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An Investigation of Types, Causes, and Implications of Incompatible Language Use: Spoken Amharic in FocusMandefro Fenta^{1*} and Getachew Seyoum²

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Abstract

The main objective of this research was to investigate the types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions used in spoken Amharic. To achieve this general objective, researchers collected data from postgraduate students, instructors, and journalists from Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, and Jimma Universities and Ethiopian Broadcast Corporate (EBC), Fana Broadcast Corporate (FBC), and Amhara Media Agency (AMA) through interviews and questionnaires. Sixty-five respondents and nine interviewees participated in the questionnaire and interview respectively. The data was analyzed by applying textual and numerical descriptions. The findings showed the use of double plurals, slang, wrong plurals, direct translation from English, applying English terms in Amharic, and unnecessary addition of terms. It was also noted that speakers lacked the necessary understanding of Amharic grammar, were negligent in adhering to Amharic rules, were unprepared while speaking, and mixed Amharic and English vocabulary. The other observations included meaning distortion, miscommunication between communicative partners, ambiguous phrases being introduced into Amharic, bizarre happenings taking the place of indigenous cultural and moral norms, loss of group and national identity, and identity confusion. Thus, the prevalence of using incompatible expressions was observed; concerned bodies did not handle language use, and language teaching and learning properly. Finally, speakers' reluctance to use appropriate expressions has resulted in social crises, linguistic conflict, misunderstanding, and signs of losing personal and national identity. As a recommendation, speakers should struggle to minimize the use of incompatible expressions, and educational leaders, instructors, and students need to assess their language use, language teaching and learning.

Key words: /Amharic speech/Implication/Incompatible/Language use/

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication is the transfer of information between a sender and one or more receivers; it is a process of sharing meanings, using a set of common rules (Northouse & Northouse, cited in Berry, 2007). Besides, West and Turner (2014, p. 5) defined communication as, “Communication is a social (involves people and interactions) process (ongoing and unending) in which individuals employ symbols (arbitrary label or representation of phenomena) to establish and interpret meaning (what people extract from a message) in their environment (the situation or context in which communication occurs)”. The application of effective language use in communication also supports implementing everyday activities in meaningful ways. On the contrary, incompatible language use is a cause of misunderstanding between speech partners.

To enhance interaction among people, communicative competence is essential to help them carry out their activities properly. Communicative competence, in turn, demands the skill of compatible language use. Saville-Troike (2003, p. 18) states, “Communicative competence extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, to whom one may speak, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles...”. This notion inculcates speakers to develop and apply compatible expressions at the right place, time, and situation and to whom they have to speak. However, maybe due to a lack of knowledge or negligence, a significant number of individuals are observed using incompatible expressions during speaking and writing. Such unfitting forms of language use also have their own negative implications in the process of communication in particular and in preserving cultural and social values in general. For instance, the researchers heard a journalist’s report in Amharic, which reads,

“አሁን የ ምግ ኘውስ ድሰት ኪሎ ጋር ነው።”

ʔahun jəmgəjəw sidist kilo gar nəw

Now I am with Sidist Kilo.

In this speech, the reporter wanted to indicate the location where he was at the time of speaking. In the above sentence, the journalist used “ጋር (gar)” (which means with) to indicate location, but it is not acceptable because “ጋር (gar)” (with) is used to show relationships. However, using “ጋር (gar)” (with) to indicate location has been a common experience nowadays.

Moreover, a significant number of speakers recurrently use two plural indicators like “ህፃናቶች (hitsanatotf)” (children) together incorrectly. Thus, it is necessary to use either the plural marker in Geez (i.e., ህፃናት - hitsan+ʔat (ህፃን + አት) or the Amharic plural indicator (ህፃኖች (hitsan +ʔotf (ህፃን + አች).

The other problem is the mixing up of expressions from other languages during speeches, which may not have any relevance to most audiences. For example, listening to English expressions during speeches in Amharic by professionals and reporters whose voices have a tremendous impact on listeners has been a common experience. Using incompatible expressions like mixing languages may cause communication breakdown and other problems. Thus, since using incompatible expressions has various causes and implications, and this is a new research area in the local context, investigating the types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions is essential. Besides, this article needs to recommend ways to alleviate the use of incompatible expressions by showing the negative impacts of using incompatible expressions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective communication enhances message transfer among speech participants significantly. However, there are communication barriers which have the potential to affect message transfer among communicators. One of the communication barriers is the linguistic or language barrier. Concerning the language barrier, Rani (2016, p. 76) states the following.

Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. However, barriers can also occur when people are speaking the same language. Sometimes barriers occur when we use inappropriate levels of language or we use jargon or slang which is not understood by one or more of the people communicating.

According to Rani, as observed in the quotation, language barriers block and/or create confusion among communication partners. Even while speaking with the same language speakers, a communication barrier occurs due to the difference in language level of the communicators. In clear terms, communication barriers originate from speaking different languages, differences in language level between communicators, and the use of jargon and slang. These events are the causes of incompatible language use. In addition, some individuals mix terms from other languages (English in this context) and complicate the process of understanding messages during communication in Amharic. Besides, the researchers believed that no research has been conducted related to the types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions used in speeches.

Therefore, the researchers hope that the results of this research will address the gaps observed in relation to the types and causes of using incompatible expressions and their implications on citizens (who use and hear incompatible expressions). In other words, this research contributes to increasing the knowledge and understanding of speakers regarding how, when, where, and why to use compatible expressions, and how incompatible expressions hinder the transferring of messages among communicators.

To conduct this research, the following research questions were posed.

- What types of incompatible expressions do speakers use when speaking in Amharic?
- What are the causes of incompatible language use?
- What are the implications of incompatible language use on citizens' understanding of messages and their cultural norms and values?
- What are the possible measures that should be taken to alleviate incompatible language use?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept of Communication

It is agreed that communication has several definitions, and it is also believed to be difficult to put its definition in a single sentence. However, Okwor cited in Aruma (2018) simply defines communication as a process and the activity of passing information from an individual to another person in society. Keyton, cited in Alluri (2016) also defined communication as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. Furthermore, Canale as mentioned in Bardovi-Harlig (2005, p. 67) writes about the definition and characteristics of communication as follows.

Communication is a form of social interaction, and it is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction. It involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message; it takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts, which provide constraints on appropriate language use and clues as to the correct interpretation of utterances. It is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions; always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise); involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived, language; is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

As stated above, communication is social interaction that takes place among individuals to accomplish a certain purpose, and while communicating with others, communicators need to apply appropriate expressions to maximize understanding between them. However, due to various factors, communicators use inappropriate expressions that can hamper the proper understanding of messages. That makes communication be labeled as successful or not. Factors that affect smooth communication are also considered barriers. Communication barriers that hinder smooth communication are presented below.

2.2 Type of Communication Barriers

Communication experts state that noise is one of the major communication barriers. For instance, according to Lunenburg, 2010, p. 2), “Noise is anything that distorts the message. Different perceptions of the message, language barriers, interruptions, emotions and attitudes are examples of noise”. Noise consists of the external factors in the channels and the internal perceptions and experiences within the source and the receiver that affect communication. In addition, Buarqoub (2019) stated that language or semantic barriers arise when many words have more than one meaning, and a sender and a receiver try to communicate in a language they themselves do not understand properly. Among the aforementioned barriers, the problem of the language barrier that is forwarded by the sender is the main concern of this research because it is the sender who applies inappropriate expressions and mixed language while speaking. For instance, Daniel Kibret (2010 E. C, p. 202) presents common errors like,

እስኪለዘፈውበአመርኛ ቋንቋ ንግግርና ጽሕፈት እየተለመዱ የሚገኙ ስህተት የስህተት አይነቶችን ለመጻፍ ነው፡፡
 ?iski ləzarew bə?amarja k’^wan k’^wa nigigir ?ina tsihfət ?ijətəlmədu jəmət’u ?asirasost
 jəshitət ?ajnetotf’in laməlkit
 For today, let me show thirteen types of common errors committed while speaking and writing in Amharic).

According to Daniel (2010) two of the thirteen mistakes, “(የ ብዙ ብዙ (jəbizu bizu)” (double plural) and “አለስፈላጊ እንግሊዝኛ (ʔaləsfəlagi ?inglizʔa)” (using of unnecessary English terms while speaking in Amharic) have been observed in speeches in various contexts nowadays. Thus, these observations need scientific investigations.

2.3 Choice of Appropriate Expressions

The use of appropriate language use refers to knowledge and skill to apply the right word for the right purpose in the right context. Regarding appropriate language use, Hynes as cited in Rahimi (2019) emphasized that knowing what to say to whom in what circumstances and how to say it is a central element of language

competence, a term which brings linguistic, socio-cultural and discourse knowledge under the umbrella of appropriate language use. That means we can express an idea in different possible ways, but we need to choose the most appropriate one for achieving our communicative purpose in different contexts. According to Harmer (2001), there are variables that determine our choice of appropriate expression. The variables include setting, participants, gender, channel and topic. Besides, the grammatical rules and contextual functions of a language or its expressions can be considered as manifestations of appropriateness. Fairclough (1995) also notes that different varieties of English, and different languages, are appropriate for different contexts and purposes, and all varieties have the legitimacy of being appropriate for some contexts and purposes. Speakers have the right to use various expressions in different contexts if they feel those expressions are appropriate to convey meaningful messages. Furthermore, Saville-Troike (2003) stated that many studies of attitudes towards language use ...have not dealt with language in general, but with what language or variety of language is considered more appropriate in a specific context. Thus, applying the grammatical rules of a language and using compatible expressions of a language in the right context, with the right speech participant and at the right time has paramount importance to maximize message transfer and better understanding among communicators.

2.4 Causes and Implications of Using Incompatible Expressions

When a speaker uses incompatible words or expressions, which block listeners' understanding, the message cannot be transmitted properly. This situation creates a misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver. Especially when speakers use incompatible expressions or mix words from different languages where most audiences are monolingual, miscommunication is inevitable. Concerning this, Buarqoub (2019, p. 64) explained, "Language barriers are the root causes of many problems or obstacles in health care, aviation, maritime, business, and education. For example, effective communication between healthcare providers, patients, and families is critical for providing safe and quality healthcare." Therefore, using incompatible expressions or mixing languages while speaking breaks down communication and impedes smooth human interaction. Many people also talk about the various causes and implications of incompatible expressions. Nevertheless, they refrain from investigating the causes and the implications in depth. For instance, regarding the causes, individuals suggest that it is a means of searching for more explanatory words; it is a sign of being knowledgeable; it is a sign of an identity crisis and so on. Anyway, whatever the causes and impacts of incompatible language use, they are manifested in speeches nowadays, so this case needs further investigation.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The researchers used Grice's cooperative principle as a valid theoretical framework for this study. The concept of Grice's cooperative principle is, "Make your conversational contribution where is required, at the state which it occurs, by the accepted purpose and direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" Mey cited in Tsojon and Jonah (2016, p. 45). As indicated, this cooperative principle demands us to be selective and purposeful when we apply words or expressions in our daily interactions. This general principle is divided into four maxims, such as the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance and the maxim of manner. The maxim of quantity alerts communicators to make their contribution as informative as is required (for the existing purposes of the exchange). Besides, communicators are advised not to make their contribution more or less informative than is required. The maxim of quality entails communicators not to say what they believe to be false. Moreover, communicators are required not to say or state a point for which they lack adequate evidence. The next principle is to be relevant. This principle requires speakers to be within the domain of a topic while communicating. The last cooperative principle, the maxim of manner, notifies

communicators to avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly.

Generally, Grice's cooperative principle enables language users to apply appropriate language expressions to maximize understanding and reduce barriers to communication between speakers and listeners. Dominantly, Grice's maxim of manner has been applicable in this study. Nowadays, contrary to Grice's maxims, speakers use unnecessary words, which violate the maxim of manner. For the aforementioned reasons, Grice's cooperative principle was used as a theoretical framework for this study.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Study Area and Period

The study was conducted at three public universities, namely Jimma, Addis Ababa, and Bahir Dar. Besides, EBC, FBC, and Amhara Media Agency were the study sites, and the data was collected in May 2019. The project was also completed in one year, i.e., from October 2018 up to October 2019.

3.2 Design of the Study

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 164) "descriptive research is an investigation that attempts to describe accurately and factually a phenomenon, subject or area." Thus, the study design is a descriptive study because it helps to examine the types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions applied in Amharic speech in depth. The study focused on Amharic speeches and gathered data for the reason that many Amharic speakers are observed while mixing languages and using numerous incompatible expressions that might have impacts on communication in their speeches. Thus, more specifically, data on the types and causes of incompatible language use were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. Then their implications were described.

3.3 Population

The population of the study included postgraduate university students from the departments of journalism and communication and media and communication studies, journalists from media agencies (EBC, FBC and AMA), and language instructors from Jimma and Bahir Dar universities. The aforementioned department students were selected because they were expected to be more aware of communication rules and language use in comparison to other department students. Besides, we feel that selecting journalists who were working in the media had tremendous advantages in relation to obtaining ample and reliable data because they are required to use appropriate language in different situations.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

For the interview, nine interviewees (four from Fana Broadcasting Corporate at two sites (Addis Ababa and Jimma), two from Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate, and two from Amhara Media Agency and a respondent from Jimma University) participated in this research. The researchers intended to give equal opportunity to participants at each study site. In the questionnaire, sixty-five participants who were available in their classes and offices filled and returned the questionnaires. Among the participants, forty-seven were males and eighteen were females. Regarding their educational background, thirty, twenty-nine, and six respondents were BA, MA, and PhD degree holders respectively. Besides, among the thirty participants, the majority of them were attending their MA degree when the research was conducted. Concerning interviewees, five, three and one participants were BA, MA, and PhD degree holders respectively.

The sampling technique was purposive sampling because those participants were the right individuals (interviewees and respondents of the questionnaire) to generate the required data from the aforementioned institutions and departments.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

Data was gathered from the participants through interviews and questionnaires.

Interviews: semi-structured interviews were presented to eight media agency workers and one academic staff member from media and communication studies at Jimma University to investigate their perceptions of incompatible language use. The rest participated in the questionnaire. According to Denscombe (2007), with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. Besides, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher.

Interviewees were selected voluntarily, and in the interview, the researchers asked questions to the interviewees, which were designed on the types, causes, implications, and possible measures to be taken to alleviate incompatible language use. The interviewees also answered questions and explained points in a flexible manner as probed by the researchers in silent places and offices in Amharic. The length of time taken for the interviews varies from person to person (i.e., ten to twenty-five minutes). Generally, the data gathered through interviews was rich and sufficient.

Questionnaire: the second data-gathering tool was a questionnaire. The questionnaire enabled researchers to obtain the perceptions of language instructors, journalists, and postgraduate students about incompatible language use. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers to achieve the research objectives, and close-ended and open-ended questions were prepared and distributed to participants to find out their perceptions about people's speaking practices and why speakers use incompatible expressions. Some questions were designed based on a five-point Likert scale. The others were open-ended questions that gave opportunities to respondents to forward their views about types and causes of incompatible expressions.

By using interviews and questionnaires, the researchers gathered ample data, and they cross-checked the conformity of information by comparing the data obtained through the two instruments. A pilot study was also conducted using a questionnaire at Jimma University and the instruments were checked for validity. To specify, content validity was achieved because the study could investigate what it had planned from the outset.

3.6 Method of Analysis

Data obtained from the interview and the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed thematically based on types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions. In the analysis, the qualitative data gathered through interviews and the open-ended questionnaire were described, interpreted, and explained in written words, whereas numerical figures and percentages supported by word description were used to analyze the quantitative information obtained through the close-ended questionnaire. In the analysis, the reliability of the information was crosschecked by using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 23, and the reliability coefficient was 0.711, which is an acceptable value. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings, and recommendations were forwarded in line with the conclusions.

Regarding ethical considerations, a permission letter was taken from the postgraduate and research coordinating office of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities to collect data from the stated research sites. To ensure the informants' privacy and confidentiality, personal details were not disclosed, and the

collected data was used only for research purposes. Besides, the informants participated in the study based on their willingness to give information for the research.

4. Results

This study intended to answer research questions concerning the types, causes, and implications of incompatible language use in spoken Amharic. Thus, the data gathered from research participants through interviews and questionnaires was analyzed and interpreted, and findings were drawn. The analysis is presented in line with the research questions as follows.

4.1 Findings of Data on Types of Incompatible Expressions from Interview

The data analysis is made based on the stated research questions. Thus, the first research question is ‘what types of incompatible expressions do speakers use when speaking in Amharic?’

To answer this question, interviewees were asked whether they used or heard incompatible expressions during speeches. The interviewees were given codes according to the sequence used during the transcription of the data. Thus, interviewee A (a journalist from EBC) said the following.

ሁላችንም እንጠቀማለን፡፡ የምንጠቀሙ ግን አስበንበት አይደለም፡፡ ለምሳሌ ማግሰሪያ፣ ህጻናቶች እንላለን፡፡ እኛ እንኳ ያልተገባ አብዥ እንጠቀማለን፡፡ የምንጠቀሙም የትርጉም ለውጥ ያመጣሉ ብለን ስለማስታወስ፡፡

hulafñim ?int’əqəmalən jəmnit’ə k’əməw gin ?asbənəbət ?ajidələm ləmsale məmihranotf hitsanatotf ?inlalən?ijjna ?ink^wa jaltəgəba ?abiz ?int’ək’əmalən jəmnit’ək’əməwum jətirgum ləwt’ jamət’alu bilən siləmanasib nəw

All of us use incompatible expressions. But, we use them unintentionally. For example, we say ማግሰሪያ (məmhiranotf) (teachers), ህጻናቶች (hitsanatotf) (children). We use incorrect plural forms because we do not think that they have an impact on changing meaning.

As indicated in the data, in ማግሰሪያ (məmhiranotf) (teachers) and ህጻናቶች (hitsanatotf) (children) two plural markers (one in Geez and the other in Amharic) are used together where one is enough. To specify, consider ማግሰሪያ (məmhira+an+otf - teachers) and ህጻናቶች (hitsan+at+otf - children). Thus, it seems common to use or hear incompatible expressions while speaking. As stated here, speakers use incompatible expressions unconsciously, assuming that such expressions do not have any impact on communication and the rules of the language. However, if an expression is incompatible, it has the potential to affect proper communication and cause misunderstanding among communicators.

Interviewee D (a journalist from FBC at Addis Ababa) also admitted that he used and heard others while they used incompatible expressions. His actual words are listed as follows.

አዎ ተጠቅሞኝ ሰማኛም አወቃለሁ፡፡ አንዳንዶች አስደንጋጭ ያለበታው የገቡ ቃላትን ጥቅም ላይ ሲያውሉ ለማስተካከል ሞክረ አወቃለሁ፡፡ ማስተካከል ካልቻልኩም እንዴምን ነካው? ብዬ ደንግጭ አወቃለሁ፡፡

?awo tət’ək’imem səmtfəm ?awk’aləhu ?andandotf ?asdəngəč’ ?ina jaləbotaw jəgəbu k’alətin t’ik’im laj sijawlu ləmastəkəkəl mokre ?awk’aləhu mastəkəkəl kaltfalkum ?inde min nəkaw bijə dəngič’ə ?awk’aləhu
Yes, I used and heard others while they use incompatible expressions. Sometimes I tried to correct individuals who used irritating and inappropriate words. When I could not give a correction, I wondered why he said like that and I felt very shocked.

Based on the data, it is common to apply or hear incompatible expressions while speaking. In such situations, some individuals try to correct incompatible expressions. However, when they are not able to correct speakers who use incompatible expressions, they feel embarrassed. It implies that using incompatible expressions is common and disturbing to listeners' emotions.

The next question requires respondents to list down incompatible expressions they have ever used or heard while speaking in Amharic. To this question, respondents listed many words. Some common words used in Amharic speeches are, for example, ok, exactly, of course, information, service, ጎል (goal), አትሌት (athlete), ረከርድ ሰበረ/ች (rikærd sɛbærə/tʃ) (broke the record), ማምሪያ ሰጠኞች (məmhīranotʃ i.e., məmhīr+an+otʃ) (teachers) etc.

The respondents stated that some speakers frequently apply English expressions during Amharic speeches. In this regard, it is reasonable to say that educated Amharic speakers are familiar with English terms, so they apply such expressions in Amharic speeches. As stated by the informants, many words that have Amharic equivalents (like gol and ?atlet) are familiar to Amharic speakers even though they are English terms.

Besides, the addition or omission of a letter is common while speaking. For instance, interviewee F (journalist from AMA) mentioned how the omission of a letter may change the meaning of the whole sentence. The correct sentence reads, “ሚኒስትሩ እና ሚኒስትሩ በስብሰባው ላይ ተገኝተው በረ (ministru ?ina ministr^wa bəsibsəbaw laj tægənitəw nəbər.” From this sentence, if the letter “ገ (gə)” is omitted from the word “ተገኝተው (tægənitəw)”, the word reads “ተኝተው (tənitəw)”, and the sentence is meaningful with both the presence and absence of the letter “ገ (gə)” from ተገኝተው (tægənitəw). However, when the letter “ገ (gə)” is omitted, the meaning of the sentence has a negative sense. The respondent added that similar problems are observed in the media currently. The same respondent shared his reading experience as, “አንድ ታሪክ ሳነ ብብአዴ በካፍ ዘመን ማግስት ቃል ያሳሳተ ስልሳ ጅራፍ ይገረፍ ነበር (bə?atse bəkafa zəmənə mængist k'al jasasatə silsa dʒiraf jigərəf nəbər)- during the era of King Bekafa, if an individual misused a word, he/she would be punished or hit by whip sixty times. This incident shows that more attention was given to proper language use. However, the attention given to language use nowadays seems too minimal.

4.2 Types of Incompatible Expressions Obtained through Questionnaire

The first question asks respondents about the necessity of using appropriate or compatible words or expressions of a language while speaking. To this question, 60 (92.3%) respondents said that there is no doubt about using a compatible word or expression while speaking. These responses indicate that using compatible words or expressions while speaking is essential. We also asked the respondents to mention reasons for the importance of compatible language use. Thus, the most repetitive reasons indicated that it makes communication intelligible among speakers and listeners. To illustrate, first, by using compatible expressions, it is possible to get or offer complete information while speaking. Second, compatible language use preserves the rules and structure of a language, so compatible language use saves a language from linguistic domination.

Respondents were also asked whether they used or heard incompatible words or expressions during speaking. To this question, 51(78.46%) replied that they have used and/or heard incompatible words or expressions during speaking. Related to this question, the respondents were asked to list down incompatible words or expressions. Therefore, the respondents listed many incompatible words as follows.

Table 1

Type of Incompatible Words, Observed Problem and Correct Usage in Amharic

| Type of incompatible expression in Amharic | Problem observed | Its meaning in English | Correct usage in Amharic |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------------------|
| ሀገራቶች (hagəratotf) | Double plural | countries | ሀገሮች ወይም ሀገራት |
| መምህራኖች (məmhīranotf) | Double plural | teachers | መምህራን ወይም መምህሮች |
| አናብስቶች (ʔanabsitotf) | Double plural | lions | አናብስት ወይም አንበሶች |
| እፅዋቶች ((ʔitswatotf) | Double plural | plants | እፅዋት ወይም እፃች |
| ጀለሴ (dzələse) | Strange word | maybe | ገናኝ |
| ችክዋ (ችኪ) tʃikwa/tʃik ^w a | Strange word | maybe the girl | ልጅቱ |
| (ዝናቦች) (zinabotf) | Wrong plural | rains | ዝናብ |
| ውሃዎች (wuhawotf) | Wrong plural | waters | ውሃ |
| ተእንደገና (təʔindəgəna) | Addition of unnecessary letter (tə) | again | እንደገና |
| ትመጣለክ (timət'alək) | Replacement of a sound/ letter unnecessarily | Will you come? | ትመጣለህ? |
| ግማሽ ወንድም (gimaf wondim) | Wrong expression (we don't say gimaf wondim) | half brother | የአባት ወይም የእናት ልጅ |
| ኤክስፐርቶች (ʔekspərtotf) | Using English instead of Amharic | experts | ባለሙያዎች |
| ሴክተሮች (sektərotf) | Using English instead of Amharic | sectors | ክፍሎች |
| ኢንፎርሜሽን (ʔinformaʃin) | Using English instead of Amharic | information | ሚዲያ |
| እናንተ (ʔinantə) | Using a wrong term (እናንተ) to show respect for elders | you | እርስዎ ወይም አንቱ |

Incompatible words shown in Table 1 can be categorized into different types. The categories are:

1. Double plural forms ሀገራቶች (hagər+at+otf) (countries), መምህራኖች (məmhīr+an+otf) (teachers), ʔanabsit+otf (lions), ʔitswat+otf (plants). Note that the words አናብስት (ʔanabsit) and እፅዋት (ʔitswat) are plural forms in Geez, but the plural marker ‘ኦች (otf)’ is also added to them unnecessarily.
2. Using jargons like ጀለሴ (dzələse), ችክዋ (ችኪ) (tʃik^wa),
3. Forming wrong plurals like ዝናቦች (zinabotf) (rains), ውሃዎች (wuhawotf) (waters),
4. Adding unnecessary letters where “ተ (tə)” is added unnecessarily in ተእንደገና (təʔindəgəna) (again),
5. Replacing of sound, ‘h’ is replaced by ‘k’ in ‘ትመጣለክ (timət'alək)',
6. A direct translation of English terms, for example, “half-brother” is translated to ‘ግማሽ ወንድም (gimaf wondim)’ which is not common in Amharic,
7. Writing of English terms in Amharic like ኤክስፐርቶች (ʔekspərtotf) (experts), ‘ሴክተሮች (sektərotf)’ (sectors), ኢንፎርሜሽን (ʔinformaʃin) (information),
8. Wrong use of terms to give respect like using ‘እናንተ (ʔinantə)’ to say ‘እርስዎ (ʔirsīwo)’.

These words are widely used in day-to-day communication at this time. Let alone the laypersons, professionals (for example, journalists) do not notice the above expressions to be incompatible. It implies that the use of incompatible expressions has prevailed due to negligence or carelessness in applying the right forms

of a language for communication. This kind of usage violates the maxim of quality (by using terms without adequate knowledge) and the maxim of manner by creating ambiguity in the expressions mentioned above.

Moreover, there are various incompatible uses of expressions at the phrase or sentence level. For instance, the following expressions were reported.

Table 2

Type of Incompatible Expressions at Phrase or Clause Level

| Incompatible expression | Problem observed | Intended meaning in English | Correct usage in Amharic |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| እየመጣሁ ነኝ ʔijəmət'ahu nəɲ | Wrong use of ነኝ (nəɲ) | I am coming | እየመጣሁ ነው : |
| አምነት ኪሎ ጋር ነኝ ʔamsit kilo gar nəɲ | Wrong use of ጋር (gar) | I am at Amsit Kilo | አምነት ኪሎ ጋ ነኝ : |
| ማናኛ ብዙሃን məgənaɲa bizuhan | Wrong usage | mass media | ብዙሃን ማናኛ |
| መኝን ፍቸሏል məʃənəf tʃil ^w al | wrong usage | was beaten | ተሸንፏል |
| ያንበሳውን ድርሻ ተጫቷል janbəsaʋun dirʃa təč'awt ^w al | Direct translation from English | played the lion's share | ከፍተኛ ድርሻ አበርክቷል፤ አብላጭን ስራ ሰረቷል : |
| ኪስና ማረብን አዋሀደ k ^w as ʔina məɾəb ʔawahadə | Wrong use of the word ʔawahadə (combined) | joined the ball and the net | ኪስና ማረብን አገናኘ : |
| ደንተከላ ባህል ሊሆን ይገባል dən təkəla bahil lihon jigəbal | Wrong use of words (dən təkəla) | planting seedlings must be a culture | ችግኝ መከል ባህል ሊሆን ይገባል : |

As shown in Table 2, there are different problems related to language use. For example, we do not say “እየመጣሁ ነኝ (ʔijəmət'ahu nəɲ)” rather we say “እየመጣሁ ነው (ʔijəmət'ahu nəw)” (I am coming). In this context, the speaker used the auxiliary verb “nəɲ” (am) in the wrong form. In the expression, “አምነት ኪሎ ጋር ነኝ (ʔamsit kilo gar nəɲ)” (I am with Amsit Kilo), gar (which means with) shows a relationship but not location, so it is not used in a compatible way. Rather it is better to say “አምነት ኪሎ ጋ ነኝ (ʔamsit kilo ga nəɲ)” (I am at Amsit Kilo) to show where the speaker was. The next phrase is “ማናኛ ብዙሃን (məgənaɲa bizuhan)” (mass media), and it needs to be rephrased as “ብዙሃን ማናኛ (bizuhan məgənaɲa)”.

The other incompatible expression is “መኝን ፍቸሏል (məʃənəf tʃil^wal)” (could be beaten). Conceptually, being beaten is not an ability. Thus, it is possible to correct it as “ተጫኘው (təʃən^wal)” (was beaten). Besides, respondents mentioned that many speakers use the expression “ያንበሳውን ድርሻ ተጫቷል (janbəsaʋun dirʃa təč'awt^wal)” (played the lion's share) repeatedly by translating it from the English version. However, this could be said አብላጭን ስራ ሰረቷል (ʔablač'awun sira sərt^wal) (has accomplished the greater portion of the activity) or ከፍተኛ ድርሻ አበርክቷል (kəftəɲa dirʃa ʔabərkit^wal) (has contributed a lot). The other incompatible expression

is “k^was ʔina mərəb ʔawahadə (combined the ball and the net)”. Practically, there is no way a ball and a net are combined; rather, they can touch (or have contact) with each other. In this context, the Amharic word “አዋሀደ (ʔawahadə)” which means combined is incompatible. Besides, the phrase ደን ተከላ ባህል ሊሆን ይገባል (dən təkəla bahil lihon jigəbal) is wrongly used because ደን (dən) forest is a collection of fully-grown plants. Therefore, it should be corrected as ቸግኝ ማኑከል ባህል ሊሆን ይገባል (tʃigjɨn mətkəl bahil lihon jigəbal) planting seedlings should be taken as culture.

The next question requires respondents to list down incompatible words or expressions used by reporters, public speakers, friends, owners of organizations and government authorities. Thus, respondents have listed incompatible words or expressions used by different people as follows.

Table 3

Untranslated, Vague and Wrong Expressions used by Various Speakers

| Incompatible expression | Problem observed | Intended meaning | Correct usage in Amharic |
|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ትራንስፎርሜሽን transformeʃn | Using an untranslated English term instead of its Amharic equivalent | transformation | ስር ነቀል ለውጥ |
| እየሆነ ያለበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው ʔijəhonə jaləbət huneta nəw jaləw | Using vague expression | It is happening | እየሆነ ነው |
| ግንዛቤ እየተፈጠረ ያለበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው ginzabe ʔijətəfət'ərə jaləbət huneta nəw jaləw | Using vague expression | Awareness created | ግንዛቤ እየተፈጠረ ነው ወይም ግንዛቤ ተፈጥሯል |
| የሴት ነጋዴዎች ማህበር jəset nəgadewotʃ mahbər | Wrong expression | Business Women's Association | የነጋዴ ሴቶች ማህበር |
| ሪፖርት (riport) | Using English instead of its Amharic equivalent | report | ዘገባ ወይም ሀሳብ |
| ፕሬዚዳንት presidənt | Using English instead of its Amharic equivalent | president | ርእሰ ብሄር |
| የተተከሉ ደግኞች jətətəkəlu dənotʃ | Using the wrong term | Planted seedlings | የተተከሉ ችግኞች |
| የኢንፎርሜሽን ኮሙኒኬሽን ሳምንት ʔinformeʃn komjunikaʃn samint | Mixing of English and Amharic terms | information communication week | የሚጻፍ ስንተግባቦት ሳምንት |
| ዲቪሎፕመንት divəlopmənt | Using English instead of its Amharic equivalent | development | ልማት |

Now, let us consider some incompatible words or expressions indicated in Table 3. Words, like ትራንስፎርሜሽን (transformeʃn -transformation), ሪፖርት (riport - (report), ፕሬዚዳንት (president - president), ዲቨሎፕሜንት (divelopmәnt - development) are English terms, but they are directly functional in Amharic speeches with no translation where they have Amharic equivalents. This shows that the speakers are careless or reluctant to use Amharic terms correctly. In the expressions, (እየሆነ) ያለበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው (ʒijəhonə jaləbət huneta nəw jaləw - it is happening just like this condition) and “ግንዛቤ እየተፈጠረ ያለበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው (ginzabe jaləbət huneta nəw jaləw - there is a condition that awareness is being created), unnecessary inclusion of terms like “...ያለበት ሁኔታ ነው ያለው (jaləbət huneta nəw jaləw” - there is a condition like that) is observed. Speakers commonly use such kinds of additional phrases, but such phrases do not have any relevance to explain the main idea; rather, they spoil the structure and meaning of the language.

Furthermore, respondents stated that reporters use the expression “የሴት ነጋዴዎች ማህበር (jəset nəgədewotʃ mahbər” - women traders’ association) in their reports without noticing its meaning. The meaning of this phrase is an association of traders who exchange (buy and sell) women. Nevertheless, the reporter’s intention was to say “የነጋዴ ሴቶች ማህበር (jənəgade setotʃ mahbər)” - Business Women’s Association), which means women whose job is trading. Here we observe that the actual meaning of the intended proposition and what was reported are different. However, this wrong information was transmitted in the media without noticing the fallacy of meaning.

In addition, as stated by respondents, some reporters say “የተተከሉ ደኖች (jətətəkəlu dənotʃ)” (planted forests) which is an inappropriate expression because ደኖች (dənotʃ -forests) are not planted; rather they are fully-grown trees and shrubs. Hence, reporters need to say የተተከሉ ችግኞች (jətətəkəlu tʃignotʃ - planted seedlings). In this situation, it is rational to state that reporters’ manners of language use have become sources of problems whose words cause linguistic conflict, damage smooth communication and distort meaning rather than constructing knowledge and wisdom. It implies that some journalists may lack the appropriate language competence, so they are unable to communicate with the public smoothly.

In the expression, “የኢንፎርሜሽን ኮሚኒኬሽን ሳምንት (ʒinformeʃn komjunikaʃn samint -information communication week)”, the words “information” and “communication” are in English, but “ሳምንት (samint - week)” is an Amharic word. This kind of mixed usage is common nowadays. For instance, even uneducated farmers, regardless of correct usage and pronunciation, apply words like “information” in their speeches. However, mixing terms from different languages is not compatible because it causes misunderstanding and confusion among listeners.

Besides, respondents mentioned that public speakers use the following expressions in their speeches. They are shown in the following table.

Table 4

Mixed Expressions Used in Speeches

| Incompatible expression | Problem observed | Intended meaning in English | Correct usage in Amharic |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| GDPው እድገት አሳይቷል dzidipiw ?idgət ?asajit ^w al | Mixing English and Amharic | The GDP showed growth | ሀገራዊ ምጣኔ ሀብቱ እድገት አሳይቷል፡፡ |
| ኢኮኖሚያዊ ሪፎርም አስፈላጊ ነው ?ikonomijawi riform ?asfəlagi nəw | Mixing English and Amharic | Economic reform is necessary | የምጣኔ ሀብት ለውጥ አስፈላጊ ነው፡፡ |
| የሊደርሽፕ ችግሩ ካልተፈታ jəlidərʃipu tʃigr kaltəfəta | Mixing English and Amharic | Unless leadership problems are not solved | የአሚራሩ ችግር ካልተፈታ |
| አዌርነስ ክሬሽን ?awernəs kriəʃn | Using English instead of Amharic | Awareness creation | ግንዛቤ ማፍጠር |

As mentioned above, mixing English terms with Amharic expressions has been common. For instance, they use phrases like GDPው እድገት አሳይቷል (dzidipiw ?idgət ?asajit^wal - the GDP has shown development), ኢኮኖሚያዊ ሪፎርም አስፈላጊ ነው (?ikonomijawi riform ?asfəlagi nəw - economic reform is necessary), የሊደርሽፕ ችግሩ ካልተፈታ (jəlidərʃipu tʃigr kaltəfəta - unless the problem of the readership is solved) and አዌርነስ ክሬሽን (?awernəs kriəʃn) (awareness creation). Thus, using mixed expressions repeatedly causes linguistic conflict and identity crisis gradually.

Furthermore, respondents said that people who are friends often use the following words or expressions in their talk.

Table 5

Slangs, Mixed Terms and Wrong Gender Marker

| Expression | Remark | Meaning |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------|
| ኧረ አይነፋም (?ərə ?ajnəfam) | slang | It is not good |
| ለሽ በል (laf bəl) | slang | Go |
| ወፍ የለም (wof jələm) | slang | There is no one |
| ፒፕሉ እንዳለን ቁጥረን (piplu ?indalə nək'e bil ^w al) | Slangs with mixed | The people are aware. |
| ድንቡሎ አናላም (dinbulo ?anamət'am) | slang | We do not bring anything. |
| ፍሬንዶች (frendotʃ) | mixed | friends |
| አንቺ ሰውቤ (?antʃi səwja) | wrong gender marker | You man |
| ፒስ ነሽ (pis nəʃ) | mixed | Are you fine? |
| ፈያ ነሽ (fəja nəʃ) | mixed | Are you fine? |

Among friends, using slangs, mixed terms and wrong gender markers has been a common experience, and they may interact with one another easily. However, the expressions are not formal. They are slang and some are mixed. For instance, look at the term ፍሬንዶች (frendotʃ (friend + ኦች (otʃ)) which is formed from an English term friend and from an Amharic plural marker “ኦች (otʃ)”, so other listeners may not understand the term “ፍሬንዶች (frendotʃ - friends)” which is a hybrid term. They also use “ፒስ ነጃ (pis nəʃ)” to greet a male individual, which is formed from the English term peace and an Amharic term “nəʃ (are you)” which refers to females in an Amharic context. However, it is applied among friends to refer to males as stated by the respondents. Similarly, consider how “አንቺ ሰዎቹ (ʔantʃi səwʒə)” is formed. The speaker used a feminine marker አንቺ (ʔantʃi) to refer to a male individual. As indicated, even if most of the phrases are Amharic expressions, they are confusing to Amharic speakers. These expressions violate Grice’s cooperative principle, i.e., the maxim of manner that demands communicators to avoid ambiguity during communication. Such kind of mixed usage has a negative impact on understanding the meanings of expressions, and they create identity confusion (gender in this case) and linguistic conflict when they are widely used.

As reported by a respondent, the word “ጅምራል (jiməral)” was applicable in beer advertising previously. In this situation, the meaning of “jiməral” is ambiguous unless it is used contextually. That means, it has a different meaning when the word is stressed or unstressed on the third syllable (r). Thus, “ጅምራል (jiməral)” means “it is leading” but “ጅምራል (jimərral)” means, it is bitter. Similarly, unless words like this are pronounced properly to indicate their appropriate meaning, they will be confusing to listeners. Thus, it implies that advertisers should take great care to avoid distortion of meaning when they use ambiguous terms to advertise their products and services.

4.2 Analysis of Data on the Causes of Incompatible Language Use

The second research question was, “What are the causes of incompatible words/expressions?” The respondents mentioned a number of reasons for using incompatible expressions. Thus, the interviewees listed causes for using incompatible expressions as follows.

ነገሮችን በትክክል ተገንዝቦ የሚናገር የለም
 nəgərotʃɪn bətʃikil təgənzibə jəminagər jələm
 There is lack of understanding while speaking. (A from EBC)

የምናገረውን ነገር ሰዎች የሚገባቸውን ለሚሰማ ለን
 jəmninagərəwun nəgər səwotʃ jəmigəbatʃəw siləminəslən
 We feel that people understand what we say. (A from EBC)

የዝግጅት ማስ፣ ችልተኝነት፣ ማደንገጥ፣ ልማድ ወይም ሳያስቡት ድንገት ማናገር
 jəzgidzɪt manəs tʃəlɪtəɪnət mədəngət’ limad wəjim səjasbut dɪngət jəmijaməlt’atʃəw alu
 Lack of preparation, negligence, feeling of panic (stun), habit or speaking spontaneously. (D & G from FBC)

የቃላት ክምችት እጥረት፣ አዋቂ ማለፊያ ለማታየት ቋንቋን ማደባለቅ
 jək’alat kɪmtʃɪt ʔit’irət ʔawak’i məslo ləmətəjət k’^wank’^wan mədəbalək’
 Lack of vocabulary potential, mixing language to pretend or act as an intellectual. (E from AMA & H from FBC)

የቋንቋ ብቃት ማስ፣ ቋንቋውን ሳይችሉ ለመገባባት ማሞከር
 jək’^wank’^wa bik’at manəs k’^wank’^wawun səjɪtʃɪlu ləməgbabat məmøkər
 Lack of language ability, trying to communicate with inadequate knowledge of language. (I from JU)

As mentioned above, there are a number of reasons why speakers choose to employ inappropriate language. Among the reasons are, but are not limited to, inadequate comprehension of what they say, lack of planning before speaking, feeling nervous when speaking, limited vocabulary, incompetence in language, speaking impulsively, and using a lot of words to sound intelligent. Carelessness also plays a great role in using incompatible expressions. For instance, consider, “የ ሚዲያና ኮሙኒኬሽን ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል (jəmidija ?ina komjunikaʃin t'inat timhirt kifl)”. According to interviewee I (from JU), this could be rewritten as “የ ማናኛና ስነ-ተግባቦት ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል (jəməgəna?na ?ina sinə təgbabot timhirt kifl)” which is a better Amharic equivalent for the “Department of Media and Communication Studies” than the first one mentioned above. However, probably, proper attention was not given to it when it was made ready for use. Moreover, according to respondents, some officials are not willing to use Amharic terms that have equivalent meanings to English terms. For this reason, they prefer using English expressions to Amharic equivalents. For instance, the Amharic equivalent to the term “Millennium” is “አንድ ሺህ አመት (ʔand ʃih ʔamət)” (one thousand years). Nevertheless, the millennium was written in English by the influence of some officials, as mentioned by respondents, during the celebration of the ‘Second Ethiopian Millennium’.

Interviewees were also asked whether mixing languages has advantages or not. Accordingly, some respondents stated that using mixed languages has some advantages. For instance, using English terms is better to explain some ideas that do not have appropriate expressions in Amharic, but this may create a communication gap for monolingual speakers. Contrary to this, other respondents replied that mixing languages has no advantage; rather, it has several disadvantages. For instance, interviewee C (from FBC at Addis Ababa) suggests the disadvantages of mixing languages as follows.

እኔ ጥቅም አለው ብዬ አለመናገር : ቋንቋ በራሱ ማለት ነው : በራሱ ማለት ይቻላል : :
 ስለዚህ ሌላ ቋንቋ ማጠቀም ልባት ያበላሸው እንደሆነ ነው እንጂ ጥቅም አይኖረውም :
 ?ine t'ik'im ?aləw bijə ?alamnim k'ank'wə bərasu mulu nəw bərasu məl?ikitin mastələləf jitʃilal siləzih
 lela k'ank'wə mət'ək'əm minalbat jabələʃəw ?indəhonə nəw ?indzi t'ik'im ?ajinorəwm

The above respondent believed that mixing languages does not have advantages. Every language is complete by itself, so it can express any idea and transmit a message by itself, and mixing the words of one language with another language is more disadvantageous. Another respondent also mentioned when the practice of mixing one language with another language increases, it hinders the development of the language under study (Amharic in this context) and distorts message transfer. Additionally, when presenters do not receive the kind of acceptance they anticipate from listeners, it gradually erodes their confidence, and causes identity issues. Therefore, mixing languages while communicating is not appreciated. Based on the above respondents' ideas, it is possible to infer that code-mixing is more disadvantageous, especially when speaking with monolinguals.

In the questionnaire, the respondents were also asked why they or others speak incompatible expressions. Related to this idea, respondents mentioned various reasons for speakers to use incompatible expressions. These are, firstly, speakers are careless about language use, or they lack attention to what they say. The second reason is a lack of knowledge or vocabulary in Amharic. Other individuals mix languages, considering themselves as more skillful than others. Alternatively, some individuals mix languages to overact or as a sign of modernization and due to habit. Besides, respondents said that when some words in Amharic cannot fully express what they want to say, they use English terms to provide a detailed description of their ideas. These ideas are congruent with the ideas mentioned by the interviewees. Therefore, it is possible to infer that the causes of using incompatible words or expressions are signs of modernization, carelessness about language use, lack of grammar knowledge and vocabulary in Amharic, and choice of English terms rather than

Amharic to express some ideas better.

4.3 Implications of Using Incompatible Expressions

The respondents were also asked about the negative impacts of using incompatible expressions on cultural values, identity and the development of the Amharic language. The respondents mentioned the implications of using incompatible expressions on cultural values, constructing identity and the development of Amharic as follows.

In relation to the impact of incompatible expressions on cultural values between the two languages (Amharic and English), respondents mentioned that incompatible expressions like using excessive English terminologies instead of Amharic words and mixing words cause cultural conflict. Besides, it weakens the transfer of indigenous culture and tradition from generation to generation. The existing cultural values are also degraded when they are mixed with foreign languages. Based on the above information, it is possible to infer that incompatible expressions or mixing languages results in the replacement of indigenous moral and cultural values by English norms and practices gradually.

Moreover, respondents mentioned that incompatible words or expressions have several impacts on identity building. For instance, it causes gradual identity confusion especially in the new generation because they use or hear mixed terms from Amharic and English terms repeatedly. Besides, it creates a lack of self-confidence in speakers, and they develop a kind of mixed identity. In other words, individuals replace their own identity with foreign elements by ruining their own sense of national, cultural, and group identity. Eventually, it causes an identity crisis in individuals, and they develop a sense of disrespect for their language, social norms and values.

According to the respondents, the impact of using incompatible words or expressions on the development of the Amharic language is tremendous. For instance, it decreases the development of Amharic in various aspects of the language. Through time, some Amharic words are forgotten, and unfamiliar terms become part of the vocabulary. Gradually, the introduction of numerous new words from English will become a barrier to the progress of Amharic in general.

The other question presented to respondents was about the impact of using incompatible expressions or mixed language on message transfer. Thus, according to the respondents, the most repeatedly mentioned impact of using incompatible expressions is creating misunderstanding between speakers and listeners. Similarly, distortion of the message, inculcating listeners with wrong information, and transferring of unclear messages are the impacts of using incompatible expressions. Besides, using untranslated and hybrid expressions reduces the development of Amharic. Likewise, when speakers use incompatible expressions, it teaches the new generation as if inappropriate words and expressions were right or acceptable elements of the language. Based on these ideas, it is reasonable to deduce that using incompatible expressions is so prevalent that it shows outrageous linguistic distortion and cultural invasion of citizens. To sum up, the implications of using incompatible words/expressions are the replacement of indigenous cultural and moral values, degrading the development of Amharic by introducing hybrid words from English and Amharic, distortion of the language, cultural invasion and identity crisis in the new generation.

4.4 Measures to be Taken to Minimize Incompatible Language Use

Prior to measures taken, respondents were asked to what extent reporters, politicians, professionals, instructors, students and Diasporas speak incompatible expressions. To this question, forty-nine (75.38%) respondents mentioned that reporters sometimes use incompatible expressions. Moreover, thirty-three (50.76%) respondents said that politicians sometimes use incompatible expressions. Besides, forty-five (69.23%)

respondents replied that professionals sometimes use incompatible expressions. Forty-seven (72.30%) respondents also said that instructors sometimes use incompatible expressions. Forty-six (70.76%) respondents added that students always use incompatible expressions. To the same question, forty-four (67.69%) respondents stated that Diasporas always speak incompatible expressions. As stated above, students and Diasporas take the highest share of using incompatible expressions respectively. Besides, reporters, professionals, instructors and politicians also use incompatible expressions in descending order.

The last question was about possible measures to be taken as a solution to minimize the use of incompatible expressions. As a solution, what the respondents suggested is summarized below.

የ ከ ፍተኛ ትምህርት ተቋማት ማምረቻና የ ሚዲያ ከ ታችኛው አካላት ቋንቋ ላይ ጥናትና ምርምር ማድረግ ይገባቸዋል፡፡

jəkfītəna tīmhirt təkʷamat məmhīran ?ina jəmimələkətətfəw ?akalat kʷankʷa laj tʷinat ?ina mīrmīr madrəg jīgəbatfəwal

Instructors at higher institutions and concerned bodies need to conduct research on language use.

በተለይ ቋንቋና ባህል ላይ በጥልቀት ትምህርት ማከገጥ ያስፈልጋል፡፡

bətələj kʷankʷa ?ina bahil laj bətʷilkʷət tīmhirt məstʷət jasfəligal

It is essential to educate learners in-depth about language and culture.

ስለ ቋንቋ ያለንን አላማካከት የ ማዳሻሽሉ አሰራሮች ሊኖሩ ይገባል፡፡

siləkʷankʷa jalənin ?amələkakət jəmijafajilu ?asərarotf linoru jīgəbal

There should be working systems that can improve our perception of language.

በባህላችን ለሀገር ጥቅም ቋንቋ የ ማከገጠው ግምት አነስተኛ ነው፡፡

bəbahlatfīn ləhagərna kʷankʷa jəmisətʷəw gīmt ?anəstəna nəw)

In our culture, we give less value to local languages.

የ ቋንቋ ፖሊሲ ተግባራዊ አለመሆን ይታይበታል፡፡ ስለዚህ ቋንቋ እንዴት ማደግ አለበት የ ማዳ አሰራር ተግባራዊ ማድረግ ያስፈልጋል፡፡

jəkʷankʷa polisi təgbarawi ?aləməhon jītājibətəl siləzih kʷankʷa ?īndet madəg ?aləbət jəmil ?asərar təgbarawi madrəg jasfəlgal

The language policy is not implemented practically, so it is necessary to establish a working system that follows up on how language develops.

በቤተሰብ፣ በትምህርት ቤት፣ በሚያበረሰብ እና በህግምለቋንቋ እድገት ማከራት አስፈላጊ ነው፡፡

bəbetəsəb bətīmhirt bet bəmahbərəsəb ?ina bəhgim ləkʷankʷa ?īdgət məsrət ?asfəlagi nəw)

It is necessary to work for the development of language at family, school, society level, and by law as well.

የሀገር በቀል እውቀት በስርዓተ ትምህርት ውስጥ በዋናነት ገብቶ ማከገጥ አለበት፡፡

jəhagər bəkʷəl ?iwkʷət bəsri?atə tīmhrītu wusitʷ bəwananət gəbto məsətʷət ?aləbət)

Indigenous knowledge must be incorporated in the curriculum.

ለተለያዩ የሚያበረሰቡ ከፍሎች የ ቋንቋ ማሻሻያ ስልጠናዎችን ማከገጥና ግንዛቤ ማከገጥ

lətələjaju jəmahbərəsəb kiflotf jəkʷankʷa mafafaja siltʷənawotfīn məstʷət ?ina

gīnzabe masčʷəbətʷ

Give language improvement training and create awareness among various citizens.

አድማጭ በቅድሚያ ማወቅ፤ ከዚያም አድማጭ ማከቀጠን ቋንቋ ማከቀም
 ?admač'un bək'idmija mawok' kəzijaŋ ?admač'u bəmit'ək'əmbət k'wank'w'a
 mət'ək'əm

Consider the audience, and use the audience's language while speaking.

ቃላትን ያለባቸው ወይም በማይማሉ ከታችው ሰዎች ማካከል አለመናገር፡፡
 k'alatın ?aləbotaw wojim bəmajməlekətətfəw səwotf məkəkəl ?aləmənagər)
 Avoid speaking incompatible words among people who do not understand them.

ጠንካራ የሆነ የማከተሚያ እና የቋንቋ አጠቃቀም እንዲኖር ትኩረት ማከጠት፡፡
 t'ənkara jəhonə jəməstəmar ?ina jək'wank'w'a ?at'ək'ək'əm ?indinor tikurət məst'ət
 Give due attention to language teaching and language use

የማናኛ አገልግሎት ሰጪዎች የቋንቋ አጠቃቀምን የመቆጣጠር ዘርፍ ሊኖራቸው ይገባል፡፡
 məgənaŋawotf jək'wank'w'a ?at'ək'ək'əmin jəmifətətf zərf binoratfəw
 The media need to have units that evaluate language use.

ባለሙያዎች ሀሳባቸውን አሟላኛ እና እንግሊዝኛ ሳይቀላቅሉ ቢገልጹ፡፡
 baləmujaŋawotf hasabatfəwn ?amarja ?ina ?inglizna sajk'ələk'lu bigəltsu
 Professionals need to express their ideas either in Amharic or in English without mixing terms.

The above points are repeatedly mentioned as solutions to minimize incompatible language use. The solutions can be categorized into four. They are incorporating indigenous knowledge in the curriculum and teaching culture and local languages in depth, designing appropriate language policy and implementing it properly, conducting research on how to develop language and giving training on language use, and avoiding mixed language use by considering the audience's background while speaking. As indicated, the first solution emphasizes incorporating indigenous knowledge into the curriculum and teaching culture and local languages in depth. However, according to the respondents, teaching Amharic as a subject in educational institutions has been given very little attention for a long time. For instance, the time allotted to teaching or learning Amharic at schools is less than the emphasis given to other subjects like English.

Besides, Amharic is not given as an entrance examination for grade twelve students, unlike other subjects. This practice does not motivate teachers and students to teach and study it similar to other subjects. Related to this, interviewees F (from AMA) and I (from JU) mentioned:

ቋንቋን አስተምሮ አለመረጋገጥ ቋንቋውን የማዳከም ዘዴ ነው፡፡ ቋንቋ አስተምሮ ፈተና ካልተሰጠ ማምህራንም
 ለማከተሚያ አይተጉም፤
 ተማሪዎችም መማር አይፈልጉም፤ አያጠኑም
 k'wank'wan ?astəmrə ?aləməfətən k'wank'w'awun jəmadakəm zəde nəw kaltəsət'ə məmhiranim
 ləməstəmar ?ajtəgum təmariwotfim memar ?ajfəlgum ?ajət'ənum
 Teaching a language but not taking the exam (at the national level) is one way of weakening the language. If
 an examination is not offered after teaching a subject, teachers are not encouraged to teach, and students do not
 want to learn and study it.

As stated by respondents, excluding a language from the national exam after teaching may be a cause for citizens to disrespect their own language, culture, and values. That means teachers are discouraged from teaching, and students are not motivated to learn and study it. Thus, this case needs due attention from concerned bodies. The second solution is implementing the language policy. In our country, it is observed that

implementing the language policy related to language use has not been given due consideration as expected. That is why we do not dare to talk about the standard of languages (national, official, working, instructional, or any other status) confidently. In this regard, respondents mentioned that there is an extended silence. Anyways, it is vital to implement a language policy that can serve and reward citizens for various purposes and contexts. Third, it is necessary to conduct research and organize training to create awareness about language use. Through research, it is possible to investigate the strengths and gaps in how the language policy is implemented, and how language is taught and used. Besides, giving training on language use to the public (for example, to journalists, teachers, students, politicians, etc.) is necessary. Fourth, it is essential to consider the audience's background and try to minimize or avoid (if possible) using mixed language while speaking. Generally, it is possible to infer that teaching Amharic is not given due attention at educational institutions, the language policy is not implemented as planned, how language is used is not evaluated and speakers do not consider listeners' linguistic background when they speak.

5. Discussion

The major objective of this study was to investigate the types, causes, and implications of incompatible expressions used by speakers. Therefore, the types, causes and implications of incompatible expressions are discussed in brief below.

Amharic is one of the Semitic languages which has been serving as a national and official language of Ethiopia, and a large number of people within and outside the country speak it. However, as the education system in Ethiopia proves, even if Amharic is a national language, more attention is not given to it in comparison to English. For instance, in Ethiopian secondary schools, English is taught four periods per week, unlike Amharic, which is offered for two periods per week. Besides, English is a compulsory subject for university entrance examinations, and it is used as a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels. However, Amharic is not included as part of the entrance examination given to grade twelve students. It implies that Amharic is not given attention like English nationally. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that students and parents pay more attention to English than Amharic elsewhere in the country. For this reason, students give more emphasis to English vocabulary and grammar rules in comparison to Amharic. This may facilitate conditions for using incompatible expressions and mixing of words from the two languages.

Based on the information obtained from interviews and questionnaires, the types of incompatible expressions used by speakers are different. They include double plurals, slangs ጀለሴ (dʒələse), wrong plurals ዝናቦች (zinabotʃ (rains), adding unnecessary letters to words ተኔንደገና (təʎindəgəna (again) where “tə” is unnecessary), replacing sounds, i.e., saying ደህና ነክ (dəhna nək) instead of ደህና ነህ (dəhna nəh), ሙጣክ (mət'ək) instead of ሙጣህ (mət'ah). Besides, direct translation from English ግማሽ ወንድም (giməʃ wondim - half-brother), የአንበሳውን ድርሻ (jəʎanbəsawun dirʃa - lion's share), using English terms in Amharic አዌርነስ ክሬሽን (?awernəs kreʃn), unnecessary addition of expressions እየሆነ ያያበት ሁኔታ አለ (?ijəhənə jaləbət huneta ʎalə (it has been done in this condition), mixing Amharic and English terms ፍሬንዶች (frend + otʃ), ፒስነሽ (pis nəʃ - peace+nəʃ) and using of feminine gender marker አንቺ ሰወዴ (?antʃ səwja) to refer to a male person were observed.

Moreover, confusing expressions like እየሙጣሁ ነኝ (?ijəmət'ahu nəʃ), አምስት ኪሎ ጋር ነኝ (?amsit kilo gar nəʃ), ይጫሉል (jiməral), የተተከሉ ደኖች (jətətekəlu dənotʃ), የሴት ነጋዴዎች ማህበር (jəsət nəgadewotʃ məhbər) and the like are widely used in Amharic speeches. These expressions violate the maxims of quality and manner. Similarly, it is common to see related expressions applied in printed books. For example, consider

how Endalamaw Aragie (2010 E. C) used “ጋር (gar)” (which means with) in the following sentences with different meanings.

First, he used “ጋር (gar- with)” in the expression, እዚህ ጋር እንደምታዩት- ገደብ ጋር ገንዘብ (as you can see with here)” (Endalamaw, 2010 E. C, p. 155). In this scenario, the writer used “gar” to indicate location because the term “እዚህ (ገደብ - here)” which is an adverb of place, makes its function clear. However, it is not compatible to use “gar” (with) to show a location because listeners are accustomed to using “gar” (with) to indicate relationships. The same writer applied “gar” (with) to show a relationship. The sentence reads, “... (ቅዱስ ግንብ ጋር በቀጥታ የሚገናኝ ግንብ ቋንቋ ቢሆን እንጂ ሌላ ምክንያት አይኖርም- k'idus ገና kək'idusanu gar bək'ət'ita jəmijagbaba k'wank'wā bihon ገንዘብ lela mīknijat ገንጠም” (Endalamaw, 2010, p. 158) (it is holy and holy language that communicates directly with holy individuals, but there is no another reason). In this context, “ጋር (gar)” (with) is used to refer to a relationship which is acceptable. This kind of language use proves that individuals are applying terms with no proper attention and create different meaning-forming and confusing situations.

The causes for applying the above incompatible expressions are also different. They can be categorized as a lack of appropriate knowledge of the grammar of Amharic, lack of preparation and carelessness while speaking, unwillingness to use Amharic terms, negligence to apply the rules of the language, signs of modernization and boasting.

Applying the above incompatible expressions in day-to-day communication has its own implications on the public, the culture and the language. The implications result in distortion of meaning, misunderstanding among communicators, incomplete message transfer, confusion between communicators, and introduction of vague terms (vocabularies) into Amharic, identity confusion in the new generation, replacement of indigenous, cultural, and moral values by foreign practices, loss of national and group identity and identity crisis.

The different types of incompatible language use and their impacts can be alleviated by focusing on appropriate language teaching and language use, implementing the language policy and trying to change the government's silence about language issues and working for societal benefit. Besides, educating and awareness creation training for students and media workers about language use at various levels are essential. However, the effort made to educate students about language as a subject and language use seems to be minimal. For example, the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia Education and Training Policy (1994) states, “Students can choose and learn at least one national language and one foreign language for cultural and international studies.” As to foreign language and international studies, it is clear that students can learn English, and it is clearly stated that teaching English begins from grade one.

Nevertheless, regarding teaching a language for countrywide communication, for example, Amharic, except saying, “It shall be taught as a language of countrywide communication,” the document does not give any direction when it begins to teach the language and how it is taught. Besides, it says, “Students can choose and learn at least one national language...” But, which levels of students are expected to choose the language that has potential advantages for their future careers and wider communication? Why doesn't the government want to decide about the language that must be taught for countrywide communication for the benefit of citizens? It would be better to pass a decision on language teaching and implementing the language policy properly. Nevertheless, the government's silence in relation to which language, when, and how to teach it, has resulted in a lot of negative impacts on citizens as indicated above.

Moreover, a lack of knowledge of Amharic grammar is one cause for using an incompatible language. Thus, struggling to offer quality education in general and language skills in particular is essential because, as scholars, for example, Turhan and Ozer (2017) suggest, “Foreign language learners need to perform well on four basic language skills in order to be able to understand and produce a very complex sets of sentences in the target language.” Turhan and Ozer (2017) emphasize that being efficient in the four language skills has

paramount importance to not only understand and produce complex sets of sentences in the target language, but it is also necessary to master the knowledge of local languages and practice the rules to impart logical and sound ideas in everyday communication.

In addition, lack of preparation and carelessness when speaking are causes of using incompatible words. For this reason, individuals who are working in various sectors, for example, journalists commit unexpected mistakes repeatedly. For instance, Bedilu Wakjira (2011 E. C, p. 133) supports this finding. He said, “ከ ቋንቋ አጠቃቀም እስከ ፕሮግራም ይዘት ድረስ አብዛኛዎቹ ጣቢያዎች ስህተት የታጨቀባቸውናቸው፡ ...ዛሬ በሚኖሩ ሰነድ ጽሑፍ ላይ የሚጠቀሙት ስህተቶች ቢሰበሰቡ፣ እጅግ ቢያንስ በየሳምንቱ አንድ ሙጽሀፍ ይወጣቸዋል፡፡ (kək^w ank^wa ʔat'ək'ak'əm ʔiskə program jizət dirəs ʔabzəገawotʃu t'abijawotʃ sihtət jətəč'ək'əbatʃəw natʃəw zare bəməgəገəገə bizuhan jəmitələləfu zenawotʃ ʔina zigdzitotʃ bisəbasəbu ʔidzīg bijanis bəjəsəmnitu ʔand mətshaf jiwot'atʃəwal)

This means regarding language use and program content, most programs are full of errors. If the observed errors in news and programs that are transmitted through the media are gathered, at minimum a book would be compiled per week.

When we ask about the cause of making various mistakes, a poor language teaching system and carelessness in implementing various activities are raised as factors. Thus, it requires offering quality language education for students at different levels to enable them to develop their conceptual and analytical skills and then alleviate the transmission of distorted messages during communication.

Another cause for the use of incompatible words or expressions is speakers' need to overact. Most speakers want to be considered modernized and knowledgeable individuals by their listeners, so they usually mix English expressions in their speeches delivered in Amharic. As a stereotype, a significant number of our people believe that English-speaking individuals are regarded as modernized and knowledgeable. Therefore, mixing English terms during speech in Amharic seems to be a common practice. Related to word use and personality, Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer (2003) stated that more specifically, word use is a meaningful marker and occasional mediator of natural, social and personality processes. As indicated above, word use is a meaningful marker of one's personality. Thus, by implication, when people use English terms while speaking in Amharic, they assume that their audiences appreciate and accept them better, so they tend to use more English terms in Amharic speeches. However, mixing languages is harmful, especially in communities where most communicative participants speak only Amharic. Briefly, using incompatible expressions means violating appropriate communication among citizens and facilitating conditions for the cause of misunderstanding and social crisis gradually.

6. Conclusions

The general objective of this research was to investigate the types, causes and implications of incompatible words or expressions used by speakers. To achieve the research objectives, data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. Then, the data was analyzed and interpreted, and the findings were forwarded. Based on the findings the following conclusions were drawn.

Firstly, speakers use various incompatible expressions widely in their speeches. For example, speakers use double plural forms, slang and wrong plurals, add or omit unnecessary letters and words, replace sounds, mix words, form hybrid terms, translate English words directly into Amharic and use English terms in Amharic-speaking situations. Thus, these factors prove that the prevalence of using incompatible expressions has been a significant problem. Secondly, various factors are mentioned as causes of incompatible language use. Therefore, it is rational to conclude that concerned bodies did not handle language use and effective language

teaching and learning properly. Thirdly, reluctance to use appropriate language rules has resulted in showing the signs of social crises, linguistic conflict, misunderstanding and loss of personal and national identity.

Regarding data, we planned to get live speeches from speakers at the beginning. However, due to various challenges, we could not get data in such a way, unfortunately. Thus, we believed that if we had not encountered such limitations, our study would have been more comprehensive. Therefore, we recommend that interested individuals can conduct further research in this area by analyzing data obtained from live speeches.

7. Recommendations

First, the government and educational institutions should follow up on how language is used by communicative participants in various contexts to maximize understanding among speech participants. Second, responsible bodies need to assess language use and the effectiveness of language teaching and learning to improve learners' language competence. Third, individuals are recommended to minimize the use of incompatible expressions and mixing languages during speaking to increase understanding, appropriate message transfer and avoid linguistic and cultural conflict.

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