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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Silt'e as a Medium of Instruction

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SILT'E AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is an account for the development of Silt'e as a medium of instruction. The thesis consists of five chapters. This chapter is an introduction where the geography, language and people of Silt'e, the problem, the objectives, the significance and the limitation of the study are stated. Discussions of the theoretical and methodological preliminaries are provided in the third chapter. The fourth chapter, which is the main body of this work, deals with results and discussions. The last chapter summarizes the discussions in the foregoing chapters and provides recommendation on the implementations.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## *1.1 The Silt'e People and Their Language*

The Silt'e people are one of the ancient Semitic speaking peoples of Ethiopia. They have a very strong Islamic tradition; subsequently Islam provides the central backbone of the Silt'e identity. The Silt'e people live in South-West Ethiopia (SNNPR), in an area which stretches for about 60 km along both sides of the Addis Ababa – Hosanna road, starting from a point about 140 km from Addis Ababa. The Silt'e zonal administration is located at Worabe Town, approximately 173 km south of Addis Ababa, on the road to Hosanna.

The following six language communities surround Silt'e:

1. Mask'an and Dobbi (Ethio-Semitic) to the north;
2. Marak'o (Cushitic) to the northeast;
3. Arsi-Oromo (Cushitic), to the east;
4. Alaba (Cushitic) to the southeast;
5. Haddiya (Cushitic) to the south; and
6. Gumer, Geto and Endegagn (Ethio-Semitic) to the west.

Approximately 950,000 people speak Silt'e – an Ethio-Semitic language belonging to the East Gurage group, which also includes Wolane and Zay. Geographically, however, East Gurage Languages are not contiguous: Wolane is separated by Muhur and Mask'an from the main Silt'eland. Wolane is located within the Gurage Zone while the Silt'e people have established their own independent zonal administration. Arsi-Oromo separates Zay and Silt'e; Zay is located within the Oromia Regional State. The Zay people are predominately Christians and have only sporadic contacts with Silt'e on markets. According to the 1994 Ethiopian Population and Housing Census, the Wolane are counted as Silt'e while Zay are not considered at all. The Silt'e language is used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools in Silt'e Zone.

The main dialects of Silt'e are: (a) the northern dialect - as spoken in the area of Summut-Silt'e and Allicho-Wuriro; and (b) the southern dialects of Hulbarag and Azarnat-Barbare.

The Silt'e people connect their history with the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa. According to oral traditions, the ancestors of the Silt'e people were Muslim immigrants from Harar. During the war of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim (Ahmed Gran), groups of Muslim people under the leadership of Hajji Aliyye left Harar and settled in the area, presently called Silt'e. The alleged descendants of Hajji Aliyye are referred to by the term *Hajamo*. Ultimately the Muslim newcomers, the *Hajamo*, and the aboriginal people, called *agar*, intermingled. This event is considered to mark the genesis of the Silt'e people as a distinct group of its own though the exact time, when Silt'e was formed as a distinct group is unknown.

## ***1.2 Statement of the Problem and Background of the Study***

Only a few facets of the ethno-linguistic development and composition of the Silt'e are known until today. Furthermore, sociolinguistic issues in the Silt'e area, specifically with respect to ethnic identity, are still controversial. Although Silt'e has a certain degree of linguistic variation, which is still not well-researched, Silt'e became a medium of instruction in schools.

The independent Silt'e Zone was established in 2001 resulting in administrative reshuffling in the Gurage Zone as well as in the neighboring zones, that is, Haddiyya and Kambata. The northern part of the Silt'e-speaking area in the Gurage Zone as well as Azarnat-Barbare and Sankura were separated from their former zones and integrated into the newly established Silt'e Zone. However, Wolane still remained part of the Gurage Zone. Already since 1991, the issue that Silt'e is a separate entity from Gurage was a headache for political elites in the Gurage Zone while mother tongue education issues were slogans for Silt'e political elites, i.e. those who claimed that Silt'e is a separate ethnic group. In 1995, therefore, the Gurage political elites decided to use Silt'e as a medium of instructions in Silt'e-speaking areas, including Wolane to calm down the political situation in Gurage.

When Silt'e became a medium of instruction in the Gurage Zone, the southern Silt'e speaking areas, i.e. most part of Azarnat-Babare and some parts of Hulbarag, such as Sankura, were under the administration of the Haddiyya and Kambata zones with Amharic as medium of instruction in schools. Only with the establishment of the independent Silt'e Zone in 2001, Silt'e became a medium of instruction in the entire Silt'e-speaking area except in Wolane.

The main purpose of this study is to account for the development of Silt'e as a medium of instruction considering symbolic and pedagogical perspectives. The symbolic perspective refers to the role of language in relation to sociolinguistic factors such as ethnic identity and attitudes toward speech varieties. Pedagogical perspective includes material production, standardization processes, mobilization of resources to implement the intended plans, etc.

### ***1.3 Objective of the Study***

The main purpose of this study is to examine the introduction and use of Silt'e as medium of instruction in the Silt'e Zone in relation to sociolinguistic aspects and standardization issues. The research questions addressed are:

- (a) Silt'e as a concept of sociolinguistic identity (ethnic and linguistic identity): cultural, historical, and religious factors;
- (b) Linguistic varieties in Silt'e: how related and distinct are these varieties from each other; and what is the level of mutual intelligibility of these varieties; and
- (c) Standardization issues of Silt'e (including orthography development and choice of standard dialect).

More specific objectives were:

- (a) An analysis of the sociolinguistic situation with respect to language use and attitudes: investigating and determining the degrees of inherent intelligibility among the main Silt'e varieties. In addition to intelligibility, sociolinguistic factors will be examined to determine reference centers. Reference center is considered to be the variety of a language to be developed into a standard, written form of the language.
- (b) An investigation whether the reference center, central Silt'e, i.e. the variety used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools in the Silt'e area, is in line with the interests of other varieties, specifically to southern Silt'e dialects.
- (c) A detailed description and analysis of the standardization process: orthography development, standard dialect selection, material production, introduction of technical terms, coordination and organization of the implementation process.

### ***1.4 Significance of the Study***

This study will contribute to the understanding of the Silt'e linguistic community and to clear the way for future sociolinguistic research on Silt'e. Teaching material producers and curriculum developers, particularly with respect to standardization processes in Silt'e, can benefit from the

results of this study, as Silt'e, currently, is used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools in the Silt'e Zone.

### ***1.5 Limitations of the Study***

This research is limited to the general sociolinguistic situation (including intelligibility) in Silt'e and the linguistic processes in connection with the development of Silt'e as a medium of instruction.

## 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The sociolinguistic situations in the Silt'e area are very complex and controversial. There are dialect variations which are associated with a sense of (internal)-group identity resulting in different perceptions among different groups as to ethnic or linguistic identity or both. The research that has been done so far on socio-linguistic issues in Silt'e is scanty but increasing in number.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will focus on works on Silt'e and the Gurage context. It is concerned with what has been said on Silt'e as well as on the relations between Silt'e and other East Gurage groups. The second part is a review of related literature to language standardization.

### *2.1 Works on Silt'e and the Gurage Context*

Ernst-August Gutt is the first scholar to describe Silt'e more extensively: Gutt (1983) deals with the Silt'e sound-system while Gutt (1997b) is about its morphology and syntax. Meyer (2005) Meyer (2006) provide the most complete descriptions of Zay and Wolane, respectively. This section is concerned with works on Silt'e and related groups, both linguistic and sociolinguistic.

Silt'e, Wolane and Zay are closely related to Harari (Leslau, 2000: 251; 1999: 103). Silt'e, Zay and Wolane belong to the Eastern Gurage varieties within the Ethio-Semitic language family. Silt'e and Zay share grammatical features with Cushitic languages:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Silt'e has a ten-vowel-system: five short vowels, and five long vowels (Gutt, 1983: 37);<sup>2</sup>
- (b) Zay has a five vowel-system with phonemic length (Meyer, 2005: 44, 47);
- (c) Vowel length is not phonemic in Wolane (Meyer, 2006: 35).

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<sup>1</sup> Cushitic, Amharic and Arabic also influenced the lexicon of East Gurage languages.

<sup>2</sup> Note that short and long vowels are one of the problematic areas in the standardization of Silt'e.

According to Bender's (1971) lexicostatistical analysis, Zay has 61% lexical similarity with Harari and 70% with Silt'e. Nevertheless, the linguistic classification of the Eastern Gurage varieties remains unclear. Gutt (1997a: 509) considers Silt'e, Wolane and Zay as three varieties of a single language - the *Silt'e-group*; Girma (2001) considers only Silt'e and Wolane as varieties of the same language; according to him, Zay is a different language. Meyer (2006: 19-20), on the other hand, considers Silt'e and Wolane as two distinct languages; as he observed, the Wolane people do not consider themselves to be Silt'e.

Ernst-August Gutt (1980) carried out an intelligibility study among different speech varieties in the Gurage area. The results of his study show that both the Inneqor and the Wolane people understand Silt'e. Another important point, Gutt states, is that for the inneqor people, their variety is not distinct from Silt'e while the Wolane were fully aware that their own speech variety is different from Silt'e. Despite spatial distance, the two groups, i.e., Silt'e and Wolane, have preserved enough similarity in their speech to be highly intelligible to each other (Gutt, 1980: 72ff.). Drewes (1996: 71-72) confirms the findings of Ernst-August Gutt as to mutual intelligibility between Silt'e and Wolane.

There are dialect variations in Silt'e though they are not studied exhaustively; the geographical boundaries of the Silt'e varieties are not clear. However, it is believed that the main dialects of Silt'e are: the northern dialect as spoken in the area of Summut-Silt'e and Wuriro; and the southern dialects of Hulbarag and Azarnat (Gutt/Hussein, 1997: ix). Drewes (1996) states that both Azarnat and Hulbarag varieties are different from northern Silt'e to some extent but the differences are inconsiderable. Furthermore, the differences between Silt'e and Hulbarag are minimal; Silt'e and Inneqor are 'almost the same' and Azarnat and Inneqor are virtually identical (cf. Hetzron, 1972: 5).

The socio-cultural situations are more complex than the linguistic data. Generally, the Islamic people of the area connect their history with the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa. During the war of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim, a group of Muslim people, immigrated into Silt'e and surroundings areas. According to Braukämper (1980: 429), the traditions of the people, concerning their ethno-genesis and their countries of origin, are about a migration of Muslims from Arabia and their mixing with the aboriginal people in what is now Somalia and East Ethiopia. These traditions are important to the feeling of ethnic identity and to value concepts in

the Northeast African societies, which are well-known for their historical consciousness. The seven tribes of the East Gurage (also called *adäre*), Silt'e, Ulbarag, Azarnat, Barbare, Wuriro, Wolane and Gadabano, speak a Semitic language closely related to that of the Harari (Braukämper, 1980: 428). The Adari clan in Arsi has kept a marriage restriction with the East Gurage because they consider this people as their own kinsfolk (Braukämper, 2002: 66).

Historically and genealogically, the Alaba and the neighboring East Gurage are closely related. The East Gurage kept the memory of their relationship with Harari; the linguistic connection between them is clear. The Oromo name for the East Gurage, *adäre* 'people from Harärge', provides further historical evidence. Most section of the Silt'e a lived in the *C'är'är* region before they settled in the Gurage mountains. A land called *Silt'e-ge* 'country of the Silt'e' was documented during Amdä Siyon's reign (Braukämper, 2002: 65).

During the war of Ahmad Gran, Muslim Gurage groups (i.e. Silt'e) lived at the eastern shores of the Lake Zway. They fled westward when the Oromo movement reached the lake. Some of them took a shelter at Tullu Guddo where they founded a village, called *Gumarayge* [Gumara is one of the Wolane clans]; and then, they converted to Christianity (Meyer, 2001: 324-325). Ahmad Gran's troops invaded Haddiyya in A.H. 939 (1531/32). The Haddiya Muslims joined the troops in their campaigns against the Christians (Braukämper, 2002: 58; 1980: 430). The Silt'e, Ulbarag and related groups, which originated in the *C'ärc'är* mountain, settled in Gurageland after a series of fierce battles (Braukämper, 1980: 431).

Shack (1966: 36-37) reports that East Gurage consists of Silt'e, Wolane, Ulbarag, Inneqor and Zay. However the term Gurage, according to Meyer (2006: 19-20), has neither a historical nor a cultural denotation as none of the three East Gurage language communities refer to themselves as Gurage. Work'u (1983 E.C.: 21 ff.) mentions that the Wolane are definitely not part of the *Säbat Bet Gurage* neither on linguistic nor on historical grounds. According to Drewes (1996: 71-72), too, the terms *Silt'e Gurage* and *Eastern Gurage* are unfortunate. The speakers of Eastern Gurage do not consider themselves as Gurages – they never belonged to the Sebat Bet Gurage. The speakers of Silt'e Gurage had their own regionally defined political organization, the *Gogot*, which included the Silt'e Gurage, Mask'an and Alaba [and also the Kistane]. The speakers of Silt'e Gurage themselves call their language *yiislaam af* 'language of the Muslims'. Amazingly,



Gutt (1983: 37) states that the Silt'e people refer to their own language as *yasilt'e af* 'language/mouth of the Silt'e'.

Markakis (1998: 130-132) is of the opinion that religion is the cornerstone of identity among the Silt'e-speakers with their five dialects. Abyssinian rule brought most of the Gurage groups into one administrative unit. The congregation of most Gurage into a single administrative unit was the first stroke in the process of fashioning a single Gurage ethnic identity. Markakis (1998: 141-144) notes that components of identity acquire prominence in different contexts, such as genealogy, religion, language, territory, history, in the case of Gurage, there is no correlation between any of them, so neither single nor in combination could they serve to anchor an identity for the Gurage as an 'ethnic' group.

Nishi (2005: 156-163) states that the term *Silt'e*, in its traditional sense, constitute only part of the present day Silt'e nationality. There are neighboring units of Muslim people who share the same language and the similar historical narratives about the Islamic expedition: Azarnat Barbare, Malga [plus Chiro], Allicho-Wuriro, and Wolane-Gadabano, and the traditional word to address the people of these five units (including Silt'e) is *islaam*. Nishi (2005) further notes that the homeland of the Silt'e was put under the authority of the Ethiopian empire in 1888 after the political and economic incorporation of their homeland into the modern Ethiopian State. The Silt'e then emerged as part of the Gurage, i.e., they were recognized as part of the Gurage but not longer as *islaam* – a people who emerged from the 16<sup>th</sup> century military expedition that nearly ruined the Abyssinian Empire.

## ***2.2 Issues in Language Standardization***

Silt'e was only recently reduced to writing and introduced as medium of instruction in schools so that it is not yet full standardized. The remaining part of this section deals with literature regarding to language standardization and related issues.

There is no "one-best definition" regarding to language planning in general, standardization in particular as scholars define standardization from differen perspectives. Language planning, according to Magwa (2006: 113), refers to an explicit and systematic effort to resolve (perceived) language problems and to achieve related goals through institutionally organized

intervention in the use and usage of languages. Hornberger (2006: 28) divides language planning into three activities:

1. *Status planning*: dealing with those efforts directed toward the allocation of functions of languages in a given speech community;
2. *Corpus planning*: dealing with those efforts related to adequacy of the form or structure of language; and
3. *Acquisition planning*: dealing with efforts to influence the allocation of user.

As to acquisition planning, Fasold (1984: 311) states that one of the most crucial planning decisions that can be made is the determination of a language to serve as a medium of instruction in schools; language planning practices are more successful when they are directed at monitored language use (Fasold, 1984: 262). Opportunities for use of the language, attitudes towards the language by students and the anticipated value of the language in future life plans influence the learning process (Rubin, 1971: 245).

Language development, according to Ferguson (1968: 31), is divided into three parts:

1. *Graphization*: the adoption of a writing system and the establishment of spelling and other orthographic conventions;
2. *Standardization*: the process of one variety of a language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a supradialectal form – the “best” form of the language; and
3. *Modernization*: - concerns with the expansion of lexicon - adding new vocabulary to the language, either by coinage or borrowing from other languages.

A linguistic feature of standardization, according to Ferguson (2006: 21), is the creation of a uniform written variety, the ultimate aim being minimal variation in form and maximal variation in function. Codification is the process of giving explicit definition to the norm, principally through the production of authoritative grammars, dictionaries, and the like. These contribute to the dissemination of the standard by making clear its rules and boundaries.

Codification - a prerequisite for the standardization of a language - is an explicit statement of the codes via dictionaries, grammars, spellers. When a language is codified, its products include: spelling and pronunciation guides, grammars and dictionaries, style manuals, and guides to correct usage (Crystal, 1997: 67).

Standardization is ‘establishing the right way of writing’ for specific languages, a so-called language norm. Standardization is needed for choosing a standard dialect serving as a written form, for setting orthography rules (Gfeller, 1999).

According to Hudson (1980: 33), a standard language will be passed through the following processes:

1. Selection – choosing a particular variety to be developed; the choice is a matter of great social and political importance.
2. Codification – compiling dictionaries and grammar.
3. Elaboration – using the selected variety in all the functions associated with central government and with writing (education, court, etc.).
4. Acceptance – the variety must be accepted by the relevant population of the community.

Haugen (1972: 97-110), lists four aspects of language development which form the following matrix:

*Table 1: Four aspects of language development according to Haugen (1972)*

	FORM	FUNCTION
SOCIETY	Selection	Acceptance
LANGUAGE	Codification	Elaboration

Selection and codification refer to primarily to the form while elaboration acceptance to the function language; selection and acceptance are concerned with society while codification and elaboration with language.

According to Hall (1972: 144-148), the problems connected with the establishment of standard language are three kinds:

1. The choice of a variety to be preferred above others;
2. The area of human activity in which it is to be used; and
3. The achievement of recognition for the new standard.

According to Hall (1972), the orthography should reflect the phonological system of the dialect on which the standard is based.

According to Wolff (2000: 332), one of the major concerns of language planning in Africa is language standardization - turning linguistic varieties into standard languages in the sense of a regularized and codified normative system of reference supported by a standard orthography, standard reference grammars and (preferably monolingual) standard dictionaries. There must be codification in terms of a standard orthography, a reliable reference grammar, a comprehensive monolingual dictionary, sufficient and adequate reading materials, and teacher training manuals. In particular, its vocabulary should undergo continuous expansion in some controlled way with regard to new terminology for use of the language in education. The first step in codification is the creation or unification of a standard orthography. Elaboration of vocabulary (*modernization*) and grammar (*normalization*) serve as sources for reference and basic tools for the development of pedagogical materials for all levels of formal education. There is a constant need for elaboration of vocabulary by creating and expanding the appropriate terminology. Cultivation of the so created standard languages by language authorities ensures continued observance of the norms and control implementation. In Africa in particular, language cultivation would also be concerned with the creation and continuous production of post-literacy materials. After initial implementation, standard languages need continuous support from language promotion agencies such as language committees, boards or academies. These advisory bodies are needed to create guidelines as to matters of style, and acceptable variants mainly in literary production; ensure that printed materials conform to the standard norms; ensure that lexical innovation is continuously subjected to standardization in order to avoid uncontrollable competition of terms with similar yet different meanings; radio programs, local newspapers will play an important role. Harmonization of orthographies aims at reducing and limiting the inventory of graphic symbols including use of diacritics used within one multilingual country for its various languages. The ultimate pedagogical aim of national harmonization is to facilitate reading and writing in languages other than one's own spoken in the same country.

Language planning activities in Africa, according to Chumbow (1987: 15-22), however, differ substantially from language planning activities in the developed countries of Europe and

America in a number of ways. One is the absence of a recognized, uniform and clear defined model for enterprise of language planning in most of African countries. In the majority of cases,

- a. Policy decisions are taken without taking sociolinguistic fact-findings as input to policy formulation;
- b. Language planning activities are the results of the personal efforts of individuals and private organizations;
- c. The efforts are not coordinated because of lack of a recognized central agency empowered to give directions to all efforts of standardization, etc.
- d. As a result of lack of coordination and central agency, language planning activities are undertaken by amateurs without training and with no sense of orientation.
- e. Objectives, procedures and methods of planning are not clearly defined and outlined, thus making evaluation of progress at every stage difficult and sometimes impossible.

The stages of language planning within the planning model as proposed in the literature are the following:

*Table 2: Comparision of proposed stages in the language planning process*

Haugen (1969)	Fishman (1971)	Jernudd (1973)	Chumbow (1982/1984)	
Selection of Norms	Policy Formulation	Determination (of policy)	Policy Formulation:	Policy Implementation:
Codification of Form	Codification and Elaboration	Development of Norms	Sociolinguistic Fact-finding input	Codification
Elaboration of Function	Implementation	Implementation	Policy decisions;	Elaboration
Propagation			Outline of implementation	Reforms
			Cost-benefit analysis of planning	Dissemination
			Evaluation	Evaluation

According to Chumbow's (1982 and 1984) models, there are basically two main stages in language planning: Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation. Each of these stages consists of a number of ordered processes. Sociolinguistic fact-finding is not a pre-policy formulation

activity as in previous versions, but an integral part of the policy formulation stage. The implementation includes all post-policy activities undertaken to give effect to policy decisions.

A global and more explicit perspective of the model proposed, in Chumbow (1987: 18), is the following:

*Table 3: Language planning model for Africa (Chumbow 1987: 18)*

Evaluation	Evaluation		Evaluation
1. Evaluation of policy alternatives 2. Efficiency of implementation process 3. Adequacy of Resources	1. Uniformity, Adequacy and Efficiency of Codes and Norms 2. Quality, Quantity and Efficiency of Agents 3. Efficiency and Adequacy of networks		Level and degree of Adoption
<u>Policy Formulation</u>	Policy Implementation		<u>Language Community</u>
1. Sociolinguistic Fact-Finding 2. Policy Decisions: (a) Formulation of policy (b) Allocation of functions, etc 3. Outline of implementation: (a) Goals (b) Process 4. Cost-Benefit Analysis 5. Financial Allocation and Allocation of Resources	<u>Standardization</u> 1. Selection of standard 2. Language Engineering • Codification: (a) Orthographic norms (b) Grammatical norms (c) Norms of style and discourse • Elaboration (a) Dictionary and lexicon (b) Lexical expansion 3. Reforms in codification and elaboration	<u>Dissemination</u> Diffusion of Policy and its planned products 1. Implementation of policy 2. Promotion of standard 3. Production of materials: (a) Educational (b) General Literature 4. Training of Agents of Diffusion (teachers, etc) 5. Cultivation of communication Networks	<u>Y</u> Effective Adoption of Policy

Given the multilingual nature of African nations and the level of linguistic complexity, much more pre-implementation activity is necessary than in the planning models of Europe and America; independent evaluation is also necessary at every stage.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 *Methods*

Five sociopolitical localities or major “dialects” of Silt’e were included in this research: the Silt’e proper, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro, Hulbarag and Wolane. This study has three aspects: sociolinguistic situation, linguistic aspects and language implementation.

As sociolinguistic and linguistic aspects of the study have the notions of attitude and dialect, respectively, preliminaries as theoretical framework will be provided.

The label *dialect* is controversial. There is no clear consensus on the theoretical distinction between language and dialect yet. However, linguists use 80% agreement on basic lexicon as a cutoff point (Bender 2003). Dialect means only a variety (regional or social) of a language, which is mutually intelligible with other dialects of the same language (Campbell, 2004: 186). In this research, the label *dialect* is used in the sense of subdivision of a language by location as in traditional dialectology (Vaux and Cooper 2003: 156).

The naming of dialects in this paper is not merely linguistic but also sociopolitical. The names correspond to the sociopolitical localities; dialect variations are associated with a sense of internal identity.

Attitudes individuals have towards languages or dialects are assumed to be social attitudes. Language attitude includes attitudes towards speakers of a particular language or dialect. Attitudes towards languages are often the reflection of attitudes towards members of various ethnic groups (Fasold, 1984: 148). If a language has social meaning, people will evaluate, it in relation to the social status of its users. Their language attitude will be social attitudes (Muysken, 1987: 12).

Languages are not only objective, socially neutral instruments for conveying meaning, but are linked up with the identities of social or ethnic groups has consequences for the social evaluation of, and the attitudes towards language. In other words, if there is a strong relationship between language and identity, this relation should find its expression in the attitudes of individuals

towards these languages and their users (Muysken, 1987: 16). Hence, in this the paper, attitudes individuals have towards languages or dialects are assumed to be social attitudes.

The research follows a descriptive approach, both qualitative and quantitative (lexicostatistic) methods are applied in combination. Questionnaires, interviews, discussions and wordlist elicitations were the major methods employed for collecting the data. Sociolinguistic group interviews and group discussions were employed for collecting sociolinguistic data. Efforts were made to include elders who have a profound knowledge of the history and social contacts of the people in the specific research areas. Personal experience and observations, as well as locally available Arabic manuscript, on Silt'e origin, were used, too.

A questionnaire was the major method employed for collecting data concerning the language implementation aspect of the study. Subjects included in this group were literate people who could at least have some understanding of technical aspects: teachers, school directors, students and their parents, educational officials and material producers and editors were the target group. In order to substantiate the results from the questionnaires, interviews were conducted and certain written materials, particularly the Silt'e language textbooks for grade 5-8, were examined.

### ***3.2 Data Sources***

To collect the necessary data, I made a trip into the areas in question, between February 24 and March 20, 2010. During this period, wordlists were elicited, questionnaires, interviews were administered; my personal experience or observations are also having some inputs to the data to be analyzed.

#### **3.2.1 Sociolinguistic Data**

Sociolinguistic questionnaires and interviews were administered in three towns: K'ibbat, Lera and Kerate - labeled Silt'e-K'ibbat, Innak'or-Lera and Hulbarag-Kerate, respectively. As the Silt'e congregation is concerned, presently, the Wolane area is inconvenient to visit for political reasons. The information about Wolane is scanty and scattered. It was obtained from six individuals, two each from the Silt'e Woreda, Wolk'it'e (the main town of the Gurage Zone) and Addis Ababa. Hence, much of the discussion will be about non-Wolane groups.



Sociolinguistic questionnaires deal with ethnic identity, multilingualism, language use, language attitudes, attitudes to dialects, social interaction patterns, language vitality and development of the language and educational needs. The total number of respondents was 38: 13 female, 25 male. The background of the respondents are summarized in the tables below. All respondents were Muslims.

*Table 4: Educational backgrounds and age ranges of respondents*

Group	Sex		Total	Age range	Education level
	Female	Male			
Silt'e- K'ibbat	6	10	16	23-65	0-12+
Innak'or-Lera	1	5	6	15-45	5-12+
Hulbarag-Kerate	3	7	10	25-55	8-12+
Wolane	3	3	6	35-70	0-12
Total	13	25	38	15-70	0-12+

*Table 5: Occupation of respondents*

	Teachers	Government employees	Farmers	Merchants	Housewives	Students	Total
Silt'e- K'ibbat	5		3	3	2	3	16
Innak'or- Lera		2		1	1	2	6
Hulbarag-Kerate	4		2		2	2	10
Wolane		3		2	1		6
Total	9	5	5	6	6	7	38

*Table 6: Birthplace and place of residence of respondents*

Birthplaces for the respondents other than the Wolane (their respective residences: K'ibbat, Lera and Kerate)			Birthplaces and Residences of the Wolane respondents		
Silt'e-K'ibbat	Innak'or-Lera	Hulbarag-Kerate	Birthplaces	Residence	Total
Goto (1m)	Mugo (1m+1f)	Kerate (3m+1f)	Woliso (1f)	Silt'e-K'ibbat	8
Boze (2m+1f)	Anfar (1m)	Warabbat (2m+1f)	Nak'ora (1f)	Addis Ababa	8
K'ibbat (3m+2f)	Wagar- Gunjible (1m)	Sankura (1f)	Angachimma (1m)	Addis Ababa	8
Asano (1m)	Lera (1m)	Dalocha (1m+1f)	Addis Ababa (1m)	Wolk'it'e	5
Agode (1f)	Lemo (1m)		Wolk'it'e (1f)	Wolk'it'e	3
Aggatta (1m+1f)			Butajira (1m)	Silt'e-K'ibbat	3
Abbecho (2m+1f)					3
16	6	10	6		38

(Number of respondents in brackets; f=female; m=male)

Birthplaces, residence and social interaction patterns, even education level, are among the sociolinguistic factors that determine attitude, identity, etc. Hence, each group is treated separately by its own; the combination, in each group, is not necessary from the same origin.

### 3.2.2 Wordlist Elicitation

The second set of data is concerned with wordlist elicitations; 314 lexical items were recorded in each of to five main dialects:

- (a) The wordlists from T'ora, Silt'e and Worabe represent the Silt'e proper;
- (b) Allicho and Wuriro wordlists represent Allicho-Wuriro;
- (c) Abbecho and Innak'or represent Azarnat-barbare;
- (d) Kerate, Sankura and Chiro represent Hulbarag; and
- (e) Wolane.

### 3.2.3 Questionnaires

The third set of data deals with questionnaires concerning mobilization of resources. The data was collected from different sources:

- (a) Two individuals from education offices:

One was from Worabe - acting material production and distribution coordinator - Silt'e Zone Education Department; the other was from Lera – supervisor - West Azarnat-Barbare Education Office; both were male, MT speakers of Silt'e; born in Mugo.

- (b) School directors:

Eight school directors - all male. Seven were MT speakers of Silt'e, one Amharic speaker. Their age range was between 24-46 years. Their educational background varied from 10+ to 12+. Currently, three of them live in Kerate, the remaining five in Lera, Worabe, K'ibbat, T'ora and Alem Gebeya, one each. Their birthplaces: Shandar, Shibayban, T'ora, Sadda Barango, Dammak'k'e, Dalocha, or elsewhere (two respondents did not mentioned their birthplaces).

- (c) Students and parents:

The number of students investigated is 14: 2 females (from Silt'e and Lanfuro Woredas one each) and 12 males; all were MT speakers of Silt'e with ages ranging from 14 to 19 and education, from 2 to 8 grade. Six were from Lanfuro Woreda and were born in:

Madad Kusaya, Tite, T'ora, Girar and Warisha, one each, and T'ora, two. Five were from Silt'e Woreda and their birthplaces were: Ejare and Ret'abo, one each, and Wac'o Dank'a, 3. One was from Lera - born in Mugo; the two were from Sankura, born in Adasho.

The number of parents was 10: 2 females (from Silt'e) and 8 males; all were MT speakers of Silt'e. Their age range was between 27-65 years; their education varied from literacy to 12+. Three were from Lanfuro Woreda; born in Silt'e, Girar and T'ora. Five were from Silt'e Woreda; their birthplaces: T'ora, K'ibbat, Addis Ababa, K'oto Baloso and Shashamanne. Two were from Lera; born in Buno K'oto and Innak'or.

(d) Teachers:

All respondents but four were MT speakers of Silt'e; four teachers from Sankura and Worabe, two each, were MT speakers of Amharic. The number of respondents was 30: 7 women and 23 men. The age range of the respondents was between 21- 48 years. Their educational background varied from 10+ to 12+, and, their work experience from 6 to 17.

*Table 7: Current residence, age, education level and experience of teachers*

Where they live currently	Sex		Total	Age range	Education	Experience
	Male	Female				
Lera	4	2	6	26-36	10+3- 12+3	8-12
Worabe	2	4	6	28-37	10+3-12+2	10-17
K'ibbat	4	1	5	27-45	12+1-12+3	7-9
T'ora	5	-	5	23-28	10+1-12+1	6-10
Kerate	5	-	5	27-48	12+	8-12
Alem Gebeya	3	-	3	21-24	10+	8-9
Total	21	7	30	21-48	10+-12+	6-17

Table 8: Birthplaces of teachers

	T'ora	Lera	Worabe	K'ibbat	Kerate	Alem Gebeya
Birthplaces	K'ibbat	Mugo	Silt'e (2)	Aratber	Gebaba	T'amada
	C'efuna	Sut'amb	Dalocha	Agode-Lobrerera	Grinzilla	Elsewhere (2)
	Dalocha	K'ec'a C'umeta	Kuyyara	K'ibbat	Ac'amo	
	Rap'i	Hosana	Wonji	Asano-Dugrare	Hulbarag	
	T'ora	Jiro Wagar-Gunjible-	Alkaso	Lobrerera	Silt'e	
Total	5	6	6	5	5	3

(Number of persons in brackets, if more than one)

(e) Material producers and editors:

There amount was 5 material produces and 3 editors. Currently, five of them live in Worabe; the remaining three, in Butajira, T'ora and Addis Ababa. Seven of them speak Silt'e as their first tongue, and one speaks Amharic. The age range of the respondents was between 28-48. Their educational background varied from 12+ to BA. They are not professional linguists except some experience.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *4.1 Sociolinguistic Setting*

The socio-historical and the ethnolinguistic development and composition of the Silt'e-speaking area are complex and still controversial when it comes to identity. There are various controversies concerning the Silt'e. One concern is whom to include under Silt'e, another point is the relationship among the Silt'e themselves and with the neighboring peoples. This section deals with the historical, cultural, and socio-political structure of the Silt'e.

#### **4.1.1 Historical Setting: The So-Called Haddiyya**

According to Braukämper (2002: 61), the Semitic-speaking East Gurage [Silt'e-Wolane], the Silt'e, Ulbarag, Azarnat, Barbare, Gadabano, Wolane, Wuriro and Chiro, and the Cushitic-speaking Halaba-[K'abena] claim descent from the ancient Haddiyya.

Today's Muslim descendants of the former Haddiyya refer in their genealogies to legendary forefathers from Arabia, who entered Ethiopia via the town of Harar. According to the oral traditions, a group of Muslim people, under the leadership of Hajji Aliyye, left Harar and moved westwards. Among these Muslims was Kabir Hamid, who led a group of them to Wolane. Consequently, the Muslim newcomers began to intermingle with the indigenous people. This event is considered to mark the genesis of the Wolane people and the Silt'e and related groups as distinct groups though the exact time and place of this group formation is unknown. Abbecho, one of the followers of Kabir Hamid and son of Hajji Aliyye, is often named as the immediate forefather of the Wolane (Meyer, 2006: 16-17).

According to Nishi (2005: 160), the Silt'e and neighbouring Muslim people, i.e., the former Haddiyya people, share the same religion and the similar historical narratives about the Islamic expansion. Gan-Silt'e, the last son and successor of Hajji Aliyye, is believed to be the ancestor of the Silt'e proper.

Hajji Aliyye is considered to be the common ancestor of the Silt'e in its broader sense. Furthermore, Garaad Side, Malga-Gello, Oche and Hajji Ahmed-Al-Barbar are believed to be the forefathers of the Wolane, Halaba, K'abena, Hulbarag, Allicho and Azarnat.

It is known that the shrines of most symbolic ancestors of the Silt'e, such as Sheikh Ali Nur and Sheikh Nasrallah, are found in Wolane while the shrines of Garaad Side and Chiro are found at Innak'or (Dangawar) and Mugo in Azarnat-Barbare. The shrine of Gan-Silt'e is found in Wuriro, Gajammar. Allicho-Wuriro and Azarnat are places where shrines of the Silt'e foremothers, Giistit Muluka, and Ajamote Makkula, are found in Diir, and Sorgan.

There is also another binding force between Silt'e and Hadiyya, namely the clan structure which extends across territorial and linguistic borders. However, linguistically, Wolane and Silt'e are Ethio-Semitic languages while Halaba and K'abena are Cushitic languages. Geographically, K'abena and Wolane are located at the most north of nowadays Gurage Zone while Silt'e and Halaba are situated further to the south. Furthermore, Silt'e and Halaba belonged to the Gogot confederation of clans (see 4.1.2, below) but Wolane and K'abena did not. Currently, the Haddiya are recognized as separate group by the Silt'e in the broader sense but the Wolane not yet.

Generally speaking, according to Nishi (2005), the historical settings for the Silt'e people and their neighbors changed drastically after the southern conquest of Menelik II. at the end of the 19th century. The following information is derived from a locally available unpublished text in Arabic (page 3-8) on Silt'e origin (cf. Appendix D). This text was written by Sheikh Abdullah Selah, the famous inheritor of the Silt'e narratives, and reads as follows:

The seven prominent personalities, our forefathers in his own term, immigrated into Haddiya [now-a-days Silt'e-Wolane area], whose language is similar to that of Adare, situated south of Jabarti [Yifat] wherein Islam was introduced in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.H. They were:

1. Azma Alekko or Hajji Aliyye - the leader of the immigrants;
2. Sheikh Kabir Hamid and Sheikh Ali Nur - the forefathers of Wolane and Gadabano;
3. Garaad Side - the forefather of Halaba [and K'abena];

4. Malga-Gello<sup>3</sup> - the forefather of Hulbarag;
5. Oche - the forefather of Allichu; and
6. Hajji Ahmed al-Berber - the forefather of Azarnat [and Barbare].

They came, together with the troops of Alghazi [Ahmad Gagn] in 10<sup>th</sup> century A.H. [that is, 16<sup>th</sup> century]. After his death, unlike the other soldiers, they did not go back – they occupied lands and settled permanently:

- Hajji Aliyye – settled in Umnan;
- Malaga-Gello - Yac’ret [Geto Gurage], Kant’e Zigba;
- Garaad Side – Duna [Innak’or]; a fraction of them, because of fierce war, migrated to Wonb whereby they are called K’abena - Halaba and K’abena are the same [as to descent];
- Wolane-Gadabano - in the north;
- Azarnat-Barbare - Mount Mugo;
- Allichu - south of River Wera;
- Wuriro - south of Mount Aggatta.

Then they intermarried and intermingled with *agar*<sup>4</sup> [indigenous people]. *Agar* is a name given to the Muslim remnants after the wars a long time ago. They lived in permanent war with the *Gudela*, Marak’o, Arsi-Oromo and Gurage, until they were invaded by Amhara. Gan-Silt’e [the last son of Hajji Aliyye] is the forefather of the Silt’e proper.

Important points from this manuscript are:

- The term Haddiyya, as used by Sheikh Abdullah, refers, both linguistically and geographically, to Silt’e-Wolane at present; linguistically, Silt’e and Wolane are the closest speech varieties to Adare;

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<sup>3</sup> According to Umar (2007:3), Malga-Gello was a commander of the Malasaay army.

<sup>4</sup> *Agar* having the same sense as *Zay agär* does not refer to one single ethnic group but to all the different groups who lived in former Haddiya before Hajji Aliyye and his followers came; *agar*, in Kistane, refers to a cluster of hamlets, which provides the foundation of local identity (Markakis, 1998:130-132).

- Duna where Garaad Side, the forefather of the Cushitic-speaking Halaba, settled is located in Innak'or, Silt'e; his shrine is also found at a place called Dangawar, in Innak'or.
- 10<sup>th</sup> century A.H. is in line with the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Gan-Silt'e, the forefather of the Silt'e proper, did not belong to the newcomers.

#### **4.1.2 The Gogot Confederation**

The four groups, traditionally addressed *islaam* (see section 4.1.3, below) with the neighboring Halaba, Mask'an and Kistane formed a regional political organization or local confederation traditionally called *Gogot*. The Gogot, in Silt'e context, is different from the ethnolinguistic group Dobbi-Gogot.

Historically, the Silt'e-Gogot leaders were from the Summut-Silt'e (see 4.1.4, below) which indicates how influential this group was. The Summut-Silt'e also were dynastically a legitimated group in the *islaam* political structure. Azma Ormora Gona, the last leader of the Silt'e-Gogot and the leading warlord of Summut-Silt'e and *islaam*, was captured and taken captive by Italian soldiers; no one knows what happened to him nor where his grave is.

Currently, the Silt'e-Gogot is disintegrated into pieces so that traditional and historical ties among its members, at least politically, ceased to exist. Alaba and Silt'e are officially recognized as separate ethnic groups and established their own independent special Woreda/Zone. Mask'an and Kistane together with the Sebat-Bet Gurage, K'abena, Wolane and Marek'o are incorporated into the Gurage Zone. The historical relationship between Sebat-Bet Gurage and the Gogot members still needs further investigation.

To summarize, the Silt'e-Gogot is a regional political entity binding people with different languages and religions in order to act as a team for their mutual benefits and to share a common identity while maintaining local or internal identities. Indeed, the Silt'e-Gogot is to be taken as a model, as far as peaceful coexistence is concerned. The two members of the former Hadiyya, Wolane and K'abena, did not belong to the Silt'e-Gogot.



### 4.1.3 The Term *islaam*

Generally, the Silt'e area consists of 14 geographical entities, called *gatma*, or *mawt'a*: Mukkarre, Tite, Aratbar, Abzana, Anshabesso, Walaya, Danecho, Gora, Azarnat, Barbare, Allicho, Wuriro, Malga and Chiro. These *gatmas*, or *mawt'as*, in turn, are grouped into four autonomous units forming a larger unit traditionally called *daar* or *baad*:

- (a) Mukkarre, Tite, Aratbar, Abzana, Anshabesso, Walaya, Danecho, Gora, combine into one sociocultural entity called *Silt'e*; this group claims to be the descendant of Gan-Silt'e;
- (b) Malga and Chiro form Hulbarag;
- (c) Allicho and Wuriro combine into Allicho-Wuriro; and
- (d) The combination of Azarnat and Barbare forms Azarnat-Barbare.

The division is in accordance with geographical location and ancestry. Each group is relatively autonomous; it has its own internal structure, with its own territory. In other words, the four *daar* are based on geographic location and are associated with a sense of internal identity which is also partly manifested in dialect variations. These four groups also identify themselves based on their ancestries: the Silt'e are considered to be the descendants of Gan-Silt'e; the Hulbarag are descendants of Malga-Gello; the Allicho-Wuriro claimed Oche to be their ancestor; the Azarnat-Barbare are descendants of Hajji Ahmad al-Barbar. Note that the last two claims for descendancy are highly speculative.

As to identity, there is a basic distinction between the Silt'e and the other three *daar*. Anybody from one of the eight sub-districts of Silt'e identifies himself/herself as Silt'e. In contrast, a person from Azarnat-Barbare, for example, identifies himself/herself as Azarnat-Barbare, or Azarnat or Barbare accordingly; the same is true for Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbarag. This shows that the bondage, among the members of the Silt'e *daar* is stronger than in the other three *daar*.

However, these four *daar* have another kind of binding tie: they claim that they share a common language, culture, religion, history, origin, and a common ethnic identity. The traditional word to address the people of these four *daar* collectively is *islaam* 'Muslim', and their language *yiislaam af* 'language of Muslims'. The Silt'e word for Islam is *isliiminna*; hence, there is no confusion with the self-designation for the Silt'e, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and

Hulbarag, *islaam*. Hajji Aliyye is considered to be the common ancestor of *Islaam* and serves, consequently, as mythical anchor of their group identity. After Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim was killed in the middle of the 16th century, Hajji Aliyye and his followers did not return to Harar, instead they settled permanently in central Ethiopia and intermingled with the indigenous people called *agar* in Silt'e. The name Haddiya, according to Silt'e Sheikhs, was historically the collective name for the Silt'e, Halaba, K'abena, and Wolane as a whole. Nowadays, the three members of the former Haddiyya, namely Wolane, K'abena and Halaba, do not belong to the *islaam* identity.

According to the sociocultural context, the term *islaam* can denote varying concepts:

- (a) It is the common designation for the four daar Silt'e (in the narrow sense), Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbarag.
- (b) It denotes the former Haddiya groups of the region during the times of Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim excluding the Halaba, K'abena and Wolane.
- (c) It is also used to denote the groups of the Gogot confederation excluding the Alaba, Mask'an and Kistane.

The neighboring groups of the *islaam* in the sense of (a) above use different terms for calling them:

- (a) According to the Marek'o people, the name of the people to the southwest of them is *Ganda*;
- (b) The Arsi-Oromo call the people to the west of them *Adare*;
- (c) The West Gurage<sup>5</sup> name for the people to the east of them is *Haddiya*. The Sebat Bet Gurage do not use the name *Haddiyya* referring to Wolane.
- (d) The today's Haddiya people call the people to the north of them *Gande*<sup>6</sup>;
- (e) The Mask'an call the people along their border to the south *Silt'e*;
- (f) According to the Halaba people, the name of the people to the northwest of them is *Hulbarag*.

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<sup>5</sup> The name *Gurage*, according to the Silt'e people, refers to West Gurage only.

<sup>6</sup> The Silt'e name for the today's Haddiya is *Gudella*.

#### 4.1.4 The Term *Silt'e*

It is confusing and controversial to explain who the members of the Silt'e ethnic group are, in particularly for outsiders. The way the people are classifying and denoting themselves is different from the perceptions most elites have about them. Nowadays, the term *Silt'e* conveys three different concepts. Traditionally, the term Silt'e is used referring specifically to the descendants of Gan-Silt'e with their own legitimate territory. The Gan-Silt'e are considered the most prestigious group within *islaam*. Nowadays, with roads connecting formerly separate territories, the term Silt'e has acquired a broader sense encompassing all four major groups of *islaam*. The third concept of the term Silt'e denotes an administrative division within the Silt'e Zone.

The three concepts are related to historical sociopolitical dynamics prevailing at specific times, i.e. the different concepts of the term Silt'e display a chronological sequence, which will be presented in this section starting from the earliest and proceeding to the most recent.

##### 4.1.4.1 Gan-Silt'e

In the first half of the 16th century, Hajji Aliyye and his followers settled in the nowadays Silt'e area, at that time known as *Haddiyya*. Consequently, Hajamo – the alleged descendants of Hajji Aliyye and the aboriginal people, *agar*, intermingled creating a new sociocultural community with Hajji Aliyye as leader. His administrative center was Umnan, a place at which today his shrine is found. Hajji Aliyye, according to Gutt (1983: 37) and oral traditions as well, married with local women and gave birth to five sons, who spread over the area and became the ancestors of most of the actual population. His last son and successor, Gan-Silt'e, is believed to be the ancestor of the Silt'e. According to Nishi (2005: 60), the Silt'e in its original sense, are the descendants of Gan-Silt'e who constitute only a part of the present day Silt'e nationality.<sup>7</sup>

The name of Gan-Silt'e before he came to power was Sult'an. According to the Silt'e oral traditions, Hajji Aliyye blessed Sult'an with virtues of *gan* – a dynast. When his father died,

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<sup>7</sup> Other possible interpretations: The word, *summut*, in Harari, means congregation, assemblage; hence, the concept Summut-Silt'e may hold the concept, Centralized Silt'e – a system having a centralized political administration; according Braukämper (2002: 47), *Gan*, means kingdom; hence, Gan-Silt'e may mean the kingdom of Silt'e; the word *gan* in Gurage means a country; hence, Gan-Silt'e may mean the Silt'e country.

Sult'an came to power and was called henceforth with his coronary name *Gan-Silt'e* 'king of Silt'e'. The emergence of the Gan-Silt'e dynasty entailed an independent, politically and geographically defined chiefdom with its own chief, *garaad*, and marks the genesis of a sociocultural group, Silt'e, within in the former Haddiyya. This probably happened after the religious war in the middle of the 16th century but the exact time of the group formation is unknown. Thus, the traditional sense of *Silt'e* is associated with the Gan-Silt'e dynasty and conveys the essence of the Silt'e proper with its definite geographical area considered to be the homeland of Gan-Silt'e. The Gan-Silt'e dynastic community consists of the following geographical units, as its eight traditional districts,

(1) Mukkarre (3) Anshabesso (5) Aratbar (7) Abzana

(2) Tite (4) Walaya (6) Danecho (8) Gora

These geographical units come together and form one centralized political system by itself ruled by *garaad* 'warlords', whereby Gan-Silt'e was the first warlord. The common name for the eight geographical units is *Summut-Silt'e* 'eight Silt'e'. Traditionally, the entire Summut-Silt'e are considered to form the prestigious group of nowadays Silt'e. The name Silt'e in the traditional sense is used to identify the Summut-Silt'e while the remaining three groups, Allicho-Wuriro, Azarnat-Barbare, and Hulbarag, are considered to be peripheral. These three groups identified themselves as Allicho-Wuriro or Wuriro, Azarnat-Barbare or Azarnat and Hulbarag but not as (Summut)-Silt'e.

The values of the Summut Silt'e are strongly associated with Gan-Silt'e and his dynastic system. This sense of Silt'e is still vividly maintained by the descendants of Gan-Silt'e as to their local identity. Actually, the basic sense of the name Silt'e is associated with this traditional sense, which is also recognized by the other groups. All historically prominent people from *islaam* came from this group. Generally, the term (*Summut-*)*Silt'e* refers to a group of people belonging to *islaam* claiming to be the descendants of Gan-Silt'e and having their own, separate sociopolitical structure, The traditional sense of Silt'e excludes the other members of *islaam*, i.e., *islaam* minus Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbareg.

The *garaad* system continued for centuries until Silt'e was annexed in the 19th century by Menelik II. Sediso K'albo, the last *garaad* of the Gan-Silt'e dynasty, was banished and his

chiefdom incorporated into Shewa. Since then the *garaad* system stopped to exist. This leads us to the second sense of Silt'e.

#### **4.1.4.2 Yaansanbat Amaara**

The basic sense of Silt'e is necessarily associated with the emergence of the Gan-Silt'e dynasty which had an independent local state until the Shewan Soldiers devastated it in 1888. The Silt'e people still remember it as *yansanbat amaare* 'Saturday's Christians' – referring to the Silt'e conquest by Christians. The second sense of *Silt'e* is to be dealt with in this section, appeared after the Gan-Silt'e territory was annexed. The homeland of the Summut-Silt'e was put under the political and economic authority of Shewa in 1888. The groups belonging to *islaam* were considered as part of the Gurage. Consequently, they were recognized as Gurage and no longer as *Islaam*. Hence, the Gurage ethnic identity was imposed upon them. According to Markakis (1998: 132-144), components of identity acquire prominence in different contexts, such as genealogy, religion, language, territory, history. In the case of Gurage, there is no correlation between any of them which could serve to anchor an identity for the Gurage as an 'ethnic' group. The conglomeration of various groups into a single administrative unit labelled Gurage was the first stroke in the process of fashioning a single Gurage ethnic identity.

Since the annexation and incorporation of the Summut-Silt'e into Shewa, the armed settlers established their own administrative unit, Silt'e, to exercise their administrative and economic control over the people. This administrative unit acquired the status of a Woreda, which was divided into two sub-woredas, in the former Gurage Awraja. As result of the geopolitical reorganization, some members of *islaam* became part of this new Woreda in the Gurage Awraja while others were incorporated into neighboring administrative entities where they were reduced into minority groups. Later, the former Silt'e Woreda divided into three woredas: the two sub-woredas became independent woredas, namely Dalocha and Lanfuro, and Silt'e; currently, these three woreda do exist.

The current Silt'e Woreda is a part of the Summut-Silt'e. Therefore, some people, particularly elites, use the term Silt'e referring to this particular woreda or its main town Bilele (also called K'ibbat). The name is maintained as historical heritage and used widely. Some people use the

term *Silt'i* instead of Silt'e to refer to the Woreda. To avoid possible confusions, the term Silt'e-K'ibbat will be used.

To summarize, currently, the traditional Summut-Silt'e territory is divided into three administrative Woredas, namely: Silt'e, Dalocha and Lanfuro. Thus, Silt'e (-K'ibbat) denotes Summut-Silt'e minus Dalocha and Lanfuro.

#### **4.1.4.3 The New Version of *islaam***

The first sense of Silt'e is associated with the historical setting 500 years ago, the second, about 120 years. This section is dealing with the very recent sense prevailing since 1991.

Historical settings for the *islaam* people varied drastically with the sociopolitical environment. After the Shewan invasion *islaam* emerged as part of Gurage. Until 1991, the different governments implemented a policy of unity; hence, there was little incentive in those days for the people of *islaam* to claim their own identity as a separate group from the Gurage; in those days the attitude of the ruling elites towards *islaam* was negative.

The present government bases its policies on ethnic factors so that belonging to a unique ethnic group brings higher status and opens economic resources. So the *islaam* people struggled to acquire a distinct identity. In consequence, the Silt'e came out as a new version of *islaam*. Silt'e was asserted as a distinct ethnic identity with the *islaam* concept as its cover name. The goal of this assertion was to reject the Gurage identity in favor of a distinct Silt'e identity, and to claim autonomous political recognition and administration as well as allocation of economic resources.

In July 1991, the first political organization for an independent Silt'e ethnic identity came out. The political movement was motivated from other *islaam* groups rather than from the Summut-Silt'e. The Summut-Silt'e was recognized as distinct unit for many years; it remained influential in the area; Sebat Bet Gurage or any other neighboring group is not a threat for it. The other groups were neglected and incorporated into other dominant groups as enclaves. They were politically and culturally dominated by stronger groups, such as Haddiyya, Kambata or the Sebat Bet Gurage, necessitating the struggle to begin when the cultural pressure was prevalent.

At the beginning of the movement, there were a number of problems and confusions: firstly, *islaam* was not accepted as neutral term to incorporate the various groups; secondly, there was

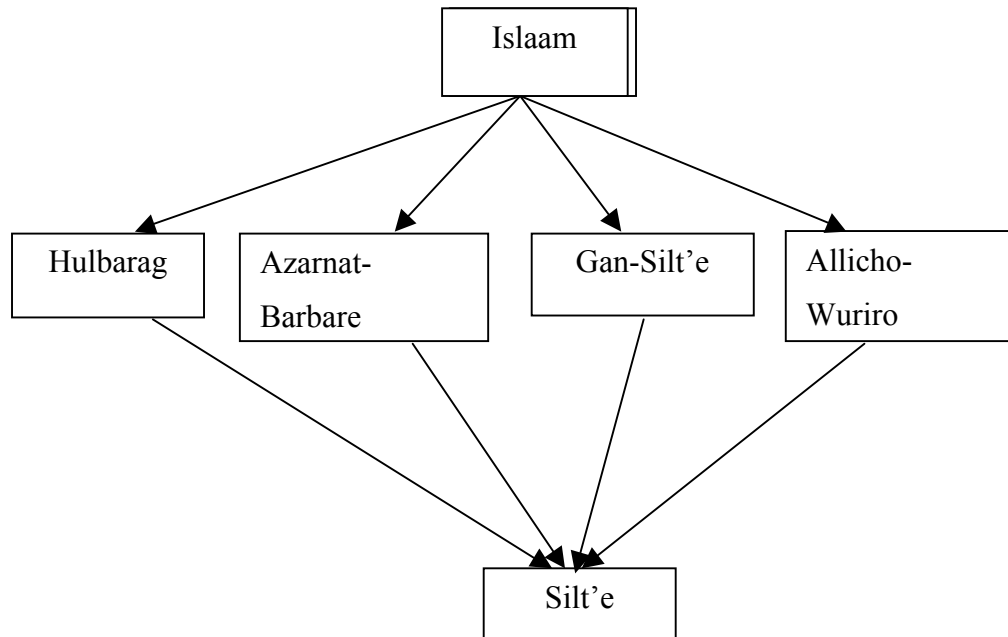
no common alternative name; third, Wolane claimed a separate status different from *islaam* and *Gogot*. The name of the party was abbreviated – SAAMWGDO - *Silt'e*, *Azarant-Barbare*, *Allicco-Wuriro*, *Malga* and *Wolane-Gadabano* - by taking the first letters from each group, including Wolane-Gadabano; it was frustrating.

Later on, the party tended to use the traditional term *Silt'e-Gogot* as a common name - the concept the *islaam* share with neighboring groups. Finally, it was decided to use the prestigious name, *Silt'e*, representing *islaam*, which became generally accepted. Then, a referendum over *Silt'e* identity was carried out in March, 2001 - out of 421,188 voters, 416, 481 (99%) voted for an independent *Silt'e* identity (Ethiopian National Electoral Board Report: April, 2001, Addis Ababa); it did not apply to Wolane for some reasons.

The political movement, for an independent *Silt'e* identity, aimed at attaining two simultaneous goals: rejecting the Gurage ethnic identity and accepting *Silt'e* as a representative name for all members of *islaam* – both were successful. Hence, the name *Silt'e* turned out to represent the four groups as a whole – besides its traditional sense – since the 2001 referendum. To avoid possible confusion, the term *Mullay-Silt'e* 'pan-*Silt'e*' will be used to refer to this community.

Nowadays, the name *Silt'e* prevails over *islaam*. The younger generation, leaving *islaam* to be used only by old people, tends to use the name *Silt'e*. Furthermore, currently *Silt'e* is officially recognized as a separate group while the position of Wolane remains controversial. In this paper, thus, I prefer to use the name *Silt'e* and it applies to all groups traditionally called, *islaam* or the *Silt'e Gurage*, unless stated otherwise. The current concept of *Silt'e* is, thus, the Summut-*Silt'e* plus other members of *islaam*. *Islaam* consists of the *Silt'e* proper, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbarag whereas the *Silt'e* proper denote *islaam* minus Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbarag. The current concept of *Silt'e* also includes all members of *islaam*: the *Silt'e* proper, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro and Hulbarag. The current sense of *Silt'e* is not different from *islaam* as to its compositions. Both *islaam* and the current concept of *Silt'e* consist of the *Silt'e* proper, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro, and Hulbarag. Hence, the current concept of *Silt'e* is nothing but the new version of *islaam* - a deep-rooted concept in the hearts of the people as far as their identity is concerned.

Figure 1: Comparison between *islaam* and *Silt'e*



The traditional sense of *Silt'e* conceives of divergence within it while in the current sense *Gan-Silt'e* represents the *Silt'e* proper.

#### 4.1.5 Clan Structure

Besides political structures, there is a clan structure. The *Silt'e* ethnic group is divided at least into 114 clans, called *gicho*, showing a system of reference to ancestral origins on which *Silt'e* ethnic identity is based. The names of the clans are associated to either the names of their ancestors (male or female), or the names of the original places where the clans lived, e.g. *Sabola*.

The clan structure of the *Silt'e* ethnic group is established in a way that can be traced back to descent - to trace the origin and direction of movement of people. Though it remains to be verified by further research, the origins of most clans are traced to military leaders of Ahmed ibn Ibrahim. The clan structure crosses territorial or group borders. It is independent of political consideration, but associated with social values.

Members of the same clan can be found in any territorial entity within or outside *Silt'e*. Most clans in Wolane have some trace to *Silt'e*; they trace back their descents to Wasanuute - the daughter of *Gan-Silt'e*, etc. The clan, named Abbecho, is found both in *Silt'e* and Wolane and it



traces back to Hajji Aliyye as to its descent. A clan named, Nago is found both in Silt'e and Soddo. Members of Dankuse clan trace back to Zara Yak'ob as to their origin.

Alaba, Kistane and K'abena have blood or historical relations with the though they are considered as separate groups as to ethnic identity. Silt'e people make things more complex, by extending their historical or blood relations to Harari and Argobba; some groups, in Bale and Sidama, are said to have common ancestors with Silt'e, too. All these issues indicate that further investigation is needed in the future.

Furthermore, different groups, such as Mask'an, Marek'o and Alaba, are intermingled with Silt'es, particularly in border areas. There are other issues related to enclaves in different administrative entities. Personally, I feel that further research is needed as to the relationships, including Marek'o, among different groups in the area.

Furthermore, Silt'e is politically sensitive area as it remained to be the meeting place for two historically competitive forces: Christianity from north, Islam from east. Silt'e remains as a strong hold for Islam while Aymallal for Christianity. The area was a battlefield for Amda Syon, Zara Yak'ob, Ahmad Gran, Hasan Injamo and Menelik. During Emperor Yohannes' evangelization campaign, a lot of Wollo and Argobba Muslims took shelter in Silt'e and intermingled. Generally, the socio-cultural situations in the area are so controversial and complex – inviting more and more for sociolinguistic, historical and anthropological researches in the future.

## ***4.2 Data Analysis***

### **4.2.1 Sociolinguistic interviews**

This subsection presents findings from sociolinguistic questionnaires and interviews. K'ibbat, Lera and Kerate are the main towns of Silt'e, West Azarnat-Barbare and Hulbarag Woredas in zhe Silt'e Zone. Silt'e, Lanfuro and Dalocha Woredas are assumed to be the homeland of the Silt'e group - in its traditional sense - the Gan-Silt'e or the Summut-Silt'e group, and the information from K'ibbat is supposed to represent the groups formerly under Gurage Zone in general, the Summut-Silt'e group, in particular.

West Azarnat-Barbare and Hulbarag woredas are among the newly coming areas into the Silt'e congregation – converging into Silt'e identity. The information from Lera and Kerate, hence, is supposed to represent the group traditionally called Azarnat-Barbare and Hulbarag accordingly. East Azarnat-Barbare and Sankura Woredas are considered to be parts of Azarnat-Barbare and Hulbarag, respectively, as far as local identities are concerned.

#### 4.2.1.1 Identity of Respondents

The total number of respondents was 38; 13 female and 25 male. Other personal background information of the respondents is given in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6 in section 3.2.1.

This subsection deals with how the respondents see themselves concerning their identity. Birthplace, residence and social interaction patterns, even education level, are among the sociolinguistic factors that determine their identity. Hence, each group is discussed separately.

##### (a) Silt'e-K'ibbat

All non-Wolane respondents explicitly stated that they share the same ethnolinguistic identity – Silt'e. However, they have different perception in some other respects. Eleven respondents, who were born in Goto, Boze, K'ibbat, Asano and Agode, maintained the Silt'e identity in its traditional sense – the Summut-Silt'e. These places are found in Silt'e Woreda and considered to be the prestigious. People living there trace back their descents to Gan-Silt'e, the youngest son and successor of Hajji Aliyye. They trace back their Silt'e identity to Gan-Silt'e. The remaining five respondents, who were born in Aggatta and Abbecho, maintained Wuriro and Azarnat as their group identities and consider Hajji Aliyye to be the symbolic forefather of Silt'e as a whole. Aggatta is a place in Wuriro; Abbecho belongs to Azarnat.

The terms Haddiyya, *islaam*, Adare (i.e., *adäre*), Gurage, Gande and Ganda used as denomination for Silt'e trace back to the historical origin of the Silt'e. The Arsi-Oromo term Adare and the Marak'o name Ganda denoting Silt'e are neutral. However, the term Haddiyya in the context of Wuriro and Abbecho – as used by the Gurage – has a negative connotation. Respondents belonging to Gan-Silt'e, however, have no idea concerning this issue. All respondents stated that the Silt'e name for Haddiyya at present is *Gudella*. They use the term Gurage only referring to Western Gurage – neither to Mask'an nor to Kistane. Nine respondents

stated that the Wolane belong to the Silt'e cluster somehow; the remaining respondents preferred to keep silent as to this issue.

(b) Innak'or-Lera

The respondents from Innak'or-Lera maintained Azarnat-Barbare as their internal identity. Hajji Aliyye is considered to be the symbolic forefather of the entire Silt'e people, and the founder of their political system. *Gurage* – the Amhara name for Silt'e – and *Gande* as denominations for Silt'e are derogatory terms for them.

(c) Hulbarag-Kerate

Eight of the Kerate respondents identified themselves as Malga while the remaining two – born in Dalocha – maintained Chiro as identity. The Halaba name for Silt'e was said to be *Hulbarag*. Generally, people in the Silt'e congregation still identify themselves in relation to their membership in a particular local group, i.e., they identify themselves locally rather than linguistically whereby the traditional boundaries have remained fixed.

(d) Wolane

The Wolane call their language Wolane and explicitly state that they have linguistic, blood and historical relationships with the Silt'e. As to linguistic relationship between Silt'e and Wolane, there is no intelligibility problem between the two; they communicate in Silt'e or Wolane without any interpreter. The Wolane have different perceptions as to their ethnic identity, may be because of cultural pressures from different directions. These perceptions vary with the place of residence. Two respondents - currently living in Addis Ababa - identified themselves as Wolane but not as Silt'e or Gurage. According to the other two respondents, who currently live in Wolk'it'e, Wolane belongs to the Gurage cluster. Those living in K'ibbat are indifferent as whether the Wolane should identify themselves as Silt'e, Wolane or Gurage. Among the Wolane it is commonly believed that the Gadabano people belong to Wolane but not necessarily vice versa. To the best of my knowledge, I do not think that the Wolane consider themselves as Gurage.

#### 4.2.1.2 Multilingualism

All the respondents but one, and their respective parents were mother tongue speakers of Silt'e or Wolane; one respondent (from Lera) has Haddiya as his first language. 14 mothers were monolingual in Silt'e or Wolane; two mothers can speak Haddiyya as a second language; 4 Amharic. 24 fathers can speak Amharic or have some understanding of it. Table 9, below, presents the mother tongues of the spouses and children of the respondents.

*Table 9: First languages spoken by spouses and children of the respondents*

Language	Spouses	Children
Silt'e	18	13
Amharic	5	21
Mask'an	3	-
Wolane	7*	-
Gurage	1	-
Alaba	2	-
<i>Total</i>	36	34
Two respondents were not married 38 (36+2) Two respondents have no children 38 (34+4) * One of the Silt'e respondents has a Wolane wife.		

From Table 9, one can understand that only 28 Silt'e respondents (i.e., 34 minus 6 Wolane respondents) have children; two respondents are not married; another two have no children. Among these 28 Silt'e respondents only the children of 13 (46%) respondents have Silt'e as their first language; for the children of 15 (54%) respondents, Amharic, which was the second language of their parents, became the first language. These children, if ever, learn Silt'e as a second language. This indicates that intermarriage affects the linguistic behavior. The children of respondents having a non-Silt'e mother tongue speaker as spouse are most likely to learn Amharic as their first language. Among the Wolane respondents, no child learnt Wolane as his first language.

As to the whole area, however, Silt'e and Wolane are still alive and strong, particularly in rural areas. Most children learn Silt'e or Wolane as their first language accordingly though a significant number of people also speak Amharic as second language. Speaking Amharic is perceived as a sign of civilization. Amharic is the dominant language in Kerate town. The language ability in Amharic varies with age, sex, and education. The younger generation has a better competence in Amharic than older people while men are more fluent in Amharic than

women. Rural people with no education have less competence in Amharic. Many people are monolingual in Silt'e. Education contributes a lot for the spread of Amharic in their area. Amharic is a more favored, powerful and more prestigious language in education. Amharic reflects high degrees of social acceptance and prestige, and thus, is used for prestigious official functions. On most occasions, political and educational elites use Amharic. Amharic is a threat to Silt'e because Amharic is expanding at the expense of Silt'e. People think that Amharic is far superior to Silt'e; it seems very difficult for Silt'e and Wolane to compete in function and prestige even if Silt'e is used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools in the Silt'e Zone.

#### 4.2.1.3 Language Use

Silt'e is the dominant language in communicating with parents and village elders. Amharic is used when communicating with administrators as well as in hospitals. Amharic or Silt'e is used when communicating at work places and at the market. Table 10 indicates the language used within the family, with village elders and friends.

*Table 10: Languages used by respondents within the family, with elders and friends*

Language	Parents	Village elders	Spouses	Children	Siblings	Friends
Amharic	-	-	15	16	9	16
Silt'e	32	32	11	8	10	5
Amharic or Silt'e	-	-	4	4	13	11
Total	32	32	30	28	32	32

Table 10 indicates that using Amharic is increasing in every aspect of life, while Silt'e is declining. Only 28% (8 respondents) use Silt'e when communicating with children, while 57% (16 respondents) use Amharic.

We have seen from Table 9 that the children of 13 (46%) respondents have Silt'e as their first language; among these:

- (a) Only 8 (28%) respondents use Silt'e when communicating with their children;
- (b) 5 (18%) respondents do not use it at all which affects the children's language ability in Silt'e adversely, i.e. the transmission of Silt'e from the elder to the younger generation is interrupted.

Nevertheless, the interviewees stated that language vitality is quite high everywhere in rural areas, though young people, political and educational elites tend to speak Amharic rather than Silt'e. The elites keep using Amharic that they were educated in. Thus, the implementation of mother tongue education in Silt'e seems not to promote using Silt'e.

#### **4.2.1.4 Language Attitudes**

The implementation of a language policy depends to a large extent on people's perception or attitude towards a language; the language's acceptability is crucial in policy formulation (Haugen (1972: 97-110). Language attitude includes attitudes towards speakers of a particular language or dialect. Attitudes towards languages are often the reflection of attitudes towards members of various ethnic groups (Fasold, 1984: 148). If a language has social meaning, people will evaluate, it in relation to the social status of its users. Their language attitude will be social attitudes (Muysken, 1987: 12). The fact that languages are not only objective, socially neutral instruments for conveying meaning, but are linked up with the identities of social or ethnic groups has consequences for the social evaluation of and the attitudes towards language. In other words, if there is a strong relationship between language and identity, this relation should find its expression in the attitudes of individuals towards these languages and their users (Muysken, 1987: 16). This section is concerned with respondents' attitudes towards their mother tongue, towards Amharic and towards the language of the neighbors.

Exogamy is not forbidden in the Silt'e culture. As far as outside marriage is concerned, there is no problem in the area where the respondents live. Inter-marriage is well accepted according to the Silt'e-K'ibbat respondents who live together with Marak'o and Mask'an. Inter-marriage with Haddiyya and Gurage is accepted in Innak'or-Lera though the Gurage men don't want to marry a Silt'e woman. Inter-marriage between other Silt'e groups as well as Alaba is accepted and common in Hulbarag. For 28 respondents, it is acceptable that their children marry a non-Silt'e speaking person but four respondents do not accept outside marriage.

All respondents (including the Wolane) have a positive attitude towards their mother tongue and Amharic. The respondents stated that Silt'e will be used for many generations so that it will not be forgotten. Children should learn to speak their mother tongue, i.e., Silt'e, Amharic or a combination of the two.

*Table 11: Languages the respondents' children should learn to speak*

Language	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Silt'e and Amharic	11	3	14 (44%)
Silt'e	4	6	10 (31%)
Amharic	7	1	8 (25%)
Total	22 (69%)	10 (31%)	32 (100%)

14 (44%) respondents said that both Silt'e and Amharic are the most useful languages to know in the area, ranking Silt'e first and Amharic second. Children need learning both Silt'e and Amharic for speaking, reading and writing. Learning only Amharic for speaking, reading and writing will help to acquire more knowledge or be of help for wider communication but it will also affect their culture, language and ethnic identity adversely. Hence, it is wise to use both Silt'e and Amharic instead of using only Amharic for their children. Silt'e, according to 10 respondents, is the most useful language to know in the area; 8 respondents perceived Amharic to be the most useful language.

The Wolane respondents also have a positive attitude towards their mother tongue and Amharic. Their children should learn to speak their mother tongue, Amharic or a combination of the two. Both Wolane and Amharic are important for the Wolane people.

#### **4.2.1.5 Attitudes to Dialects**

Generally speaking, dialect variations exist in Silt'e. However, overall variation among the Silt'e varieties creates no problem as far as intelligibility is concerned. According to the Silt'e interviewees, there are three dialects: Summut-Silt'e, Hulbarag, and Azarnat (including Innak'or). The variety spoken in the Silt'e Woreda is exactly the same with the varieties spoken in Allichu-Wuriro and Lanfuro, and, slightly different from the varieties spoken in Sankura and Azarnat-Barbare. The variety spoken in Innak'or is exactly the same with the variety spoken in Azarnat but they consider Wolane as a different language. The variety spoken in Hulbarag is exactly the same with the variety spoken in Chiro, and slightly different from the varieties spoken in Wuriro. The varieties spoken in peripheral areas such as Sankura and Innak'or are

considered to be influenced by the neighboring languages, i.e., Haddiyya, Alaba, Kambata and West Gurage.

All respondents stated that the reference center Central Silt'e, i.e., the varieties currently used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools, is in line with the interests of their respective areas –Hulbarag, Innak'or and Silt'e-K'ibbat. The interviewees stated that the variety spoken between Worabe and K'ibbat towns is considered a prestigious variety in the Silt'e area – in its traditional sense.

#### **4.2.1.6 Social Interaction Patterns**

Most wives of Silt'e men come from surrounding villages; there is no restriction as far as outside marriage is concerned. They have freedom to marry outsiders, particularly Mask'an and Marak'o, Haddiyya, Geto as well as Gomaro women. Silt'e interact with internal groups – Wuriro and Hulbarag, and outsiders – Mask'an and Marak'o and celebrate holidays with them. Silt'e have also friends outside their ethnic group. They go to Butajira, K'oshe and Inseno towns, Hosana, K'abul and Alem Gebeya towns or other villages for trading. They use, depending on whom they meet, Silt'e or Amharic for communication when they go to the towns or villages for trading. Silt'e is a trade language in the area; a significant number of Alaba, Endegagn, Mask'an as well as Marak'o people and some Haddiyya, Gomaro and Geto can speak Silt' as a second language, but not vice versa. Social interactions are more important for men than women and so is second language knowledge more common among Silt'e men than woman.

#### **4.2.1.7 Language Vitality**

The language vitality of Silt'e is strong. Many children in rural areas learn Silt'e as their first language. The mother tongue is still being transmitted to the children. However, there was some uncertainty about whether this would continue with future generations. Interviewees doubt whether the generation to come will use their mother tongue as a languages. The young people, political and educational elites tend to speak Amharic more than Silt'e. Amharic is expanding, and so, it is a threat for Silt'e. Using Amharic is increasing while using Silt'e is declining. Silt'e is struggling with Amharic. The implementation of mother tongue education in Silt'e doesn't promote using Silt'e either.



However, most of the respondents believe that it is possible to keep the language if necessary measures are taken; particularly, if it becomes an official language at the zonal level and a Silt'e language academy is established. They would like that decision-makers take necessary measures to keep the language. They believe that mother tongue education can contribute to keep the language.

Wolane, too, is strong and alive everywhere in rural areas. Many children learn it as their first language. The mother tongue is still being transmitted to the children. However, there was some uncertainty about whether this would continue with future generations; they doubt whether the generation to come speak it; the Wolane respondents expressed their interest in the development of Wolane.

#### 4.2.1.8 Development of Silt'e and Educational Needs

All respondents (including the Wolane) expressed their interest in the development of their respective languages. According to 10 Silt'e respondents, Amharic is the best language to choose for making books and newspapers; 16 respondents prefer Silt'e; six respondents did not answer this question. The Wolane were not asked about this issue.

*Table 12: Respondents' preferences for the medium of instruction in elementary schools*

Language	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Silt'e	15	6	21 (66%)
Amharic	7	4	11 (34%)
Total	22	10	32

21 (66%) respondents stated that Silt'e is the best language as a medium of instruction in elementary schools; according to the remaining 11 respondents, however, Amharic comes first. The respondents stated that both Silt'e and Amharic are important for the Silt'e people. Silt'e is given symbolic value as to ethnic identity while Amharic is necessary for wider communication. Furthermore, it was stated that that children should learn Silt'e, Amharic and English in school.

Most Silt'e respondents stated that English is the best language as mediums of instruction in secondary schools:

*Table 13: Preferred medium of instruction in secondary schools*

Only	21 (66%)
Amharic and English	7 (22%)
Only Amharic	<u>4 (12%)</u>
	32 (100%)

As a language to be passed over to children, Silt'e is more important than any other language. The respondents explicitly stated that developing Silt'e means not only keeping the language alive but also maintaining the Silt'e identity and culture. They would like their mother tongue to be fully developed and widely used in different domains, such as government offices and meetings. Generally, the Silt'e people should change their linguistic behavior. The respondents would like seeing:

- (a) their mother tongue being used as zonal official language;
- (b) the Silt'e language institute established;
- (c) the Silt'e history written in their mother tongue;
- (d) Silt'e monolingual dictionary produced;
- (e) local magazines and newspapers be published; and
- (f) Silt'e radio program, and television, would be welcomed very much.

The respondents also stated that it is necessary to establish some kind of institution to promote the standardization process. The material producers are to be well equipped with technical as well as professional skills. A Silt'e training center is needed. The Silt'e people need to contribute for the development of their mother tongue; active participation is expected from the Silt'e scholars and from the community at large.

#### **4.2.1.9 Summary**

To launch a mother tongue education, linguistic and sociolinguistic factors must be considered, particularly if there is a strong relationship between language and identity. All Silt'e groups except the Wolane share the same ethnolinguistic identity – Silt'e. The Silt'e have a common political and historical center and are interested to learn in Silt'e and develop their mother

tongue. The dialect variations are insignificant; no problem as mutual intelligibility is concerned. The variety, spoken in Central Silt'e is considered to be the reference center. The variety used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools, is in line with the interests of different groups.

The Wolane case must be treated differently. Linguistically, Silt'e and Wolane are closely related speech varieties. The Wolanes, for cultural reasons, refused to learn in Silt'e. The Wolane consider their language to be different from Silt'e for historical, geographical and ethnic reasons – the Wolane live outside the Silt'e Zone as well. But the two speech varieties could share the same writing system – they could harmonize their orthographies. Harmonization of orthographies is helpful in order to allow reading materials to be easily used by speakers of different varieties. Harmonization aims at establishing a single unified orthography for two varieties. When necessary and possible, adaptation is helpful to minimize costs; it saves money and time. Two or more language development projects in related speech varieties can work together. The Wolane could adapt Silt'e literature just by making necessary adjustments (modifications) suitable to their situations. The ultimate pedagogical aim of harmonization of the orthographies is to facilitate reading and writing in languages other than one's own language (Wolff, 2000: 332).

#### **4.2.2 Results of the Lexicostatistic Comparison**

Ten varieties from the main administrative units in the Silt'e Zone, namely Central Silt'e, Allicho, T'ora, Worabe, Wuriro, Abbecho, Innak'or, Kerate, Sankura and Chiro, as well as Wolane from the Gurage Zone were compared with each other. For the lexical comparison, 314 items, from the 326 SIL lexical items list (as first compiled by Girard, Wedekind et al. 1993, and revised by the SIL-Ethiopia survey team during the Zayse-Zargulla survey in 2006), were selected. The remaining 12 items were excluded from the comparison because they are not relevant culturally.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt to work out lexical similarity, cognates with slight phonological variation, as in the following examples, are counted as similar:

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<sup>8</sup> The excluded items are: lake, boat, arrow, bow, pig, scorpion, buffalo, harvest, bush, animal, green, and fruit.

- (1) a. [iʃeed ~ iʃeet] ‘spider’  
 b. [int’irät ~ hint’irät] ‘fence’  
 c. [udr ~ wudr] ‘thigh’

The percentages of shared lexical items, lexical similarities among the speech varieties under study, are presented in Table 14, below:

*Table 14: Results of lexical comparison of eleven varieties*

	C. Silt’e	Allicho	T’ora	Worabe	Wuriro	Abbecho	Innak’or	Kerate	Sankura	Chiro	Wolane
C. Silt’e	100										
Allicho	100	100									
T’ora	100	100	100								
Worabe	100	99	100	100							
Wuriro	100	100	100	100	100						
Abbecho	100	100	100	100	100	100					
Innak’or	99	99	99	99	98	97	100				
Kerate	99	99	99	100	97	99	98	100			
Sankura	98	97	98	97	96	96	96	97	100		
Chiro	98	98	98	98	98	98	97	97	97	100	
Wolane	93	91	93	93	93	93	92	93	91	92	100

The term Silt’e in Table 14 denotes the variety spoken in the Silt’e Woreda referring to Central Silt’e, the reference center. The varieties spoken in Silt’e, Allicho, Worabe, T’ora and Wuriro belong to the northern dialect of Silt’e. Kerate, Chiro, Sankura, Innak’or and Abbecho varieties belong to the southern dialects. Detailed investigation is needed in order to establish the exact dialect boundaries in Silt’e with the exception of Wolane, which is geographically separated from all other Silt’e varieties. The southern dialects - Abbecho and Chiro - are closer to Central Silt’e, which is a northern dialect, than to Innak’or. Speakers of the Abbecho and Chiro varieties belong to Azarnat-Barbare and Hulbarag, respectively, with regard to their local identity. The possible factor might be proximity or social interaction. However, geographically adjacent varieties are also lexically closer to one another; further research is needed.

In lexicostatistical analysis, more than 80% agreement in the basic lexicon is a reasonable cut off point for mutual intelligibility (Bender, 2003: 8). Varieties sharing cognate percentage in basic vocabulary from 81-100 are considered as dialects of a language while those sharing 36-80 are languages of a family (Crowley, 1997: 173).

The lexical similarity between North Silt'e and South Silt'e is nearly 99%; Wolane and North Silt'e have nearly 93% lexical similarity. The average lexical similarity between Wolane and South Silt'e is nearly 91. The average lexical similarity between Wolane and Silt'e is nearly 92. Hence, the varieties under question are to be considered as dialects of the same language; high level of mutual intelligibility is expected among the speakers of these varieties, and, is in line with the facts in reality; the findings from the sociolinguistic interviews confirm this too.

Language and dialect are distinguished on the basis of the level of understanding each other of the speakers of two speech varieties. According to Payne (1997: 18),

“[T]wo speech varieties are said to be dialects of one language if speakers of the two varieties can understand one another immediately, i.e., with no period of familiarization on the part of either speaker. Conversely, two speech varieties are said to be two distinct languages if speakers cannot understand one another . . . until they have adjusted their production and comprehension to allow for the variation.”

According to interviewees and my personal experience of the area, there are no intelligibility problems among the different Silt'e varieties under study. Hence, these varieties are to be considered as dialects of the same language from a theoretical point of view whereby variation refers to variation in location as in traditional dialectology.

The linguistic findings suggest considering Silt'e and Wolane as two varieties of the *same language*. However, the Wolane people consider themselves being different from Silt'e as far as their ethnolinguistic identity is concerned. Geographically, Wolane is separated from the other dialects of Silt'e whose speakers live in contiguous areas and share both linguistic and ethnic identity. The Wolane diverged and formed their own identity as they are separated in space and time from Silt'e; social interaction patterns, one of the binding factors, are absent. In this regard Palmer (1978: 278-279) notes that constant communication is the integrating force of the community. He says,

“Where ever there exists a centre of social activity of any kind at which people come together regularly... for marketing or festivities, religious or secular, or merely for the business of political

administration, there we have a unification force that will be manifested in all cultural phenomena of that region, and most particularly in its speech. Isolated communities on the other hand, will exhibit eccentricities of language.... Speech, like disease, spreads quickest where contact is closest and intercourse most intense.”

At this point, thus, Wolane is to be considered as a separate group.

### **4.2.3 Implementation of Silt’e as Medium of Instruction**

This part is the core of the present study. It is concerned with the availability of necessary resources for language implementation in terms of quality and quantity.

#### **4.2.3.1 General Overview**

The Silt’e Zone Education Department is supposed to be responsible by delegation for the production and distributions of the Silt’e materials. This section deals with information obtained from education officials (cf. 3.2.3) regarding to organizational capacity and financial capability in general. It is not concerned with specific problems; rather, it is intended to give some insights as to the general picture of things - aimed at highlighting the challenges and problems relating to the question on hand. The two educational officials perceive the same thing differently.

The Silt’e Zone Education Department is authorized to coordinate and monitor the production processes and distributions of Silt’e materials. It selects individuals from different sectors and assigns them to produce these materials. Its staff members are neither proficient nor trained in Silt’e to carry out the job. Unfortunately, these individuals who the material producers and editors selected are not trained in Silt’e and translation works. There is no an authorized body to control the whole process of standardization; it has neither professional consultants to work with nor personnel who are expert in Silt’e - so no way to monitor the process. The material producers and editors work in a situation where other materials, such as reference materials, the Silt’e monolingual dictionary and the grammar book, are not available.

According to the respondent from the Zone, the problem is insignificant as experienced people are selected from other sectors very carefully; the editors can contribute a lot to the quality of materials, of course with some limitations. The department uses the feedbacks from teachers to evaluate and revise them which bring in improvements in their quality. This year, nine people were assigned to prepare the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade materials, four or five for each grade level. The

preparation was completed within one month: according to the Zone, experienced people were selected carefully, the time allotted was also fairly enough, and things were done well – everything, more or less, was effective. The availability of teachers, teaching newly prepared materials, will be acceptable but not sufficient; it is hoped that the teachers will understand the books easily; there is neither a center nor any other option to train them in the Silt'e language and orthography. However, the teachers are expected to teach well. Most of them improved their performance through experience. There is sufficient money to distribute the new books. The Zone also expects some possible problems but they are natural and tolerable. All in all, things are on the right direction.

The man from Lera, on the other hand, doubts whether things are on the right track. Individuals are selected randomly, not carefully, regardless of their professional qualifications and their language proficiency and assigned to produce materials. This kind of selection or assignment affects the production process adversely as far as quality is concerned. He does not believe that an amateur, not trained in Silt'e, can produce quality materials. The contribution of editors as to the quality of materials is also questionable. Sometimes the revised versions are more problematic than the original ones; the books are filled with orthographic, grammatical and usage problems. The controlling process – by itself controversial – is left to be carried out by people who do not have knowledge of Silt'e. There is shortage of teachers teaching Silt'e in general and from grade 5-9 in particular. Most teachers are not willing to teach grade 5-9 as the books are difficult to understand. There is not enough money to publish books and there is always a shortage of books. He doubts whether it is possible to someone with no training, to teach well. According to him, however, the situation from grade 1-4 is more or less acceptable, but in the higher grades the materials are defective and insufficient. There are no sufficient teachers. Teachers are not qualified either. He thinks that it will take at least four months for producing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades materials if competent people are assigned.

#### **4.2.3.2 Attitudes towards Silt'e as Medium of Instruction**

21 respondents out of the 32 Silt'e respondents would like to have Silt'e as a medium of instructions in elementary schools; the remaining 11 of them would like to have Amharic in this function. In this section we will see the attitudes of teachers, students and parents with regard to the medium of instruction question in the Silt'e Zone.

According to four directors, the teachers would like teaching Amharic more than Silt'e. Two directors stated that the teachers would like teaching Silt'e; the remaining two directors would be neutral to this question. 19 teachers, on the other hand, stated that they like teaching Silt'e more than teaching Amharic; only 7 like teaching in Amharic; one respondent likes both Amharic and Silt'e; three teachers did not answer this question.

*Table 15: Students and parents preference for medium of instruction*

Language	Students	Parents	Total	Percent
Silt'e	5	7	12	50
Amharic	6	3	9	38
Both Silt'e and Amharic	3	-	3	12
Total	14	10	24	100
	58	42	100	

Most parents, 7 out of 10, would like their children to learn Silt'e in elementary schools; 5 students would like to learn Silt'e; 6 Amharic, 3 both Amharic and Silt'e.

Finally, 31 respondents (20 teachers, 6 directors and 5 parents), believe that mother tongue education in Silt'e is on the right track; 9 respondents (two directors, three teachers and four parents) were in doubt; 5 teachers were in dilemma; 3 respondents (two teachers and one parent) escaped the question.

#### **4.2.3.3 Script (do we need to show the whole alphabetic chart?)**

The Silt'e writing system is based on an adapted Ethiopic script. In addition, Arabic graphemes are used by Muslim scholars. The two writing systems came from different directions with their own purposes. The remaining part of this sub-section, deals with the Silt'e writing system and its history.

Historically, the Silt'e area remained to be the meeting place for two competitive forces: Islam from the East and Christianity from the North. These two forces introduced their own writing systems, the Ethiopic and Arabic scripts, into Silt'e for their own purposes.



#### 4.2.3.3.1 Arabic Writing system for Silt'e: *yiislaam aliifbaa*

The Arabic script is known in Silt'e since the introduction of Islam into the area centuries ago. It was first used to write Arabic later it was adapted to write Silt'e as well. The Silt'e religious leaders – Sheikhs – still use Arabic symbols for writing Silt'e. By modifying Arabic symbols, that is, by adding dots to basic symbols, new symbols are provided. To represent a sound common in Silt'e and Arabic, the Silt'e uses the basic Arabic symbol.

Arabic symbols are modified in accordance with the Silt'e sound system, thus /c/=چ or چ, /g/=غ, /c'/=ظ and /p'/=پ. The three Arabic vowel diacritics, *fetha* sign for vowel [a], *dumma* sign of vowel [u] and *kasrah* sign for the vowel [i], are called in Silt'e *likada*, *lukuda* and *laast*, respectively. The sign to indicate vowelless consonants, *sukun*, is called *kariim*.

#### 4.2.3.3.2 Ethiopic script: *yaamaara fidal* 'alphabet of Christians'

The Ethiopic script was introduced into Silt'e by Abyssinian rulers for administration, church and education purposes. Later, it was adapted to write Silt'e. The first materials written in the Ethiopic script were appeared during the Derg regime. Literacy materials for the purposes of the literacy campaign were produced in Silt'e; Silt'e was one of the fifteen languages chosen for the literacy campaign.

The current writing system of Silt'e, in which the Silt'e dictionary and schoolmaterials are written, is based on the Ethiopic script with some improvements. The symbols, ፀፂ ፃፂ ሐፂ ገፂ ገፂ ጸ and ፀ and the graphemes for labialized sounds are excluded. The short vowel /a/ is indicated by the first form of the Ethiopic script and the long vowel /a:/ by the fourth form in the standard Silt'e orthography. The short vowel /i/ and vowelless consonants are indicated by the sixth order of the Ethiopic script; the long vowel /i:/ is written by the third order form of the Ethiopic script. The second, fifth and the seventh order forms remained do not distinguish vowel length. It is the context that determines to read a vowel short or long. Concerning to the second and seventh order forms, the majority of written word-forms are either long or short, but not both; only a few words are spelt the same way but pronounced differently. Hence, marking of length does not seem important. With only a few exceptions, any Silt'e word with a fifth order form at word-initial or medial position is long. So it is not important to mark this. Gemination, too, is left for the context and not marked in the script.

Finally, two teachers stated that they would like to use the Arabic script as it refers to the Islamic heritage.

#### 4.2.3.4 Availability and Quality of Resources

##### 4.2.3.4.1 Qualification of Teachers

Availability of teachers is one of the important inputs as far as teaching-learning interaction is concerned, both in terms of quantity and quality. Availability of competent teachers is one of the crucial areas in mother tongue education. This sub-section deals with whether the manpower with respect to teachers is sufficient.

##### 4.2.3.4.1.1 Availability of Teachers

There are some differences among the school directors as to their judgement regarding the availability of teachers. According to five directors, the number of Silt'e teachers is not sufficient; there is a shortage of teachers teaching Silt'e in general, from grade 5-8 or above in particular. Besides, most teachers are not willing to teach grade 5-8 or above as the books are difficult to understand. The remaining three directors stated that there is a shortage of teachers; but the problem is not much significant. Table 16 contrasts availability of teachers for grade 1-4 vs. grade 5-8 in terms of periods allotted.

*Table 16: Number of periods per week for grades 1-4 and 5-8*

Grade Levels	Name of Schools				
From 1-4	Lera	Worabe	Girar	Kerate	Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	4	-	5	5	14
2 <sup>nd</sup>	4	-	5	5	14
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4	3	4	4	15
4 <sup>th</sup>	4	3	4	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>58</b>
From 5-8					
5 <sup>th</sup>	2	3	3	3	11
6 <sup>th</sup>	2	3	3	3	11
7 <sup>th</sup>	2	2	2	3	9
8 <sup>th</sup>	2	2	2	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39</b>

Each grade level from 1-4 will have at least 3 periods per week, but from 5-8 at most 3. The number of periods allotted for grade 5-8 is less than allotted for grade 1-4. The lesser number of

periods reflects the shortage of teachers. This is in line with the assertions that the five directors made - the availability of teachers for grade 5-8 or above is not promising; it is questioning whether they are enough to cover the lessons.

#### 4.2.3.4.1.2 Training

Training is very important for good performance and has a close relationship with proficiency; in some cases people are successful though not trained. All directors stated that the teachers are trained in Amharic but not in Silt'e; but they have different perceptions regarding to the attitudes of teachers towards teaching Silt'e:

- (a) According to four directors, the teachers are not competent as they are not trained in Silt'e and, hence, they would like teaching Amharic more than Silt'e.
- (b) Two directors stated that the teachers would like teaching Silt'e;
- (c) Two other directors would like to remain neutral.

14 teachers (from 30) stated that they are not trained in Silt'e; among the teachers who are not trained:

- (a) Eight stated that teaching Silt'e is very difficult; their knowledge of Silt'e grammar is not good; there are words they do not know their meanings, too.
- (b) Four, however, stated that they could manage to teach through experience, and now, teaching is alright for them. The Silt'e people started learning lately during the Derg - the only means is experience and courage. It is not only training but also personal efforts that matter.
- (c) Two respondents just escaped the question.

According to eight teachers and four directors, competence influences performance and is a result of training while for four teachers training is not the only factor for good performance.

Generally, it is clear that lack of training affects performance negatively; it influences the teaching-learning interactions adversely. However, lacking training is not the only problem. Lacking sense of respect to Silt'e culture and values is one of the practical problems; attitude, interest, plus commitment can contribute a lot.

According to four directors, teachers would like teaching Amharic more than Silt'e because they lack competence as they are trained in Amharic but not in Silt'e. Eight of the teachers, not

trained in Silt'e, stated that teaching Silt'e is very difficult. As reported, on the other hand, for a significant number of teachers, who are not trained in Silt'e, it is easier to teach Silt'e than Amharic, and most of them would like teaching Silt'e more than Amharic:

*Table 17: Language Which is Easy and Preferred to Teach*

Language	Easy to teach			Preferences to teach		
	Trained	Not trained	Total	Trained	Not trained	Total
Silt'e	8	8	16	10	9	19
Amharic	6	6	12	5	2	7
Silt'e & Amharic	1	-	1	1	-	1
No answer	1	-	1	-	3	3
Total	16	14	30	16	14	30

16 teachers, 8 of them are not trained in Silt'e, stated that teaching Silt'e is easier than teaching Amharic. 19 teachers, 9 of them are not trained in Silt'e, would like teaching Silt'e more than Amharic. For six teachers, who are trained in Silt'e, it is easier to teach Amharic than to teach Silt'e. Furthermore, five teachers who are trained in Silt'e would like teaching Amharic more than teaching Silt'e. It seems, hence, that training has nothing to do with performance to teach Silt'e or Amharic. The main motivating factor, most likely, is the attitude towards teaching Silt'e which is not a result of getting training in Silt'e.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the claimed training will be helpful as the textbooks in the teacher training institute, if any, will also be poor in quality and quantity. There is neither a dictionary nor additional reference materials. Availability of well-educated trainers to teach candidate teachers is also questionable. Currently, the claimed training ceases to exist as there is no training center in reality. However, this does not mean that training in Silt'e is not important. Those who are not trained in Silt'e stated that they have improved their knowledge of Silt'e through experience but they still need training in Silt'e. They have difficulties in understanding the meanings of some words, particularly newly introduced technical terms in the books, they lack competence in the grammatical structure of Silt'e and lack confidence in their language proficiency in Silt'e.

According to 25 teachers, students score better in exams in Silt'e than they do in Amharic as it is easy to learn in Silt'e; 5 teachers stated that students score better in Amharic tests. According to 10 students, in contrast, Silt'e is easier to learn than Amharic. For the remaining four students, Amharic is easier to learn than Silt'e. There are differences in language preferences among parents and among the students; for students, preference is not necessarily related to easiness (see Table 17).

#### 4.2.3.4.1.3 Linguistic Fluency and Behavior

Language fluency influences the teaching-learning interactions. Therefore, the teachers were asked to evaluate themselves as to how well they speak Silt'e. Parents and directors were also asked about their attitudes towards the teachers' ability to speak Silt'e. Table 18 summarizes the information obtained from teachers themselves, parents and school directors.

*Table 18: Language fluency of teachers*

	Teachers	Parents	Directors	Total	Percent
They speak fairly good	19	2	3	24	50
Do not speak well	11	5	2	18	37
They speak with some limitations	-	3	3	6	13
Tota	30	10	8	48	100

11 teachers do not believe that they know Silt'e but 19 claim that they are fluent enough in Silt'e. According to five parents, the teachers don't know Silt'e well while three parents said that the teachers are fluent with some tolerable problems; two parents said that the teachers are fairly good in Silt'e. According to the three directors, the teachers can speak Silt'e well; two directors said that the teachers don't speak Silt'e. The remaining three directors stated that the teachers can speak Silt'e, in fact, with some limitations.

Lack of fluency, in the case of teachers, affects the teaching-learning interactions adversely. The teachers, just like students, are struggling with Silt'e. There are some teachers who improved their ability in Silt'e through experience. In some cases it was reported that students have better ability in Silt'e than their teachers which might create unsound interaction or frustration.

According to the students, there are some difficult words in the materials of which they don't know their meanings. Some teachers and parents are not able to explain these difficult words to the students. According to 7 out of 14 students, the teachers explain difficult words well. According to five students, however, teachers are not able to explain difficult words; two students stated that teachers explain these words with some limitations. According to eight students, their parents explain difficult words well to them; three said no; the other three stated that they explain difficult words with some limitations.

Linguistic behavior of teachers, like switching from Silt'e to Amharic when they teach Silt'e, could be an indication that they lack fluency. Most respondents stated that teachers switch from Silt'e into Amharic for different reasons.

*Table 19: Language switching behavior of teachers*

	Teachers	Students	Directors	Total	Percent
Switch	18	11	6	35	70
Do not switch	12	3	0	15	30
Total	30	14	6	50	100

35 respondents stated that teachers switch from Silt'e to Amharic when they teach Silt'e. 18 teachers stated that they often switch from Silt'e to Amharic because they do not know the equivalent word in Silt'e or do not understand the provided Silt'e expression.

All directors stated that the teachers switch from Silt'e to Amharic as they teach Silt'e for different reasons:

- (a) When the material is defective or unclear;
- (b) Lacking of knowledge and competence of those teachers who were born in towns or speak Silt'e as a second language; and
- (c) Some teachers have a negative attitude towards Silt'e; they look down upon the language and cultural values of Silt'e.

According to 11 students, their teachers switch into Amharic while teaching Silt'e; only three said that the teachers do not switch.

The general language use of teachers in and outside class does not encourage students to use Silt'e. According to all students and three directors, the teachers use Amharic when communicating with their students. The other three directors said that the teachers use both Silt'e and Amharic. The information obtained from the teachers themselves suggest that Amharic is the dominant language when communicating with friends and other teachers.

*Table 20: Language use of teachers*

Language	With family	With friends	With teachers	With students
Amharic	12	14	14	12
Silt'e	8	6	6	8
Silt'e and Amharic	10	10	10	10
Total	30	30	30	30

19 of the 30 teachers claimed that they are good in Silt'e; only 11 declared they are not. Now, let us see the linguistic behavior of the 19, who claimed having a good ability:

- (a) 12 (63%) of them do not switch; 7 (37%) of them switch;
- (b) Only 8 (42%) of them use Silt'e when communicating with their students: 11 (58%) of them use Amharic.

Generally, the linguistic behavior of teachers is not satisfactory. The teachers are teaching the language they cannot speak or are not willing to speak it.

Furthermore, the language use pattern of students and parents are also paradoxical, as shown in Table 21.

*Table 21: Language use of students and parents*

Language	Students with			Parents with children
	Teachers	Parents	Friends	
Silt'e		14	3	2
Amharic	14		3	
Silt'e And Amharic			8	8
	14	14	14	10

All students use Amharic when communicating with their teachers; only three students stated that they use Silt'e to communicate with their friends. Two students from Sankura stated that they do not feel comfortable speaking Silt'e with their friends. Only two parents stated that they use Silt'e when communicating with their children. Generally, the linguistic environment is not motivating for the use of Silt'e.

#### 4.2.3.4.2 Teaching Materials and Textbooks

Availability of materials is one of the important inputs as far as teaching-learning interaction is concerned. This part deals with the distribution and quality of materials. It is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the reaction of school directors and teachers towards the availability of materials while the second part deals with the reaction of school directors, teachers and parents towards the quality of materials.

##### 4.2.3.4.2.1 Distribution of Materials

Most respondents were concerned about the problems in the provision of textbooks in general, and specifically, for grade 5-8 or above. The information obtained from teachers and directors is summarized in Table 18, below.

*Table 22: Distributions of Silt'e language textbooks*

	Teachers	Directors	Total	Percent
There is always mismatch – shortage	22	8	30	79
It is OK - for grade 1-4	2	-	2	5
No answer	6	-	6	16
Total	30	8	38	100

All directors and 22 teachers stated that there is always a mismatch between the demands and the supply of materials so that shortage of materials does exist. They explicitly stated that the problem is very serious and needs a solution as soon as possible. Two teacher stated that the provision of textbooks for grade 1-4, is alright; six teachers did not answer this question. The assertions of directors were found to be in line with the information obtained from the Azarnat-Barbare Education Office.



To substantiate the results from the questionnaires, the following information was obtained from four schools: Girar (Silt'e Woreda), Worabe Town, Kerate (Hulbarag Woreda) and Lera (West Azarant-Barabe Woreda). To verify the discrepancies, a pupil-text ratio for each grade level, 1-4 and 5-8 is taken separately for each school and then averaged (cf. Table 23 and Table 24 Table below and also Appendix C).

*Table 23: Provision of textbooks and the number of grade 1-4 students in four schools*

Grade Levels	Schools				<i>Total</i>
	Lera	Worabe	Girar	Kerate	
1 <sup>th</sup>	363 (363)	-	108 (50)	353 (2)	<b>824 (415)</b>
2 <sup>th</sup>	247 (247)	-	98 (46)	311 (118)	<b>656 (411)</b>
3 <sup>th</sup>	259 (259)	220 (110)	138 (35)	216 (108)	<b>833 (512)</b>
4 <sup>th</sup>	216 (216)	250 (125)	120 (35)	189 (229)	<b>775 (605)</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>1085 (1085)</b>	<b>470 (235)</b>	<b>464 (166)</b>	<b>1069 (457)</b>	<b>3088 (1943)</b>
<b>Pupil-text ratio</b>	<b>1:1</b>	<b>2:1</b>	<b>4:1</b>	<b>2:1</b>	<b>3:2</b>

(Number of books in brackets)

Table 23 shows that the average pupil-text ratio is 3:2. In addition to the shortage, however, the distribution itself is not proportional as some schools were left disadvantageous. The Lera school for some reasons, for example, was found to be favored with a pupil-text ratio 1:1, at the expenses of the other schools. Girar is the most disadvantageous school with a pupil-text ratio of 4:1. Furthermore, Kerate has only two textbooks for 353 students in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

*Table 24: Provision of Silt'e textbooks and the number of grade 5-8 students in four schools*

Grade	Schools				<i>Total</i>
	Lera	Worabe	Girar	Kerate	
5 <sup>th</sup>	305 (1)	440 (1)	112 (20)	150 (47)	<b>1007 (69)</b>
6 <sup>th</sup>	221 (1)	440 (1)	108 (3)	178 (10)	<b>947 (15)</b>
7 <sup>th</sup>	426 (1)	275 (3)	56 (2)	91 (3)	<b>848 (9)</b>
8 <sup>th</sup>	459 (1)	250 (3)	54 (2)	87 (5)	<b>850 (11)</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>1411 (4)</b>	<b>1405 (8)</b>	<b>330 (27)</b>	<b>506 (65)</b>	<b>3652 (104)</b>
<b>Pupil-text ratio</b>	<b>353:1</b>	<b>176:1</b>	<b>12:1</b>	<b>8:1</b>	<b>35:1</b>

From Table 24, one can see that the problem in the provision of textbooks is reflected with a high pupil-text ratio. This is in line with what the school directors asserted and the supervisor from Lera claimed regarding grade 5-8. Availability of materials varies with level of grade; the higher the grade, the lower will be the availability of materials. In most cases, the students have no books to read and to do exercises - only teachers have books. Relatively, only two schools, Girar and Kerate, have a better supply for grade five, with pupil-text ratios of 7:1 and 3:1 (112:20 and 150:47), respectively. The problem relating to the supply of materials is significant enough in cases of grade 5-8 or above. The number of textbooks available for grade 1-4 is better than grade 5-8. The shortage of materials is also a reflection of a lack of sufficient fund for publishing. If other factors remain the same a wide distribution is impossible without sufficient money.

Generally, the number of textbooks does not satisfy the needs. The mismatch between the demands and the supply of materials is significant enough to affect the teaching-learning processes adversely. Furthermore, there is no dictionary to define the newly introduced terms. Absence of reference materials is another major problem: absence of magazines, newspapers, grammar books or any other thing to be read hinders the development of reading habits in Silt'e.

#### 4.2.3.4.2.2 Quality of Materials

The text materials must satisfy the necessary qualities. The spelling should conform to the Silt'e writing system, the materials should be in line with the Silt'e grammatical structure and usage; and, focus on culturally relevant aspects.

This sub-section deals with the reaction of school directors, teachers and parents towards the quality of materials. The information, obtained from teachers and directors as well as parents regarding to quality of the materials, is summarized in Table 25.

*Table 25: Quality of materials*

How quality the materials are	Teachers	Parents	Directors	Total	Percent
Quite poor- neither understandable nor clear	17	4	1	22	46
Clear- fairly good	5	2	2	9	19
Indifferent-neither bad nor good	-	-	5	5	11
No answer	4	-	-	4	8
From grade 1-4, good, from 5-8, bad	4	-	-	4	8
With tolerable problems	-	4	-	4	8
<i>Total</i>	30	10	8	48	100

Most teachers were concerned about the quality of materials. 17 teachers stated that the materials are quite poor; 5 teachers stated that they are fairly good somehow; 4 teachers specifically stated that the quality of materials from grade 1-4 is fairly good, but from 5-8 is quite poor; the other 4 did not answer this question. The parents have different perceptions as to the quality of materials: four of them stated that the materials are very poor; the other four said they are with some problems that can be tolerated and improved through experience somehow; the remaining two said they are fairly good. Most directors remained indifferent: 5 stated that the text materials are neither bad nor good - some grammatical, spelling and other problems appeared; two directors stated that they are fairly good; only one director stated that they are quite poor.

It seems that the materials are of poor quality: what the teachers stated needs to be given more attention as they are closer to the materials than anyone else. The quality of materials for grade 5-8 or above is lower than for the materials for grade 1-4. Furthermore, most teachers were not satisfied with the revised versions of materials; parents were not asked about this issue:

*Table 26: Quality of revised materials*

	Directors	Teachers	Total	Percent
No improvement- the same or getting worse	5	19	24	63
Just some improvements	3	4	7	19
Much improvement	0	6	6	16
Improvement but grade 5-8	0	1	1	2
Total	8	30	38	100

24 respondents stated that revising the books does not bring any improvement but rather results in additional problems. In some cases things keep the same or go wrong - the revised books are the same as the original or their quality gets less and less as they are revised. According to 7 respondents, just some improvements are seen; six respondents stated that there is much improvement, one respondent stated that there is improvement but books from grade 5-8 are forgotten.

#### 4.2.3.4.3 Linguistic problems

The teachers specifically stated that the following problems are found in Silt'e textbooks:

- a. Orthographic problems: lots and lots of spelling errors; inconsistency in spelling; wrong symbols; lack of consistency in dialect resulting inconsistency in spelling or grammar.
- b. Direct translation based on Amharic, resulting in a construction which is not natural in Silt'e or with an unintended meaning;
- c. Amharic and Arabic words are found in the books unnecessarily;
- d. Using different words for the same concept;
- e. There are some words which are difficult to understand;
- f. Technical terms introduced into the books are not appropriated, not defined well and difficult to understand.

To substantiate the results from the questionnaires, some materials were examined. This subsection tries to show some linguistic problems appearing in Silt'e textbooks (more examples are given in Appendix C).

##### 4.2.3.4.3.1 Orthographic problems

The basic problem in writing Silt'e is related to sound lengthening. In Silt'e, vowel lengthening is phonemic - short and long vowels are contrastive. Substituting long vowels with short vowels results in a construction giving either a different meaning or with no meaning. Hence, distinguishing long and short vowels in writing Silt'e should follow a rule. In the following example (2), the first spelling is intended to mean the second, unfortunately it goes into different meanings:

- (2) Written form resulting in an unintended meaning:  
**ባሎት** [ba:lot] ‘she was told’ instead of **በሎት** [balot:t] ‘to say’  
**ፋሮ** [fa:ro] ‘ant-eater’ instead of **ፈሮ** [faro] ‘dishonest, fraud’

Substituting long with short vowels can give unintended meanings. This type of mistakes is really significant, misleading and confusing. In other cases, substituting long with short vowels gives no meaning or results in a construction which is not natural:

- (3) Meaningless or unnatural forms:  
**መጣ** instead of **መጠ** ‘he came’  
**በላ** instead of **በለ** ‘he ate’

Using word-final long [a:] instead of short [a] with verbs, as in (3), results in not natural expressions in Silt’e. This might be an Amharic influence during the typing process. Furthermore, the vocative forms of proper names in Silt’e are lengthened but in the Silt’e textbooks the vocative represents the personal name.

- (4) Vocative forms personal names:  
Vocative **ጀሚላ** instead of proper noun **ጀሚላ**  
Vocative **መሀባ** instead of proper noun **መሀባ**

These typing errors might also be related to Amharic influence during the typing process. The following examples indicate inconsistencies in spelling in relation to dialect variations:

- (5) Northern dialect **እበላን** /ibālan/ vs. ‘he eats, he will eat’  
Southern dialect **ይበላን** /yibālan/

In addition, the same word was spelt differently even in one paragraph by the same person, as **ክታብ** ~ **ኪታብ** ‘book’ or **ብል**~**ቢል** ‘work’. In some other cases, symbols not belonging to the Silt’e writing system were used:

- |     |                      |               |               |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| (6) | Wrongly spelled form | Standard form | Gloss         |
|     | <b>ጉልጌ</b>           | <b>ጎልጌ</b>    | ‘room, grade’ |
|     | <b>መንግሥት</b>         | <b>መንግስት</b>  | ‘government’  |

This kind of problem is related to either lack of awareness that Silt’e excludes these symbols.

Generally, the materials are not user-friendly. Most spelling mistakes result in a construction giving either a different meaning or with no meaning. Such mistakes are really significant, misleading and confusing. The Silt’e orthography based on its phonological structure has been

settled and a Silt'e dictionary was published. Once an orthography has been settled, it needs to be used consistently. To write Silt'e, one needs to be familiar with its orthography first. Unless such practices are monitored, the teacher will be at a loss, unclear as to what is correct and what is not, and, frustration and ineffective teaching will be the consequence. A uniform and consistent norm of writing is lacking. This problem arose due to the lack of an authorized institution for monitoring.

#### 4.2.3.4.3.2 Grammatical Problems

The material producers most often write Silt'e based on Amharic grammar or usage resulting in a semantically, grammatically, and culturally unnatural construction or with an unintended meaning in Silt'e. The materials are direct translations of Amharic original textbooks for the respective grades. The Silt'e textbook for grade 6, for example, is a direct translation equivalent to the Amharic version of the same grade; the translation is word by word even morpheme by morpheme leading into unfriendly constructions in Silt'e.

Given the contact of two languages, A and B - the model language and the replica language - the following types of grammatical interference of A with B (or vice versa) are to be expected (Weinreich, 1968: 30-31):

- (1) The application of a grammatical relation of language A to B-morphemes in B-speech, or the neglect of relation of B which has no property in A.
- (2) Through the identification of specific B-morpheme with a specific A-morpheme, a coinage (extension, reduction) in the functions of the B-morpheme on the model of the grammar of language A.

On the model of language A, a set of existing categories of language B may come to be expressed by new morphemes, or entirely new rules may even be established.

- (1) The replica of the relation of another language explicitly conveys an unintended meaning.
- (2) The replica of the relation of another language violates an existing relation pattern, producing nonsense or a statement which is understandable by implication.

Writing Silt'e by taking Amharic as a model language explicitly conveys an unintended meaning, produces nonsense or a construction which is understandable only by implication. The

following discussion, based on Gutt (1997b: 972-997), deals with the influence of Amharic affixes on Silt'e grammar.

(a) Amharic prefix **ከ-**

There are three prefixes in Silt'e which are confused with this Amharic prefix **ከ-**:

- **በ-** 'from' (ablative);
- **ለ-** 'from' (origin, point of departure); 'at, by, on' (location); 'through, by' (direction);
- **ተ-** 'together with' (associative)

In most cases, only **ተ-** is used in Silt'e translations, even in places where **በ-** and **ለ-** are more appropriate, resulting in unnatural constructions or unintended meanings.

- |     |  |                                     |                             |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (7) | Amharic original<br><b>ከ-ሱቅ ገዛሁ</b>                  | Correct Silt'e<br><b>በ-ሱቅ ወከብኩ</b>  | 'I bought (it) from a shop' |
|     | Silt'e translation in textbook:<br><b>ተ-ሱቅ ወከብኩ</b>  |                                     | 'I bought with a shop'      |
| (8) | Amharic original<br><b>ከ-ጆማል ጋር ገዛሁ =</b>            | Correct Silt'e<br><b>ተ-ጆማል ወከብኩ</b> | 'I bought with Jamal'       |
|     | Silt'e translation in textbook:<br><b>በ-ጆማል ወከብኩ</b> |                                     | 'I bought from Jamal'       |
| (9) | Amharic original<br><b>ከ-መስጊድ መጣ</b>                 | Correct Silt'e<br><b>ለ-መስጊድ መጠ</b>  | 'he came from the mosque'   |
|     | Silt'e translation in textbook:<br><b>ተ-መስጊድ መጠ</b>  |                                     | 'he came with the mosque'   |

There are other grammatical problems relating to marking the accusative case, number and the copula (for examples, see appendix C).

Lack of training or lack of familiarity with the culture could be causes for such problems. The existing textbooks are not user-friendly. Using folktales for passages, instead of using Amharic translation, may help to minimize the problems. Grammatically, textbooks and written material reflect a deviation from the Silt'e grammar norm. Textbooks are not in accordance with the Silt'e grammatical rule and consequently the teaching process will be ineffective. Hence, training is

mandatory for minimizing such irregularities. Further, some kind of monitoring mechanism needs to be established.

#### 4.2.3.4.3.3 Problems Related to Cultural Differences

Another problem occurs with literal translation without taking the cultural differences into account, as demonstrated in (10) and (11).

- |      |  |  |                                |
|------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| (10) | Amharic original<br><b>ጫካውን ጎበኙ</b>    | Silt'e translation in textbook<br><b>ገዎይ ዘየሩ</b>   | ‘They visited the forest’      |
|      | Correct Silt'e<br><b>ገዎይ ሄዶ አንዙ</b>    |  | ‘They went and saw the forest’ |
| (11) | Amharic original<br><b>በሽተኛውን ጠየቀው</b> | Silt'e translation in textbook<br><b>ኖታመይ ተሳለይ</b> | ‘He asked the patient’         |
|      | Correct Silt'e<br><b>ኖታመይ አንገይ</b>     |  | ‘He saw the patient’           |

Direct translation, without considering the usage, most often misleads people. The Silt'e word **ዘየሩ** ‘he visited’ in (10) has a restricted usage. It is used when visiting holy places or respected people but not for a forest, a town, etc. Hence, the correct translation equivalent for Amharic **ጎበኙ** is **ሄዶ አንገይ** lit. ‘he went and saw’. The direct Silt'e translation equivalent for Amharic **ጠየቀ** ‘he asked’ is **ተሳለ**. But **ተሳለ** does not have the sense ‘visit’, as **ጠየቀ** in Amharic. Hence, the correct translation equivalent for **ጠየቀ** in (11) is not **ተሳለ** but **አንገይ** lit. ‘he saw’.

Most of language is contained within culture, i.e., ‘a society’s language is an aspect of its culture ... The relation of language to culture is that of part to whole’ (Hudson, 1986: 84). The area of overlap between language and culture consists of all those parts of language which are learned from other people, like concepts and the establishment of propositions.

Language is part of the culture. With regard to the above Silt'e examples, words are used in violation of the society’s norm. Deviation from the social norms is another aspect of the problem. This indicates that material producers have weak social interaction or lack of familiarity with the Silt'e culture (for additional examples, see appendix C).



4.2.3.4.3.4 Miscellaneous

There is a number of other problems. Amharic and Arabic words are introduced into the books unnecessarily. Some texts are difficult to understand because different words are used for the same concept. Technical terms are not appropriate or not defined well and difficult to understand (see Appendix C). I am not going to discuss all these; I would like to say something about the problem indicated in (12).

(12)	Amharic <b>መማሪያ መጽሐፍ</b>	Amharic-based Silt'e <b>መቅሬ ክታብ</b>	Correct Silt'e <b>እቀርቡያን ክታብ</b>	'textbook' [a-book-to-learn-with]
	<b>ማስተማሪያ መጽሀፍ</b>	<b>ማቅሬ ክታብ</b>	<b>ያቀርቡያን ክታብ</b>	'teachers' guide' [a-book-to-teach-with]

Material producers taking Amharic as a model are introducing defective forms into the text material for no reason. Creating expression like **መቅሬ** and **ማቅሬ** for Amharic **መማሪያ** and **ማስተማሪያ** is intolerable. The natural Silt'e expressions exist and are perfectly comprehensible. Silt'e should not need to be governed by Amharic structure (for additional examples, see appendix C). The equivalent Silt'e expressions for the instrumental nouns **መማሪያ** and **ማስተማሪያ** in Amharic is the use of a relative clause in the imperfective aspect with the non-direct object marker **-ቡ**. The entire expression conveys the reading of the instrumental noun in Amharic.

To summarize, the Silt'e textbooks, particularly from grade 5-8 or above, are poor in quality: they are defective in terms of orthography, grammar, culture, semantics and usage.

**4.2.4 Challenges for the Implementation of Silt'e as Medium of Instruction**

Using Silt'e as a medium of instruction entails reducing it to writing. This section deals with material production and is directly related to standardization. The availability of quality materials is important for sound teaching-learning processes. Quality materials are unlikely to be produced unless trained and competent authors and translators are available - the quality of the output is determined by its input.

No question that the Silt'e materials, as mentioned above, are in poor quality. This sub-section explores the area where problems most often occur – more specifically, the factors affecting performance as to material production.

#### 4.2.4.1 Lacking of Trained Manpower and Necessary Materials

Lacking trained manpower is the most crucial area as far as material production is concerned. The key problem seems to be lack of professional knowledge and experience. The teachers and parents were asked for their impression towards the material producers and editors regarding their language ability in Silt'e. The material producers and editors were asked them same question about themselves. The information obtain is summarized in Table 27.

*Table 27: Competency of material producers and editors*

	Teachers	Parents	Producers and Editors	Total	Percent
Not competent	21	3	6	30	65
Quite a few	7	5	2	14	30
No idea	1	-		1	1
No answer	1	-		1	1
Doubt	-	2		2	3
Total	30	10	6	46	100

Most teachers (21 of them) stated that they do not think that the material producers and editors are competent enough in Silt'e, particularly those who participated in the preparation of grade 7 and 8 materials. 7 teachers stated that quite a few editors or material producers are competent, one respondent has no idea about them, another one did not answer this question. Five parents do believe that material producers and editors are competent enough in Silt'e; two respondents doubt this while three respondents do not believe that material producers are competent in Silt'e at all.

All material producers and editors stated that they are not trained in linguistics or translation. They are neither trained in Silt'e. Six material producers and editors stated that lack of training affects their performance adversely; most material producers do not believe that they are competent enough in Silt'e. They lack experience and confidence. Only two material producers and editors improved their ability through experience and are confident in their work.

Generally, material producers and editors are not proficient enough in Silt'e. This could be one of the reasons why text materials are defective, i.e., the poor quality of texts has a direct relation to the lack of competent authors and translators. It is clear that lack of training affects

performance negatively, it negatively influences the quality of materials. Lacking an expert in Silt'e is a big challenge. However, short-term trainings in Silt'e orthography and grammar are possible. Most typists are not mother tongue speakers of Silt'e. Whether proofreaders have some input in checking spelling errors is another question. Furthermore, material producers and editors work in a situation where no professional support is available; no professional consultants to work with; not a single professional linguist either. There is no professional support to check whether the materials conform to the Silt'e orthography and grammar or common usage in the language. There is no training center; most material producers are not familiar to, or associated with, the Silt'e culture either.

Lack of reference materials is another aspect of the problem. Material producers and editors work in a situation where the Silt'e orthography is not fully standardized; a monolingual Silt'e dictionary and a standard Silt'e grammar book or other reference materials are not available. Material producers and editors are just provided with syllabuses – whether they understand them is another question. The only available educational materials are written in Amharic which leads to translation errors. The translations are based on Amharic grammar - word by word even morpheme by morpheme - resulting in a Silt'e construction, which is both unnatural and culturally irrelevant or with unintended meaning.

#### **4.2.4.2 Lacking of an Authorized Institution**

According to Fasold (1984: 262), language planning practices are more successful when they are directed at monitored language use. Language planning activities in Africa, according to Chumbow (1987: 15-22), are not coordinated because of lack of a recognized central agency empowered to give directions to all efforts of standardization. As a result, language planning activities are undertaken by amateurs without training and with no sense of orientation. This part deals with the lack of a central coordinating agency for the Silt'e language development.

There is no established institution, like a language academy or advisory bodies, to manage the problems during the production of text materials or to reexamine them and to make the necessary corrections. The lack of a central, coordinating agency is another major challenge in the standardization process of Silt'e. Lacking such an institute has a number of implications related to the standardization and consistency of written forms, vocabulary and grammar. It is unlikely

to check and control inconsistency in spelling where such organization does not exist. There is no way to check whether the materials conform to the structure of Silt'e grammatically as well as semantically or culturally. Another problem is related to vocabulary. First, the material producers are not professional linguists and it is very difficult to expect that they can understand linguistic concepts to be included in the books and explain them well in Silt'e. Second, material producers have different educational backgrounds, biology, history, accounting, etc. Hence, they may perceive the same concepts differently from their preconceived ideas - everybody writes whatever he/she thinks to be correct, which leads into inconsistency as to wording. Furthermore, Silt'e is a newly written language. Hence, many new words - technical terms - by extension, borrowing or coinage are introduced into the books. However, there is no authorized institution to manage or to control this process. An institution is required to decide which terms to include or exclude. The lack of an authorized institute let the material producers to go their own ways resulting in all possible problems, discussed above.

To overcome the challenges of the language development process, coordinated effort as well as effective management is necessary. Specifically, to foster the developing process, an institution with clearly defined powers and obligations is to be established. To achieve its goal, the language development program must be well planed. This is not attainable unless a well organized authorized institution with competent personnel and other material resources exists. Language development necessitates establishing an institution, which is the cornerstone. Establishment of such an institution and cooperation with other stakeholders helps to promote the standardization process. So far it seems that political decision took over the conscious planning and consultation with professionals.

#### **4.2.4.3 Method of Processing**

The way the material production carried out was found to be affecting the quality of materials adversely. The Silt'e materials are written three times at each step some possible problems are expected to occur:

- (a) The first draft: Material producers prepare hand-written drafts possibly with many lexical and grammatical problems and passed them over to the editors.
- (b) The editing process: The editors edite the drafts, make necessary corrections, and rewrite the draft whereby possible omissions and additional mistakes or errors may occur.

Rewriting leads to possible omissions and spelling errors. Finally, the 'corrected versions' are sent to be typed. Rewriting the original drafts also consumes time and money and is not efficient. Resources are scarce. They should be used wisely, that is, efficiently and effectively. It is necessary to be economical in the textbook production without hurting the quality. Whether the original hand-written drafts are readable is one factor. Time constraints and carelessness are other factors. Original drafts can be corrected as they were.

- (c) The typing process: This process results in additional mistakes and errors. The typing leads to possible omissions and spelling errors, most typists are neither mother tongue speakers of Silt'e nor trained in Silt'e orthography. There is a time constraint as well; most spelling errors are expected to occur at this stage.

The consequences of these processes, without doubt, are to lower down the quality of materials. Finally, printouts are given to be proofread - how well the materials are proofread is questionable. After the proofreading is done, the final drafts are sent to publication or duplication.

#### **4.2.4.4 Time Constraints**

Time constraints are another challenge. This is related to coordination and effective management. The material production is urgent, thus, the time allotted is not sufficient enough to produce quality materials:

- (a) Firstly, the time given was very short and insufficient. Hence, everybody works in hurry and confusion. For example, there was one month time to prepare grade 7 and 8 materials. Four or five individuals were assigned to produce the Silt'e language textbooks and teachers' guides for each grade.
- (b) Secondly, most individuals - material producers, editors, typists and proofreaders - involved in this process were from different sectors whereby they have their own jobs to carry out regularly in their respective sectors. Consequently, they run out of time. They will not have sufficient time to concentrate on material production.

Time constraints affect the quality of materials produced adversely. Material production is not something easily done. It needs sufficient time and concentration. The natural consequences of time constraints, without doubt, are to lower down the quality of materials. Lack of necessary preparation is one aspect of the problem; the material production process was not well-organized - things were done in a rush, in fact. As to the time constraint, there was a difference between the typists and material producers and editors. The typing process was carried out in

situations where the typists were heavily busy in their offices. Others are relatively free as they work out of their offices.

#### **4.2.4.5 Other Factors**

Lack of trained manpower and an authorized institution are the most crucial areas as far as standardization processes are concerned; both time constrain and inefficient processing influence the quality of materials. There are other factors, too.

It was stated that lacking teamwork and incentives will influence the quality of materials. The time budgeted is not sufficient to work together as a team. Hence, they divided the work among themselves, and each one tended to work independently. Therefore, benefits from working together as a team could not be exploited. Working as a team is helpful to be consistent and to produce quality materials to some extent.

Furthermore, it was stated that payments were not encouraging enough so that the participants are not going to carry out their duties well; this may affect the work negatively. In addition, hard-working people and reluctant were treated equally. The payments need to be fairly if possible. Lack of interest and commitment are other aspects of the problem. Lacking sense of respect to the Silt'e culture and values affects the quality of the materials adversely. Attitude, interest, plus commitment can contribute a lot. Most materials producers lacked attentiveness and did things reluctantly and carelessly. Some material producers and editors use the problem as a pretext to cover their weakness and blame others. Still there are quite a few who improved their knowledge of Silt'e and do well. These people are recruited just randomly or because they are friends of some people. Not assigning the right people is another facet of the problem. The competency of most material producers and editors is questionable; whether proofreaders speak Silt'e or are willing to investigate typing errors is not clear.

Generally, the cumulative effects of these different factors result in poor quality material filled with orthographic and grammatical problems or something else, as output is a function of both the inputs and the processing method.

#### **4.2.4.6 Summary**

The problems related to material production are multi-faceted. The people participating in material production are not well trained, material producers are not well equipped with technical as well as professional skills. They have no sufficient time to concentrate on the production process, no professional consultants to work with, not a single professional linguist, no reference materials either. Further, there is no established institution to manage the problems during the production or to reexamine and make necessary corrections. The processing itself is inefficient and the commitment of the people involved is questionable (note that a brain-storming of these problems with respondents is summarized in Appendix E).

## 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In 1995 the Gurage political elites decided to use Silt'e as a medium of instructions in Silt'e-speaking areas including Wolane. The decision was politically oriented - suppressing the Silt'e political movement for independent Silt'e - and was done at a sudden without any preparation. When Silt'e became the medium of instruction in the Gurage Zone, the southern Silt'e-speaking areas - Azarnat-Babare and some part of Hulbarag - were excluded as they were under the administration of the Haddiyya and Kambata zones, respectively, with Amharic as medium of instruction in schools. 2001 things changed drastically:

- a. A referendum over Silt'e identity was carried out in March 200. It did not apply in Wolane;
- b. An Independent Silt'e Zone was established resulting in administrative reshuffling in the Gurage, Haddiyya and Kambata zones. The northern part of the Silt'e-speaking area in the Gurage Zone, Azarnat-Barbare and Sankura were separated, from their former zones, and integrated into the newly established Silt'e-Zone;
- c. Wolane remained as part of the Gurage Zone;
- d. The new groups in the Silt'e Zone accepted to use Silt'e in schools;
- e. The Wolane rejected using Silt'e in their schools.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the introduction and use of Silt'e as a medium of instruction with regard to sociolinguistic, linguistic and standardization aspects. Lexical comparison was not the major component of my paper. However, it presents the extent of lexical variation among the varieties and supports the results from the sociolinguistic investigations of mutual intelligibility. Implementation in general, and the standardization process in particular, is the core of this study. The main emphasis was given to the standardization processes. Generally, five major sociopolitical localities were included in this research: the Silt'e proper, Azarnat-Barbare, Allicho-Wuriro, Hulbarag and Wolane. The questions the study focused on were:

- a. Investigating the sociolinguistic facts in the research area.
- b. The linguistic relationships among the varieties included in this the research.
- c. Implementing capacity.



In attempting to answer the research questions sociolinguistic questionnaires and interviews were administered as to ethno-linguistic relations among the different groups in the research area. In addition, personal experience and observations as well locally available unpublished Arabic manuscript on the Silt'e origin were used. The questionnaires and interviews dealt mainly with sociolinguistic identity, language use and vitality, language and dialect attitudes and interest in the development of mother tongue. The sociolinguistic data was collected from 38 individuals in four areas Silt'e-K'ibbat (16 individuals), Hulbarag-Kerate (10 individuals), Innak'or-Lera (6 individuals) and Wolane (6 individuals).

Wordlist elicitations as well as interviews were employed to gather the linguistic data. Wordlist comparisons included eleven varieties representing the main five dialects or sociopolitical localities:

1. Central Silt'e, T'ora and Worabe: representing the Silt'e proper;
2. Allicho and Wuriro: representing Allicho-Wuriro;
3. Abbecho and innak'or: representing Azarnat-Barbare;
4. Kerate, Sankura and Chiro: representing Hulbarag; and
5. Wolane.

Concerning to the implementation process, questionnaires were dispatched to different subjects: education offices (2 respondents), school directors (8), students (14), parents (10), teachers (30) and material producers and editors (8).

To substantiate the results from the questionnaires, interviews were conducted and, some materials were evaluated. The Wolane were not included in this part. Finally, using descriptive techniques, the data collected from different sources was integrated and analyzed accordingly.

## ***5.1 Summary and Conclusion***

The socio-historical and ethnolinguistic development and composition of the Silt'e area is complex and still controversial. There are various controversies concerning who the Silt'e people are; their relationships among themselves and with the neighboring people. The name Silt'e itself is controversial and confusing.

The Islamic people of the region connect their history with the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa. Islam is the backbone of their identity. The Silt'e proper, Hulbarag, Allicho-Wuriro and Azarnat-Barbare are grouped into four autonomous units traditionally called *daar* or *baad*. Each group is relatively autonomous or semi-independent with its own territory. The division is based on geographic location and is associated with a sense of internal identity. Traditionally, these four groups collectively call themselves *islaam* 'Muslims'. However, the neighboring groups called the *islaam* people by different names: Ganda, Adare, Haddiya, Gande, etc. Generally, the term *islaam* refers to a group of people with a defined sociopolitical structure as to local identity. Who are the Silt'e people? The traditional sense of Silt'e refers to *islaam* without Azarnat-Barbare, Hulbarag and Allicho-Wuriro, that is, the Silt'e proper. The Silt'e proper is organized into three Woredas - Silt'e, Dalocha and Lanfuro; in administrative terms, it refers to the Silt'e Woreda, that is, the Silt'e proper minus Dalocha and Lanfuro Woredas. After the Silt'e referendum, however, the Silt'e concept includes all members of *islaam*. The political movement for an independent Silt'e identity aimed at attaining two simultaneous goals: rejecting the Gurage ethnic identity and accepting Silt'e as a representative name for all members of *islaam*. Since the 2001 referendum, the name Silt'e turned out to represent the four groups as a whole besides its traditional sense. Hence, the current concept of Silt'e is nothing but the new version of *islaam*. Silt'e is officially recognized as a separate group while the position of Wolane remains controversial.

The lexical similarity between North Silt'e and South Silt'e is nearly 99%; Wolane and North Silt'e have nearly 93% lexical similarity. The average lexical similarity between Wolane and South Silt'e is nearly 91%. The average lexical similarity between Wolane and Silt'e is nearly 92%. Hence, the varieties under question are to be considered as dialects of the same language. High level of mutual intelligibility is expected among the speakers of these varieties and is in line with the facts in reality. According to the findings from the sociolinguistic interviews and my personal experience of the area, there are no intelligibility problems among the varieties including Wolane. Theoretically, the varieties under question are to be considered as dialects of the same language. All non-Wolane respondents maintained the same ethnolinguistic identity; the Wolane people do not consider themselves as Silt'e. Hence, I would say that the Wolane case must be treated differently.

The findings from the analysis of the data indicate that the teaching-learning process in Silt'e is practically confronted with a number challenges:

- (a) The number of teachers for Silt'e is not sufficient, Besides, most teachers are not willing to teach grade 5-8 or above as the textbooks are difficult to understand;
- (b) A significant number of teachers are not fluent speakers of Silt'e;
- (c) Most of the Silt'e teachers are not trained in Silt'e orthography and linguistic structure. Currently, there exists no Silt'e language training center.
- (d) The linguistic environment is not sound for using Silt'e: most teachers switch from Silt'e to Amharic while teaching Silt'e; they also use Amharic when communicating with their students outside the classes;
- (e) Availability of the Silt'e language textbooks - both in terms of quantity and quality - is not satisfactory. In cases of grade 7-8, the students have no textbooks to read and to do exercises - only teachers have them;
- (f) There is scarcity of reading materials: absence of magazines, newspapers, grammar books or any other thing to be read hinders reading in Silt'e.
- (g) It was reported that some teachers have a negative attitude towards Silt'e.

The cumulative adverse effects of these factors on the teaching-learning activities are significant enough in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness. The poor quality of materials indicates that the language development process has not achieved its goal yet. The standardization process is not finished so far.

The following factors have been found influencing the quality of materials adversely:

- a) All material producers and editors are not professional linguists; they are amateurs; material producers are not well equipped with technical as well as professional skills.
- b) Material producers and editors are neither trained in Silt'e nor in translation nor other necessary trainings in general, or in Silt'e orthography and grammar in particular; it is unlikely to find well trained authors where no Silt'e language training center does exist;
- c) Most of the material producers and editors do not have sufficient experiences; the same is true for most typists and proofreaders;
- d) No professional support or professional consultants are available;
- e) The lack of reference materials is another aspect of the problem; even spellers are not available, let alone the Silt'e monolingual dictionary or the Silt'e grammar book. The only available materials are in Amharic which lead into mistakes when literally translating them into Silt'e.

- f) Lack of an authorized institution or central coordinating agency is another major challenge as to the standardization processes; there is no established institution to manage the problems during the production or to reexamine and make necessary corrections;

There is no institutional support to check whether the materials conform to the Silt'e orthography and grammar or other areas of language usage. Another factor was the time constraint. Material producers and editors have no sufficient time to concentrate on the production process. The material producing procedure itself was found to be ineffective. Lacking teamwork and incentives were found to be other factors. The natural consequence of these problems in combination resulted in the textbooks filled with all possible linguistic and cultural problems making it difficult to use them for teaching.

To sum, it seems that political decision took over the conscious planning and consultation with professionals so far. The lessons derived from this, however, are the best experiences in favor of the future plans. The problems indicate that mother tongue education is not easy. It needs to work hard and sustainably in a systematically coordinated manner.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

To solve the problems in the implementation process of the Silt'e language the following recommendations are suggested:

1. To promote and coordinate the standardization process, an authorized institution must be established. To use Chumbow's (1987: 15-22) terms, standardization activities must not be done by amateurs without training and with no sense of orientation, rather by professionals and be coordinated by a recognized agency empowered to give directions to all efforts.
2. An independent institute doing research in Silt'e culture and language must be established.
3. A Silt'e language training center needs to be established.
4. Material producers and teachers must be trained in the Silt'e orthography and grammar.
5. The Silt'e language textbooks must conform to the Silt'e orthography, grammar, usage and culture.
6. Introduction of technical terms should be monitored. New terminology for use in education must be developed in some controlled way.
7. Opportunities should be created for using the Silt'e language in different domains of life.

8. The Silt'e language needs to be the official language of the Silt'e Zone and must be used in every sector of the government offices.
9. Monolingual Silt'e dictionary, grammar and spellers are to be written and disseminated.
10. Promoting other writers to produce different materials in Silt'e must be given great attention; reference material producers are needed to be monitored as to their conformity with the Silt'e orthography, structure, usage and culture.
11. Local newspapers and magazines need to come out regularly; the Silt'e radio program is also important; zonal notices are to be produced in Silt'e.
12. It is necessary to mobilize the people to actively participate and contribute for their language development. The Silt'e community needs to participate actively in the development of the Silt'e language and culture.
13. Working together with other stakeholders as a team is important;
14. To have sufficient materials, additional fund raising strategies are to be established.

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## APPENDIX A: CLAN STRUCTURE OF SILT'E

The Silt'e ethnic group is divided at least into 114 clans, called *gicho*, showing a system of reference to ancestral origins on which Silt'e ethnic identity is based. The names of the clans are associated to either the names of their ancestors (male or female), or the names of the original places where the clans lived. The clan structure of the Silt'e ethnic group is established in a way that can be traced back to descent - to trace the origin and direction of movement of people. Though it remains to be verified by further research, the origins of most clans are traced to military leaders of Gragn Mohammed. Clans are further divided into sub-clans; membership to a certain clan is seen from both the father's and mother's sides. Patrilineal comes first while matrilineal is second. People are identified as Silt'e if they belong to any of the clans. Each geographic group is divided into clans; clans can be further divided into sub-clans:

- a. **Malga:** is divided into five main clans; each clan is further divided into sub-clans:
  - K'ocho (sub-clans; Hibitta, Dawwit, Gamo, Gumbaki);
  - Ank'addin (sub-clans; Magalchi, Aresho, Adabo, Aybiñe and Dur);
  - Awsanabi (sub-clans; Sankur, Senko, Sillase, Asgadir, Konte, Jigana and T'ummano);
  - Gumbe (sub-clans; Sarn, Sasira, Shando, K'inan, K'aso, Urago, Ilamo, Wanjala);  
and
  - Guder (sub-clans; Abalcho, Abaro, Kura and Fat'an).
- b. **Chiro:** is divided into nine clans: Fuge, Dileto, Ittaya, Gazzicho, Walat, Zamo, Shadgar, Imoshe, and Ak'ulle.
- c. **Barbare:** is divided into 17 clans: Laglago, Sabute, K'arge, K'orafta, Toddo, Abre, Abbiyo, Abbakke, Azobad, Washarmine, Wazir, Zizancho, Dao, Gammaso, Gololsha and Faraze.

- d. **Azarnat:** is divided into 14 clans: Mulaṅṅe, Smardin, Sillaase, Shandar, Tok’o, Tafalat’, Allak’iro, Arado, Abbecho, Abosare, Kallisa/Daragot, Wasana, Gandarera, Fat’e and Dilap’p’a.
- e. **Alicho:** is divided into 12 clans: Sante, Sura, Sudar, K’at’uc’c’a, K’orafcha, Turturo, Amarcho, Awsen, Adangazo, Wanabo, Wusho and C’aac’o.
- f. **Gan-Silt’e:** is divided into the following main clans: Lokke, Manzo, Mareno, Sabola, Sambe, Silt’an, Silo, Shenasralla, K’albo, Bonaya, Chunne, Chumbul, Nasr, Nago, Nuge, Allayo, Atoye, Adam, Urago, Unfila, Irik’atale, Kunnabbar, Koyye, Warabo, Wanjala, Wazir, Wizara, Disan, Dankuse, Dat’e, Jigana, Garora, Gidawasan, T’ajjo, Fajje, etc.
- g. **Wuriro:** is divided into 24 clans: Manne, Rayya, Sabola, K’afla, K’aso, Tamam, Nashare, Arzanna, Asalat’, Abaro, Awge, Ungarad, Illas, Irzacho, Injafo, Kukko, Washano, Wantaga, Wagaram, Wayo, Dir, Gadano, Gumbe and Gomra.

## APPENDIX B: MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION IN FOUR SCHOOLS

*Number of students, textbooks and periods per week in Girar School*

Grade levels	Number of students	Number of books	Number of sections	Periods per week
1 <sup>st</sup>	108	50	2	5
2 <sup>nd</sup>	98	46	2	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	138	35	2	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	120	35	2	4
5 <sup>th</sup>	112	20	2	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	108	3	2	3
7 <sup>th</sup>	56	2	1	2
8 <sup>th</sup>	54	2	1	2

*Number of students, textbooks and periods per week in Worabe School*

Grade levels	Number of students	Number of books	Number of sections	Period per week
3 <sup>rd</sup>	220	110	4	3
4 <sup>th</sup>	250	125	5	3
5 <sup>th</sup>	440	1	8	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	440	1	8	3
7 <sup>th</sup>	275	3	5	2
8 <sup>th</sup>	250	3	5	2

*Number of students, textbooks and periods per week in Kerate School*

Grade levels	Number of students	Number of books	Number of sections	Period per week
1 <sup>st</sup>	353	2	4	5
2 <sup>nd</sup>	311	118	4	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	216	108	3	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	189	229	2	4
5 <sup>th</sup>	150	47	2	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	178	10	3	3
7 <sup>th</sup>	91	3	2	3
8 <sup>th</sup>	87	5	1	2

*Number of students, textbooks and periods per week in Lera School*

Grade levels	Number of students	Number of books	Number of sections	Period per week
1 <sup>st</sup>	363	363	6	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	247	247	4	4
3 <sup>rd</sup>	259	259	3	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	216	216	4	4
5 <sup>th</sup>	305	1	5	2
6 <sup>th</sup>	221	1	5	2
7 <sup>th</sup>	426	1	6	2
8 <sup>th</sup>	459	1	7	2

## APPENDIX C: LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS APPEARING IN THE SILT'E TEXTBOOKS

### Orthographic Problems

Using Silt'e as a medium of instruction entails reducing it to writing. Silt'e is one of the newly studied languages of Ethiopia; it has no long written history. Hence, writing in Silt'e is a primary concern. So far, however, uniformity in writing is not achieved. Currently, the Silt'e writing system adapts the Ethiopic script with some modification. However, dissemination of spellers is quite poor. Consequently, wrong symbols (like ሐ፥ ዐ፥ ኸ፥ ሠ፥ ገ፥ ፍ፥) appear in some written material:

Forms appearing in the materials	Standard form	Gloss
መንግሥት	መንግስት	'government'
ሰዓት	ሳት	'watch, time'
ሣር	ሳር	'grass'
ኸይር	ከይር	'good news'
ገልጌ	ጎልጌ	'room, grade'

This kind of problems, without any doubt, is related to either lack of awareness that Silt'e excludes these symbols or neglect. The Silt'e orthography is based on the phonological structure of Silt'e and a Silt'e dictionary is written. Once the orthography has been settled, it needs to be used consistently. To write Silt'e, it is a necessary requirement to be familiar with its orthography first. Coordinators, writers, editors, typist, proofreaders or anyone else needs to have awareness of this issue.

The basic problem in writing Silt'e is related to sound lengthening: in Silt'e, vowel lengthening is phonemic - short and long vowels are contrastive. Substituting long with short vowels results in an expression with either a different or no meaning. Hence, distinguishing long and short vowels in writing Silt'e is a must. The following substitutions were frequently found in the textbooks:

Written form – resulting in an unintended meaning	Intended but not attained form
<b>ተክነበለ</b> ‘come back’	<b>ተክናበለ</b> ‘turn (around/over)’
<b>ጠለ</b> ‘hate’	<b>ጣለ</b> ‘drop, throw away’
<b>ባሎት</b> ‘she was told’	<b>በሎት</b> ‘to say’
<b>ተረከበ</b> ‘be found, be situated’	<b>ተራከበ</b> ‘meet each other, reunite’
<b>ፋሮ</b> ‘ant-eater’	<b>ፈሮ</b> ‘dishonest, fraud’

Substituting long with short vowels gives unintended meaning. Such mistakes are really significant, misleading and confusing; one needs to have a clear-cut perception as to long and short forms. In other cases, substituting long with short vowels gives no meaning or results in a construction which is not natural. There are lots and lots of such spelling errors in Silt’e textbooks:

Meaningless or unnatural expression	Correct expression	Gloss
<b>መጣ</b>	<b>መጠ</b>	‘he came’
<b>በላ</b>	<b>በለ</b>	‘he ate’
<b>አመጣ</b>	<b>አመጠ</b>	‘he brought’

The incorrect spelling of the above forms might be Amharic influence during the typing process. Similarly, vocative forms in Silt’e, i.e. proper names with a lengthened word-final vowel, are found in the textbooks instead of the proper names:

Vocative forms	Proper names
<b>ጅሚላ</b>	<b>ጅሚለ</b>
<b>ሙሀባ</b>	<b>ሙሀበ</b>
<b>ከድጃ</b>	<b>ከድጅ</b>
<b>ለይላ</b>	<b>ለይለ</b>

For mother tongue speakers of Silt’e, these differences are clear. This spelling error might also be related to Amharic influence during the typing process.

The following examples indicate inconsistencies in spelling in relation to dialect variations:

Northern dialect	Southern dialect	Gloss
<b>አበላን</b> /ibälan/	<b>ይበላን</b> /yibälan/	‘he eats, he will eat’
<b>ጅብ</b> /jibbä/	<b>ጅጥ</b> /jippä/	‘mat’
<b>አሼት</b> /iʃeet/	<b>አሼድ</b> /iʃeed/	‘spider’

In addition, the same word appeared spelt differently even in one paragraph by the same person:

**ክታብ** and **ኪታብ** ‘book’  
**ብል** and **ቢል** ‘work’  
**ሰጅ** and **ሲጅ** ‘fringe’

## Grammatical Problems

The material producers most often write Silt’e based on Amharic grammar or usage resulting in a construction unnatural - semantically, grammatically, and culturally - or with unintended meaning, in Silt’e. The materials are direct translations of the Amharic versions of the same class. The Silt’e language textbook for grade 6, for example, is a direct translation equivalent of the Amharic version of the same grade. The translation is word by word, sometimes even morpheme by morpheme, leading to unfriendly constructions.

The Amharic prefix **ከ-**

There are three prefixes in Silt’e which are confused with the Amharic prefix **ከ-**:

- ብ-** ‘from’ (ablative);
- ለ-** ‘from’ (origin, point of departure); ‘at, by, on’ (location); ‘through, by’ (direction);
- ቶ-** ‘together with’ (associative)

In most cases, however, only **ቶ-** is used, even in places where **ብ-** and **ለ-** are appropriate in Silt’e resulting in unnatural construction or unintended meanings.

Accusative case (Gutt, 1997b: 907)

The morpheme **-nä** <**-ነ**> is suffixed to proper nouns and personal pronouns to mark them as the direct object; the suffix **-ä**, is used elsewhere. Both suffixes are equivalent to the Amharic accusative marker **-ን**:

Amharic	Silt'e	Gloss
Proper name		
<b>ጆግል-ን</b>	<b>ጆግል-ነ</b>	‘Jamal’ (acc)
<b>አንተ-ን</b>	<b>አተ-ነ</b>	‘you (2sm)’ (acc)
Animate noun		
<b>ሰው-ን</b>	<b>ሰብ-አ</b> (from <b>ሰበ</b> )	‘man’ (acc)
Inanimate noun		
<b>ቤት-ን</b>	<b>ጋር-አ</b> (from <b>ጋር</b> )	‘house’ (acc)

The suffix *-nä* in Silt'e also functions as possessive pronoun suffix having a meaning ‘our’. Consequently, using *-nä* in places of *-ä* results in a construction having possessive meaning:

Amharic original	Correct Silt'e translation	Incorrect Silt'e form in textbooks
<b>ሰዎች-ን ገደለ</b> ‘he killed a person’	<b>ሰበ ቀተለ</b>	<b>ሰብቸ-ነ ቀተለ</b> ‘he killed our people’
<b>መያዝ-ን</b> ‘holding’	<b>ኢንዞ-ተ</b>	<b>ኢንዞት-ነ</b> ‘our holding’

Not using the accusative suffix *-ä* will result in unnatural constructions:

Amharic original	Correct Silt'e translation	Incorrect Silt'e form in textbooks
<b>በሬ ገዛ</b> ‘he bought an ox’	<b>ከራብ ወከበ</b>	<b>ከራብ ወከበ</b> ‘an ox bought’
<b>ቤት ሠራ</b> ‘he built a house’	<b>ጋረ መኝ</b>	<b>ጋር መኝ</b> ‘the house built’

The accusative suffix *-ä* has also a meaning equivalent to the English preposition *to*:

Amharic original	Correct Silt'e translation	Incorrect Silt'e form in textbooks
<b>ወደ ቤት መጣ</b> ‘he came home’	<b>ጋረ መጠ</b>	<b>ጋር መጠ</b> ‘a house came’

Number (Gutt, 1997b: 906)

Semantically, Silt'e has a three-way number distinction: singular, plural, and paucal. Paucal refers to a small number of items. Morphologically, only the paucal is marked with the suffix,



-cä for nouns ending in consonants; the other two categories are unmarked. However, in Silt’e written materials, -cä is used to indicate plural not paucal. For instance, the Amharic form ሰዎች ‘people’ should be translated into Silt’e as ሰብ but not ሰብ-ቸ which means ‘some people, a small number of people’.

### Copula

In Silt’e, the most common form for the present-tense copula is the suffix -n ‘he is’, which is to be attached to the leftmost constituent of the noun phrase serving as attribute.

Amharic original	Correct Silt’e translation	Incorrect Silt’e form in textbooks
ቤት ነው ‘it is a house’	ጋር-ን	
ጥሩ ቤት ነው ‘it is a good house’	ፈያ-ን ጋር	ፈያ ጋር-ን ‘the only good thing is (one’s own) house (emphatic form)
ትዳር ጥሩ ነው ‘marriage life is good’	ብተር ፈያ-ን	ብተር-ን ፈያ ‘only marriage is good’

Grammatically, the text materials deviate from the Silt’e norm, i.e., the textbooks are not in accordance with the Silt’e grammar.

### Problems related to cultural difference

Another problem is concerned with literal translation without taking the cultural differences into account.

Amharic	English Gloss	Translated as	Normal form
ባል አገባች	she married a man	ሚሺ አገባች	በሚሽ ገባች ‘she entered into a man’
ቤቶች ልጆች የመማር እድል አያገኙም	girls do not have learning opportunities	የገረድ ወልድቸ የቅሮት አያን እለረክቡ	የገረድ ወልድ ሊቀረ እለረክብ
በሽተኛውን ጠየቀው	he visited the patient	ኖታመይ ተሳለይ ‘he asked the patient’	ኖታመይ አንገድይ ‘he saw the patient’
ጫካውን ጎበኙ	they visited the forest	ገዎይ ዘየሩ	ገዎይ ሄዶ አንዙ ‘they went and saw the forest’
እንግዳውን አጫውተው	converse with the guest	ነግዳይ አትፈቅረይ ‘entertain the guest’	ነግዳይ አሳዌ አሽ ‘converse with the guest’
ወንድማማችነት	brotherhood	ማጣ ዋጅነት ‘younger-elder brothers’	ደድ-አመኛት ‘love-respect’

Direct translation, without considering the usage, most often misleads people:

1. The word አደን ‘lucky or fortune’ does not have the same sense as እድል is used in this context; hence it is not needed to translate it all; the plural form must be ወልድ, not ወልድቸ.
2. The Silt’e word, ዘየረ - ጎበኘ ‘he visited’- has restricted usage; it is used when visiting holy places, or respected people; but not for forest, town, etc. hence, the correct translation equivalent for ጎበኘ, here, is ሄደ አንገፎ [lit. he went and saw].
3. The Silt’e word, ተሳለ, does not have the sense ‘visit’ as ጠየቀ is used here; hence, the correct translation equivalent for ጠየቀ is not ተሳለ, but አንገፎ.

Language is part of the culture; here, words are used in violation of the society’s norm. This indicates that material producers have weak social interaction or lack of familiarity with the Silt’e culture.

### Miscellaneous

There are a number of other problems: Amharic and Arabic words are introduced into the books unnecessarily. Some texts are difficult to understand; different words are used for the same concept; technical terms are not appropriate, not defined well and difficult to understand.

Amharic	Defective forms	Natural forms
መማሪያ መጽሐፍ ‘textbook’	መቅሬ ክታብ	አቀርቡያን ክታብ ‘a-book-to-lean-with’
ማስተማሪያ መጽሀፍ ‘teachers guide’	ማቅሬ ክታብ	ያቀርቡያን ክታብ ‘a-book-to-teach-with’
መኖሪያ ቤት ‘house, home’	መንበሬ ጋር	እነብሩቡያን ጋር ‘a-house-to-live in’
ርዕሰ ብሔር ‘head of the nation’	ዱ.መ.-መንግስት	የባድ- ዋጂ/አባት ‘elder/father-of- the country’

The following passage from a textbook is very difficult to understand:

ባዝጋጋሙ ያሉ ወልድ ላበት ኢንደትኑሙ አነገነ ለወለኒሙ ሰብ ድጋዩ ዮቦን፤ ባቡ ምን ምነ ምነ ድጋዩቸ ዩኑኮ አዋልኮኔ መትዲላለዩይ ተሞኒኒሞ ተቆትኒሙ ቂጩ ዩኑ የኮኒኮ ባትዋሮት ወባጅ አሱ።

ባለፋይ ቂራት ኡንዱሉሌ ዩኑ በዌጅ ተር ኢትረሶን ፋረሮ ባትወረኝ በቡትን አንገፎናን። ቢታይ ቂራት ተፋሮይ ኡስጥ ሀዲ ዩነይ በወልድ ላዩ አለ ኤት ተድጋለሎት መነ ዩኑኮ ያንዜን።

የቀልቀለት ወልድ መላዩ አለኤት ተድጋለሎት በሉሌሞ አኩ በበላቢይ ወክት በሉላሉሌ ኢትንዣን ዩነ የሮሬን ሚካት። ሚካቴ በቡርነት ኢታንዣንይ በቀል ቀሌን ወልድ ደር። የማነሞ በቢል ደር ሰሰበኮ ዌጅ ቢገቢን በል የጂስመዋ የመእነ ኪሽነኮ የትወክለ ያሶን አሀዋልቸ ተሰናዶት አለሲይሙ። ቢታሚ ቲቢሊ.

በማንም የቂያ ዱንዩ (ኢኮኖሚ) ጉለንተ ገበን ያሰን ወልድቸ ተሀልሞ ቀደ የወልድነት ሀለት ከተቻለኔ ሀቂክ ተቂሮት እትጌባን ኡሎነይ።

ቢታይ አየ የቀረበይ ሀቅ የትአወነኮ ላትሪግጦት ወሽ ባድቸ የሁክመ። የአቲንደዳሬ የአውዋ የአሽረ ቂጮ ዮስዳን።

ሂሊቀደ በናረይ ኡስቤ ዩልድ በላዩ አሰኤት ተድጋለሎት ይትር የናረይ ባውጀዋ ባጫሪቅ ፋፋሪክቸ ኡስጥ ቀጠሩ ማኔ አለኤት መላዩኒሙ ኢድጋለል ቡሙ ናረ

ባኩ ወክት ሃለትከ ቴገናኔ ፊተተ በትሮት ማነሞ ወልድ ተአሽር ያቴድገያን አነጊነ ለሰብነቲሞ ኑሞ አነ ለመሊቅኑሞ ኢደውሳን ዩነ ቢል ሁልምከ ዩልድ መላዩ አሰኤት ተድጋለሎት በባሎትን ኢሳዳነይ (128)።

ቲንደትኒሙ መውት ሬር ኪምሰሬ ሸወ ቲቶጭ የ16 አይደ ዩነይ ዋጄሽ ከማል አይደ ቀደሜታኔ ያቀራቢኑም የከማል ሲርበላነይ ናዝሬት ሄዳኔ በአማሊሻይ ጋር ተቀጠረ ያሻን።

## APPENDIX D: BRAIN-STORMING

The school directors, teachers and material producers were asked what they think specifically in relation to promoting the Silt'e language. The brain-storming from them (including responses from sociolinguistic subjects) is summarized as follows:

1. As a language, to be passed on to the children, Silt'e must be seen more important than any other language; developing Silt'e means not only keeping the language alive but also maintaining the Silt'e identity and culture.
2. Opportunities need to be created for using the Silt'e language in different domains of life; Silt'e language needs to be the official language of the Silt'e Zone; and be used in every sector of the government offices; the Silt'e scholars, particularly teachers, must change their linguistic behaviors and work for the development of their mother tongue;
3. To monitor things, an independent institute is needed to be established at zonal level as to the Silt'e cultural and language; to promote the standardization process an authorized independent body needs to be established; Silt'e language training center needs to be established;
4. An independent Silt'e language research center is needed to be established; continuous research in Silt'e culture and language is important; organizing language and cultural groups in every woreda as well; the Silt'e language institute established;
5. Working together with other stakeholders, if any, is important.; working together with others doing in Silt'e, sharing their experience and exploiting their findings is important;
6. Monolingual Silt'e dictionary, grammar and spellers be written and disseminated; the Silt'e history written in their mother tongue.
7. Encouraging scholars working in Silt'e; promoting other writers to produce different materials in Silt'e must be given great attention; reference material producers are needed to be monitored as to their conformity with the Silt'e orthography, structure and usage.
8. Local newspapers and magazines need to come out regularly; the Silt'e radio program is also important; Zonal notices are to be produced in Silt'e;
9. It is necessary to mobilize the people to actively participate and contribute for their language development. The Silt'e community needs to participate actively in the development of the Silt'e language and culture; active participation - working hard - is expected from the Silt'e scholars, the community at large.
10. To have sufficient materials, additional fund raising strategies are to be established;
11. Silt'e radio program, and television, would be welcomed very much.

As to the quality:

1. The material production will be well planned, necessary preparations be made; reference materials, newspapers, magazines and Silt'e dictionary are needed to be available; things need to be well planned, carried out carefully and with great attention; not needed to be carried out at a sudden; the material producers are to be well equipped with technical as well as professional skills.
2. Sufficient time is to be given for the preparation of materials
3. Strict follow-up is needed; the material production is needed to be computerized.
4. Material producers, editors and others must be fluent speakers of Silt'e, competent and committed and trained in Silt'e orthography and structure; continuous short-term and long-term trainings are important; The Silt'e materials are not being based on Amharic spelling and grammar; no need to direct translations as well; it should be natural Silt'e - both linguistically and culturally.
5. The right people - experienced, who respect and concerned about the Silt'e cultural values - are to be assigned for the production of materials; the Silt'e cultural values need to be respected; protecting the books from religious influences- - they must be secular and free from religious ideological biases; people who have negative attitude towards the Silt'e culture must be controlled;
6. Material producers and editors must be responsible for their work and their language and culture; editors need to have some inputs as to the quality of materials; proofreaders should control typing errors; the typist must MT speakers of Silt'e; and must be trained in Silt'e, too; the payments for producers, editor and others need to be fair; consultancy checking is important; official decision is needed to be made as to the central dialect.
7. The existing materials to be evaluated professionally and revised - the feedbacks from teachers are needed to be taken into considerations;

Silt'e language textbooks must conform to the Silt'e orthography, grammar, usage and culture.

## **APPENDIX E: ARABIC MANUSCRIPT ON SILT'E ORIGIN**