



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**GENDER BIAS IDEOLOGY AS MANIFESTED IN THE
GRAMMAR OF AFAN OROMO**

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**GENDER BIAS IDEOLOGY AS MANIFESTED IN THE
GRAMMAR OF AFAN OROMO**

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By Amanuel Raga

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List of abbreviation

1FS	First person Feminine singular
1MS	First person masculine singular
2P	Second person plural
2S	Second person singular
3F	Third person feminine
3FS	Third person feminine singular
3M	Third person masculine
3MS	Third person masculine singular
3P	Third person plural
AO	Afan Oromo
AUTO	Auto benefactive
BEN	Benefactive
CAUS	Causative
COP	Copula
DEF	Definite
EDAO	Eastern dialect of Afan Oromo
F	Female
FEM	Feminine gender
FUT	Future tense
GAS	Gada administrative system
M	Male
NEG	Negative
NOM	Nominal
PART	Particle
PAST	Past tense
POS	positive
SDAO	Southern dialect of Afan Oromo
SUB	Subject
TOP	Topic
WADAO	Western dialect of Afan Oromo

Abstract

This study explains how the grammar of Western dialect of Afan Oromo (WDAO hereafter) manifests gender bias ideology in the light of the socio-cultural stratification of the speakers of the language.

Afan Oromo follows a cultural hierarchy that favors men and demeans women. This language functions on binary gender system. Nouns are categorized under one of the two gender categories namely, masculine and feminine based on semantic criteria. Nouns with negative attributes are categorized under feminine gender while those with relatively positive attributes are categorized under masculine gender. This polarized linguistic property reflects the socio-cultural places of men and women in the language community.

In Afan Oromo gender bias is also manifested through administrative and profession titles. As this study tries to explain, administration and profession titles in different historical times of the language community show that women had been excluded from higher socio-political positions. In addition this study also shows that in spite of the fact at the present some Oromo women have access to political and social affairs. And this is attested by the lack of feminine forms of administration and professional titles.

As this study tries to show, some indefinite terms in WDAO also display gender bias ideology. These indefinite nouns are masculine terms that do not have feminine forms. As the study shows, these masculine indefinite terms reflect the past socio-cultural lives of the language community in which women have been marginalized. In addition these indefinite terms imply the habit of taking the masculine gender as normative in the present lives of the language community.

This study also shows that WDAO exhibits gender bias ideology through historically lost feminine forms of different terms. As this study argues this event might have different

sociolinguistic justifications but it would still be gender bias as it may challenge women's self esteem.

In addition, this study argues that verbs which express some socio-cultural activities like marriage, child rearing, and family administration in the language community exhibit gender bias. The grammar of WDAO employs conventions of word collocation based on the socio-cultural gender roles of men and women in Oromo society. This activity reflects the social places of men and women in the society.

Furthermore, this study also argues that proper names in Afan Oromo exhibit gender bias. In Afan Oromo proper names show gender bias in two ways. The first is the semantic connotations of the names. Some female names have negative connotations that may challenge women's self esteem while some male names have positive connotations that indicate the higher social place given to men in the society. The second is the absence of parallel female names for some male names. In spite of the fact that the grammar of the language allows the formation of female names parallel with male names we find gaps because of male dominance in the society.

This study also tries to show that the figurative use of nouns referring to male and female in Afan Oromo display gender bias. Nouns referring to female are figuratively used to express negative social values. On the other hand, nouns referring to male are used to express concepts that have positive and normative social values.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

1.1.1 The people

The Oromo belong to the Cushitic stock of people. They live in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. (Gragg 1982, Clamons 1992 and Greiferow-Mewis 2001) In Ethiopia the Oromo are estimated to be 26, 553,000 in number, 13,249,999 male and 13,303,001 female. (Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia 2005) According to Tesema Ta'a (2006), they are the largest ethnic group in the horn of Africa.

The Ethiopian Oromo occupy an area stretching from the Western end of the country to the Eastern end and from Southern end to up in the Northern part. (Gragg 1982, Baye Yimam 1986) Depending on their geographical location, the Oromo are engaged in different economic activities like pastoralism, crop cultivation and animal husbandry. (Clamons 1992) In the past the Oromo mainly followed a cultural belief of their own. However, today they may follow a syncretic culture of Christian, Muslim and Oromo beliefs. (ibid)

The Oromo are patriarchal and patrilineal people. (Asmarom 1973, Negaso 2000, and Mohammed 1990) According to Wondwesen (2000), gender bias ideology in Oromo society starts at the birth of a child. The 'ululation' sound for the herald of the child's birth is only three times for a female child while it may extend up to eleven times for a male child. The society also shows the ideology of gender bias through proverbs and folksongs. For instance, they utter proverbs like, [dala:tu dala: argata] 'one who begets female is female'. (ibid) [ta:u:-rra durba daltfu: wayya]. 'Better beget female than sit idle'.

Gender bias also prevails in the process of rearing male and female children. Depending on their sex, children receive unequal respect, responsibilities and

duties. Female children are assigned to undertake heavy workload until a few days before their marriage while male children train to be leaders in their society. (Negaso 2000)

The cultural gender bias ideology also manifests through the process of marriage. A woman is not allowed to choose her marriage partner. (Wondwesen 2000) It is the parents of the man or himself that chooses a woman for marriage. In formal cultural marriage, the man or his parents send [dʒa:rsoli:] 'elderly men' as mediators to the woman's parents to ask for their permission to let the man take the woman in marriage. The woman's parents ask the man or his parents to pay marriage price in exchange of their daughter. According to Negaso (2000), if the man cannot afford the marriage price, he is asked to work for the woman's parents or promise that their future children would be given to them (to replace the physical labor the woman covers at her parents' home).

Wondwesen (2000) argues that the act of asking bride-wealth in exchange of a woman given in marriage in Oromo society is a patriarchal practice that degrades and devalues woman. Moreover, according to Negaso (2000), in the past the husband had the right to even take away the lives of his wife and children if he thought that they deserved this punishment.

Another cultural practice that may be added to the unfavorable socio-cultural status of the Oromo woman is the practice of kidnapping women for marriage. Since not many could afford the bride-wealth given to the woman's parents, some men used to kidnapping women for marriage (now this practice is being left out because of modern law enforcement).

In Oromo society women are not allowed to inherit their parents' or their husband's property. (Wondwesen 2000) In the past Property ownership had been the exclusive right of men. Women had no right to own any valuable property. (Negaso 2000)

Generally, the Oromo traditionally had given higher social value to male and undermined the female. In addition to undermining women by their social practices, the male in traditional Oromo society showed their dominant social position by wearing [kallatfa] 'phallus' on their forehead. (Negaso 2000:128)

In formal cultural marriage, women are fed only with [aka:i:] 'roasted grain' for five consecutive days until their wedding days. On the contrary, men are fed with nutritious food like chicken and soup for fifteen consecutive days until their wedding days. This practice is to weaken women so that they cannot defend themselves from the possible physical struggle during sexual intercourse on the day of their marriage.

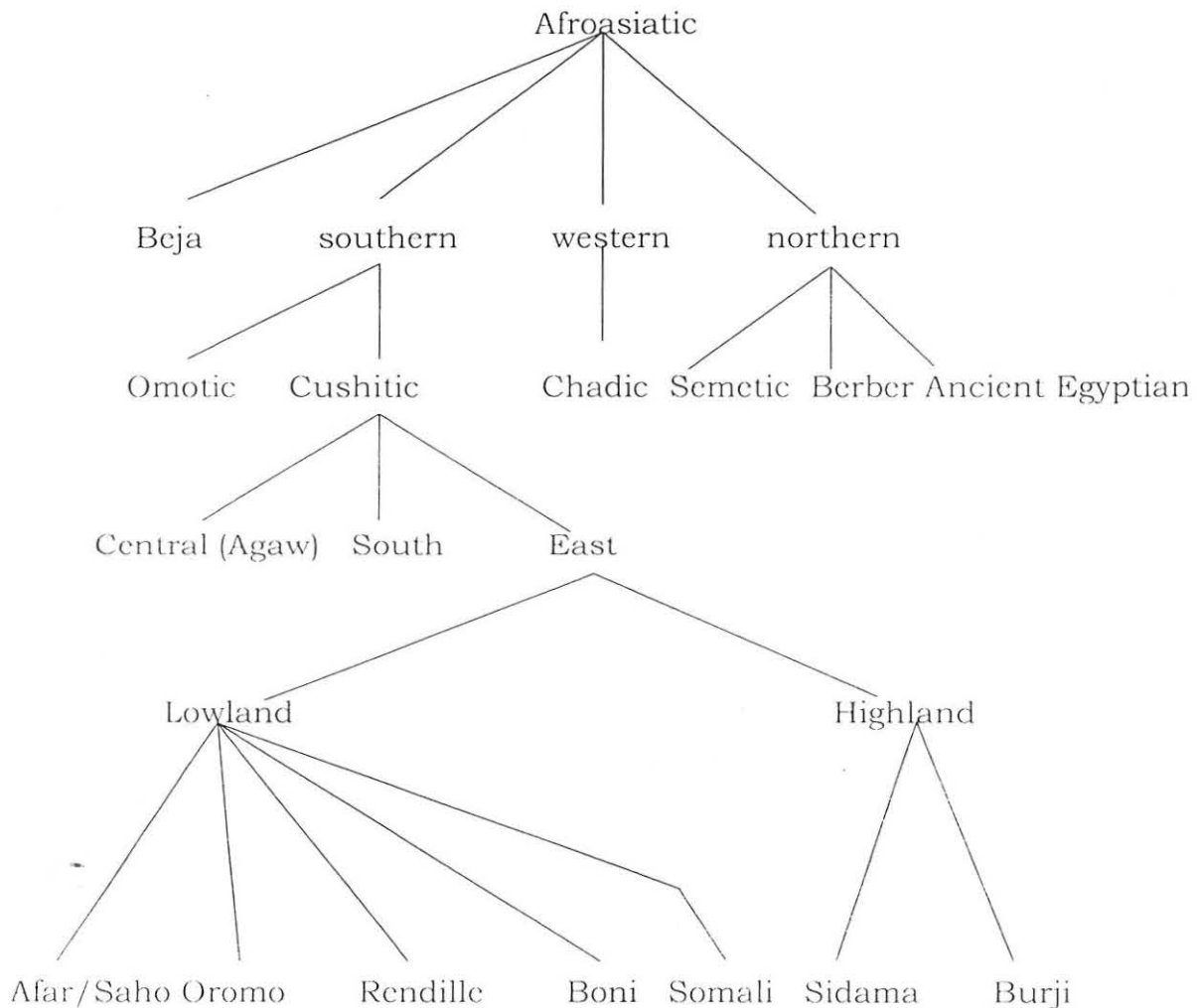
The Oromo women are not allowed to have pre marital sex. (ibid) In fact they are expected to be virgins. If a woman is not a virgin when she gets married, the man has the 'right' to beat and send her back to her parents (in which case it would be considered as shame for the woman and her parents).

The Oromo women are economically dependent. Their dependence has emanated from the socio-cultural lives of the society. Women are engaged in service giving works, while men are engaged in works that generate possessions. (ibid)

In the traditional Oromo administration system (the Gada administration system) women were not allowed to take part in socio-political activities. Even today, in spite of the availability of these possibilities, we do not see many women on administrative posts because of the fact that many are not educated.

1.1.2 The language

Afan Oromo belongs to the East Cushitic branch of Afroasiatic language family. (Bender 1976, Gragg 1982, Clamons 1992, and Griefenow-Mewis 2001) Regarding the position of Afan Oromo within Afroasiatic language family, Clamons (1992:8) proposes the following.



In relation to the other Ethiopian languages, Afan Oromo is a fairly studied language. However, the number of its dialects is not yet established. Many scholars, who studied the language, roughly classify Afan Oromo into different groups of dialects. For instance, Cerulli (1922) spots three groups, Macca (Limmu, Goma, Lieqa and Jimma), Tulama (dialects of Shoa) and Eastern

dialects. Bryan (1948) recognizes four groups of dialects, the Western (Macca) the Central (Tulama), the Northern (Wollo and Raya), the Eastern (Arsi, Guji and Borana). Heine (1981) distinguishes as far as six groups of dialects, the Northern dialects (Macca, Tulama, Raya, Wollo) the Eastern (Nole, Babille, [J]arso, Ala, Ittu, Odorra, Anniya, and Karayyu), and ... [Arsi]..., Guji, Borana, and Gabra. And Gragg (1982) distinguishes five groups of dialects, the Western (consisting Wallaga and North Ilubabor and Kaffa), the Eastern (Hararge), the southern (consisting Borana, Bale and perhaps with Oromo of North Kenya), the Central (comprising of large part of Shewa and possibly will extend to... [Arsi]...).

Afan Oromo is spoken as mother tongue and as second language mainly in Ethiopia and the horn of Africa. Clamons (1992:2) puts this fact as follows,

...as mother tongue it is spoken in southern Ethiopia, in western highlands between Blue Nile and Gojeb rivers, throughout much of Shoa, as far east as Harar and south into Kenya and also in communities in Wollo, Northern Ethiopia .Oromo is also spoken as a mother tongue in northern Kenya in communities that extend south throughout the Tana river valley to the coast of Indian ocean and in communities along the coast as far south as Kilifi.

It is also spoken widely as a second language in neighboring areas in the horn of Africa, especially in rural areas. (ibid)

According to Mohammed Hassen and Hayward (1980) Bender (1976) and Mohammed Hassen (1990), cited in Clamons (1992:5), "the Oromo people... [expanded]...toward the central highlands and adjacent areas in southern Ethiopia to occupy the area they inhabited now. During the time of their expansion, other Cushitic, Semetic and Omotic people were absorbed into the Oromo society. Oromo became the most essential lingua franca in the whole

area and continued to be the most important language for common communication in southern Ethiopia and neighboring areas in the horn of Africa. (Hodson cited in Clamons 1992) According to Heine (1980), Afan Oromo is replacing Burji, a Cushitic language spoken in the highland area of northern Kenya.

Today, in Ethiopia Afan Oromo is the official language of Oromia Region. It is used as a medium of instruction in schools (grade 1-8) and in the region's Teachers Training Colleges. In addition, from grade 9-12 it is taught as a subject and it is given in Ethiopian School Leaving Exam. It is taught as major and minor courses in different Ethiopian Universities. In Addis Ababa University it is taught as a major and minor course at BA and as major course at MA level. At Jimma and Haramaya Universities it is offered as a minor and major course at BA level. At Mekelle University it is offered as a minor course at BA level.

There are three newspapers printed in Afan Oromo. They are *Bariisaa* 'dawn' *Kallacha* 'fore head' and *Oromiyaa*. There are also services in Afan Oromo on Radio Ethiopia and Radio Fana and Ethiopian Television. (Wondwesen 2000:2)

1.2 Statement of the problem

The grammar of Afan Oromo operates on two gender systems (masculine and feminine). Objects and concepts are categorized under feminine or masculine gender depending on their natural sex, their positive and negative attributes, their social values and their relationships with the language community.

The categorization of objects and concepts under feminine or masculine gender depending on the physical nature of the objects and the attitude of the speakers on the references seem metaphorical conceptualization emanating from the gender bias ideology of the language community. According to the

grammar of Afan Oromo most objects and concepts with positive attributes, desirable social values, and at good relationship with the language community are categorized under masculine gender. On the other hand, most objects and concepts with negative attributes, undesirable social values and those that have negative relationships with the language community are grouped under feminine gender.

In addition to gender categorization, the language manifests the ideology of gender bias through its morphological and semantic system. Furthermore, some lexical items of the language and their exclusive usage with women or men show the gender bias of the community as practiced in their social and cultural lives. The fact that the Oromo socio-culturally favors males and disfavors females might be a reason for the language to reflect gender bias ideology. In the past this ideology had been potted only verbally while today it also manifests in text books and different written materials.

In 1992, when teaching materials were prepared in Afan Oromo, it seems that not much attention had been given to the gender imbalances, possibly for the absence of significant number of females in the planning team or the presence of other problems which engaged the attention of the team. In addition, no linguist or social scientist has given much weight to this problem yet.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study seeks to achieve one general and one specific goal. **Generally**, the study intends to scrutinize how socio-cultural gender bias manifests through language structure and explain the relation between the two. **Specifically**, the study intends to investigate and analyze areas of Afan Oromo grammar that exhibit gender bias ideology. To comply with this objective the morphology, syntax and semantic system of the language are scrutinized. The use of the feminine gender to express negative concepts like inferiority and undesirability

and masculine gender to explain concepts like superiority and strength are analyzed in light of the Oromo culture and social stratification.

1.4 Hypothesis of the study

Based on the socio-cultural status of male and female in Oromo society and the grammatical structure of Afan Oromo, I presuppose the following hypothesis.

- 1) The grammar of Afan Oromo maintains a hierarchy that physiologically favors men and challenges the self esteem of women.
- 2) The grammar of Afan Oromo reflects the social status of men and women in the language community.
- 3) The grammar of Afan Oromo functions as a hauler of gender bias ideology (male dominance and female subordination) in the society.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is believed to be a glimmer to show the magnitude of gender bias ideology in Afan Oromo to concerned scholars and language planners and call their attention to do some language planning work in this direction. It may also contribute a droplet of information to language and gender study, which is universally hot research topic today. In addition, the study is believed to evoke much scholarly debate on the relationship between social gender bias and language structure.

1.6 Research Design

Under this section the types of linguistic data collected for the study and the methodologies used to collect them would be discussed. Furthermore, the methodologies used for the analysis of the data would also be expounded.

1.6.1 Area of the study

This study focuses on the Wollega dialect of Afan Oromo (one of the Western dialects of Afan Oromo according to Gragg 1982). This dialect is chosen for the reason that, (from my personal observation) Afan Oromo text books for grade one through twelve exhibit the dominance of this dialect which contains a lot of gender bias ideology.

1.6.2 Methods of data collection and data analysis

The study is based on quantitative and qualitative data. These data have been collected from different sources using various data collection techniques. Secondary sources such as Afan Oromo text books, grammar books, and one specific Oromo-English dictionary have been used to collect nouns, verbs, and different expressions. In addition, primary sources have also been used to collect proper nouns and different expressions.

1830 common nouns have been collected from Tilahun Gamta's (1989) Oromo- English dictionary. Then these have been examined for their gender assignments in different contexts. Then the nouns have been grouped under masculine or feminine grammatical gender.

With the help of three literate field assistants, 1012 proper names have randomly been collected from residents of Dembi Dollo 03 kebele. Then 937 of the names have been filtered out from the crude data. Then these have been analyzed for their semantic connotations and their morphological structure.

In addition, administrative and profession titles, generic forms of nouns, and verbs that express socio-cultural practices have also been collected from secondary sources like text books, grammar books and books written on the history and culture of the Western Oromo (specifically Wollega).

The analyses of these data have taken place in various ways. For instance, the administrative and the profession titles have been analyzed in the light of the past and the present social, cultural, and political lives of the language community. This has involved comparison of gender roles in the past and the present and how they manifest in the language. And the analysis of verbs that express socio-cultural practices has taken place in the light of the social gender roles of men and women in the language community.

A significant library research has also been done to collect data on how the grammars of the other dialects of the language distinguish gender. Then the findings have been compared with the Wollega dialect.

Participatory observation has also been used to collect different figurative expressions that engaged nouns that refer to man and woman. Then the expressions have been examined for their pragmatic connotations.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptual framework

This section tries to discuss concepts such as gender, gender identity, gender ideology, the role of language in the socio-cultural lives of a society, and the relationship between gender and language.

In common usage gender is the difference between men and women. It is also common to hear people use the term 'gender' interchangeably with 'sex'. (Encyclopedia Britannica 2007) Yet, in the field of social sciences gender refers to social rather than biological differences between men and women. For instance, according to Money (1994:163) "In popularized and scientifically debased usage, sex is what you are biologically; and gender is what you become socially; gender identity is your own sense or conviction of maleness or femaleness."

Even if scholars like Money (ibid) define gender identity as one's conviction of maleness and femaleness, for some scholars like Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000) gender identity is what different cultures define as masculine or feminine based on different stereotypes or gender roles. This idea entails that one does not pick whatever gender he/she wants since it is one's culture that prescribes maleness or femaleness.

Gender starts to be formed before one's birth and continues to develop in one's life time. Regarding this Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000:15) write as follows.

The making of a man or a woman is a never – ending process that begins before birth – from the moment someone begins to

wonder if the pending child will be a boy or a girl. And the ritual announcement at birth that it is in fact one or the other instantly transforms an "it" into a "he" or a "she" standardly assigning it to a lifetime as a male or a female.

Gender identity construction starts by parents and later every child takes up the responsibility of transforming it. Male and female transform gender in their everyday lives based on the gender roles or cultural stereotypes that define maleness and femaleness. Regarding this Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000:30) write the following.

Gender continues to be transformed as we move into the market place, as we learn to act like secretaries, lawyers, managers, janitors. And it continues to be transformed as our family status changes as we learn to be wives and husbands, mothers, fathers, aunts and uncle, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers. As we age we continue to learn new ways of being men and women; what is expected from the teenaged girl is rather different from expectations for a woman in her mid forties and those expectations differ from those for a woman approaching eighty.

As the above argument tries to state, one learns and performs to be male or female. According to Bonvillian (2000:174) one learns and accepts gender roles through a process called "socialization".

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000) different societies rule people's memberships in gender order through sets of thought called gender ideology. And they use gender ideology to explain and confirm people's membership in the society.

Gender ideology is built as sets of principles among a society. These principles explain the socio-cultural roles of men and women in the society. Men and women are also judged based on these principles. For instance, according to Amadiume (1987:93-4) in Igbo society of Nigeria women are judged as bad or good based on their performance of the roles expected of them.

... a good daughter, wife , and mother...looked after her husband, never refused him food and made sure that things worked out well in the household. She looked after her children, fed them, kept them clean and gave them good home training. She usually helped her husband financially through her own efforts. If her husband was unable to provide money for food, she was able to support her household through farming, marketing and trading. She was not quarrelsome and protected her children against any form of danger. If necessary she would even protect them from their father. A woman's self denial in relation to her children was expressed in the belief that mothers starved before their children. She did not eat before her children had done so.

On the contrary, according to Amadiume (1978) a bad woman in Igbo society is a woman who does not conform to the above principles. As (ibid) argues the Igbo society does not judge men as bad or good except stressing their duties.

A society is an organized group of people functioning in the background of different customs, religious beliefs, taste, preferences, social institutions, etc. All of these influence the behaviors of individuals in the society. (Sankaranarayanan 2001:1) And according to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000), as a product of social reality, language reflects the socio-cultural behavior of a community who speaks it. In other words, language reflects the thoughts, opinions, attitudes, and culture of its users.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000), gender is rooted in language as a system of symbols, or as mixture of form and meaning in communicative practice in a variety of ways. Gender can be the actual content of a linguistic sign. For example English third-person singular pronouns distinguish between inanimate 'it' and male and female animate '*she/her, he/him/his*'. The suffix '-ss' transforms a male or generic noun into a female one as in the case of '*heir; heiress*'. (ibid:30)

Gender ideology influences linguistic conventions. It could set rules for choice of orders. For instance according to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000: 34)

The fact that we say, "Mr. and Mrs. Jones" not "Mrs. and Mr. Jones" and "husband and wife" not- "wife and husband" is a matter of convention. This is a point where linguistic convention is determined by gender ideology and in turn, supports the ideology at least implicitly.

Language helps its speakers to communicate their culture and customs to their up coming generations. Regarding this, Miller (1973:176) argues as follows.

...in the way different languages represent peoples experience is closely tied to the variations in the social customs and world views in the different societies. Since language is learned early in life and certainly provides one means by which they communicate their world views to their children, it seemed a possible factor in maintaining a society's particular world view.

The world views Miller states above includes gender ideology of different societies. Hence, language also serves as a tool that facilitates the construction and sustainability of gender. This symbiotic relationship between language and gender sometimes directs us to the moments of historical changes of a society's custom and philosophy. In these historical changes,

language conventions tend to change along. For instance, the absence of title for woman without showing her marital status like *Mr.* for man in English language in the past and its invention today may show this fact. (Bonvillian 2000: 185)

In addition, according to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000) language constrains its speakers' thoughts through its patterned conventions, which were once shaped by the culture and politics of the society. When a society passes its social customs and world views to a new generation language functions as a preserver (through its convections). This constrains the new generation by leaving them no choice of order but the one inherited from the older generation.

Even if it may be difficult to tell the share of either the masculine or the feminine in influencing the change of linguistic conventions, it would not be hard to find out to whose advantage those conventions work. For instance, the absence of title equivalent to sir for a female manager in English as argued by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet may mean that women have been excluded from business in the past.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Under this section, I would discuss different theoretical frames so far used by different scholars for the investigation of gender bias in language. In addition, I would also indicate which theoretical framework I use for this study.

So far researches that have been done on gender bias in language mainly have focused on the difference between women's and men's language use in different societies. These researches are divided into two broad categories depending on the angles from which they give explanations to the differences. The two angles of arguments are taken as theories of language and gender.

One of the theories is called the difference theory and the other is the dominance theory.

The difference theory tries to argue that the difference between female's and male's language use has come about as a result of linguistic cultural difference between female and male members of a linguistic community. Deborah Tannen's (1990) *You just don't understand! Women and Men in conversation* is an example for this theory. As she argues, Boys and girls grow up in what are essentially different cultures, so talk between women and men is cross-cultural communication. According to this theory, men and women in a certain linguistic community belong to different linguistic cultures and this has brought about the difference between their language uses.

However, according to Cameron in Sunderland (2006: 122) many of the early researches on language and gender have focused on gender differences in language use and the very idea of focusing on this dimension of study seems that their objectives are to provide a ground for the already existing gender bias ideology.

The dominance theory considers that both men and women in a certain linguistic community belong to the same linguistic culture and argues that the difference between men's and women's language use comes about from men's power dominance in the language community. According to this theory men and women members of a linguistic community are unequal in status and power. Robin Lakoff's (1975) *Language and Women's place* and Dale Spender's (1980) *Man made language* are some of the earliest researches that used the dominance approach. Wondwesen Teshfaye's (2000) *The Effect of Laguu in the Oromo Society* also has been done from this angle and it is one of its kinds for Ethiopian languages.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Afan Oromo *la langue* or the underlying socially established system of linguistic units and rules of the

language covertly ascribes positive and normative qualities to male and negative or secondary ones to female.

Thus, this study investigates gender bias in Afan Oromo with the consideration of the dominance theory and Bonvillian's (2000) definition of gender bias in language, *la langue*. According to Bonvillian (ibid:176), gender bias is "the reproduction and reinforcement of negative gender stereotypes which becomes internalized as negative symbols for both genders." And language (*la langue*) persistently and covertly ascribes "positive and normative qualities to males and negative or secondary ones to females. This property of language becomes internalized through contemporary language (*la parole*)." (ibid:205) Bearing this argument in mind, the grammar of Afan Oromo is critically analyzed in the light of different socio-cultural and historical contexts of the language community.

2.3 Review of related literature

This section presents different relevant literature on the study of gender bias in language.

As Sunderland (2006:2) argues, the idea of gender and language was there before its study was considered. This idea had been manifested in two ways; i.e. the prescriptive ideas of how men and women should speak and the 'folk-linguistics' which dealt with how both men and women do speak.

Both manifestations of the early idea of gender and language show the demeaning effect of male dominated society on women. The prescriptive idea shows that women had no right of choosing how to speak, for instance, they were expected to keep their voices low. And the 'folk-linguistics' shows the exaggerated fact about how women speak and that this idea was used to legitimize their inequality with men. For instance, the following proverbs of different cultures from Coate (1993:16) show this.

In addition to lexicons, Lakoff also discusses the syntactic peculiarity of women's speeches in English. She writes that women's speeches are dominated by tag questions. As she argues this has emanated from lack of confidence which resulted from male domination in the society. However, Holmes (1983) research on Tags questions in English language, challenges Lakoff's explanation on the origin of the domination of women's speeches by tag questions.

After observing linguistic imbalances between male and female in English language Lakoff argued that these issues are worth studying because they show real world imbalances and inequalities. She also argues that some of the gender imbalances reflected in the structure of language causes a psychological damage to women's personality.

Wondwesen Tesfaye's (2000) *The Effect of Laguu on Women in Oromo society* investigates how Oromo women's speech varies from that of the men. According to Wondwesen, in Oromo society a wife should not mention the names of her father-in-law, her elder brother-in-law, the best men, her husband and her husband's clan. She is also not allowed to mention words that have the same initial sounds and/or syllables as in the name of any of these categories. As a result of which she uses different techniques such as circumlocution, synonyms, and special terms used to avoid taboo, and syllable and phoneme substitution or addition. And this practice challenges women to communicate their idea effectively because at every point in their speeches they have to stop and think of the words they have to choose to escape the taboo. (ibid)

In the past many scholars believed that grammatical gender did not have any connection with social gender. However, recently researchers have started to come up with facts that reveal that grammatical gender systems are linked to social gender in a number of ways. For instance Boroditsky (2001) showed that speakers whose dominant language is German assign male

characteristics to masculine noun *der tisch*, 'table'; whereas French speakers assign female characteristics to the same object, *la table* 'table' which is feminine noun in French. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2000) also argue that grammatical gender provides a convenient link to social gender for thinking and talking about things.

The grammars of different languages manifest gender bias ideology by their conventions. These conventions are set and taught as rules to be followed in language acquisition. For instance, as Bonvillian (2000) argues, the grammar of English language encodes distinction in lexical classes (nouns, verbs, and adjectives). And its syntactic structure also manifests gender bias by placing the important segments earlier than they appear in unmarked sentences, as in placement of male before female. The comparison of similar construction denoting age and status hierarchies may show this. (ibid)

Further more, the use of feminine marking morphemes, *-ette* or *-et* and *-y* or *-ie* for diminutive function, some male/female sets of paired words such as *bachelor/spinster*, the very meanings of *woman*' and *man* and, lexical items derived from them may reflect the inequality between genders. The lexical items derived from the word *man* are seen used positively as having good trait admired by society and representing humanity while words derived from *woman* like *womanish* for instance, suggest traits not socially approved when used with man. (Bonvillian 2000:198-205)

Sometimes the use of feminine suffixes with some words show the past social gender bias in the language community. For instance according to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) the use of the feminine suffix *-ess* in *actress* shows the fact that acting is gendered and that male and female actors generally portray different kinds of characters, are expected to have different kinds of skills, and Some hundred years ago English actors were all males.

According to (ibid), in English language the feminine suffix *-ess* shows more gender bias. As a convention this feminine suffix is used to derive feminine nouns from masculine nouns. The noun to which *-ess* is added implies, but does not specify, male gender. An actor and a waiter are still generally considered to be male but a driver or a murderer can readily be male or female.

Lexical items may also show the relation between a linguistic sign and social gender. For example according to Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2000:60) the adjectives *pretty* and *handsome* have background meanings corresponding to cultural ideals of good looks for females and males respectively, and are generally used gender specifically or to invoke social characters associated with male or female. Thus, the description *a pretty boy* in English is usually used with a sarcastic scorn.

In addition, lexical items also show the social gender inequality through their meanings. For instance according to Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2000), we find old masculine-feminine pairs of words in the lexicon that have asymmetric meanings. The inequality in meaning between the pairs is related to the asymmetric social positions of men and women in society, such as *master* and *mistress*, *governor* and *governess*.

Socio-cultural gender bias may also manifest through the conventions of naming. Socio-cultural gender bias creates gaps between possible male-female parallel names. For instance, according to Zelealem Leyew (2003), some male names in Amharic do not have parallel female names; despite the fact that the language allows the possibility. Consider the following examples from Zelealem Leyew (2003:195)

[mængist-u]	'his government'
[mærr-a]	'he led'

CHAPTER THREE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses how gender bias manifests through the grammatical structure of AO. The chapter begins with introduction to grammatical gender in AO. Then it discusses how gender bias manifests through gender categorization of nouns, administration and profession titles, gendered terms that define male gender as normative, absence of feminine forms of some terms, verbs, proper names, and figurative uses of nouns referring to men and women.

3.1 Gender in Afan Oromo

This section is an introduction to AO grammatical gender. It expounds the picture of grammatical gender in AO. And it is required for the understanding of the later discussion of the data analysis. Even if this section particularly discusses grammatical gender as it appears in the Wollega dialect of AO I would stick to referring to the language as AO for simplicity.

In AO most nouns are not overtly marked for gender. According to Nordfeldt (1947), Clamons (1992), and Griefenow-Mewis (2001), a small closed set of nouns are marked overtly as feminine or masculine, with feminine gender marker [-ti:/tti:] and masculine gender marker [-sa/ssa] or [-u:] as in example (1) below, and with the masculine [-itʃtʃa] and feminine [-itti:] as in example (2) below. In addition, proper names may also be distinguished by morphemes [-a:] for male and [-e:] for female as in [du:l-a:] and [du:l-e:] respectively. Morphemes [-a] and [-itu:] also distinguish male and female names as in [ibs-a:] and [ibs-itu:] respectively.

(1)

- a) [dʒa:r-ti:/sa]
old woman/old man
- b) [obbole:-tti:/ssa]
sister/brother
- c) [oge:-tti:/ssa]
expert (female)/expert (male)

Definite marker may also be suffixed to some animate nouns, and to some adjective stems to indicate that a specific individual is being referred to distinctly for male and female. (Griefenow-Mewis 2001) Consider the following cases.

(2)

- a) [ho:l-itʃtʃa/itti:]
'the sheep/(male) the sheep (female)'
- b) [le:nc'c'-itʃtʃa/itti:]
'the lion/the lioness'

According to Griefenow-Mewis (2001:23), in AO "some names of animals can be differentiated with respect to their gender by adding the words [korma], 'male' and [daltu:], 'female'." For example as in [le:nc'c'a korma] 'lion' [le:nc'c'a daltu:], 'lioness'.

In addition to suffixing different gender markers to some nouns, gender is also assigned covertly for some nouns, with the use of agreement markers on modifiers, anaphors, and on the verb, not on the noun itself. (Clamons 1992) Consider the following examples.

(3)

- a) [le:nc'c' -i bine:n -ssa c'im -a: -da]
lion NOM beast 3M strong 3M COP
'Lion is a strong beast.'
- b) [le:nc'i inni ati argite sun gudd -a: -da]
lion NOM 3M you saw which big 3m COP
'The lion that you saw is big.'

In the above general expressions [le:nc'c'-i], 'lion generic' is assigned masculine gender covertly by the use of agreement marker [-a:] on the adjectives [c'im-a:] 'strong 3M' in (3a) and [gudd-a:] 'big 3M'.

^{here}
In AO, personal pronouns are distinguished by gender in the third person singular forms. (Clamons 1992, Greiferow-Mewis 2001) Observe the following list.

(4)

<i>Topic subject</i>		<i>Non-topic subject</i>		<i>Absolute</i>		<i>Possessive</i>
[ise:n/ishe:n]	3F	[ise:/ishe:]	3F	[ise:/ishe:]	3F	[se:/she:] 3F
[inni]	3M	[isa:]	3M	[isa]	3M	[isa:] 3M

Most adjectives are marked morphologically as feminine or masculine in agreement with the nouns they modify. Griefenow-Mewis (2001:28), classifies Oromo adjectives into four groups based on the gender markers they take. The first group distinguish masculine by [-a:] and feminine by [-o:] as in example below.

(5)

- | | | |
|----|----------------|--------------|
| a) | [t'inn-a:/o:] | 'small M/F' |
| b) | [dip'p'-a:/o:] | 'narrow M/F' |
| c) | [furd-a:/o:] | 'fat M/F' |
| d) | [gudd-a:/o:] | 'big M/F' |
| e) | [k'all-a:/o:] | 'thin M/F' |

The second group of adjectives identifies masculine by [-a:] and feminine by [-tu:] as in the following example.

(6)

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a) | [bad-a:/tu:] | 'bad M/F, wicked M/F' |
| b) | [bare:d-a:/tu:] | 'beautiful M/F, handsome M/F' |
| c) | [gaba:b-a:/tu:] | 'short M/F' |
| d) | [d ^ʒ ab-a:/tu:] | 'strong M/F' |
| e) | [dʒi:d-a:/tu:] | 'wet M/F' |
| f) | [la:f-a:/tu:] | 'soft M/F' |
| g) | [ulfa:t-a:/tu:] | 'respected, honored, pregnant' |

The third group of adjectives is marked by [-ssa] and [-tti:] or by [-tʃtʃa] and [-tti:] to distinguish masculine and feminine respectively. Consider the following example.

(7)

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--------------------------|
| a) | [hijje:-ssa/tti:] | 'poor M/F' |
| b) | [dure:-ssa/tti:] | 'powerful M/F, rich M/F' |
| c) | [gurra:-tʃtʃa/tti:] | 'black M/F' |
| d) | [dulla -tʃtʃa/tti:] | 'old M/F' |

According to Clamons (1992), this class is productive. The adjectives in this class can be used as nouns, so that [hijje:-ssa] can stand alone as a referring expression for a poor male and [hjje-tti:] for a poor female.

The fourth group of adjectives is non gender distinctive. Adjectives in this group are used with both masculine and feminine without any morphological modifications unlike the ones under group 1-3 above. According to Griefenow-Mewis (2001), this group of adjectives terminate with [-e:] or [i:] or [-a]. Observe the following.

(8)

- | | | |
|----|-----------|---------------------|
| a) | [adi:] | 'white' |
| b) | [maga:la] | 'brown' |
| c) | [fago:] | 'distant, far away' |
| d) | [ga:ri:] | 'good' |
| e) | [ba:jje:] | 'many, much' |

According to Clamons (1992) a small group of adjectives is also marked for gender with [-a:] and [-o:ftu:] , as in [mi'a?-a:] 'sweet 3M' and [mi'?-o:ftu:], 'sweet 3F'.

Except for the group of adjectives under example (8) above, the other adjectives in AO are marked for agreement. For instance, in (9a) bellow, [gura-tʃtʃ-i], 'black 3M' agrees with masculine noun [daga:], 'stone' and in (9c) [dulla- tʃtʃ-i] 'old 3M' agrees with masculine [sanga:], 'ox'.

In contrast, [gurra:-tti:] 'black 3F' agrees with feminine [hinda:k'k'o:], 'hen' in (9b) and [dulla-tti:] 'old 3F' agrees with feminine [sa:ww-i], 'cow' in (9d).

(9)

- a) [daga: gurra -tʃtʃ -i c'im -a: -da]
stone black 3M NOM strong 3M COP
'Black stone is strong.'
- b) [hinda:k'k'o: gurra: -tti: -n ʔin- barrf -te]
hen black 3F NOM FOC flew 3F
'A black hen flew.'
- c) [sanga: dulla -tʃtʃ -i ʔin- du -ʔe]
ox old 3M NOM FOC died 3M
'The old ox died.'
- d) [sa:ww -i dulla -tti: -n ʔin- bad -te]
cow NOM old 3F NOM FOC disappeared 3F
'The old cow disappeared.'

According to Clamons (1992), when a third person singular subject is feminine and also a topic, its verb is marked with [-t-] which follows the stem, precedes tense and negative markers, and agrees with the subject. Consider the following examples.

(10)

- a) [dubarti: -n c'im -tu: -n sun ʔin- du: -te]
woman NOM strong 3F NOM that FOC died 3F
'That strong woman died.'
- b) [gurba:-n c'im -a: -n sun ʔin- du:e]
boy NOM strong 3M NOM that FOC died
'That strong boy died.'

c) [hintall -i dɛ:r -tu: -n ?in- bad -te]
 girl NOM tall 3M NOM FOC disappeared 3F
 'The tall girl disappeared.'

d) [gurba: -n kale:ssa: ?in- bade]
 boy NOM yesterday FOC disappeared
 'The boy who came yesterday disappeared.'

In (10a) and (10c) above, the feminine subjects [dubarti:-n], 'woman' and [hintall-i] 'the girl' both are topics of the verbs and agree with them in number and gender and are formed as [du:-te] 'died F' and [bad-te] 'disappeared F'. In (10b) and (10d), the subjects [gurba:], 'boy' is masculine and topic, and agrees with the verbs, [du?e] 'died' and [dufe] 'came'.

In AO, plural verbal inflections do not show gender distinction. (Clamons 1992) The form is the same regardless of the gender of the subject nominals, or their order in coordinate constructions. Consider the following example.

(11)

a) [dubrt -o:t -i lama:-n kal:ssa duf-an c'im -o: -da]
 Women 3P NOM two NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3P COP
 'The two women who came yesterday were strong.'

b) [di:r -ot -i lama:-n kal:ssa duf -an c'im -o: -da]
 men 3P NOM two NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3P COP
 'The two men who came yesterday were strong.'

c) [gurba: fi hintall -i kal:ssa duf -an c'im -o: -da]
 boy and girl NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3P COP
 'The man and the woman who came yesterday were strong.'

The third person plural verb form is [ɗuf-an] 'came' in both (11a) and (11b), in agreement with both [dubrt-o:t-i] 'women' and [di:r-ot-i] 'men'. In (11c) too [ɗuf-an] 'came' is in agreement with [gurba: fi hintall-i] 'the boy and the girl.'

Having discussed the picture of grammatical gender in AO in section (3.1) above, I would pass on to the discussion of how gender bias manifests in AO in sections (3.2-3.8) below.

3.2 Gender categorization of nouns based on attributes of the referents

Under this section, I would discuss how the grammar of AO manifest gender bias via categorization of nouns under different grammatical genders based on semantic criteria. In AO different nouns are assigned feminine or masculine gender on the bases of the attributes of the referents they denote.

In the past some scholars believed that grammatical gender do not have semantic function. For example Ibrahim (1973) in Clamons (1992:130) writes that "the gender assigned to a particular noun neither adds nor subtracts from the meaning of that noun...this is because, semantically gender is an empty category." Yet, for some scholars like Castellino (1975) who carried out research on nominal classification in Cushitic languages, grammatical gender is semantically not empty.

In Cushitic languages, gender reveals a multifaceted reality, which passes through language in association of different categories arranged in sets of oppositions. (ibid) This in fact is not restricted to the Cushitic languages. It is the characteristics of other Afroasiatic languages too. For example according to Diakonoff (1988:58-59) "females, diminutives and objects that play a passive role in society are characteristics of feminine nouns in Afroasiatic languages." According to Baye Yimam (personal communication), in Amharic

(a Semetic language), any noun can be categorized as feminine or masculine in speech based on pragmatics.

In Tigrinya another Semetic language, except a small group of nouns that have permanent gender, for most nouns gender is assigned based on semantic criteria. (Huang 1990 cited in Clamons 1992)

According to Sasscs (1984), the opposition of gender categorization in Cushitic languages gives less value to natural sex as categorization is primarily semantic. By the same token, in AO too the question of whether or not nouns should be categorized under one of the two genders is based on Semantic criteria.

According to Clamons (1992) in Wallaga dialect of AO gender categorization is based on pragmatic knowledge. This linguistic property follows a cultural hierarchy that devalues women and favors men. In the following sections 3.2.1-3.2.4 below, I would discuss how gender bias ideology manifests through categorization of nouns under different grammatical genders depending on attributes of the referents. These attributes are size, power, and social values. Each of these is discussed below.

3.2.1 Gender categorization of nouns based on the size of the referents

This section discusses how the grammar of AO manifests gender bias through categorization of nouns under masculine or feminine gender on the bases of the size of the referents they denote.

Size is the measurements or amount of something, degree of largeness or smallness. In AO entities that are relatively small in size are referred to as feminine, while the ones that are relatively large are referred to as masculine. Consider the following examples.

(12)

a) <i>feminine noun</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[indʒdʒidʒdʒi:]	'nit'
[k'urt't'ummi:]	'fish'
[k'uba mogge:]	'little finger'
[burk'itu:]	'small stream'
[bok'k'ollo: orome:]	'indigenous maize of the Oromo'
[adudde:]	'motorbike'
[heleko:ftari:]	'helicopter'
b) <i>masculine noun</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[arba]	'elephant'
[ro:bi:]	'hippopotamus'
[abbu:ddu:]	'thumb'
[hank'a:k'u:]	'egg'
[bok'k'ollo: tʃa:ina:]	'Chinese maize'
[gala:na]	'sea'
[ajjari:] / [t'ijja:ra]	'air plane'

The above nouns under examples (12a) and (12b) are referred to as feminine and masculine respectively depending on the size of their referents in relation to other referents in their respective classes or relative to referents in other classes. For example [k'uba mogg-e:], 'little finger' is smaller than [abbu:ddu:], 'thumb', hence, their categorization as feminine and masculine is based on their intra class size comparison. On the other hand, [indʒdʒidʒdʒi:], 'nit' and [arba] 'elephant' are referred to as feminine and masculine respectively,

depending on their inter class size comparison.¹ In AO some nouns are not overtly marked for gender. For these nouns, categorization under masculine or feminine grammatical gender takes place by covertly marking the adjectives, and the verbs they appear with in different expressions. Consider the following examples.

(13)

- a) [indʒdʒidʒdʒi: -n rife:nsa -tti si mat't'an -ti]
 nit NOM hair POST you sticks 3F
 'Nit sticks to your hair.'
- b) [k'urt'ummi:-n bifa:n ke:ssa dzira:t -ti]
 fish NOM water in lives 3F
 'Fish lives in water.'
- c) [k'ub -i mogg -e: gaba:b -tu: -da]
 finger NOM end 3F short 3F COP
 'The little finger is short.'
- d) [burk' -itu: -n kun goga: dzir -ti]
 stream 3F NOM this drying being 3F
 'This stream is drying.'
- e) [bok'k'ollo: -n orom -e: dʒiʔa sadi: -tti biltʃa:t -ti]
 maize NOM Oromo 3F month three POST ripe 3F
 'The indigenous maize of Oromo ripens in three month.'

1. Some of the nouns listed under feminine or masculine gender under section 3.2.1-3.2.4 refer to sexed referents. For these nouns it is their unmarked forms that are categorized as feminine or masculine on the bases of the referents' attributes. Otherwise, in specific expressions these nouns would be marked for gender on the bases of the referents biological sex. Consider the following example. [arb-i daltu:-n ilmo: ise: e:g-ti] 'The female elephant protects her child.' In this expression the subject NP [arb-i] is marked for gender by the term [daltu:].

- f) [adudde: -n ba:je: fi:g -ti]
 motorbike NOM much runs 3F
 'Motorbike runs very much.'
- g) [heleko:fatri: -n bala:mball -e: K'ab -ti]
 helicopter NOM Propeller 3F has 3F
 'Helicopter has propeller.'

In the above sentences feminine nouns such as [k'uba mogg-e:] 'the little finger', [bok'k'ollo: orom-e:] 'indigenous maize of Oromo', [burk'-itu:], 'stream' and [adudd-e:], 'motorbike' are overtly marked with feminine marking morphemes, [-e] and [-itu:]. While [indʒɔdʒidʒɔdʒi:], 'nit', [k'urt't'ummi:] 'fish' and [heleko:ftari:], 'helicopter' are referred to as feminine covertly by the agreement marking element [-ti] suffixed to the verbs [dʒira:-ti], 'lives' and [K'ab-ti], 'has'. On the contrary, the following sentences show how entities that are relatively larger in size are referred to as masculine.

(14)

- a) [arb -i bine:n -sa gudd -a: -da]
 elephant NOM beast 3M big 3M COP
 'Elephant is a big beast.'
- b) [ro:bi: -n bifa:n -itti gal -a]
 hippopotamus NOM water POST lives 3M
 'Hippopotamus lives in water.'
- c) [abbu:ddu -n k'uba gudd -a: -da]
 thumb NOM Finger big 3M COP
 'Thumb is a big finger.'

- d) [hank'a:k'u: -n salp'p'a: -tti c'ab -a]
 egg NOM easy POST breaks 3M
 'Egg breaks easily.'
- e) [gala:n -ni waa -n ba:jje: of- ke:ssa: k'ab -a]
 sea NOM thing NOM many REF in has 3M
 'The sea contains many things in itself.'
- f) [ajjari: -n wa:k'a ke:ssa de:m -a]
 airplane NOM sky in travels 3M
 'Airplane travels in the sky.'

The subjects of the above sentences are referred to as masculine by the agreement marking morphemes on the adjectives and verbs in the sentences. In examples (14a), (14c) and (14e) the adjective [gudd-a:], 'big' is marked with a masculine gender marker [-a]. In example (14a) the noun [bine:n-sa], 'beast' is marked with a masculine marking [-sa]. In examples (14b), (14d), (14e), (14f), and (14g) the verbs, [gal-a], 'lives', [c'ab-a], 'breaks', [godat-a] 'makes', [kab-a], 'contains' and [de:m-a] 'travels' are marked by masculine gender marking [-a].

The categorization of nouns under different grammatical genders in AO depending on the size of the referents reflects the unequal social status of male and female in the language community. In Oromo society female and male are socio-culturally placed on inferior and superior positions respectively. (Negaso 2000 and Wondwesen 2000) Therefore, concepts, like smallness and largeness have been psychologically associated respectively with femininity and masculinity. This gender bias ideology which is reflected in the grammar of the language is expressed by the proverbs in the language as follows.

[dubarti: -n furd -o: male: gudd -o: ?in- k'ab -t -u]
 woman NOM fat 3F PART big 3F NEG has 3F NEG
 'There is only woman of fat kind and never of respectable one.'

The above proverb shows how women are viewed in the language community. In this proverb the use of the adjective [gudd-o:], 'big 3F' to express social value may show the existence of the men's psychological association of the physical world with the conceptual world. Therefore, it would be self contradiction if the conceptual world reflects something positive and the language reflects the opposite of that. In other words, the concept of measurement in the grammar of AO is a mirror image of the socially constructed gender ideology of the language community.

Other similar linguistic activities that prove gender bias in AO are the use of feminine gender markers to demean the referent's status and the use of masculine gender markers to augment the status of the referent. This is discussed in the following section.

3.2.2 Diminutive and Augmentative cases

i was the dabalu

This section discusses how AO grammar reflects gender bias ideology through diminutive and augmentative cases. In AO demeaning takes place by using feminine morphemes while augmenting takes place by using masculine morphemes. When masculine nouns are referred to in demeaning way they take, the feminine morpheme [-tti:] and the adjectives that modify the nouns and the verbs that express their actions are also marked with feminine agreement markers. Consider the following examples.

(15)

- a) [gurba -tti: -n Kun adagg -e: -da]
 boy 3F NOM this vagabond 3F COP
 'This boy is vagabond.'

- b) [arba -tti: t'inn -o: kana ila:l -i]
 elephant 3F small 3F this look 2S
 'Look at this small elephant'
- c) [ibidda -tti:-n jo:m bad -te:]
 fire 3F NOM when disappeared 3F
 'The fire is extinguishing.'
- d) [nam -itftfa -tti:-n bifa:n bit -at -te]
 person 3M 3F NOM water bought AUT 3F
 'The man bought water.'
- e) [gurba: ise: kam kan si rukut -te]
 boy she which that you hit 3F
 'Which boy is it that hit you?'

In the above sentences under example (15), the subjects [gurba:], 'boy' [arba], 'elephant,' [ibidda], 'fir', and [nama] 'man' are marked with the feminine agreement marker [-tti:] or with the use of the anaphor [ise:] 'she' as in example (15e). The adjectives and the verbs used in the sentences also are marked with feminine agreement markers. In example (15a) the adjective [addagg-e:] 'vagabond' is marked with the feminine agreement marker [-e:]. In example (15b) the adjective [tinn-o:] 'small' is marked with another feminine agreement marker [-o:] while the verbs [bad-te], 'died out' in (15c) [bit-at-te] 'bought for himself' in (15d) and [rukut-te], 'hit' in (15e), are marked with the feminine agreement marker [-te].

The process of marking the masculine adjectives and the masculine nouns with feminine morphemes in the above examples is to demean either the social status or the size of the referents. In examples (15a) (15d) and (15e) the

use of feminine agreement marker [-tti:] is to demean the social status of [gur ba:] ‘boy’ or [nam-itʃa] ‘the man’. And in examples (15b) and (15c) feminine agreement marker [-tti:] is used with the nouns [arba] ‘elephant’ and [ibidda] ‘fire’ to demean the size of the referents.

On the contrary, in AO augmentation takes place by suffixing masculine gender markers to nouns or the adjectives that modify them and the verbs that express their actions in different expressions. Look at the following examples.

(16)

- a) [tafki: gudd -a: kana ila:l -i]
 flea big 3M this look 2S
 ‘Look at this big flea.’
- b) [darabi: ɖe:r -a: kana ila:l -i]
 darbi long 3M this look 2S
 ‘Look at this long darbi.’
- c) [akkam gudd -a: -ɖa hantu:t -i kun]
 how big 3M COP mouse NOM this’
 ‘What a big mouse.’
- d) [k’urt’t’ummi -tʃʃa an kale:ssa bit-e agar -te:]
 fish 3M I yesterday bought saw 2S
 ‘Did you see the fish I bought yesterday?’

In the above sentences the nouns [tafki:], ‘flea’ in (16a), [darabi:], in (16b) [hantu:ta], ‘mouse’ in (16c), are covertly referred to as masculine by marking the adjective and the verbs used with them. The adjectives [gudd-a:], ‘big’ in (16a) and (16c) [ɖe:r-a:] ‘long’ in (16b) are marked with the masculine marker

[-a] and the feminine noun [k'urt't'ummi:], 'fish' is marked with the masculine definite marker [-itʃfa]. This is done to argument the size of the referents. Otherwise as we have already seen under section 3.2.1, these nouns are categorized under feminine grammatical gender.

As have been discussed under this section, the grammar of AO uses feminine agreement marker in diminutive case and masculine agreement marker in augmentative case. This is once again a polarized property of the grammar of the language. Bonvillian (2000) argues that the use of feminine gender markers for diminutive purpose challenges women's self esteem.

3.2.3 Gender categorization of nouns based on the relative power of the referents

Under this section, I would discuss how gender bias ideology manifest through categorization of different nouns under masculine or feminine gender based on the relative power of the referents they signify.

In AO some nouns are categorized under masculine or feminine gender categories based on the power associated with the referents. Powerful entities are categorized under masculine gender while the powerless or the relatively weaker ones are categorized under feminine gender. Consider the following lists of nouns under examples (17a) and (17b) below.

(17)

a) <i>masculine noun</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[wa:k'ajjo]	'God'
[ibidda]	'fire'
[abba:simbo:]	'a type of mouse'
[le:c'c'a]	'lion'

[marrata:]	'Python'
[dimitfo:ri:]	'a type of gun'
[ma:kudafuri:]	'a type of gun called M14'
[bo:mbi:]	'bomb'
[so:nsa]	'wasp'
[wara:na:]	'gadfly'

b) <i>feminine noun</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[darabi:]	'a snake like round worm'
[hantu:ta]	'mouse'
[lubbu:]	'soul'
[kurup'p'e:]	'antelope'
[fulube:ri:]	'a type of gun'

The above nouns under examples (17a) and (17b) are not overtly marked for gender. Hence, their gender is implied from covert agreement markings on adjectives and verbs they appear with. Consider example (18) and (19) below for more clarity.

(18)

a) [wa:k'ajjo be:k -a: -da]
 God know 3M COP
 'God is wise.'

b) [ibidd -i nama gub -a]
 fire NOM person burns 3M
 'Fire burns one.'

- c) [abba: -n simbo: adurre: ʔin- sodaat -u]
 father NOM grace cat NEG afraid 3M NEG
 'Abba simbo is not afraid of cat.'
- d) [le:nc'c' -i ʔin- baro:d -a]
 lion NOM FOC roar 3M
 'Lion roars.'
- e) [marrata: -n nama hidd -a]
 python NOM person sting 3M
 'Python bites.'
- f) [dimtfo:ri: -n fago: -tti hale:l -a]
 DMT4 NOM far POST hit 3M
 'DMT4 hits a target at a far distance.'
- g) [ma:kudafuri: -n me:ʃa: c'im -a: -da]
 M14 NOM weapon strong 3M COP
 'M14 is a powerful gun.'
- h) [bo:mbi -n ʔin- doʔ -a]
 bomb NOM FOC explode 3M
 'Bomb explodes.'
- i) [so:ns -i nama hidd -a]
 wasp NOM person sting 3M
 'Wasp stings one.'
- j) [wara:na -n harre: di:g -s -a]
 gadfly NOM donkey blood CAUS 3M
 'Gadfly causes donkeys bleed.'

In (19a) above, the adjective [be:k-a:] ‘wise 3M’ and (18g) [c’im-a:], ‘strong 3M’ take the masculine agreement marker [-a]. And the verbs [gub-a], ‘burns 3M’ (19a) and [baro:d-a], ‘roars 3M’ (18d), [hidd-a], ‘stings 3M’ (18e) and (18i), [hale:l-a], ‘hits 3M’ (18f), [doʔ-a], ‘explods 3M’ (18h), and [di:g-s-a], ‘causes to bleed 3M’, (18j) are all marked with masculine agreement maker [-a] because of their masculine subjects.

The nouns under example (17b) are categorized under feminine gender. Like the ones under (17a) they occur with adjectives and verbs that are marked for feminine gender. The following sentences illustrate this fact.

(19)

- a) [darabi: -n nama ʔin- mi: -t -u]
 Darabi NOM person NEG hurt 3F NEG
 ‘Darabi does not hurt one.’
- b) [hantu:t -i bo:lla -tti gal -ti]
 mouse NOM pit POST get in 3F
 ‘Mouse lives in pit.’
- c) [lubbu -n jero: du: -tu si ke:ssa: ba: -ti]
 soul NOM when die 1S you in get out 3F
 ‘Soul departs from you when you die.’
- d) [kurup’p’e: -n marga ña:t -ti]
 antelope NOM grass eat 3F
 ‘Antelope feeds on grasses.’
- e) [fulube:ri: -n fago: -tti waa ʔin- rukut -t -u]
 fuluberi NOM far POST thing NEG hit 3F NEG
 ‘Fuluberi does not hit something at a far distance.’

The subjects of the above sentences are marked for feminine as signaled by the agreement marking elements [-ti], which is affixed to the verbs [ʔin-mi:-tu] ‘does not hurt 3F’ and [ʔin-rukut-t-u] ‘does not hit 3F’, [gal-ti] ‘lives’ [ba:-ti] ‘departs 3F’ [ñɑ:t-ti] ‘feeds’ respectively.

The categorization of the subjects of the sentences under example (18) under masculine gender is based on the relative power of the referents. The referents are considered to be powerful in relation to the other entities in their classes or entities in the other classes.

If we compare the subjects of the sentences in example (18) with the subjects of the sentences in example (19) above we might see that those of example (18) are relatively powerful or believed to be so. For instance the subject of (18a) [wa:k’ajjo], ‘God’ is believed to be powerful relative to (19c) [lubbu:] ‘soul’.

[abba:simbo:] is a kind of mouse that the language community, specifically in Dembi Dollo area believe to have come from Europe or North America with the sacks of wheat which were once sent to the area as an aid during famine. It is destructive mouse compared to [hantu:ta], ‘the local mouse’. Regarding how powerful [abba:simbo:], ‘the new type of mouse’ is the name given to it may show. Literally, [abba:simbo:] means owner/father of grace or graceful. This name was given to it as a kind of respect for the mouse. This is done commonly with other powerful animals too; because the society believes that avoiding the names of powerful entities may prevent the destruction that they may cause. Hence, [abba:simbo:] ‘graceful’ is referred to as masculine and it is not categorized with [hantu:ta] ‘the local mouse’ which has less power.

[marrata:], 'python' in (18e) is a poisonous snake while [darabi:], in (19a) is a snake like worm that has no poison and does not hurt one. And the former is referred to as masculine while the later is referred to as feminine.

Like in many other societies, the Oromo also perceive [wa:k'ajjo], 'God', (18a) [ibida] 'fire' (18b) and [le:nc'c'a], 'lion' (generic) in (18d), as powerful entities, and they refer to them as masculine. On the other hand, [lubbu:], 'soul' (19c) and [kurup'p'e:], 'antelope' (19d) are perceived as powerless entities, relative to [wa:k'ajjo], 'God' and [le:nc'c'a], 'lion'.

The subjects of the sentences under examples (18f-h), [dimitfo:ri:] 'DMT4', [ma:kudafari:] 'M14', and [bo:mbi:], 'bomb' are powerful weapons and they are referred to as masculine while the subject of the sentence (19e), [fuluberi:] is a type of gun that is 'less powerful relative to [dimitfo:ri:] 'DMT4' and [ma:kudafari:] 'M14' and it is referred to as feminine.

As have been discussed so far, in AO some nouns are assigned grammatical gender on the bases of the relative power of the referents they represent. Nouns that represent referents which are relatively powerful are assigned masculine gender while those that represent relatively powerless referents are assigned feminine gender. This linguistic activity is polarized just like gender categorization of nouns based on the relative size of the referent (under section 3.2.1).

In Oromo society women are considered as physically weak individuals compared to men. This ideology commonly manifests through different expressions that involve comparisons of man's strength with that of woman. For instance, they say, [nam-itftja kana dubarti:n ille: ?in-re:b-ti] 'Even a

woman can beat this man.’ This expression shows that the society perceives women as physically weaker than men.

Hence, one may assume that the practice of gender categorization of nouns on the bases of relative power of the referents in AO might have been shaped by the society’s prejudiced perception of men’s and women’s physical strength.

3.2.4 Gender categorization of nouns based on the social values of the referents

Under this section I would discuss how some nouns are categorized under feminine gender on the bases of the social values of the referents they signify; and how gender bias ideology manifests through this linguistic activity.

In AO some nouns are categorized under feminine gender based on the negative social values of the referents. Nouns that denote human referents that have undesirable social characters are categorized under feminine gender. These nouns are either overtly marked with feminine gender markers [-t-] and [-e] or they are covertly marked with agreement markers that occur with adjectives in different expressions that involve them. Observe the following examples.

(20)

<i>feminine noun</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[buda:]	‘evil eye’
[hat-tu:]	‘thief’
[kadat-tu:]	‘beggar’
[fu:-tu:]	‘sorcerer’
[sa:m-tu:]	‘robber’
[addagg-e:]	‘vagabond’

[sob-tu:]	'liar'
[mara:tu:]	'crazy'
[ra:tu:]	'moron'

In different expressions the adjectives and the verbs that are used with the above nouns take feminine agreement markers. These nouns represent both women and men as both can have the social characters that the nouns express. Yet, they are categorized under feminine nouns. Observe how these nouns are marked for gender in the following expressions covertly as in examples (21a), (21h), and (21i) and covertly in the rest of the examples.

(21)

- a) [buda: -n idzo:lle: ŋa:t -ti]
 evil eye NOM infants bewitches 3F
 'Evil eye bewitches infants.'
- b) [hat -tu: -n k'abe:ŋŋa ke: hat -ti]
 thief 3F NOM property your 1S steals 3F
 'A thief steals one's property.'
- c) [Kadət -tu: -n homa: ʔin- k'ab -t -u]
 beggar 3F NOM nothing NEG has 3F NEG
 'A beggar has nothing.'
- d) [fu: -tu: -n si hijjo:m -s -iti]
 sorcerer 3F NOM you poor CAUS 3F
 'A sorcerer makes one poor.'
- e) [sa:m -tu: -n humna: -n k'abe:ŋŋa ke: fudət -ti]
 robber 3F NOM force NOM property your 1S take 3F
 'A robber takes one's property by force.'

- f) [addagg -e: -n nama ʔin- kabadʒ -t -u]
 vagabond 3F NOM person NEG respected 3F NEG
 'A vagabond does not respect one.'
- g) [Sob -tu: -n ʔin- kabadʒam -t -u]
 hypocrite 3F NOM NEG respected 3F NEG
 'A hypocrite is not respected.'
- h) [mara:t u: -n waa -n hodʒet -tu ʔin- be:k -t -u]
 crazy NOM thing NOM does 3F NEG know 3F NEG
 'A crazy person does not know what she does.'
- i) [ra:t -u: -n homa: ʔin- be:k -t -u]
 moron 3F NOM nothing NEG know 3F NEG
 'A moron does not know anything.'

In the above examples the subjects of (21a), [buda:], (21h), [mara:tu], and (21i), [ra:tu:] are covertly marked for gender by marking the verbs, [ña:t-ti] 'bewitches 3F' in (21a), and [ʔin-be:k-t-u] 'does not know 3F' in both (21h) and (21i) with the agreement marker [-tu]. In addition to the overt gender markings on the subjects, the verbs in the rest of the sentences under example (21) are also marked with feminine agreement markers. For instance, [hat-ti] 'steals 3F', [ʔin-k'ab-tu] 'does not have 3F', [hijjo:m-s-iti] 'makes you poor 3F' [fudat-ti] 'takes 3F' are marked with feminine agreement markers [-ti], [-tu], and [-iti].

The nouns [Kadət-tu:], 'beggar' and [Sob -tu:], 'hypocrite' can be marked for gender in specific expressions as [Kadət-tu:/-a:], 'female beggar/male beggar'

and [Sob-tu:/a:], 'female hypocrite/male hypocrite'. However, their generic forms are the feminine ones as in [Kadāt-tu:-n homa: ʔin-k'ab-tu], 'A beggar does not have anything.' and [Sob-tu:-n mo:tumma: wa:k'a: ʔin- da:ltu] 'A hypocrite does not inherit the kingdom of God'. In these general expressions the subjects [Kadāt-tu:] 'beggar' and [Sob-tu:] 'hypocrite' are the feminine forms. The generic forms of these two nouns are the feminine forms.

The lexical items in example (20) above can also be used as adjectives. When they are used as adjectives in specific expressions which involve either masculine or feminine subjects, they retain the feminine gender markers. Consider the following examples.

(22)

- a) [inni/ise:-n hat -tu: da]
 he/she NOM thief 3F COP
 'He/she is a thief.'
- b) [inni/ise:-n fu:t -u: da]
 he/she NOM sorcerer 3F COP
 'He/she is a sorcerer.'
- c) [inni/ise:-n sa:m -tu: da]
 he/she NOM robber 3F COP
 'He/she is a robber.'
- d) [inni/ise:-n addagg -e: da]
 he/she NOM vagabond 3F COP
 'He/she is a vagabond.'
- e) [inni/ise:-n mara:t -u: da]
 he/she NOM crazy 3F COP
 'He/she is crazy.'

- f) [inni/ise:-n ra:t -u: da]
 he/she NOM moron 3F COP
 'He/she is a moron.'

The expressions under the above examples show that regardless of the gender of the subjects they appear with, adjectives, [hat-tu:] 'thief 3F' [fu:t-u:] 'sorcerer 3F' [sa:m-tu:] 'robber 3F' [addagg-e:] 'vagabond 3F' [mara:t-u:] 'crazy 3F' [ra:t-u:] 'moron 3F' retain their feminine gender markers. This shows that in AO nouns or adjectives that denote or describe referents with negative social values are selectively marked for gender agreement with feminine gender markers.

To sum up, section 3.2 has discussed how gender bias ideology is manifested through noun categorization based on different attributes of the referents. As this section shows in AO nouns are categorized under feminine gender when the referents they represent are small in size, have less or no power, and are socially undesirable. On the contrary, some nouns are categorized under masculine gender when the objects they represent are larger in size, relatively powerful, and socially desirable.

In the past it was widely believed that grammatical gender has nothing in common with social gender. However, recently some researches have proved that grammatical gender has a link with social gender. For instance, Boroditsky (2001) has found out that speakers whose mother tongue is German assign male characteristics to objects such as table (which is represented by masculine noun *der tisch* in German). On the other hand, other speakers whose mother tongue is French assign female characteristics to the same object which is represented by feminine noun *la table* (in French). Based on this psychological association between grammatical gender and social gender one may presume that the polarized gender categorization in AO

might have originated from the social gender stereotypes in the language community.

In Oromo society women are perceived as mentally and physically weak individuals. For instance in the proverbs of the language we find [dubarti:n be:ka: dalti male: be:ktu: ?in k'abddu], 'woman is not wise; she only gives birth to wise man'. According to this proverb in Oromo society women are perceived as people with weak mental capacity. In another instance we find [kandande:ssu da:ni d?enna:n gowwa:n gale: ni:ti: da:ne], 'told to attack somebody he could; a fool man went home and attacked his wife'. According to this proverb, the Oromo believe that women are physically weaker than men.

The perception of the society on women expressed above, correlate with the habits in noun categorization discussed under 3.2. Hence, possibly concepts like size, power, and social value are psychologically associated with the gender stereotypes of the society.

According to Spender (1980) cited in Sunderland (2006:15), "It is the dominant group (the male) that produced" this kind of gender biased language convention and "its justification for their own benefits". Hence, the gender polarization in AO have emanated from the already established male dominance in the society.

3.3 Gendered administration and profession titles

Under this topic I would discuss the origins and historical evolution of gendered administration and professional titles in AO. In AO nouns referring to administration posts and professions are mostly masculine, and feminine nouns which could have become parallel to those masculine nouns are missing in most cases. To show the significance of this problem I have divided the discussion into two parts. Thus, section (3.3.1) deals with nouns obtained

from traditional Oromo administration system called Gada system (hereafter, GAS). And section (3.3.2) deals with administration and profession titles after the decline of GAS including the present.

3.3.1 Administration titles during the Gada system

According to Negaso (2000), until 1880s the Western Oromo people used to be administrated by a traditional socio-political system called *Gada*. This administration system was democratic for men. However, women had been marginalized in GAS. (ibid) In addition to historical literature different administration titles during GAS also show the male domination in the socio-political arena. Observe the following administration titles during GAS from Griefenow-Mewis (2001:26).

(23)

<i>administration titles during GAS</i>	<i>gloss</i>
[abba: gada:] father gada	'leader of the Gada council'
[abba: du:la:] father war	'war leader in Gada administration'
[abba: dubbi:] father speech	'chief speaker of the Gada council'
[abba: c'affe:] father legislative assembly	'chairman of the legislative assembly'

The above administration titles reflect male domination in the *Gada* system. Women were not allowed to be leaders. Therefore, they did not have parallel feminine administration titles. In fact one cannot judge the past with the present mentality since every period in human cultural evolution has its own philosophical dimension. However, sometimes the past mentality is reflected in the present life style of a society. As Bonvillian (2000) argues, language

convention is the carrier of this mentality. This argument is true to AO. Consider the following section for detail.

3.3.2 Administration and profession titles from the decline of Gada administration to the present

According to Negaso (2000) the western Oromo started to abandon (partly) the GAS in 1880s. Yet this transformation did not bring women to leadership. The then titles also attest to this fact. Consider the following example.

(24)

[mo:ti:]	'king
[go:fta:]/ [go:fti:]	'lord'

The above masculine nouns do not have parallel feminine nouns. This shows that there was power imbalance between male and female of the language community. The last noun [go:fta:]/[go:fti:], 'lord' seem to have [gi:fti:] 'lady' as its parallel. However, since the 'lord' and 'lady' are not equal in status the titles are also not symmetric. In Oromo society, someone who used to be addressed by the title [go:fta:]/[go:fti:], 'lord' was a male leader. Yet, [gi:fti:], 'lady' was only the title of a lord's wife and woman addressed with this title did not have the power of leadership.

Later in around 1885 the western Oromo lost the war with Minilik II, the first Ethiopian king. Because of this they were forced to totally abandon the GAS and adopted the feudal administration system. (Negaso 2000) The feudal system by its nature was not good regarding gender balance in administration elsewhere. Hence, it encouraged the continuity of male domination in administration arena. Nouns referring to administration posts of the time also verify this fact. Observe the following examples.

(25)

[abba: lafa:]	‘land lord’
father land	
[abba: k’oro:]	‘land owner’
father a portion of land	

This gender bias was transferred to the present (21st century) through the favorable ground laid for it by the past political systems. Even if it has not totally changed, the present seems to be relatively better for women in Oromo society. Now a few women are seen on administration posts, yet as the grammar of the language shows, the past masculine dominance in political and social arena still manifests through nouns referring to administration posts and some profession titles. Consider the following examples.

(26)

[dura ta:ʔ-a:]	‘chairman’
front sit 3M	
[abba: ganda:]	‘chairman of a village’
father village	
[bultʃ -a:]	‘administrator’
administrator 3M	
[abba: se:ra:]	‘judge’
father law	

The above masculine nouns refer to administration and profession posts in the present lives of the language community. These masculine nouns do not have feminine forms, in spite of the fact that today women are allowed to hold the posts and the grammar of the language allows the formation of parallel feminine titles by alternating feminine morphemes with masculine ones. For instance, [abba:] ‘father’ can be substituted with [ha:da] ‘mother’ to form

[ha:da ganda:] ‘chairperson of a village 3F’ or [ha:da se:ra:] ‘judge 3F’. In addition, feminine gender markers [-e:ssu:] and [-itu:] can be altered with the masculine gender marker [-a:] to form feminine titles [dura t-e:ssu:] ‘chairperson 3F’ and [bultf-itu:] ‘administrator 3F’ for female referents.

The absence of parallel feminine forms for the titles under the above examples show the fact that the posts had been held executively by male in the past. And this shows how old practices (experiences) shape language conventions. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), language conventions constrain our thoughts and practices. Hence, the fact that the above administration titles in AO do not have parallel feminine forms may influence the younger generation to think that leadership is exclusively the duty of male. Hence, the above titles in AO may need consideration.

3.4 Gendered terms which define the male gender as normative

This section discusses how some terms in AO define the male gender as normative (generic) in light of the socio-historical lives of the language speakers. According to Alpher (1987), in different societies it is the dominant gender that becomes the normative (generic) form. In other words, if a society is patriarchal, generic forms of different terms would be the masculine forms. According to Asmarom (1973), and Mohammed (1990), Clamons (1992) Wondwesen (2000), and Negaso (2000) Oromo is a patriarchal society.

In the traditional Oromo society, [abba:] ‘the patriarch’ was the head of his family. He was in command of political, social and economic lives of his family in particular and the society at large. Today, this image of the male in the traditional Oromo society reflects through some indefinite terms formed from the word [abba:] ‘father’ in AO. Observe the following examples.

(27)

- a) [abba:]
‘father/owner/oneself’
- b) [abba: fed -e]
father wish 3M
‘anybody/whoever’
- c) [abba: tokk -o]
father one 3M
‘someone’

In the above examples, the term [abba:], ‘owner/oneself’ stands as generic term representing both genders. The use of this term as generic form has resulted from women’s exclusion from leadership and ownership of property. In the traditional Oromo family the patriarch was in command of every important property. Women had no valuable property. Regarding this Negaso (2000: 130-1) writes as follows.

Female had no right to own land and cattle. They only used under the charge of male owners. In the family the most important equipment was the private property of the father. The father owned the utensils and the house. In case she divorced the woman departs empty handed. The patriarch was the only person who had the right to buy and sell property.

Hence, it may be logical to argue that one of the senses of the word [abba:], ‘owner’ has originated from the past exclusive property ownership of the patriarch in the language community.

The other sense of [abba:], ‘oneself’ as generic form might have originated from the fact that in the traditional Oromo society the male represented his family at home or in public. According to Negaso (2000), in the traditional Oromo family it was only the patriarch or the eldest son in the family that used to represent the family in any domestic and public affairs. Therefore, the generic use of the masculine word [abba:], as ‘oneself’ might have originated from the past tradition of representation in the Oromo family by male.

The terms under example (27) above are masculine nouns but they are used as generic forms. In common expressions they are marked by the masculine agreement markers as in example (28) below.

(28)

- a) [abba: -n fed -e wa: -n barba:d -e ha- dʒde-u]
 father NOM wishes 3M thing NOM wants 3M PAR Say 3M
 ‘Let any body /whoever wishes say anything he wants.’
- b) [abba: -n lafa kana: e:ññu: inni’
 father NOM land this who he
 ‘Who is he that owns this land?’
- c) [abba: -tu of- be:k -a]
 father FOC self knows 3M
 ‘It is the self who know about himself.’

In the above examples, the verbs are marked by masculine agreement markers to agree with their subjects (which are generic masculine nouns) for the grammaticality of the sentences. Accordingly, [ha-dʒe-ðu] ‘let him say’ in (28a) and [of-be:k-a], ‘knows himself’ in (28c), are marked with masculine agreement markers [-u], and [a] respectively.

The masculine nouns under example (27) may also be marked by feminine agreement markers by suffixing the agreement markers on the verbs they appear with, but then the sentences will have extra semantic feature in addition to indefiniteness. Consider the following example.

(29)

a) [abba: -n fe:-te wa: -n barbad -te ha- dʒet -tu]
 father NOM wishes 3F thing NOM want 3F PAR say 3F
 'Let anybody say whatever she wants.'

b) [abba: -n lafa kana: e:ňňu ise: -n]
 father NOM land this who she NOM
 'Who is she that owns this land?'

In sentence (29a) above the masculine indefinite noun [abba: fede] 'anybody' has been marked with the feminine agreement marker [-te] to form [abba: fe:-te] 'anybody' (diminutive). And in sentence (29b) the masculine indefinite noun [abba:], 'owner' has covertly been assigned feminine gender by using the anaphor [ise:], 'she' with it. Speakers who utter them do it filled with disrespect for the referents. As it has already been discussed under section (3.2.2), in AO marking a masculine noun with feminine gender markers is to demean the status of the referents. Therefore the above indefinite [abba: fe:-te] 'anybody' and [abba:], 'owner' are marked for gender with feminine agreement markers to demean the referents' social status.

To sum up, under this section we have seen how some masculine indefinite terms formed from the word [abba:], 'father' in AO define the masculine gender as normative. According to some scholars, this usage may cause two problems. First, as Schneider and Hacker (1973) have found out, the usage of

masculine terms as generic forms may confuse people as to whether one is referring to male alone or both male and female. Second, some scholars like Harrison (1975), Martyna (1978) have found out that this practice causes females to understand that they are unrepresented in expressions that involve masculine terms as generic.

3.5 The absence of some feminine terms from the WDAO

This section deals with how the Western dialect of Afan Oromo (hereafter WDAO) manifests gender bias by reducing feminine forms of first and second person singular possessive pronouns, the interrogative 'which' the relative pronoun 'that', some anaphoric forms, and the feminine form of 'person'.

According to Clamons (1992) and Griefenow-Mewis (2001) in the Southern, and Eastern dialects of AO (hereafter, SDAO and EDAO respectively) first and second person singular and first person plural possessive pronouns, the interrogative 'which' the relative pronoun 'that', and some anaphoric forms are distinctly marked for gender by an initial [t-] for feminine and [k-] in SDAO and [x-] in EDAO for masculine. I have also found out that the central (Shawa) dialect of AO has distinct forms of the terms under discussion. In the Central dialect of AO the masculine forms are distinguished by [k-] while the feminine forms are distinguished by [t-]. Nevertheless, in the WDAO at the present, there is only the masculine form [k-] which is used with both male and female. Observe the following examples from WDAO (Wollega dialect) and SDAO (Bale dialect).

(30)

WDAO

- a) [abba: k- o:]
father M my
'my father'
- b) [abba: k-e:ňňa]
father M our
'our father'
- c) [ha:ða k- o:]
mother F our
'my mother'
- d) [ha:ða k-e:]
mother M your 1S
'your mother'
- e) [ha:ða k-e:ňňa]
mother M our
'our mother'
- f) [ha:ða k-e:ssan]
mother M your 2P
'your mother'

SDAO

- a) [abba: k- ijja]
father M my
'my father'
- b) [abba: k-e:nna]
father M our
'our father'
- c) [ha:ða t- ijja]
mother F our
'my mother'
- d) [ha:ða t-e:]
mother F your 1S
'your mother'
- e) [ha:ða t-e:nna]
mother F our
'our mother'
- f) [ha:ða t-e:ssan]
mother F your 2P
'your mother'

Example (30) above shows that in WDAO the feminine forms of first person singular and plural and second person singular and second person possessive pronouns, [t-ijja] 'my F', [t-e:nna] 'our F', [t-e:] 'your 2FS' and [t- e:ss'an] 'your 2FP' as in example (30b), (30c), (30d) and (30e) under SDAO above are replaced by the masculine forms [k-o:] 'my M' and [k-e:ňňa] 'our M' to refer to female.

In WDAO the feminine form of the interrogative [t-am] ‘which F’ also has been replaced by the masculine form [k-am] ‘which M’. Consider example (31a) and (31b) below.

(31)

WDAO	SDAO
a) [gurba: k- am] boy M which ‘which boy?’	a) [gurba: k- am] boy M which ‘which boy?’
b) [intala k- am] girl M which ‘which girl?’	b) [intala t- am] girl F which ‘which girl?’

In addition, in WDAO the relative pronoun ‘that’ and some anaphoric forms have only the masculine forms which are marked by [k-] for both masculine and feminine references while the SDAO and the EDAO have distinct form [t-] for feminine. Observe examples (32a) and (32b) from SDAO, and (32c) and (32d) from WDAO.

(32)

- a) [gurba: -n k-an kale:ssa agar-re ?in- du -e]
boy NOM M that yesterday saw 1P FOC died 3M
‘The boy that we saw yesterday died.’
- b) [dubartiti: -n t-an kale:ssa agar-re ?in- du: -te]
woman NOM F that yesterday saw 1P FOC died 3F
‘The woman that we saw yesterday died.’
- c) [gurba: -n k-an kale:ssa agar-re sun ?in- du -e]
boy NOM M that yesterday saw 1P that FOC died 3M
‘The boy that we saw yesterday died.’

- d) [dubarti -ti: -n k-an kale:ssa agar-re sun ?in- du: -te]
 woman DEF NOM M that yesterday saw 1P that FOC died 3F
 ‘The woman that we saw yesterday died.’

As the above examples show in SDAO the relative pronoun ‘that’ is distinguished for masculine and feminine referents with the morphemes [k-] and [t-] respectively. Yet, this later case has been reduced from the WDAO.

In SDAO the near demonstrative ‘this’ is also distinguished for masculine and feminine referents with [k-] and [t-] respectively. Nevertheless, in WDAO the feminine form is missing and the masculine form is used with referents of both genders. Consider the examples from SDAO and WDAO.

(33)

WDAO	SDAO
a) [gurba: k-ana] boy M this ‘this boy’	a) [gurba: k-ana] boy M this ‘this boy’
b) [intala k-ana] girl F this ‘this girl’	b) [intala t-ana] girl F this ‘this girl’

In addition, in WDAO we do not find the feminine form of [nama] ‘person’ which is distinguished for gender in the SDAO by suffixing [-itʃtʃa] for male referent and [-itti:] for feminine referent as in [nam-itʃtʃa] ‘the person 3M’ and [nam-itti:] ‘the person 3F’. However, in WDAO [nama] ‘person’ either stands as generic representing both men and women as in [nam-ni tokko-lle: ?in-dʒiru] ‘There is nobody’. Or it only represents man when marked with any of the

gender markers as in [nam-itʃtʃa] ‘the person 3M’ or [nam-itti:] ‘the person 3M diminutive’.

The loss of the feminine forms of the terms discussed so far from the WDAO may be explained in terms of socio-historical settlement of the Western Oromo. According to Mohamed (1990) the Western Oromo assimilated the early settlers of the area through the customs of adoption of individuals and groups called *mogasa* and *gudifacha*. Among the language communities that were assimilated by the Oromo are Omotic and Semetic language speakers.

One of the Semetic groups is the Amhara who speak Amharic language. Even if both Afan Oromo and Amharic come under Afroasiatic language families they have tremendous differences. One of these differences for instance is gender distinction of the term ‘person’ for male and female referents. As have been discussed above, the SDAO (specifically Bale dialect the area where Oromo is said to have expanded from) distinguishes gender for the term ‘person’ based on the sexes of the referents. Yet, Amharic does not do this.

The Amharic term for ‘person’ is [səwɯ] this term is either used as generic representing both male and female or with male referents only (even when it is marked with feminine gender marker) as in [səwɯjə-wɯ] ‘the person 3M’ or [səwɯjə-wa] ‘the person 3M diminutive’. The use of the term [nama] ‘person’ in WDAO is similar to the Amharic [səwɯ] ‘person’. Hence, one may assume that the loss of the feminine form of this term in WDAO might have resulted from the assimilation of the Amharic speakers in to the Oromo.

According to Alpher (1987) this kind of linguistic practice may be attributed to the linguistic practice of patriarchal society where the male grammatical forms are used as generic. According to Asmarom (1963), Baxter (1978), Wondwesen (2000), and Negaso (2000), the Oromo are patriarchal and patrelineal people.

So, it could also be argued that this process of reducing the feminine forms of different terms has started as using the male forms as generic.

Be it with the socio-historical event of assimilation or other not yet investigated linguistic changes in the WDAO itself, the lose of the feminine form of [nama] 'person' and the other feminine forms of different terms explained above can still be considered as gender bias because this practice may challenge the self esteem of women as the use of the masculine forms of the terms discussed above with female referents do not represent them.

3.6 Verbs hauling socio-cultural gender bias

This section discusses how gender bias ideology manifests in AO through mandatory and exclusive grammatical collocation of some verbs that express socio-cultural practices with nouns referring to woman or man.

In AO, some verbs are grammatically obliged to take exclusively certain nominal arguments referring to either female or male human. The grammatical obligation of the verbs to collocate only with nouns that refer to man or woman referent has resulted from the socio-cultural practices that the verbs express. For instance, consider the following verbs that express marriage issues, husband-wife relationship and the roles of husband and wife in family life in the following example.

(34)

a) [hintall -i he:rum -te]

girl NOM sold 3F

Lit: 'The girl got sold.'

'The girl got married.'

b) [hintall -i kun mana -tti haf -te]

girl NOM this house POST remained 3F

Lit: 'This girl is left over.'

'This girl is not chosen for marriage.'

c) [dubarti: -n kun abba: mana: isee -f idʒo:lle: ba:jje: hor -te]
 woman NOM this father house her POST children many bread 3F
 Lit: 'This woman has reared many children to the father of the house.'
 'This Woman has given birth to many children.'

d) [ise: -n abba: mana dzala bulu: ʔin- dand e:ss -u]
 she NOM father house under be administered NEG able 3F NEG
 Lit: 'She cannot be administrated under husband.'
 'She cannot be obedient to her husband.'

The infinitive forms of the verbs used in the above sentences such as [he:rumu:] 'to be given in marriage/to be sold' (35a), [haftu: taʔu:] 'to be left unmarried' (35b), [idʒo:lle: isa:f horu:] 'to rear children for him' (35c), [dzala bulu:], 'to be administered by one' (35d) can only take nouns or pronoun referring to female human such as, [hintala], 'girl', [dubarti:], 'woman', [ise:], 'she' etc as their arguments.

This grammatical rule of word collocation has been set by the socio-cultural practices among the language community which the verbs in the above examples express. According to Wondwesen (2000) and Negaso (2000), in Oromo society women get married in a way which is equivalent to 'getting sold'. When women get married, her parents are compensated with bride price. This is done to replace the physical labor that the woman used to render at her parents' home. The verb [he:rumu:] which has a literal meaning 'to be sold' expresses this cultural practice. Regarding the gender bias in the cultural marriage practice of the Oromo society, Wondwesen (2000:53) comments as follows.

An Oromo girl is considered as a useful commodity because she is a source of income to her parents through payment of

the bride-wealth. According to the culture a man pays bride-wealth to the family of a woman he marries. Once she is sold like any other commodity she becomes the property of her husband. Thus the submissive behavior is expected from a wife toward her husband. Not only this the generally recognized right of the husband to beat his wife is observed.

The verb [he:rumu:] takes only feminine nouns as its argument. The parallel verb for male, [fu:du:] 'to take woman for marriage' can only take masculine nouns as its argument. In addition, the verb [fu:du:] also expresses the power relation between man and woman in Oromo society. This verb takes only masculine nouns as its argument as in [gurba:-n hintala fu:de] 'The boy took the girl for marriage'. If it takes feminine noun as in [hintall-i gurba: fu:te] 'The girl took the boy for marriage.', it would be interpreted as 'The girl is physically or economically more powerful than the boy and she agitates the boy.' In Oromo society, it is the man that is supposed to be more powerful and lead the woman in the way he fancies. Therefore, the utterance [hintall-i gurba: fu:te] 'The girl took the boy for marriage' is augmenting the social status of the girl while at the same time it demeans the social status of the boy.

The verb [haftu: ta?u:] 'to be left un-chosen for marriage' shows the socio-cultural bias in the language community. In Oromo society women get married only when chosen by male. If they are not chosen for marriage they would be denoted as [haftu:] 'leftover'. This noun has a negative social meaning and the absence of a parallel word that could denote a male that is left unmarried by any chance, may also show linguistic bias. In Oromo society, the male has the right to marry as many women as possible if his economy allows him. (Wondwesen 2000) In addition, the male has the right to

"Suubbo"
NO

marry any girl he wants any time (even in his old age) if he could afford the bride price. However, a female has no such rights. She could be left unmarried for instance because it is suspected that she cannot be obedient to her husband. Because of this she would be denoted as [haftu:] 'leftover'.

The phrase [idzo:lle: abba: mana:-f horu:], 'to rear children to the father of the house' shows one of the social roles of women. According to Negaso (2000), one of the duties of women in Oromo society is rearing as many children as possible because children provide the husband with manual power. Accordingly, the phrase [idzo:lle: abba: mana:-f horu:], 'to give children to the father of the house' also shows the power imbalance between the husband and the wife which is reflected by the giver-taker position assumed in the phrase. In this particular case she is at the serving position and he is at the position of getting served.

The last verb, [dʒala bulu:] 'to be administered by one' shows the bias in the social position of female and male in the society. The male is at the superior position (he is administrator and she is administered). Regarding the socio-cultural positions of male and female in Oromo society, Negaso (2000:126) writes as follows,

In the traditional Oromo society the patriarch was responsible for defense and security of the family and its property...In accordance with the traditional laws he was responsible for order, discipline and the moral standards of his family and his dependents. He had the right to reprimand and punish members of the family who violated moral norms and any law enacted by the society. He had full right to decide on the life and death of the member of the family.

The Phrase [abba: mana: dzala bulu:], ‘to be obedient to the husband’ show this. The verbs explained above so far take only nouns referring to women as subjects. If nouns referring to man are used as subjects of these verbs the sentence will have different social interpretations, as in the following examples.

(35)

a) [nam -iʃʃ -i ise: -tti he:rum -e]

man 3M NOM her POST sold 3M

Lit: ‘The man got sold to her for marriage.’

‘The man is less powerful than his wife.’

b) [inn -i ha:da mana dzala bul -a]

he NOM mother house under administered 3M

Lit: ‘He is administered under his wife’.

‘He is obedient to his wife.’

The use of [nam-iʃʃ i], ‘the man’ (35a) as the subject of the verb [herumu:], ‘to be sold for marriage’ shows that more money than him’ or that ‘she is more powerful than him. In the example (35b) too, the collocation of the subject [inni], ‘he’ with the phrasal verb [dzala bula] ‘to be administrated under’ has a connotation, ‘he is less powerful than her’. According to Negaso (2000), in traditional Oromo society the patriarch is the member of the family with the highest socio-cultural hierarchy. He controls and exploits his wife and children. He is always expected to be the leader in his family and the wife is at the subordinate position. She is considered as his property. Consider example (36) below which shows this socio-cultural picture of man’s and woman’s position in Oromo society.

(36)

- a) [nam -itʃtʃ-i ha: da mana: isa: adab -at -e]
man 3M NOM mother house his punished AUT 3M
Lit: 'The man punished his wife for himself.'
'The man punished his wife.'
- b) [gurba: -n hintala ila:ll -at -e]
boy NOM girl looked AUT 3M
Lit: 'The boy chose a girl for himself.'
'The boy chose a girl for marriage'
- c) [nam -itʃtʃ -i hintala -tti erg -at -e]
man 3M NOM girl POST sent AUT 3M
Lit: 'The man sent mediators to the girl's parents for himself.'
'The man sent mediators to the girl's parents; to allow him to marry her)
- d) [abba: mana: -tu ise: irra: du? -e]
father house FOC her top died 3M
Lit: 'Her husband died from the top of her.'
'She is widowed.'
- e) [i-nni ise: fu:d -e]
he her took 3M
Lit: 'He took her for marriage'
'He married her.'

In the above sentences the subject positions are taken by nouns referring to male human such as [namitʃtʃa] 'the man' (36a) and (36c), [gurba:] 'boy', (36b), [abba: mana:], 'husband' (36d), and ' [inni], 'he' (36e) while the object position is taken by nouns referring to female human such as, [ha:da mana:], 'wife'

(36a), [hintala], ‘girl’ (36b) and (36c) [ise:], ‘her’ (36d) and (36e). It would be socially ungrammatical to use nouns referring to female human as subjects in the above sentences. Because the verbs [adab-atfu:], ‘to punish for one self’, [ila:ll-atf-u:] ‘to choose one for oneself, for marriage’ [itti-ergg-atfu:] ‘to send mediators to the girls parents for marriage’, [irra: du?u:] ‘to die from the top of someone’, and [fu:d-f-u:] ‘to take a woman for marriage’ require a masculine subjects and feminine objects.

To sum up, in AO verbs that express marriage related activities and gender roles of husband and wife show how the Oromo society places man on superior position and woman on subordinate position.

3.7 Proper names in Afan Oromo

This section deals with the ideology of gender bias manifestation that appears in AO female and male names. Names in AO manifest gender bias ideology through their semantic connotations that show the higher value given to male and through the absence of parallel female names with male names that have semantic connotations associated with socio- political state of affairs.

In the past proper names were believed to be arbitrarily given only to denote their bearers. However, today many researches reveal that they also have semantic contents that show the “socio-economic and political situations” of different societies. (Zealelem Leyew 2003:183) For instance look at the following Amharic names from (ibid).

(37)

- a) [tammiru] ‘the miracle’
- b) [gizewerk] ‘time-gold’
- c) [getaneh] ‘you are God / rich’

According to Zelealem [ibid] the above names show the socio-economic and political realities associated to the people during or prior to the birth of their holders.

In AO too proper names may reveal connotations related to the social, cultural economic and political situations of the society, especially during the birth of the bearers or semantic connotations related to the sexes of the bearers in accordance with their socio-cultural positions. For instance in example (38a) below, [dirrib-a/e] 'double M'/'double F', has socio-economic connotation associated to the time the bearers of the names were born. For example one of the bearers of the name [dirrib-a] 'double M' tells that one of his family's cows had given birth to a calf exactly at the time he was born. As a result of this his parents named him [dirrib-a:] 'double M' to show that they got double happiness. One of their happiness is the birth of the child and the second is the economic advantage they got by the birth of the calf. For the name [gammatfu:] 'happiness M' under example (38b) two of its bearers report different connotations. One of them says that he was born on the day his father was released from six month imprisonment as a result of which his parents were happy and named him with this name for commemoration of the event. The other bearers of the name tales that he was given the name [gammatfu:] 'happiness M' because his parents were happy to get a male child (him).

(38)

- a) [dirrib-a:/e:] 'double M'/'double F'
- b) [gammatfu:] 'happiness M'

AO Proper names manifest gender bias ideology in two ways. The first is the semantic connotation of male and female names associated to gender

preference. And the second is the absence of parallel feminine names that have socio-political connotations associated with the gender ideology of the society (in spite of the fact that the grammar of the language allows the formation of feminine names by using gender districting morphemes). These circumstances occur from the fact that the Oromo are patrelineal and patriarchal society.

The Oromo society gives more values to male children. The male lead their own families and the society. According to Negaso Gidada (2000), in Oromo society almost all social and political leadership is controlled by the male. In addition, male children are expected to expand their fathers' and forefathers' bloodlines by forming their own families. Because of this belief the society craves to rear male children. When women get pregnant the parents wish that the child would be male. When their expectation fails (the child turns out to be female) they would name the female child with names that connote their unsuccessful expectation as in (39a) [hata:tu:] 'let her be', below. This name has a sense of compliant. It means 'it is against our will but since we cannot change the occurrence of the female child we accept it as it is'. The other example under example (39b) [jo:fete:] 'okay', also has similar connotation. It means 'she is female but okay because we cannot change this occasion'. The connotations of these names show that the Oromo society would have changed the sexes of female to male (at least when they expect to have male) had the case that they had the opportunity.

(39)

- a) [hata:tu:] 'let her be'¹
- b) [jo:fete:] 'let her be (even female) if she wants'

1. It may be possible to find parallel masculine name [hata?u:] in AO but its semantic connotation is not the same with that of [hata:tu:]. One of the bearers of the name [hata?u:] reports that he was given this name in commemoration of his parents' economic disaster.

In addition, the Oromo society show their gender preference by giving male children names that have semantic connotations associated to preference of male child. For instance, the name [galata:] ‘thanks’, and [wa:k’ga:ri:] ‘God is good’ under examples (40a) and (40b) below, may be given because the parents think that God has fulfilled the desire of the parents and in return they are praising God. And the name [tole:ra:] ‘it has turned out well’ and [taʔe:ra] ‘It has happened as expected’ under (40c) and (40d) respectively, are given to male with the intention of showing their satisfaction with the fulfillment of their desire i.e. the birth of male child.

(40)

- a) [galata:] ‘thanks’
- b) [wa:k’ga:ri:] ‘God is good’
- c) [tole:ra:] ‘it has turned out well’
- d) [taʔe:ra] ‘it has happened’

If parents desire to have a male child but fail to have at once or beget after two, three or more female children. Then the male child may be named with the names that connote this event. For example the name [tokkitʃa] ‘the one’ under (41a) below, has semantic connotation that is interpreted as ‘the child is the only child in the family’ (in spite of the presence of female children in the family). On the other hand, the only female child in a family is not seen as a special event and commonly not named with a name implying the event.

The male names, [k’oritʃa] ‘medicine’ and [fajjisa:], ‘savior’ under (41b) and (41c) below, are names that show the fact that the Oromo is a patrilineal society. Both of these names have semantic sense ‘curer’ to mean that the bearers ‘have cured or saved especially their fathers. The notions of curing and saving have come from the fact that the society counts its blood lines

though male. So the semantic connotation here is that the births of the bearers of the names have 'saved' their fathers' and their forefathers' blood line from discontinuing.

The names [abba: d̥ibba:], 'hundred note', [d̥ibbisaa] 'thousand maker', and [kumarra], 'better than thousand' under examples (41f-h) have also semantic connotations related to the patrelineality of the Oromo society. For instance, [abba: d̥ibba:], 'hundred note', and [d̥ibbisaa] 'thousand maker', have the sense 'the bearer males are going to expand the blood lines of their fathers. While the name [kumarra], 'better than thousand' has the sense of valuing the bearer. And there is no female with this name, in spite of the fact this name could be used with both sexes.

(41)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) [tokkitʃfa:] 'the one' | e) [c'arra:] 'luck' |
| b) [k'oritʃfa:] 'medicine' | f) [abba: d̥ibba:] 'hundred note' |
| c) [fajjisa:] 'savior' | g) [d̥ibbisa:] 'thousand maker' |
| d) [d̥arra:] 'the desired' | h) [kumara:] 'better than thousand' |

In addition to the semantic connotations of male and female names explained above, names in AO show gender bias ideology by the absence of parallel female names with some male names. In different societies some male names do not have parallels for female because of male dominance in the societies. For example among the Amharic speaking societies some male names with socio-political semantic connotations do not have parallels for females. (Zealelem 2003) According to (ibid), in spite of the fact that the Amharic grammar rule permits the production of female names parallel with the male names like

[mængistu] ‘his government’ and [mærra] ‘he led’ we do not find parallel female names because of the male dominance in the Amharic speaking society.

Similarly in Afan Oromo too, in spite of the fact that the morphological rule of the language permits the formation of some female names parallel with male names related with socio-political affairs, we miss them because of male dominance in the Oromo society. Observe the following examples.

(42)

- a) [bultʃtʃ-a:] ‘leader 3M’
- b) [abbo:m-a:] ‘commander 3M’

The above names could be produced for female in Afan Oromo by only exchanging the masculine marking morpheme [-a:] with feminine marking morpheme [-itu:/tu] Consider the following.

(43)

- a) [bultʃtʃ-itu:] ‘leader 3F’
- b) [abbo:m-tu:]

However, the above female names do not exist because of the fact that the Oromo are patriarchal society. Regarding the socio-political places of male and female in the Oromo society Negaso (2000:130-1) puts as follows.

Male children, especially the eldest son received particular care and respect from childhood onwards...from the very beginning he was trained for his later function as patriarch of the family and administrator of its property. In the absence of the father, the first born son (after having reached a mature age and social status of course) was the priest who tasted the food and slaughtered the animals for profane as well as for social and

religious occasions. He had the privilege of representing the patriarch in public meetings and affairs. ...daughters participated in all domestic and extra domestic tasks. They aided in rearing their younger brothers and sisters. They served food and washed the feet, of their younger brothers and sisters. ...particularly the eldest daughter assisted her mother in preparation of the ritual food for the [priest] of the family. In short the daughters served the family until a few days before their marriage.

As Negaso tried to put, the duties and responsibilities of men and women in the traditional Oromo society were unequal. Men were at the leading position while women were at the serving position. In fact even today in many uneducated Oromo family, one may find similar condition except political leadership which has changed its face. Women are still serving. Both as daughters and wives females serve the men.

To sum up, as we have seen under this section, proper names in AO display the gender bias ideology of the language speaker in two ways. The first is through its semantic connotations. And the second is through the gap created between some male names and female names as a result of male dominance among the language speakers.

3.8 Figurative use of nouns referring to female and male

This section deals with the manifestation of gender bias ideology in AO nouns referring to male and female. In AO some nouns that refer to female are figuratively used to express different concept that have negative social values. On the contrary some nouns that refer to male are figuratively used to express concept that have positive social values. Consider the following examples.

(44)

- a) [gurba: -n kun dubarti: -da]
boy NOM this woman COP
Lit: 'This boy is a woman.'
'This boy is cowardly'
- b) [nam -itʃtʃ -i kun akka dubarti: gola -tti fi:g -a]
person 3M NOM this like woman kitchen POST runs 3M
Lit: 'This man runs to the kitchen like woman.'
'This man is a coward.'
- c) [gurba: -n kun akka dalti: nama bak'at -a]
boy NOM this like female person retreats 3M
Lit: 'This boy retreats like a female.'
'This boy is a coward.'
- d) [nam -itʃtʃ -i kun akka dubarti: odu: funa:n -a]
person 3M NOM this like women rumor collects 3M
Lit: 'This man collects rumor like woman.'
'This man is a rumormonger.'
- e) [nam -itʃtʃ -i kun akka daltu: nama hamat -a]
person 3M NOM this like female person gossips 3M
Lit: 'This man gossips like female.'
'This man is a gossip.'
- f) [gurba: -n sun akka dubarti: miri:t'am -a]
boy NOM that like woman fidgets 3M
Lit: 'That boy fidgets like woman'
'That boy is restless.'

- b) [nam -ni ga:ffi: kana de:bisu di:ra]
 person NOM question this answers male
 Lit: 'Any body who could answer this question is male.'
 'Any body who could answer this question is so clever.'
- c) [nam -ni daga: kana ol ka:su di:ra]
 person NOM stone this up lifts male
 Lit: 'Any body that could lift up this stone is male'
 'Any body that could lift up this stone is so strong.'
- d) [dubarti: -n sun gara kut -e:tti: akka di:ra: -ti]
 Woman NOM that stomach cut 3F like male COP
 Lit: 'That woman is as determined as a male.'
 'That woman is so determined.'

In the above sentences, the noun [di:ra] ; 'male' is metaphorically used to express concepts such as heroism cleverness, and strength. In addition, simile is used in example (45d) to compare the degree of woman's 'heart' with that of man. The gender bias ideology reflected in AO through figurative use of female and male nouns may be considered as linguistic sexism. Linguistic sexism is a social behavior that manifests through language. It augments one gender and demecans the other. According to Spender (1980) cited in Sunderland (2006:15) the availability of sexist language in one's culture may force one to view reality in a biased way.

According to Boroditsky (2001) language may influence or encourage thought. Therefore, the fact that linguistic sexism exists in AO may force the language community to take for granted the gender biased ideology expressed through *la parole*. In other words, the use of sexist language in AO may influence the language community's thought negatively and encourage them to look down on women.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary and conclusion

AO manifests gender bias ideology via categorization of nouns under different grammatical genders. In AO nouns that are categorized under masculine gender are those that refer to entities that have positive attributes such as, large size, more power, and better social value. On the contrary, nouns that refer to entities that have negative attributes such as small size, less power, and negative social value are categorized under feminine grammatical gender. In addition, in AO demeaning takes place by using feminine morphemes while augmenting takes place by using masculine morphemes. These polarized actions in the grammar of AO seem to assert their source to the males. This is either to enable them maintain their status or it is a contemptuous action which might have sprung from their actions that demean women. In other words, these language practices may be mirror images of the socio-cultural practices of Oromo society.

The practice of polarized categorization seems to have been structured by male since the categorization selectively places most of the nouns that refer to things which have positive values under masculine gender. Spender (1980) argues that this sort of language practice is some men's product in which they try to defend their own interest. In addition the practice may have a negative psychological impact on the language community's women's minds.

In AO nouns referring to administrative posts in different historical periods reflect male's dominance in administration arena. In addition, the study shows that male's egoistic practice of the past has been transferred to the present socio-political activities of the Oromo society. At the present, at least we could see a few women participating in administrative professions.

Nevertheless, because of the past men dominance mentality we do not see some masculine titles representing women as well.

In AO some masculine words are used as generic forms. In some cases the feminine forms of the words are missing. This practice tries to define the male gender as a normative and challenges the identity of the female. As some scholars like, Schneider and Hacker (1973) argue this practice may confuse people as to whether one is referring to a male or both male and female. Harrison (1975) and Martyna (1978) have also found out in their researches that the practice of taking the male gender as generic may cause women to understand that they are unrepresented and that these generic forms refer only to men.

In AO some verbs that express socio-cultural practices of the Society show gender bias in the grammar of the language. The verbs discussed under this section can only collocate with only one of the grammatical genders. This is because of the fact that the practices that the verbs express are already gender biased. For example, if we take cultural marriage practice in the language community; it legitimizes men supremacy and women subordination. Hence, the separate verbs for men and women express this situation. And the grammar of the language takes up this as a convention and restricts the collocation of the two separate verbs with both genders interchangeably. In addition, the semantic asymmetries between these types of verbs also show the gender bias in the grammar of AO.

In addition, some personal names in AO reflect gender bias ideology. Personal names show that the language community places men on higher social status and women on a relatively lower social status. This practice just like the categorization process may be in an attempt to maintain the polarized social positions given to men and women.

Furthermore, In AO some nouns that refer to female are figuratively used to express different concepts that have negative social meanings. On the contrary some nouns that refer to male are figuratively used to express concepts that have positive social meanings.

Generally, the gender bias manifested in AO *la langue* or the underlying, socially established system of linguistic units and rules has been created socio-culturally and is perpetuating by the help of *la parole* or every day speech.

As the life style of the language community continues to change through time the creation of new linguistic elements may becomes necessary. Since this process has to follow the already existing language conventions, the already laid down gender bias ideology in the language convention may influence the language speakers to continue categorizing new words under different genders based on polarized semantic criteria. As Bonvillian (2000:98) argues, gender bias in language becomes a “habitus” which is the process of internalizing “the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product.” This internalization process of the past is facilitated by the interdependent nature of *la langue* and *la parole*.

Today many psycholinguistic researches are revealing facts, which suggest that habits in language encourage habits in thought. For instance, Boroditsky (2001), argue that language practice may shape human thought. Therefore, the gender bias in the grammar of AO, especially in the area of gender categorization of nouns, diminutive and augmentative cases, and figurative use of nouns referring to men and women may influence its speakers' thoughts on gender equality. In other words, the fact that AO grammatically place men and women on positive and negative poles of social places respectively, may force the language community to think and act in the same way. Therefore, to deal with these biases in language, applied linguists need to consider a joint study of the language conventions and the every day

language. Based on the nature of the gender bias in the grammar of AO, I would also recommend different linguistic and non linguistic solutions for the reduction or if possible the elimination of the bias in the following section.

4.2 Recommendations

As have been discussed so far, in AO some of the gender biases manifest in *la parole* and some others manifest in *la langue*. Hence, the possible solutions I recommend vary like their sources.

In AO, the gender biases that manifest through *la parole* are the ones that indirectly originate from socio-cultural gender ideology. These biases need non-linguistic solutions. For instance, noun categorization based on semantic features of references and figurative use of nouns referring to women and men manifest mostly in speeches. And these practices trace their roots back to the unequal values given to men and women in the language community and they manifest at the level of thought. As Lakoff (1975) argues these kinds of language biases are clues, which show that some external situations need changing. Therefore, to stop or reduce these biases it may be mandatory to deal first with the gender inequality in the socio-cultural lives of the Oromo people.

For the gender bias, which manifest at the level of language conventions, I would recommend some possible linguistic solutions. For instance, masculine administrative and profession titles that do not have parallel feminine forms need the introduction of gender-neutral terms. Therefore, I would recommend the following linguistic solution based on the morphology and semantic systems of AO.

The gender bias in AO administrative and profession titles may be done away with by substituting gender neutral terms in place of masculine terms. One may also suggest that the use of the feminine forms of those masculine

administrative and profession titles for female referents may solve the problem. However, this suggestion cannot solve the problem completely. This is because of the fact that in languages like AO that function on binary gender system, speakers would be forced to use one of the two forms (masculine or feminine) as generic in general expressions. As have been discussed under section (3.4), this by itself would be considered as gender bias. For example if we suggest that the title [dura ta:ʔ-a:] ‘chairperson 3M’, can be substituted by its possible feminine form [dura te:-ssu:] ‘chairperson 3F’ for female referent, then we are leaving the language speakers with no option of avoiding the gender bias that occurs as a result of using one of these forms as generic.

Therefore, I suggest that possible gender neutral terms be introduced to replace the gendered administration and profession titles in AO. For instance, by replacing the masculine gender marking morpheme [-a:] with third person agreement marker [-o:] which is gender neutral we can avoid the gender bias as in examples (a) and (b) below. And for terms which do not follow this pattern we may coin new gender neutral terms as in examples (c) and (d) below.

<i>Old masculine administrative and profession titles</i>	<i>Possible gender neutral titles</i>
a) [dura ta:ʔ -a:] front sitter 3M ‘chairman’	[dura ta:ʔ -o:] lead sitter 3P ‘leader’
b) [bultʃ -a:] administr 3M ‘administrator 3M’	[bultʃ -o:] administer 3P ‘administrator’

c) [abba: se:ra:]	[nama se:ra:]
father law	person law
'judge 3M'	'judge'
d) [abba: ganda:]	[durs -o: ganda:]
father village	leader 3P village
'chair man of a village'	'leader of a village'

Using the neutral terms suggested above or any other possible neutral terms I think we can reduce the gender bias in the language. However, changing only the gender biased linguistic elements in AO may not be enough to deal with the gender imbalances in the Oromo society. One needs to investigate and change the biased gender ideology in the language community to solve the problems. Lakoff (1975) in Sunderland (2006:97) metaphorically states what to do with gender bias in language as follows. "A competent doctor tries to eliminate the germs that cause measles rather than bleach the red out with peroxide." Therefore, the gender ideology in the language community, which is the source for the language bias should be examined and altered to bring meaningful gender impartiality among the Oromo society.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work, has not been presented for degree in any university and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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This thesis has been submitted with my approval as a thesis advisor.

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