to do his part, another has to have started or completed his. This level of

coordination requires proper communication, and if cultural differences affect communication, then the project performance is also affected.

As a result of globalization, today's workforce has a diverse population of employees, clients, suppliers, and other external stakeholders who are drawn from different parts of the world (Deresky & Christopher, 2011). This has created a dynamic multicultural and multiracial environment that brings with it differences in abilities, skills, and experiences. Embracing this diversity has proved to be a critical first step for businesses that want to be more competitive. Organizations, such as airlines, accounting firms, and food outlets, are all embracing the benefits of having a culturally diverse workforce (Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung & Ying-Chien, 2011). As projects require constant communication means that these companies have experienced the good and the bad of cultural diversity, as seen in the performance of their projects (Kurylo, 2012). While diverse culture brings different skills to projects, it also brings differences in thinking. In the way of doing things, these differences must be ironed out before any work can be completed.

2.2. Empirical Review

A research finding which was conducted through questionnaire and interview of a paper titled "Assessment of Project Communication Management Practices and Challenges: The case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia illustrates that electronic communication methods such as email-most of the time, fax, skype and video/audio conference followed by oral communication which are meetings, phone calls and verbal means are widely used for project communication practice. (Abebe, 2020).

A paper result conducted through a questionnaire by (Zulch, 2014) concluded that communications via electronics was ranked the highest as an effective communication method followed by written method ranked second is written communication with oral communication ranked third. Visual communication is ranked fourth and nonverbal communication is ranked fifth as an effective communication method.

Finding of the research "The practice of communication management in IT projects the case of CBE" (Gebreanania, 2020) with 87 respondents from a total population of 105 populations the most common communication channel in the study organization was different based on the geographic location of the stakeholders. That is for External communication with vendors,

consultants. An email is a usual communication channel since mostly these are foreign companies and about 82% response support this logic. Whereas, for internal communication, between team/s, formal communication is verbal (face to face) that covers about 48.3% and email with 42.5% responses.

An explanatory study which was examined by (Wakeway, 2021) conducted via questionnaire on which 50% of the respondents are project team members, 22.9% of them worked as project coordinator, 12.5% worked as project manager and 6.3% had a program manager title, confirmed that one of project communication barrier is less understanding of project manager for their project team member personal problems or work-related issues. The other barrier the research found was that there was a problem of simplicity in communication language which created misunderstanding among team members. Geographical problems also affected dissemination of project information. On the other hand, the project work finding of (Abebe, 2020) conducted on an organization called FGAE identified challenges of project communications in the FGAE projects and lack of clarity of messages, late or lack of responsive feedback and lack of dedicated project communication focal persons are some of them.

Research paper titled “The Effect of Project Communication Management on Project Performance: The case of Meskel Square Projects” conducted by (Abeza, 2021) resulted that communication barriers such as listening selectively, distraction, rationalization, time pressure, overload of communication, information distortion and prejudice were some of the obstacles for good project communication performance in different projects.

The respondents for a research “Assessing Cross Cultural Relationship in Human Resource Practice in African Union Commission” by (Abayneh, 2019) who were employed in AUC questionnaire result treated with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21 version), found to be that the majority respondents (i.e. 64.5%) approved that working in multicultural organization has advantages: career development (i.e. 54.6% of the respondents agree and 9.9% of the respondents strongly agree); while some of the respondents (17.5% disagree and 13.5% strongly disagree) denied that working in multicultural organization has advantages and few respondents (i.e. 4.3%) stated their position as neutral. On the other hand concerning the question on the questionnaire which tried to address whether misunderstanding occur in multicultural organization among staffs because of communication barriers like language, resulted with 70.2%

the majority respondents (i.e. 58.9% agree and 11.3% strongly agree); while some respondents (i.e. 14.2% whereas 48 disagree and 10.6% strongly disagree) denied that communication barriers might because for misunderstanding in culturally diversified working environment and few respondents (i.e.5%) stated their opinions as neural.

As (Kuma, 2019) in his explanatory study confirmed that the practice of project communication management has statistically positive and significant influence on project performance. Whereas, a paper by (Zulch, 2014) showed that the impact of the construction project managers' skill of communicating on the success of the project management the highest for leadership.

2.3. Proposed Conceptual Framework

This study aims to assess the communication management of an organization's projects named Summer Institute of Ethiopia (SIL Ethiopia). According to the research questions raised in the first chapter and the various literature reviews that were reviewed, the conceptual framework of the study is illustrated below. In the conceptual framework the independent and dependent variables of the study are represented; the independent variables are the Internal and External communications, Cultural diversity, communication channels and communication barriers. On the other hand the dependent variable is the success of projects.

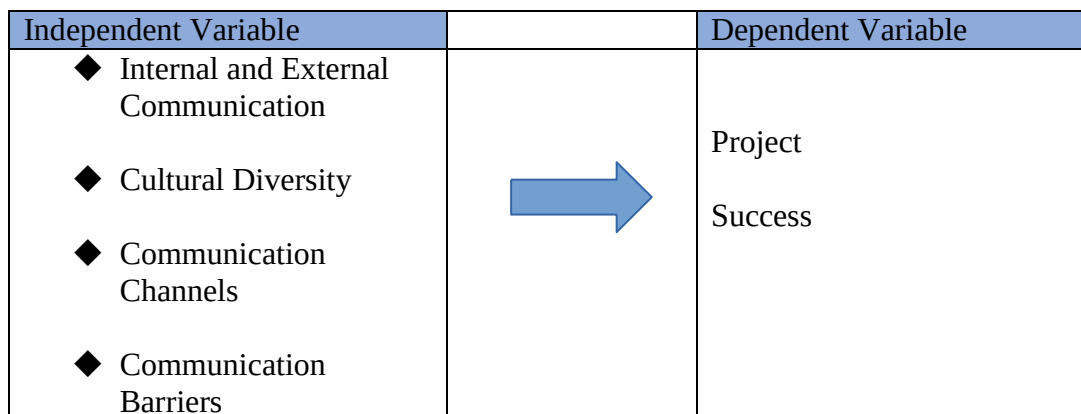


Figure 4 Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Own Compilation from Various Sources (2023)

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the research questions that the statement of the problem raises. Issues to be dealt with in this chapter are the research design, target population, sample size determination and sampling technique, data source and data collection instrument, method of data collection and analysis, validity and reliability finally ethical issues. The main research question of this study is to assess the project communication management practices of SIL Ethiopia, and if it affects project success or not. Therefore, a descriptive research approach is found to be the most suitable approach to search for the answer to the research problem. The quantitative research method was also used for the study since the aim of the study was to examine whether or not there is a cause-and-effect relationship between project communication management and project success in SIL Ethiopia.

3.1. Research Design

Research design is a framework for action that bridges research questions and the execution or implementation of research questions. Research design is important because it allows the many research techniques to go smoothly, resulting in research that is as professional as possible, giving the most information with the least amount of work, time, and money (Akhtar, 2016).

According to Chandran & Kothari (2004), there are five types of research designs. These are observation, descriptive, exploratory, experimental, and diagnostic design. The selection of a specific research design depends on the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigm informing the research, the context or situation within which the research is carried out, and the research techniques employed to collect and analyze the data. In order to bring the most out of the result of this study, a descriptive design is implemented to answer research questions and attain the objectives.

3.2. Description of Study Area

The study area is particularly focused on assessing the effects of project communication management practices on the performance of projects undertaken by SIL Ethiopia located in

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The reason why SIL Ethiopia is chosen for the case is because the researcher is familiar with the company and its projects.

3.3. Target Population

A population refers to an entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate and from which they can make inferences based on the sample statistics (Sekaran, 2013). A population also refers to an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common, and in this study's case, participating in some form of other in the projects of SIL Ethiopia under study.

Since the objective of the study was to assess the practices, processes, and challenges of communication management in the case of SIL Ethiopia projects, the target population of the study was the project managers, project staff, leaders, and employees of SIL Ethiopia who actively participated in the internal and external communication. It covers all relevant employees both at head office and at project levels. The entire population of this study is 70 individuals.

3.4. Sampling Design

A sample is defined as a set of individuals selected from a population, usually intended to represent the population in a research study (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2007). Similarly, according to (Javeaux, 1977) sample size is the number of people or objects in the sample. He argues that the results obtained from this sample are considered to be the same as those that would have been if the study had been administered to the total population. Sample size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of inquiry, what was useful, what has credibility, and what can be done with time and resources.

The population of this study was staff of the organization at the head office who closely work with projects, project leaders at the head office, project managers, project staff, finance and admin officers, and donor representatives as external stakeholders. The study tried to include all staff of the organization who closely work with projects. However, including all the internal and external stakeholders of the organization was impossible in regards to the length of time given to do this research. The number of participants was determined using Slovin's formula as stated

below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (N * e^2)}$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = Target population

e = Margin of error, which is 0.05 or 95% confidence level

$$n = \frac{70}{1 + (70) 0.05^2} = 57$$

Thus, the sample size is 57 participants selected randomly from the entire population.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

Using several methods in a study is important to triangulate the result of each method involved. Solely relying on a single method can adversely affect the reliability and validity of the results, eventually disconcerting the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made (*Currie, 2005*).

In line with this, to get the appropriate data the study has employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data are those that are collected for the first time and thus happen to be original in character (*Kothari, 2004*). As primary sources of data, interviews, and questionnaires have been used to help in answering questions related to the study objectives. The questionnaire and interview questions have been developed through a review of relevant literature focusing on the processes related to project communication management practices. The questionnaire has been carefully designed to include both closed and open ended questions, while the interview guide was structured to include key questions that explored additional information not captured or elaborated in the questionnaire.

Secondary data are those that are already available and refer to data that have already been collected and analyzed by someone else (*Kothari, 2004*). As a secondary data source document analysis of relevant books, articles, journals, online information and documents related to the

projects under study will be investigated to supplement and serve as the basis for the instruments and findings of the study.

3.6. Method of Data Collection

The study aimed to collect its data from primary data sources by using questionnaires and interviews. The interviews were held to the project managers, leaders and donor representatives of the project under study. For the confidentiality of the interview the data that were collected were recorded after a common agreement up on the conclusion on each issue was reached thus only the respondent's feedback was registered.

Questionnaires covering the different dimensions of project communication management which were thought to affect the performance and success of the project, were designed and distributed to selected internal stakeholders with multinational, multilingual and multicultural backgrounds who communicate with people from different national cultures as part of their day-to-day work life. To measure and interpret the results, a Likert scale with 5 degrees was used.

3.7. Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis essentially consists of applying statistical techniques to a database to make inferences about variables or study objects. (*Mohammed et al., 2014*). Qualitative and statistical/quantitative methods of data analysis will be used to analyze the data collected from different data sources. Creswell (2009), there is more insight to be gained from the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself. Their combined use provides an expanded understanding of research problems. Thus, with the intention of getting the general picture of the research under study both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis will be used in conducting the study.

The data that has been collected from respondents has been analyzed using data analytical software called 'statistical packages for social sciences' (SPSS). For presenting the different types of descriptive data, analysis methods such as frequency, percentage, simple tabulation, cross-tabulation, mean, and standard deviation will be employed. The relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables has been tested through statistical analysis, such as bivariate Correlation analysis with SPSS.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

3.8.1. Validity Analysis

The researcher used standard instruments to indemnify the issue of data validity in the research process for project communication in the case of SIL Ethiopia.

3.8.2. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach 's alpha is a reliability coefficient measure of the internal consistency of tests and measures (Wikipedia, 2020). This research paper also used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency (reliability of the instrument questionnaire).

Table 3.1 Cronbach's Alpha Values for Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Internal and External Communication	.739	.766	12
Communication Barriers	.821	.818	9
Communication management and project success	.724	.712	4

Source: Survey Result, 23

The results of the reliability analysis showed that all the variables had Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7, which indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability. This means that the questionnaire items were measuring the same construct and were not contradictory or ambiguous. The highest Cronbach's alpha value was for communication barriers (0.821), followed by internal and external communication (0.739), and project success and communication management (0.724). These results suggest that the questionnaire was a valid and reliable instrument for collecting data on the project communication management of SIL Ethiopia.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

The research work's ethical considerations were valued considerably. The confidentiality of respondents of the questionnaire and interview were preserved. The responders were not required to write or mention their names or other personal codes while responding.

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

As the study is constrained to assess the project communication management practices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia), this chapter presents and analyzes the information gathered by the study. The analysis was addressed to answer the research questions and research objectives of the paper. A total of 57 individuals were targeted in this study and 44 of these targeted respondents responded to the questionnaires making a 77.19% response rate. In addition, interviews were also conducted with 4 randomly selected participants from head office leaders.

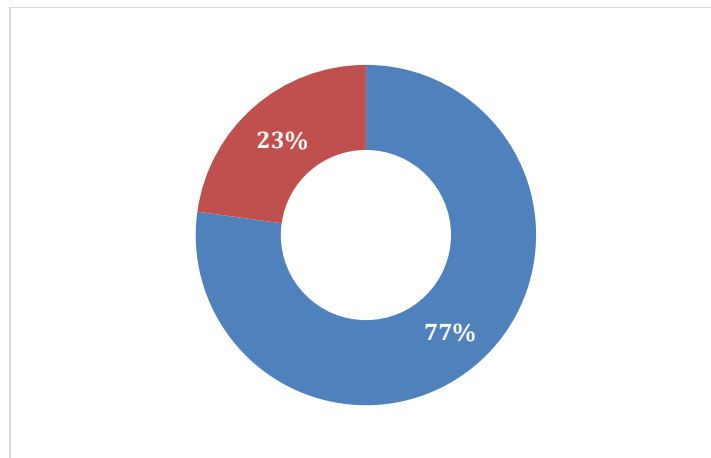


Figure 5 Questionnaire Response Rate

Source: Survey Result, 2023

4.2. Demographic Data

In this section, the demographic characteristic of the respondents is presented. Information such as the respondent's gender, age, education level, years of experience, and position within the organization is presented below.

Table 4.1: Respondents by Gender

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Female</i>	14	31.8%
<i>Male</i>	30	68.2%
	44	

Source: Survey Results, 2023

As shown in the above table 68.2% of the respondents' gender were male whereas 31.8% were female. This is due to most of the project staff being male. However, the researcher does not believe that this gender percentage would not have any effect on the results.

Table 4.2: Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Below 20</i>	1	2.3%
<i>20 to 30</i>	19	43.2%
<i>31 to 40</i>	15	34.1%
<i>41 to 50</i>	6	13.6%
<i>Above 50</i>	3	6.8%
	44	

Source: Survey Results, 2023

With regards to the age of the respondents, the majority of the respondents belong to the age group 20 – 30 accounting for 43% of all respondents. This age group is followed by the 31 - 40 age group accounting for 34% and the 41 – 50 age group accounting for 13%. On the other hand, the above 50 age group only accounts for 6% of the respondents.

This can be seen as a reflection of Ethiopia's demographic features, as the majority of the population is young. According to Pala, Eker, and Melek (2008), youth are ambitious and quickly adapt to new ideas and changes when compared to the elderly. However, the youth may lack experience and for that matter, the balance in an organization is brought by the older more experienced staff.

Table 4.3: Respondents by Highest Level of Education

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Diploma</i>	14	31.8%
<i>Degree</i>	18	40.9%
<i>MA or above</i>	12	27.3%
	44	

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Regarding the highest educational level of the respondents, while 18 of the respondents had at least a BA Degree accounting for 41% of the total respondents, 12 of the respondents had at least a master's degree accounting for 27% of the respondents. The remaining 32% was accounted for by Diploma Holders. The data support the claim that the respondents are well-educated and informed individuals who are capable of carrying out their responsibilities and expectations.

Table 4.4: Respondents by Experience in Years and Work Position

Experience in Years			Work Position		
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5	32	72.7%	Headquarter Project Leader	3	6.8%
6 to 10	5	11.4%	Headquarter Staff	4	9.1%
11 to 15	4	9.1%	Project Staff	32	72.7%
16 to 20			Project Manager	3	6.8%
Above 21	3	6.8%		44	
	44				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

The level of work experience of the respondents was also recorded and analyzed. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents had work experience of 1 – 5 years accounting for 72% of the respondents, followed by 6 – 10 years of experience accounting for 11%, and above 10 years of work experience accounting for 16% of the respondents. This indicates that the majority of the respondents have limited prior experience managing projects. With regards to the respondent's position within the organization they work in, the majority were project staff personnel. Among

those who are employed by SIL Ethiopia, 3 were project managers, 4 were headquarters staff and 3 were headquarters project leaders.

4.3. Internal and External Communication

As shown in Table 4.5 below, findings from the questionnaires on statements that aimed to identify the practices of the internal and external communication of the project were presented. Most respondents agreed with the statements which said that the information exchange to project teams was found to be effective and efficient, the leaders also communicated effectively and efficiently, the teams were encouraged to communicate freely with two-way communications, periodic reports were being presented and top leaders of the organization were approachable.

Table 4.5: Internal and External Communication Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information is communicated efficiently and effectively to Project teams.	43	2.00	5.00	3.9070	.81105
Project team members are encouraged to communicate freely with their team members.	42	2.00	5.00	4.2381	.75900
Project team members are satisfied with the internal communication of the project they are engaged in.	44	1.00	5.00	3.6591	.93866
The project leaders communicate effectively and efficiently with the external stakeholders.	44	2.00	5.00	3.8864	.89484
Two-way communication is encouraged at the project level as well as at the organizational level.	44	1.00	5.00	4.1364	1.04750
There is late or lack of responsive feedback from Headquarter colleagues	44	1.00	5.00	2.7045	1.24974
Project status report is communicated periodically to project team members.	43	1.00	5.00	4.0698	.96103
Top leaders at Head Office level are approachable and reachable to be communicated by lower-level staff	44	1.00	5.00	3.8636	1.15317
Language is an issue in communicating with headquarter staff	44	1.00	5.00	2.2955	1.21195
Communication improves teamwork.	42	4.00	5.00	4.6667	.47712
External Communication of the project is communicated through one assigned person	44	1.00	5.00	3.2045	1.09075
Internal and External communication in SIL Ethiopia plays a pivotal role for project success.	44	1.00	5.00	4.2955	1.04725
Valid N (listwise)	38				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

The statements with an average neutral response rate were on issues such as the external communication of the project is communicated through one assigned person and if there was late or lack of responsive feedback from headquarters colleagues. The statement with an average disagreement response rate was found on whether language was in communication with headquarters staff.

4.4. Cultural Diversity and Communication

The term ‘communication’ comes from the Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share". Therefore, the initial purpose of communication in a cross-cultural environment is to seek common ground and exchange ideas and information (*Mikhieieva & Waidmann, 2017*). The organization being an international NGO with a cross-cultural environment, the researcher also aimed to identify if cultural diversity and language differences were affecting the communications in the projects. Findings from questionnaires aimed at cultural issues are illustrated in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Cultural Diversity and Communication Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Differences in Language generate conflict among employees	44	1.00	5.00	2.0227	1.28477
I prefer working with people who speak the same ethnic language as myself	43	1.00	5.00	2.6977	1.50452
I'm able to communicate the information about my job to other cultures as much as I do to employees of my culture.	43	1.00	5.00	3.8372	1.06749
Using different languages to communicate in the workplace does not create conflict among employees.	43	1.00	5.00	3.8837	1.31311
I don't prefer working with people who speak the same ethnic language as myself over other languages.	43	1.00	5.00	2.9767	1.47177
Valid N (listwise)	40				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Findings from the questionnaires show that statements on whether language differences cause conflict showed an average of disagree responses from the respondents. Whereas issues concerning whether it was preferable to work with people with similar languages were neutral. On the other hand, the average of agreed response rates were found with statements that aimed to assess if the responders were able to communicate information to other cultures as much as they do to employees of their own culture and using different languages to communicate in the workplace did not create conflicts among employees.

4.5. Communication Channels

Likert questions on the communication channels of the project were asked with an average finding results to agreeing on statements that the channels of communication in projects were very effective and efficient and the organization uses appropriate communication media in every project. Table 4.7 illustrates the findings as follows.

Table 4.7: Communication Channel Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The channels of communication are very effective and efficient.	43	2.00	5.00	3.7209	.93416
The organization uses appropriate communication media in every project	43	1.00	5.00	3.8140	.90648
Valid N (listwise)	42				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Email is widely used to coordinate projects and to communicate between team members. It has valuable behaviors that make it preferable, such as information could be sent to a list of team members at once, messages could be saved to document the process in case of a misunderstanding or miscommunication that needs to be looked over and the files can be attached and distributed (Watt, 2014). For the case of SIL Ethiopia, the respondents of the questionnaire described emails as the most used communication channel marking 40.9%, meetings and telephone communication on the other hand with 29.5% and 22.7% respectively. The frequently used communication channel of the projects is illustrated in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Communication Channels Frequently Used

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2.3	2.3	2.3
email	18	40.9	40.9	43.2
Meeting	13	29.5	29.5	72.7
Skype	2	4.5	4.5	77.3
telephone call	10	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	44	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Results, 2023

To the question that was asked on how frequently meetings are held in the projects 16% of the respondents replied the meetings were irregular, with no specified time and when only required. While 31.4% responded that meetings were being held monthly, 31.4% also said they held meetings quarterly meaning every three months. However, as (Watt, 2014) regular status updates are important for internal and external stakeholders daily may be too much; monthly is not enough. One update per week is usually about right. However, when deciding the frequency of communication flow it has to be determined how often it is necessary to relay the information so that it is effective, without throwing the stakeholders into information overload (Čulo & Skendrović, 2010).

Table 4.9: Frequency of Meetings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	2.3	2.3
	Irregularly	1	2.3	4.5
	Monthly	15	34.1	38.6
	not specified time	1	2.3	40.9
	other	5	11.4	52.3
	Quarterly	15	34.1	86.4
	semiannual or annually	1	2.3	88.6
	Weekly	4	9.1	97.7
	When required	1	2.3	100.0
	Total	44	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey Results, 2023

While 26 out of 44 of the respondents which is 59.1% responded that most of the communication directions were top-down which is to mean that communication flows from top leader or project leader to project team. 6.8% responded that communication directions were bottom up and horizontal.

Table 4.10: Communication Direction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	2	4.5	4.5
All directions	2	4.5	4.5
Bottom Up	3	6.8	6.8
Horizontal	3	6.8	6.8
Top-down and Bottom-up	8	18.2	18.2
Top Down	26	59.1	59.1
Total	44	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey Results, 2023

These results were supported by the discussions made in the interviews conducted by the study. The communication channels frequently used as interviewees pointed out are oral communications, email, Google Drives and letters. As for the direction of communication, the interviewees observed that all the top down, bottom up and horizontal communication were being implemented depending on the person being communicated. That is if the person is perceived to abuse the bottom-up communication direction they may be denied having that communication direction.

4.6. Communication Barriers

The study results reveal that there were geographical barriers in the dissemination of information to projects. Kuma (2019) explained in his research paper that extensive physical distance or geographical differences between project participants, sometimes extending over national boundaries, is the main cause leading to delays in decision-making. On the other hand, communications were delivered in simple language with good communication technology infrastructure for internal information flow. The findings also confirm that there is a good

environment in projects, and there is no cultural and language favoritism in the organization. The language barrier is not significant among project team members. On the other hand, average neutral response rates were found on that there was late or lack of responsive feedback. Table 4.10 illustrates questionnaire findings of table communication barriers.

Table 4.11: Communication Barriers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Project communications are not delivered in simple language and there is misunderstanding among team members and stakeholders	44	1.00	4.00	2.0455	1.05554
SIL Ethiopia has no good communication technology infrastructure to facilitate the dissemination of project information internally with the headquarter colleagues and project members	44	1.00	5.00	2.0455	1.05554
There is no good environment in the organization 's projects, which is comfortable to everyone and that will be a barrier to effective communication.	44	1.00	5.00	2.1591	1.14004
Project managers are not good in understanding team member 's personal problems or work-related issues to overcome communication barrier	43	1.00	5.00	2.6512	1.25136
I feel like there is cultural and language favoritism in the organization.	42	1.00	5.00	1.9048	1.07770
There are geographical barriers in dissemination of project information and if it happens project managers organize appropriate ways to solve the problem.	42	1.00	5.00	3.6905	.92362
There is late or lack of responsive feedback	43	1.00	5.00	3.1395	1.12507
There are language barriers between team members	43	1.00	5.00	2.2093	1.22587
There is poor communication skill in speaking and writing	43	1.00	5.00	2.3721	1.09160
Valid N (listwise)	39				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

The major communication barriers that were mentioned by interviewees were inconsistency, lack of skills in using the communication tools and technologies, giving detailed and unnecessary information caused by lack of training, prejudice, labeling and marginalizing, hiding information, stereotyping, geographical distance, gender issues especially in down country projects, cultural clashes and labeling by age are some of the common communication barriers discussed. Stereotyping occurs when you assume we know something about a person because of their cultural or social background (*Kumbakonam, 2016*).

Being an international organization of various nationalities has many opportunities, but has also some challenges as described by the interviewees. They continued to explain how oral communication was overlooked by expatriate staff. Whereas replies to emails especially by local staff could be perceived as ignorance for expatriate staff. The other major challenge in multicultural organizations is the language barrier.

4.7. Project Success and Communication Management

Baccarini (1999) explains that project management success has three key components which are (1) meeting time, cost, and quality objectives (project outputs and inputs); (2) quality of the project management process; and (3) satisfying project stakeholders' needs where they relate to the project management process. The findings of the study show that communication management has a significant impact on the success of a project. Projects are also meeting their schedule by accomplishing their budget constraints and the organization project satisfies their internal and external stakeholders.

Table 4.12: Project Success and Communication Management

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication management has a significant impact on the success of a project	44	3.00	5.00	4.5000	.59062
Projects meet their schedule objectives.	44	1.00	5.00	3.9773	.92733
Projects can be accomplished within budget constraints.	44	2.00	5.00	3.6591	.96311
SIL Ethiopia projects satisfy its internal and external stakeholders.	44	2.00	5.00	3.9318	.99762
Valid N (listwise)	44				

Source: Survey Results, 2023

With effective communication practices and processes, one can eliminate misunderstandings around project goals and objectives. There are going to be fewer conflicts. Team members and stakeholders will be on the same page. Planning for communication means that you take the time, early in the project planning process, to understand stakeholders and how they want to be communicated. This means they're more engaged and committed to the success of your project.

4.8. Correlation between Independent and Dependent variables

This section presents the results of the correlation analysis between the independent variables (internal and external communication, cultural diversity and communication, communication channels, and communication barriers) and the dependent variable (project success). The analysis used Pearson correlation coefficients to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables.

Table 4.13: Correlations between Internal and External Communication and Project Success

		Internal and External Communication	Project success and communication management.
Internal and External Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	44	44
Project success and communication management	Pearson Correlation	.601**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	44	44

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Table 4.14: Correlations between Cultural diversity and project success

		Cultural diversity and Communication	Project success and communication management.
Cultural diversity and Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	44	44
Project success and communication management.	Pearson Correlation	.532**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	44	44

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Table 4.15: Correlations between communication channels and project success

		Communication Channels	Project success and communication management.
Communication Channels	Pearson Correlation	1	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	44	44
Project success and communication management.	Pearson Correlation	.532**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	44	44

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Results, 2023

Table 4.16: Correlations between communication barriers and project success

		Communication Barriers	Project success and communication management.
Communication Barriers	Pearson Correlation	1	-.206
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.181
	N	44	44
Project success and communication management.	Pearson Correlation	-.206	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.181	
	N	44	44

Source: Survey Results, 2023

The results showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between internal and external communication, cultural diversity and communication, and communication channels

with project success. This means that higher levels of these variables are associated with higher levels of project success. On the other hand, there was a negative correlation between communication barriers and project success and communication management. This means that higher levels of communication barriers are related to lower levels of project success.

Table 4.17: Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) value	Strength	Direction
Greater than .5	Strong	Positive
Between .3 and .5	Moderate	Positive
Between 0 and .3	Weak	Positive
0	None	None
Between 0 and $-.3$	Weak	Negative
Between $-.3$ and $-.5$	Moderate	Negative
Less than $-.5$	Strong	Negative

Source: Survey Results, 2023

4.9. Interview Findings

Interviews were held to top managers at headquarter level who oversee the projects. The interviewees were asked about their observations on the communication channels and barriers of the projects, their experience with multicultural diversity challenges and conflicts and finally they were asked for their recommendation for bettering the communication practices of the projects. The interview findings are presented below.

The communication channels frequently used as interviewees pointed out are oral communications, email, google drives and letters. As for the direction of communication the interviewees observed that all the top down, bottom up and horizontal communication were

being implemented depending on the person being communicated. That is if the person is perceived to abuse the bottom-up communication direction they may be denied having that communication direction.

The major communication barriers that were mentioned by interviewees were inconsistency, lack of skills in using the communication tools and technologies, giving detailed and unnecessary information caused by lack of training, prejudice, labeling and marginalizing, hiding information, stereotyping, geographical distance, gender issues especially in down country projects, cultural clashes and labeling by age are some of the common communication barriers discussed. Stereotyping occurs when you assume we know something about a person because of their cultural or social background (Kumbakonam, 2016). However, the finding from the questionnaires denies that there is language and cultural favoritism. In addition, the questionnaire respondents on average were neutral for if they have encountered late or lack of responsive feedback.

Being an international organization of various nationality staff members has many opportunities, but has also some challenges as described by the interviewees. They continued to explain how oral communication was overlooked by expatriate staff. Whereas non replies to emails especially by local staff could be perceived as an ignorance for expatriate staff. The other major challenge in multicultural organization is language barrier.

The last interview question was the recommendation on how to better the communication management of the organization. The summary of the responses of the interviewees is presented below.

- Applying consistency in communication practices,
- Practicing top-down, bottom up and horizontal communications,
- Adopting quickly to tools and technologies especially as new donors may come up with different project template,
- Considering the nations and local communities communication practices,
- Standardizing the oral and written communications,
- etc.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter of this study addresses the results and recommendations for future studies. The research was undertaken to assess the practices of project communication management of projects under an organization called Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia). To achieve the objectives of the study and answer the research questions the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data through questionnaires and interviews. The objectives of the study were to answer the practices of internal and external communication, cultural diversity and communication, the communication channels, communication barriers and the project success and communication management therefore the questionnaire were prepared accordingly.

5.1. Summary of Findings

The main findings from this research are that communication management has a significant impact on the successful completion of a project. Although the organization (SIL) uses appropriate communication media and encourages two-way communication with there being no language or cultural favoritism in the organization, according to the questionnaire respondents, there are some communication barriers, such as geographical distance, language differences and lack of consistency and feedback.

- A project is successful when it achieves its objectives and meets or exceeds the expectations of the stakeholders (*Watt, 2014*). Stakeholders are people involved in the project directly or indirectly or in other word internal and external beneficiaries of a project. The researcher concludes from the findings of the research that there is moderately good practice of internal and external communication. However, the participants should practice giving responsive feedback on the various communication that is held in the projects. Feedback as we had discussed in the literature review section of this paper is “confirms message received and understood” (*Burke, 2003*). In addition, assigning one person or a specific group of people for external communications needs improvement so that the external stakeholders like donors would not be overwhelmed by information overload from various people of a project.

- As though the organization SIL Ethiopia being an international organization of staff from various countries of origin the results of the finding from the questionnaire illustrated that there were not many issues of conflicts arising from cultural differences.
- Findings of the research paper show emails were the most used communication channel marking followed by meetings and telephone communication. The communication direction resulted with 59.1% respondents responding that most of the communication directions were top-down which is to mean that communication flows from top leader or project leader to project team.
- The results revealed that the major communication barriers of the projects were geographical barriers and lack of responsive feedback in dissemination of information to projects. However, language barriers were not found significant among communication between project team members.

5.2. Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the project communication management of Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia), an international NGO that works on language development and translation. The paper used a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative data through interviews with top managers. The study analyzed the practices of internal and external communication, cultural diversity and communication, communication channels, communication barriers, and project success and communication management in SIL Ethiopia.

The study found that communication management has a significant impact on project success, and that the organization uses effective and efficient communication channels and methods. However, the some also identified some challenges and barriers in communication, such as geographical distance, language differences, cultural clashes, and lack of consistency and feedback. The study concluded by providing some recommendations for improving the communication management of the organization, such as providing training, standardizing communication practices, adopting new technologies, and considering local contexts and cultures. The study has shown that communication is a vital factor for project success, and that it

requires constant attention and improvement. Communication is not only a means to an end, but also an end in itself.

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of the questionnaires and interviews was relatively small and may not represent the views and experiences of all project staff and managers in SIL Ethiopia. Second, it focused mainly on the internal communication of the organization, and did not explore in depth of the external communication with other stakeholders and communities. Third, it did not measure the actual outcomes or impacts of the projects in terms of their goals and objectives.

5.3. Recommendation

The following points are recommendations of the researcher based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for improving the communication management of SIL Ethiopia:

- Provide regular and consistent training for project staff on oral and written communication skills, as well as on how to use email and other communication tools effectively and efficiently.
- Standardize the oral and written communication practices across the organization, and follow the specific formatting requirements for different types of documents, such as reports, proposals, abstracts, etc.
- Ensure timely and responsive feedback from headquarter colleagues to project staff, and vice versa, to avoid misunderstandings and delays in communication.
- Adopt new technologies and tools that can facilitate the dissemination of project information across geographical distances and language barriers, such as online platforms, video conferencing, and translation software. Wakeway (2021) in his paper suggested “to tackle the geographical barrier project team members are facing, a company must properly use technology-based communication rather than paper-oriented ones”.
- Consider the local contexts and cultures of the project stakeholders and communities and use appropriate communication media and methods that suit their needs and preferences.

- Provide cross cultural trainings to the project managers, project staff, staff and leaders of the organization.

5.4. Suggestion for future research

Due to time constraints, this research paper was limited to assess the project communication management practices of a specific NGO called Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia).

Therefore, suggestions for future research and practices are:

- Future research should conduct a larger-scale survey or interview with more project staff and managers across different regions and projects in SIL Ethiopia to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their communication practices and challenges.
- Examine the external communication of the organization with other stakeholders and communities, such as donors, partners, beneficiaries, government agencies, etc., and how it affects their relationships and collaborations.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication channels and methods used by the organization in terms of their costs, benefits, accessibility, usability, etc.
- Assess the outcomes or impacts of the projects in terms of their goals and objectives, and how they are influenced by the communication management of the organization.
- This study has contributed to the existing literature on project communication management by providing a case study of an international NGO that works on language development and translation. The study results also offer practical insights and recommendations for improving the communication management of SIL Ethiopia.

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ANNEX 1: Questionnaire

ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: THE CASE OF SIL ETHIOPIA

Dear respondent,

My name is Hela Tilaye, a postgraduate student in the Department of Project Management, School of Commerce, Addis Ababa University. As part of the course requirement for the award of MA in Project Management, I am conducting a research study on 'Assessment of Project Communication Management Practices: The case of SIL Ethiopia'. My purpose for writing to you is to solicit your cooperation in the study I am conducting. I am, therefore, enclosing herewith for your attention a questionnaire in which a variety of information is requested from you with regard to the title of this study.

I wish to state here that the research is purely for academic purpose and at no instance will it be used for any other purpose other than this. Hence, information given will be treated as strictly confidential. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Hela Tilaye

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Email: tilayehela@gmail.com

SECTION ONE – Personal Data: Please tick on the option that best describes your situation							
1. What is your gender?	Male _____			Female _____			
2. What is your highest level of education?	High school/ Certificate _____	Diploma _____	BA _____	MA or above _____			
3. What is your age group?	20-30	31-40	41-50	above 50			
4. Your experience with SIL (yrs.)?	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	above 20		
<i>Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Use the scales of 1 to 5 where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree</i>							
SECTION B – Internal and External Communication			1	2	3	4	5
1. Information is communicated efficiently and effectively to Project teams.							
2. Project team members are encouraged to communicate freely with their team members.							
3. Project team members are satisfied with the internal communication of the project they are engaged in.							
4. The project leaders communicate effectively and efficiently with the external stakeholders.							
5. Two way communication is encouraged at the project level as well as at the organizational level.							
6. There is late or lack of responsive feedback from Headquarter colleagues.							
7. Project status report is communicated periodically to project team members.							
8. Top leaders at Head Office level are approachable and reachable to be communicated by lower level staff							
9. Language is an issue to communicate with headquarter staff							

10. Communication improves teamwork.					
11. External Communication of the project is communicated through one assigned person.					
12. Internal and External communication in SIL Ethiopia plays a pivotal role for project success.					
SECTION C - Cultural diversity and Communication	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Differences in Language generate conflict among employees					
2. I prefer working with people who speak the same ethnic language as myself					
3. I'm able to communicate the information about my job to other cultures as much as I do to employees of my culture.					
4. Using different languages to communicate in the workplace does not create conflict among employees.					
5. I don't prefer working with people who speak the same ethnic language as myself over other languages.					
Section D - Communication Channels	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. The channels of communication are very effective and efficient.					
2. The organization uses appropriate communication media in every project					
SECTION E - Communication Barriers	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Project communication are not delivered in simple language and there is misunderstanding among team members and stakeholders					
2. SIL Ethiopia has no good communication technology infrastructure to facilitate the dissemination of project information internally with the headquarter colleagues and project members					
3. There is no good environment in the organization's projects, which is comfortable to everyone and that will be a					

barrier to effective communication.					
4. Project managers are not good in understanding team member's personal problems or work related issues to overcome communication barrier					
5. I feel like there is cultural and language favoritism in the organization					
6. There are geographical barriers in dissemination of project information and if it happens project managers organize appropriate ways to solve the problem.					
7. There is late or lack of responsive feedback					
8. There is language barriers between team members					
9. There is poor communication skill in speaking and writing					
Section F - Project success and communication management	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Communication management has significant impact on the success of a project					
2. Projects meet their schedule objectives.					
3. Projects can be accomplished within budget constraints.					
4. SIL Ethiopia projects satisfy its internal and external stakeholders					

SECTION G– Please tick on the option that best describes your observation				
1. Which communication tool of the organization is the best	a. telephone call,	b. meeting	c. e-mail	d. skype
2. How often do you hold meetings related to projects	a. weekly	b. Monthly	c. Quarterly	d. other_____
3. What does communication flow of the organization look like	a. Top-Down	b. Bottom-	c. Horizontal	d.other____

		UP		_____
4. What are your recommendation for the better communication management of the organization				
5. What are the challenges for communication of the organization				

Thank you!

ANNEX 2: Interview

	DATE _____
Place _____	
Time _____	
Interviewed Via _____	
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. What are the communication channels used in the project you participate in?	
2. What are the communication barriers you observed in the project and organization as a whole?	
3. Do you think that working interculturally has challenges in communication? How?	
4. Have you ever experienced misunderstanding and conflicts due to cultural clashes?	
5. How do you think the communication management of the project could get better? Do you have any recommendations?	