

## Language Attitudes of Tigrinya-speaking Parents towards Mother Tongue Maintenance and Their views on Their Children's Shift to Arabic in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: A Sociolinguistic Investigation

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***Abstract:** This study investigates the language attitudes of Tigrinya-speaking parents towards mother tongue maintenance and their views on their children's shift to Arabic in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Sixty Eritrean Tigrinya-speaking parents participate in this research. Forty-three of them are males whereas seventeen of them are females. The subjects of this research are asked to answer a 54-item questionnaire eliciting information regarding their language use, proficiency in Tigrinya and Arabic, attitudes towards both Tigrinya and Arabic and their views on their children's language maintenance or shift. The results show that the mother tongue is strongly maintained by the parents in this domain. They are trying to use their heritage language at home constantly, and outside their homes, as far as possible, to retain it from loss over generations. Tigrinya is generally preferred for their daily linguistic use. They are esteeming their mother tongue as highly positive as far as their attitudes are concerned. Their integrative orientations show that they like Tigrinya most. They show a higher estimation for Arabic for its instrumental value and status and it is a very supportive language that facilitates a better prospect for future career development.*

***Keywords:** Attitudes, LMLS, heritage language, mother tongue, Tigrinya, Arabic*

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the language attitudes and practices of Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean immigrants living in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Eritrean community in Riyadh is one of the relatively big African communities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to the Eritrean Embassy in Riyadh the number of the Eritreans is nearly 100,000 nationals living either as refugees or residents. Thiollot (2007) states that there are 100,000 Eritreans. The majority of them entered Saudi Arabia without documents, with their refugee documents or with Haj or Umra documents. They are granted the residential permit by the Saudi authorities. In the 1970s and 1980s the Eritreans were granted a quasi-asylum status by the Saudi Government (Thiollot 2007, p. 8). That status was considered as a special case of assistant to the Eritrean people who was struggling for freedom against the Ethiopian dictatorship, which kept the country for decades under its occupation. The flux of the Eritreans to the kingdom happened nearly in that period of struggle, that is the 1970s and 1980s. The Saudi Ministry of Labour talk about 53,000 Eritreans in the kingdom, whereas the Eritrean Embassy acknowledges nearly double this figure. There are more than one community living in different cities in the kingdom.

One is in Riyadh, a second is in Jeddah and a third is in Jazan (Habtoor, 2012a). There is no clear evidence about the actual size of each community and which one is the largest. Anyway, the subjects of this study are drawn randomly from those residing in Riyadh, the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

The study focuses on Tigrinya-speaking parents' use and attitudes of Tigrinya and Arabic and their feelings about their children heritage language maintenance in future. Language maintenance denotes the continuing use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful language. The opposite of this term, language shift, denotes the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialisation within a community (Mesthrie, 2009, p.245). Fasold (1984) views LMLS as: "the choices made by the members of a particular speech community, reflecting their cultural values, add up to the shift or maintenance in that community"(p.214). Regarding language shift, Fishman (1991) defines it as a "process whereby intergenerational continuity of the heritage language is proceeding negatively, with fewer 'speakers, readers, writers, and even understanders every generation" (Fishman 1991, p.1). Language minorities and heritage language have been of higher interest of many research scholars like Fishman (1987). Fishman (1987) found that exposure to language and community motivation are essential factors in language maintenance. According to Park and Sarker (2007, p.2) "parents' supportive interaction with their children at home in the heritage language are likely to enhance the possibility of maintaining the heritage language over the generations". Schrauf (1999) also found that religious support and community use of language are essential to its maintenance. In Fishman's view minority language groups are in need for constant exposure to their native language in using it at home and in community activities. Lao (2004), for instance, emphasises on the language use at home between parents and children as the most crucial factor in determining the heritage language maintenance or loss over the generations.

The most important factor to avoid language shift is the significance allotted to the language by the speakers themselves. In Hoffman's view (1991, p. 186) "under certain cultural, social and political conditions, a community might tend to change one set of linguistic tools for another. This phenomenon is clearly observable in the case of migrant communities". In the same way, Fishman (1966, p. 424) argues that LMLS "is concerned with the relationship between change or stability in habitual language use, on the one hand, and on-going psychological, social or cultural processes, on the other hand, when populations differing in language are in contact with each other". Moreover, Fishman (1991, p. 55–65) thinks that there are two reasons of language shift:

1. the physical and demographic dislocation of language groups due to, for example, famine, population expulsion policies and the urbanization of rural populations;
2. the social dislocation, whereby members of the minority speech community are frequently but not inevitably less socially, educationally and economically fortunate than the average surrounding population.

## ***2.1 Recent Studies on LMLS: A Review***

Over the last ten years, several works on LMLS have been published. Some of the available works have been consulted and reported. One of these studies is Sun's (2000) which focuses on the importance of parental roles in first language maintenance in immigrant families. Parents' guidance and parents' insistence on their children's use of Chinese at home play an important role in their children's maintenance of Chinese language. In another study, Cashman (2001) examines the bilingual language practices in a small, heterogeneous, urban Latino community in the Midwestern United States. The individual variables such as age at time of arrival had the most significant impact on the Spanish language maintenance of Group 1 (Latin American informants), while social network variables had the most significant impact on the Spanish language maintenance of Group 2 (U.S.). Holdeman (2002) investigates language maintenance and shift among the Russian old believers of Erie in Pennsylvania. The research investigates the community's origins and history, its variant of Russian, and the status of Russian, Church Slavonic, and English, focusing on history, domains of use, attitudes towards the languages, proficiency, etc., and it examines the process of language maintenance and shift in the community. Other studies on LMLS have been conducted in different situations like Venditti (2003) in his research women and ethnic language maintenance: A study of Italian immigrant family triads in Sainte-Leonard, Montreal; Biltoo (2004) in his research on Bhojpurias LMLS in Mauritius, and Zhang (2005) in studying the home language maintenance and acculturation among second-generation Chinese children. Furthermore, Park (2007) finds that the language use pattern within the family show the language shift among Korean heritage language adolescents. Nevertheless, it is not the place, but the parents that make home a heritage language domain. The pattern shows that Korean is used more with the parents' generation and English is predominantly used among peers in the younger generations. Ramirez (2007) studies language attrition and language maintenance of Colombian immigrants in New York State. The results of this study indicate that first generation Colombian immigrants in New York State do not present signs of language attrition but some pragmatic changes due to exposure to English as well as to other Spanish dialects. These bilinguals register a high level of first language maintenance because they keep using their native language for both integrative and instrumental processes. Hamid (2007) studies LMLS in the Sylheti community in Leeds. She claimed that the identification of Bangla as mother tongue is linked to reasons other than use. Analysis of data unequivocally indicated that Sylheti is the strongest among immediate and extended family and friends. The maintenance of Sylheti is established and the evidence of Sylheti-English bilingualism substantiates the additive role of minority language in a bilingual context. Van Aswegen (2008) studies language maintenance and shift in Ethiopia: The case of Maale, a minority language spoken in Ethiopia. The findings indicate that the mother tongue literacy programme contributed to language maintenance but it is a stepping-stone to further education. Gogonas (2009) studies language shift in second-generation Albanian immigrants in Greece. Quantitative and qualitative data on children's language competence and on patterns of language use within Albanian households indicate that the Albanian ethnolinguistic group was undergoing rapid language shift. Matsumoto (2010) examines the role of social networks in the post-colonial multilingual island of Palau: Mechanisms of language maintenance and shift. He concludes that the social network is indeed a valuable and important social variable in sociolinguistic investigations, alongside other factors, such as sex and identity.

### 2.3 Language Attitudes and LMLS

Attitudes towards language are subjected to how a language speaker views his language and the host language, as in the case of immigrants. The notion of language attitudes was firstly proposed by Gardener and Lambert (1972). It was initially confined to second language learning motivation, with two orientation perspectives: instrumental and integrative. The implementation of this notion is spread to include the target language itself and its community (Lai, 2005). Edwards (1994, p.97) defines attitudes as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects”. He also added, “one knows or believes something, has some emotional reaction to it, and therefore, may be assumed to act on this basis”. Attitude towards a certain language “allows some insight into the perception and representation of identity”(Edwards 1985, p.151). According to Baker (1992, p.9) language attitudes are “to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay or death”. Fasold (1984, p.148) says that “if the mentalist conception of language attitude runs out to be right, then, if we know a person’s attitude, we would be able to make predictions about her behaviour related to those attitudes, with some degree of accuracy”. Fasold (1984, p. 147) also adds, “Attitudes are to be found simply in the responses people make to social situations”. Vassberg (1993) quoted in Manley (2008, p. 325) sums up the importance that language attitudes may have for speakers:

*...(language) attitudes...play a crucial role in the psychology of individual speakers and their use of language. For attitudes have been shown to have a profound effect on motivation to speak or learn a language; they are linked to views of identity and the desire – or lack of desire – for group membership and solidarity. Attitudes are affected by – and comprise – values and stereotypes held by both speakers and non-speakers of any given language or language variety.*

Recently, several attitude-oriented LMLS research works have been published. Lai (2005), for instance, investigates language attitudes of the first postcolonial generation in Hong Kong secondary schools. The results show that the respondents feel the most integratively inclined to Cantonese (the vernacular variety), and they perceive English (the colonizers’ language) as the language of the highest instrumental value and social status, while Putonghua (the language of the new ruler) is rated the lowest from both the integrative and the instrumental perspectives. Park and Sarkar (2007) find that Korean immigrant parents are very positive towards their children’s heritage language maintenance. Korean parents believe that their children’s high level of proficiency in the Korean language would help their children keep their cultural identity as Koreans, ensure them better future economic opportunities, and give them more chances to communicate with their grandparents efficiently. Zhang (2010) studies LMLS among Chinese immigrant parents and their second-generation children in the United States. Zhang says that despite their misconceptions of bilingualism, these parents generally have positive attitudes or “language loyalty” towards Mandarin. Differences exist among parents depending on how they integrate into American social and economic context and their future orientations are defined. Martin (2009) carries out a research on Arab American parents' attitudes towards their children's heritage language maintenance and language practices. Results indicated that parents hold positive attitudes towards Arabic and engage in various language practices that promote the maintenance of Arabic in their families, and racism is not significantly associated with language

attitudes or language encouragement. Letsholo (2009) conducts a research on language maintenance or shift through investigating the attitudes of Bakalanga youth towards their mother tongue. The results show that informants use Setswana frequently, even in domains where they could use their mother tongue, e.g. when speaking to peers from the same mother tongue. Some of the subjects also express negative feelings towards using their mother tongue around non-native speakers of the language.

### **3. The Present Study**

#### ***3.1 Objectives and Research Questions***

The aim of this study is to examine the language attitudes and the factors of LMLS among Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean parents in Saudi Arabia. It seeks answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent are the Eritrean immigrant parents proficient in both Tigrinya and Arabic?
2. What are the attitudes of the Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean immigrants towards their mother tongue and Arabic?
3. What are the views of the Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean parents on their children's language shift and cultural shift?

#### ***3.2 Sampling***

Sixty Eritrean Tigrinya-speaking parents participated in this research. Forty-three of them are males whereas 17 of them are females. Those are the parents of the children who participated in a previous study regarding the second generation maintenance and shift of Tigrinya in Riyadh (Habtoor, 2012 a, p. 948).

#### ***3.3 Research Tool and Procedure***

The subjects of this research were asked to answer a 54-item questionnaire eliciting information regarding their language use, proficiency in Tigrinya and Arabic, attitudes towards both Tigrinya and Arabic and their views on their children's language maintenance or shift.

The data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to the parents through their children registered at the International Eritrean School in Al-Nasriah, Riyadh along with another form to be filled by the youngsters for the purpose of a previous work (Habtoor, 2012a). The forms were returned to the researcher in ten days time from the day of distribution. The date of birth of these respondents ranges between 1974 to 1975. The majority of them (96.6%) migrated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while only 3.4% of them were born in the kingdom. 71.6% of the respondents were males and 28.4% were females. 61.6% were Muslims whereas 38.4% were Christians.

### **4. Findings and Discussion**

#### ***4.1 Language Proficiency***

Subjects' proficiency level in Tigrinya and Arabic shows that the majority of them are retaining their mother tongue. There are more than 93% ,  $X^2$  is 97.3; ( $p < .01$ ), strongly agree that they understand Tigrinya fluently, whereas only 35% of them say that they are strongly agree with the same statement related to their proficiency in Arabic, which shows no significance as well. As for fluency in speaking skills in Tigrinya, more than 91% of the respondents strongly agree with the related statement,  $X^2$  is 92.1; ( $p < .01$ ). Respondents' fluency in speaking Arabic shows that they are not fluent. Only slightly more than 28% of them strongly agree with the related statement, and this shows no statistic significance. The reading skill in Tigrinya shows the higher language fluency level of Tigrinya, which is undeniably better than Arabic. 83.3% of them strongly agree with the statement related to reading fluency in Tigrinya,  $X^2$  is 110.26; ( $p < .01$ ). In contrast, we find that the respondents read Arabic less fluently than Tigrinya. Only 25% of them strongly agree with the corresponding statement on Arabic, rather there are more than 40% of them 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' with the same statement as well, which shows a negative view on Arabic use. The writing skill of the respondents in Tigrinya is higher than Arabic in terms of statistics. More than 83% of them strongly agree with the statement related to writing fluency in Tigrinya and only 21.6% of them strongly agree with the same statement on their fluency in reading Arabic. As for translation from Tigrinya into Arabic and vice versa, they seem to be less skilled.

Regarding their performance in the four basic language skills the subjects show a greater inclination towards Tigrinya than Arabic proficiency. Although they are also proficient in Arabic, which is one of the main languages in Eritrea, their home land and the host language of their new settlement, but still they find it more comfortable to use their mother tongue. The results discussed above give a clear idea about the proficiency of these subjects in their mother tongue and they have a strong belief in its survival. The figures given above show that Tigrinya and not Arabic that they generally prefer for their daily linguistic use. This is an indication of maintaining Tigrinya.

#### **4.2 Language Use Patterns**

As for the patterns of language use by the Eritrean parents, one of the questions required them to indicate what language they use in trying to convince a person from the same mother tongue, Tigrinya. More than 96 % of them said they use Tigrinya with  $X^2 = 52.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). This shows that they are inclined to use their mother tongue much more than using Arabic. Subjects also indicate that they use Tigrinya very dominantly in 'asking for information'. 96.95 % of them, with  $X^2 = 52.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), say that they use Tigrinya rather than Arabic in such situation. In giving commands the subjects indicated that they use Tigrinya more than Arabic, that is 96.6 % with  $X^2 = 52.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). For both gossiping and discussing politics, the respondents show that they use Tigrinya more than Arabic, 95 %.  $X^2$  for both is 48.60 ( $p < 0.01$ ). 85% of the subjects use Tigrinya to express their anger, ( $X^2 = 29.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In giving compliment, 80% of the respondents use their mother tongue,  $X^2 = 21.60$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). 83.4% of the respondents claim that they use their mother tongue in joking which shows a statistical significance,  $X^2 = 21.60$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). In reading books for pleasure, purposes 66.6 % of the respondents say that they use Tigrinya,  $X^2 = 6.66$ , which shows no significance. Respondents rating of reading newspapers, listening to radio and watching TV in Tigrinya shows no significance at all. The percentage is 58.3 %, 51.6 % and 50%, respectively. These three activities almost show the least interest as far

as using mother tongue is concerned. As for talking in a supermarket, 90 % of the respondents claim that they use Tigrinya,  $X^2 = 38.40$ , ( $p < 0.01$ ). When the respondents are doing mental arithmetic they use Tigrinya more than Arabic, so 70 % of them use their mother tongue which shows some significance,  $X^2 = 9.69$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, when the respondents write notes for themselves they use their mother tongue, Tigrinya, more than Arabic, 80 %,  $X^2 = 21.60$  ( $p < 0.01$ ).

The statistical results expressed above show that the Eritrean parents are very much interested in using Tigrinya than Arabic, the dominant language, in their activities. This shows that this community is struggling to maintain its mother tongue in the family domain and through this, the whole society will be able to maintain it as long as possible, since the family is the smaller unit of the society. In support for this argument, several scholars, among them Crystal (2000), have noted that one way in which a language could be sustained is if it is used within the community.

### 4.3 Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are determined by the view the speakers of a given language appreciate their mother tongue in the face of the host Language. In the following lines we will discuss the attitudes of the Tigrinya-speaking Eritreans towards both Tigrinya, the mother tongue, and Arabic, the host language. If we dealt with both answers 'agree and strongly agree as positive answers we find that 80 % of the respondents strongly agree and 20 % of them agree that Tigrinya is a beautiful language,  $X^2 = 21.60$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), but they also do not look down Arabic at the same time, so we find that 96.8 %, that is, 28.4 % agree and 68.4% strongly agree that Arabic is also a beautiful language,  $X^2 = 66.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). We find that 88.4 % of them support the statement 'Tigrinya is a language of culture', positively and the  $X^2 = 44.93$ , ( $p < 0,01$ ). On the other hand, they view Arabic as a language of culture, too, but with less positive support. 68.4 % of them feel that Arabic is a language of culture  $X^2 = 48.10$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). 98.4 % of them both 'agree' and 'strongly agree' with the statement related to the pleasure of listening to Tigrinya,  $X^2 = 40.30$ , ( $p < 0.01$ ), while Arabic is also seems to be a pleasant language to listen to by the Tigrinya speakers, that is, 96.3 % of them agree and strongly agree with the statement related to pleasure in listening to Arabic. All respondents say that they are proud of their mother tongue, 6.6 % 'agree' and 93.4 % 'strongly agree'  $X^2 = 45.06$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). The respondents feel that maintaining Tigrinya is the responsibility of the family for the coming generations. So, 13.4 % 'agree' and 86.6 % further 'strongly agree' with the statement regarding Tigrinya learning by the future generations within the family itself. 20.2 % 'agree' and 76.6 % 'strongly agree' that Tigrinya is part of their identity,  $X^2 = 90.80$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, Tigrinya-speaking parents believe that immigrants should maintain their language. So, we find that the respondents fully agree and strongly agree with the statement related to this issue, that is, they are 100 % with maintaining their mother tongue,  $X^2 = 38.40$  ( $p < 0;01$ ). Again we find almost the same figures regarding maintaining their culture, since culture is an inclusive concept that comprises language as well. 13.4 % and 86.6 % agree and strongly agree with that statement related to mother tongue maintenance, respectively and  $X^2 = 32,26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Identically, the respondents entirely support the notion of maintaining the cultural customs of their ethnicity within the hosting society. 66.6 % of the respondents believe that the only barrier between them and the Arabs is the language,  $X^2 = 7.33$  and shows no statistical significance at all, which means that there might

be some other factors which constitute barriers between the Eritreans as immigrants residing in KSA and the natives of the country. As for using Arabic in contacting Arabs, the respondents do not have a strong feeling that their accent might bother them or the Arabs when they speak Arabic. So, it is found that only 28.3 % of them think that their accent bothers them in speaking Arabic, whereas only 32.2 % of them feel that their accent bothers Arabs,  $X^2 = 15.60$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) and  $X^2 = 19.46$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), respectively. Almost 85 % of the respondents think that they feel more comfortable in using Tigrinya than Arabic,  $X^2 = 38.53$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). In contrast, 80 % of them do not support the statement related to being uncomfortable using Tigrinya in public,  $X^2 = 24.93$ , ( $p < 0.01$ ), which means that they are very keen about reserving using Tigrinya everywhere. Finally, it is found that only less than third (30 %) of the respondents believe that Arabic is a threat to their mother tongue as far as maintenance is concerned,  $X^2 = 14.40$  ( $p < 0.01$ ).

The majority of the respondents (90%) think that knowledge of Arabic language makes them part of the developed world rather than Tigrinya,  $X^2 = 38.40$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, well over 86 % think that knowing Arabic indicates that someone is educated,  $X^2 = 32.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Again, the majority of respondents (93.4 %) think that knowing Arabic will enable them to have a better future,  $X^2 = 45.06$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). 98.4 % of the respondents think that people who know Arabic can easily get jobs,  $X^2 = 56.06$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). More than 83 % of them also think that knowing Arabic indicates a high social status,  $X^2 = 26.66$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Most of the respondents (88.4%) think that knowledge of Arabic makes someone more successful in life,  $X^2 = 35.26$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Ultimately, the respondents are in favour of Tigrinya speakers being pleasant using their mother tongue, that is, more than 68 % of them rated this statement positively,  $X^2 = 8.6$  ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Although the respondents' attitudes towards their mother tongue is highly positive, their attitudes towards Arabic is also positive. Definitely they are not as significant as those of Tigrinya, but still they view it relatively positive. More specifically, their integrative orientation shows that they like Tigrinya most. As for their instrumental orientation they view Arabic positively significant. This factor seems to show respondents' high evaluation of Arabic for its instrumental value and status. As shown in the statistical results, the respondents tend to agree strongly that Arabic is a highly regarded language for them in KSA, and it is a very helpful language that enables them to obtain better prospects for career improvement.

#### ***4.4 Parents' Views on Tigrinya Future***

The Tigrinya-speaking parents are concerned about the future of their coming generations losing their identity and their language as well. But they are not pessimistic about that or, in other words, they do not want to acknowledge this fact. It is found that less than half of them (41.6 %) think that the time will come when most Tigrinya speakers in KSA will have forgotten their ethnic past, but this does not reflect any statistical significance at all,  $X^2 = 1.66$ . The same thing is applied to the language loss anticipation, but with much worry about the future of Tigrinya in the hands of the younger generations. Well over half of the respondents (51.6%) think that time will come when most Tigrinya speakers in KSA will have forgotten their language,  $X^2 = .07$ . Anyway, the respondents think that the time has not started yet for both losing the ethnic past and losing language. In rating the answer for a question related to the



duration it might take their children to lose their ethnic past, 58.4 % think that it has not yet started and only 21.6 % acknowledge its commencement,  $X^2 = 61.33$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). As for language loss, 46.6 % of them think that the time has not started yet, whereas 36.6 % of them think that it has started,  $X^2 = 48.83$  ( $p < 0.01$ ).

The parents in this study do not want to acknowledge the linguistic fact that the younger generations have already started a gradual language shift to Arabic, the dominant language. In a previous study that I have conducted on Tigrinya speaking teenagers, "...the use of Tigrinya is seemingly decreasing and the use of Arabic is increasing. Therefore, there is evidence from this study that second generation Tigrinya teenagers proficiency is shifting towards Arabic rather than maintaining the native language." ( Habtoor 2012a, p. 953)

## 5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, three questions have been asked regarding the Eritrean immigrant parents proficiency in both Tigrinya and Arabic, the attitudes of the Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean immigrants towards their mother tongue and Arabic and finally, the views of the Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean parents on their children's language shift. In answering these questions, language proficiency, language use, language attitudes, and parents' views regarding their children's language maintenance of Tigrinya were investigated. It is found that the mother tongue is strongly maintained by the parents in this domain. This shows the close ties among the families members in trying to use their heritage language at home constantly, and outside their homes, as far as possible, to retain it from loss over generations. I also found that the language used in the intimate domains continued to be spread to younger members of the family or through the peer groups with whom the respondents interacted, as have been obviously shown in the results of my previous study (Habtoor,2012a), regarding the teenagers LMLS, and the results of the present study. Younger generations are experiencing a gradual language shift.

As for language use, the parents in this study are inclined to use their mother tongue in a wider scope of communication in order to preserve a high status for both mother tongue and heritage culture. There is evidence on higher proficiency of these subjects in their mother tongue and they have a strong belief in its survival. Ultimately, we can say that Tigrinya and not Arabic the respondents generally prefer for their daily linguistic use. This is an indication of maintaining Tigrinya as well. The results revealed that the respondents are esteeming their mother tongue as highly positive as far as their attitudes are concerned. In particular, their integrative orientations show that they like Tigrinya for the most part. They also view Arabic positively significant. This factor seems to show respondents' higher estimation of Arabic for its instrumental value and status. As shown in the statistical results, the respondents tend to agree strongly that Arabic is a highly regarded language for them in their new settlement, and it is a very supportive language that facilitates a better prospects for future career development. Finally, LMLS of Tigrinya parents is obviously contrary to the younger generations in all respects. Parents are struggling to maintain Tigrinya, whereas teenagers are gradually shifting towards Arabic(Habtoor, 2012a). The parents do not acknowledge this fact and they do not foresee, at least in near future, any threat by Arabic language to Tigrinya language and culture, which may consequently lead to an ultimate shift to Arabic by the end of the day. However, they have started to consider the problem of both linguistic and cultural shift but slightly on the long run.

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## Appendix 1 Questionnaire

### I. Personal Data:

1. Date of birth: .....
2. Country of birth: .....
3. Sex: Male.....Female.....
4. Religion: Islam.....Christianity .....

### II. Tigrinya proficiency and Arabic proficiency:

Please circle the number 1, 2, 3, or 4 if you agree or disagree with the following statements according to the scale below

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I understand Tigrinya fluently	1	2	3	4
2	I speak Tigrinya fluently	1	2	3	4
3	I read Tigrinya fluently	1	2	3	4
4	I write Tigrinya fluently	1	2	3	4
5	I can translate orally Tigrinya into Arabic easily and accurately	1	2	3	4
6	I understand Arabic fluently	1	2	3	4
7	I speak Arabic fluently	1	2	3	4
8	I read Arabic fluently	1	2	3	4
9	I write Arabic fluently	1	2	3	4
10	I can translate orally Arabic into Tigrinya easily and accurately	1	2	3	4

### III. Language Use:

Which language do you use in the following situations and activities? Put a (√) below the language you use against each statement

No	Statement	Tigrinya	Arabic
11	Try to convince a person		
12	Ask for information		
13	Give command		
14	Gossip		
15	Discuss politics		
16	Get angry		
17	Give a complement		
18	Tell joke		
19	Read books for pleasure		

20	Read newspapers		
21	Listen to radio programmes		
22	Watch TV		
23	Talk at the supermarket/ market		
24	Do mental arithmetic		
25	Write a note to yourself		

#### IV. Attitude towards the language:

A: Please circle the number 1, 2, 3, or 4 if you agree or disagree with the statement according to the scale below.

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
26	Tigrinya is a beautiful language				
27	Tigrinya is a language of culture				
28	Tigrinya is a pleasant language to listen to				
29	I am proud of my mother tongue				
30	Arabic is a beautiful language				
31	Arabic is a language of culture				
32	Arabic is a pleasant language to listen to				
33	It is important that future generations in our family know Tigrinya				
34	Tigrinya language is part of my identity				
35	Immigrants should maintain their language				
36	It is important that immigrants maintain their culture				
37	I find it important to maintain my culture customs				
38	The only barrier between us and Arabic speakers is the language				
39	My accent bothers me when I speak Arabic				
40	My accent bothers Arabs when I speak Arabic				
41	I feel more comfortable using Tigrinya than Arabic				
42	Arabic is a threat to Tigrinya				
43	I feel uncomfortable using Tigrinya in public spaces				

B. Put a tick under the language that you agree with against each statement

No	Statement	Tigrinya	Arabic
44	Knowledge of this language makes you feel part of the developed world		
45	Knowledge of this language indicates someone is educated		
46	People who know this language will have a better future		
47	People who know this language get jobs easily		
48	Knowledge of this language indicates a high social status		
49	Those who know this language are more successful in life		
50	Speakers of this language are usually pleasant		

**C:Do you think there will come a time when most Tigrinya Speakers residing in KSA will:**

- 1. Have forgotten their ethnic past? YES/ NO If yes , how long will it take?**
  - a. It has already started
  - b. One Generation
  - c. Two generations
  - d . Three generations
  - e. four generations
  - f. five generations.
- 2. Have forgotten their language past? YES/ NO If yes , how long will it take?**
  - b. It has already started
  - b. One Generation
  - c. Two generations
  - d . Three generations
  - e. four generations
  - f. five generations.