

**LINGUISTIC SEXISM IN GENDER
ASSIGNMENT SYSTEMS OF
AFAN OROMO, AMHARIC, AND GAMO**

Amanuel Raga Yadate

Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

SELINUS UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**SELINUS UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE
FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES, DEPARTMENT OF
LINGUISTICS**

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DISSERTATION:

**to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics at
Selinus University of Sciences and Literature on the authority of the
President Dr. Salvatore Fava, in accordance with the decision of the
Board of Examiners.**

20 September 2019, Bologna

DECLARATION

The dissertation titled “LINGUISTIC SEXISM IN GENDER ASSIGNMENT SYSTEMS OF AFAN OROMO, AMHARIC, AND GAMO” which is submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics at Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, Department of Linguistics, is my original work. This dissertation has not been presented at any other institution to earn any degree, associateship, fellowship or any other academic merit before. Materials borrowed from other sources and used in the dissertation have been duly acknowledged and referenced. Articles published out of this study are also my original work. “I do hereby attest that I am the sole author of this PhD dissertation and that its contents are only the result of my own readings and research”.

Date: 30 July 2019

Student’s Signature: *Amanuel Raga Yadate*

Student ID: UNISE0862IT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious”

Albert Einstein

I am indebted to my supervisor Dr. Salvatore Fava for his unreserved advice and continuous encouragement in the course of the research. I am equally indebted to my friend Dr. Debela Goshu Amante, who read the initial chapters of the dissertation and gave me vital comments. I would also like to thank my teacher Dr. Kebede Hordofa Janko, my brother Dr. Lubo Teferi Kerorsa, and my friend Reverend Wake Geo Gerbi who encouraged me to finish up up this work which I almost dropped. Moreover, I am grateful to my examiners who have asked critical questions and offered invaluable comments that helped my work to reach its current form.

I am very thankful to the UDI for allowing me to live in Norway. Next, I would like to thank Hege Tørdal, Linn Camilla Elvenes, and Umalkeir Saed who helped me to settle in Bydel Gamle Oslo. Hege and Umalkeir, without your guidance life could have become difficult for me in Norway. I am also indebted to Becky Smith Norvang who taught my first Norwegian classes. You have helped me build self-confidence when speaking in Norwegian. Furthermore, I would like to thank Karin Sofie Rødhal, Leif Bjørka, Reverend Karl-Axel Mentzoni, John Kristianslund, Christoffer Flatin, David Haraldsen, and Girma Abate Aga for their spiritual support during my early days in Norway. I am grateful for their daily prayers and continuous encouragements.

I am also indebted to my uncle Abe Abraham Jote for his support and encouragement. I lack words to express the endless love and support I got from my dear wife Rahel Yonas Ayana (Richo). Richo, you are my precious gift from God. Thank you for encouraging me to continue this work when I felt I could never finish. I love you. I am also indebted to my son Solan Amanuel Raga (Bebbe) whose love and laughter refreshes my life.

I am also grateful to my brothers and sisters: Adam, Teferi Kerorsa, Waqqari Teferi Kerorsa, Matewos Teferi Kerorsa, Bayisa Teferi Kerorsa, Debisa Teferi Kerorsa, Waktola Teferi Kerorsa, Fedhasa Teferi Kerorsa, Yadesa Teferi Kerorsa, Oasa Teferi Kerorsa, Odasa Teferi Kerorsa, Galgale Teferi Kerorsa, and Marama Teferi Kerorsa for the continued love and support they provide me. I thank also my father-in-law, Yonas Ayana Yadesa, my mother-in-law Almaz Gamtesa Amuma, my sisters-in law: Tinbit Yonas Ayana, Darartu Yonas Ayana, and Baye Yonas Ayana; my brothers-in law: Tolawak Yonas Ayana, and Natol Yonas Ayana for their encouragements.

I would also like to thank my friends Jatani Huka Godana, Dr. Hasan Abda Wako Dr. Bikila Ashenafi Mammade, Dr. Zerihun Ayenew Birbirso, Dr. Bula Sirika Wayessa, Dr. Etana Habte Dr. Debela Tesfaye, Lalisa Kebede Hika, Hika Fekede Dhugasa, Tadele Asefa Dinagde, Manaye Abera Shagirdi, Fekadu Tolesa Ayanie, for their encouragement.

Dedicated to My Late Mother Bojore Abraham Jote

ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

2SF	Second person singular feminine
2SM	Second person singular masculine
3F	Third person feminine
3FS	Third person feminine singular
3M	Third person masculine
3MS	Third person masculine singular
3PL	Third person plural
Abs	Absolutive
AFF	Affirmative
AUX	Auxiliary
COP	Copula
Dec	Declarative
DEF	Definite
F	Feminine
Fem	Feminine
FOC	Focus
Imp	Imperative
Loc	Locative
M	Masculine
Mas	Masculine
NEG	Negative

Nom Nominalizer
PERF Perfective
Prog Progressive
- Morpheme boundary
[] Embraces phonetic transcription

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to examine how linguistic sexism manifests through the gender assignment systems of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo in the light of the social and cultural lives of the speakers. The data for this study was collected from native speakers through elicitation and structured interview. The data was analyzed based on the Critical Discourse Analysis approach.

As the study showed, among the three languages, human nouns such as personal names, administration titles, professional titles, religious titles, and generic human nouns manifest sexism. What is more, non-human animate nouns also exhibit a gender bias ideology among all three languages. Furthermore, inanimate nouns such as names of plants, geographical bodies, names of deities, celestial bodies, and materials, also show the gender-bias ideology among the Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo languages.

Moreover, in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, the gender of abstract nouns is mostly masculine. It is only in Afan Oromo that a few abstract nouns are assigned the feminine gender.

Lastly, it was found in this study that there is a clear link between grammatical gender assignment and thought. This resonates with the previous findings of various psycholinguistic scholars who assert that grammatical gender assignment has a link with social gender stereotypes. This works specifically for

Afan Oromo whose speakers sometimes map the social and cultural gender stereotypes of gender assignment on inanimate nouns, and in Amharic which sometimes maps the metaphorical images of humans on inanimate entities.

The linguistic sexism in the three languages is the result of male dominance in the socio-cultural lives of the societies. The linguistic sexism observed in this study are conventions of the languages. Research shows that language conventions shape the way speakers think. Hence, it is believed that linguistic sexism in the languages helps maintain the socio-culturally created gender-bias ideologies of the societies. The linguistic sexism manifested in the languages can be a challenge for the current gender mainstreaming endeavors in Ethiopia. Therefore, language planning should be carried out in these languages and the rest of the country's languages to assist in combating the broader gender inequalities in the country.

Key word: *Linguistic sexism, gender bias, grammatical gender, gender equality, Afan Oromo, Amharic, Gamo.*

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the dissertation and offers a background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology of the study, and organization of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Ethiopian nation, nationalities, and peoples are categorized under two ethno-linguistic families called Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan. These families comprise over 80 different ethno-lingual communities with over 200 dialects (Central Statistics Agency 2007). All of the groups have lived together through centuries of diversity and unity described as containing innumerable social, linguistic, and cultural differences. There were also important points of peaceful and warlike contact among the groups. This resulted in vast assimilation of populations, considerable adoptions of languages, innumerable conversions from one faith to another, and extensive intermarriages (Lubo 2012, citing Twibel 1998).

Assimilations of populations and adoptions of languages in Ethiopia have begun with the Cushitic and the Semitic in the central highlands of Ethiopia between the 12th and 13th centuries, and accelerated during the Oromo

expansions in the 16th century and by the assimilation policies of the Ethiopian Emperors between the 16th and 19th centuries (Lubo 2012 citing Galperin 1981). Due to these socio-political/cultural, linguistic, and religious interactions among its ethnic groups, Ethiopia is said to have developed into a linguistic area (Tosco 2000). Consequently, languages of the Ethiopian linguistic area share as many as 13 linguistic traits (Ferguson 1976; Thomason 2001; cf. Tosco 2000). Among these, gender distinction in second and third person pronouns, and the use of the form equivalent to the feminine singular for plural concord (the use of feminine singular adjective, verb, or pronoun to agree with a plural noun) are the two features related to grammatical gender. Other studies, like that of Castellino (1975), Diakonoff (1988), and Clamons (1992) show that grammatical gender in Afro-asiatic languages bears a sociocultural meaning. Still, these studies did not consider the existence and problems of linguistic sexism.

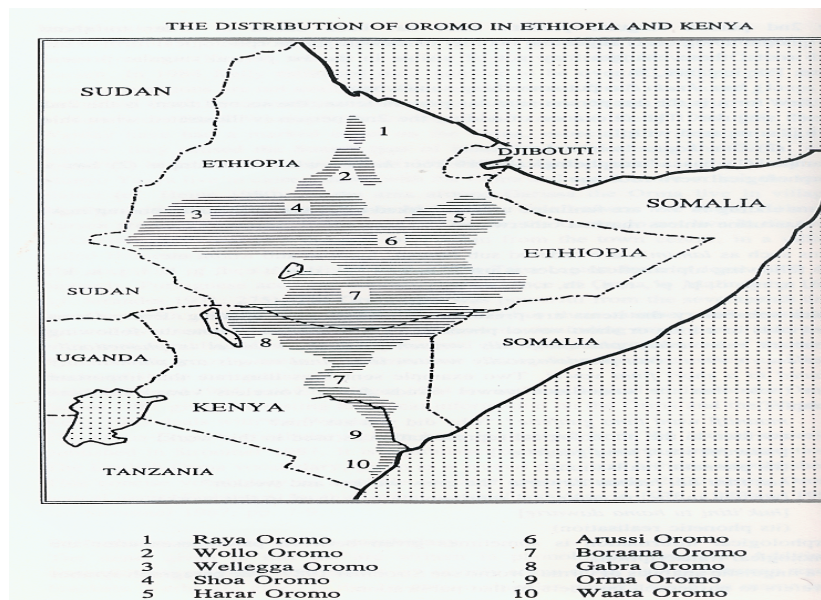
Sexist language makes women invisible and creates the impression of a male dominated society. It also demeans women, reducing them to marriage material; it reinforces stereotypical gender roles and by so-doing perpetuates stereotypes about the "correct" way for a man or woman to behave. Furthermore, it limits women's opportunities and even their aspirations, and it alienates female interlocutors and causes them to feel that they are not being heard. What is more, it causes women to view themselves in a negative way. (Mills 1995:95)

Research findings have established a direct correlation between the gender correctness of the official language, and the economic possibilities of women in society (Tolstokorova 2003). International advocacy organizations have also found evidence of the relationship between language practices in recruitment policies and women's competitiveness in the labour market in post-communist countries. For example, the August 27, 2003 Human Rights Watch report on Ukraine contains information on gender discrimination in the language of job advertising and interviews, which results in excluding women from the work force (Tolstokorova 2003).

Therefore, to tackle this sort of problem, anti-sexist language campaigns were launched in the official languages of most industrial countries, such as the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scandinavian countries. Similar campaigns are also underway in transnational organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, European Parliament, etc. The main objective of these campaigns was to counteract linguistic sexism, which is considered one of the causes of gender inequality issues (ibid). It seems that Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, which are the focus of this study, exhibit similar linguistic sexism to that discussed above. Below, a brief background of the people who speak these languages and their sociolinguistic and cultural settings, is presented.

1.1.1 The Oromo

The Oromo belong to the Cushitic group of people. They live in Ethiopia and Kenya (Gragg 1982; Clamons 1992; Greifenow-Mewis 2001). In Ethiopia, the Oromo have an estimated population of 25,488,344, which accounts for 34.5% of the whole population of the country (CSA, 2007). According to Tesema (2006), they are the largest ethnic group in the horn of Africa. The Oromo occupy an area stretching from the Western end of Ethiopia to the Eastern end, and from the Northern end Ethiopia to Southern Kenya. (Gragg 1982; Baye 1986; Kebede 2005).



Distribution of Oromo in Ethiopia and Kenya (Kebede H. Janko 2019, Upcoming)

The Oromo are patriarchal and patrilineal. They are known for their traditional democratic political system called *Gada* (Asmarom 1973; Mohammed 1990; Kuwe 1997; and Negaso 2000). Though the Gada system excluded women from

taking part in most political and military activities (Kuwe 1997), it at least provided them with basic human dignity and rights (Amanuel and Hirut 2014).

During the Gada period¹, Oromo women had an institution called *siiqqee* by which they fought any form of patriarchal subjugation or injustice (Gemetchu 1998, Kuwe 1997, Østebø 2007). Traditionally, upon marriage, the bride and the bridegroom were given special sticks which signified the basic human rights to which they were entitled for as long as they lived. The stick given to the bride is called *siiqqee* while that of the bridegroom is called *horooroo*. These sticks were symbolic regulators of a healthy and balanced relationship of power between the female and the male (Gemetchu 1998).

Married Oromo women carried their *siiqqee* sticks on events, such as: protests against violations of their rights, and during social, religious, and political mobilizations that were considered part of their gender role. As Østebø (2007) writes, *siiqqee* were specifically carried during: (1) *ateete*, ‘female-only religious ceremonies’ which involve praying to the deity on the occurrence of drought, infertility, plague among humans and livestock, and political instability or war; (2) protests against insult, intimidation, or sexual abuse by men; (3) protest against husbands beating or insulting their wives during pregnancy or child birth; (4) during reconciliations of conflicting clans; and (5) during marriage

¹ The Gada system had declined in the 19th century mainly due to the political pressure from Menilk’s II. (cf. Negaso 2000)

ceremonies. So, the carrying of the *siiqqee* stick signified social, political, or religious mobilizations. The institution under which the mobilization process took place was also called *siiqqee*. It was exclusively a women's institution which helped in safeguarding their rights and dignity (Amanuel and Hirut 2014).

Nevertheless, after the decline of the Gada system, the *siiqqee* institution was abandoned. This has forced the people to adapt the cultural and religious gender ideologies of the neighboring ethnic groups creating a form of cultural confusion (ibid). Thus, currently Oromo women do not have the rights and respect their foremothers enjoyed under the Gada system. Consequently, gender bias in Oromo society starts at the birth of a child. The 'ululation' sound for heralding a female child's birth is only three times, while it may extend up to eleven for a male child (Wondwesen 2000). In addition, the society shows the ideology of gender bias through proverbs and folksongs. For instance, they utter proverbs like, [dala:tu dala: argata] 'one who begets female is female' (ibid), [ta:u:-rra durba dalfu: wayya] 'Better beget female than sit idle' (Wiirtuu 7). This shows the practice of gender preference among the Oromo.

In addition, women are assigned to undertake a heavy workload until a few days before their marriage. Besides, they are not allowed to choose their marriage partners. It is the men themselves or their parents who choose women for the men. In formal marriage, the man or his parents send

[dʒa:rsoli:] ‘elderly men’ as mediators to the woman’s parents to ask for their permission to let the man take the woman in marriage. The woman’s parents ask the man or his parents to pay a marriage price in exchange for their daughter (Wondwesen 2000). If the man cannot afford the marriage price, he is asked to work for the woman’s parents or promise that his future children will be given to them to replace the physical labor the woman covers at her parents’ home (Negaso 2000). These cultural activities reduce women to marriage commodities.

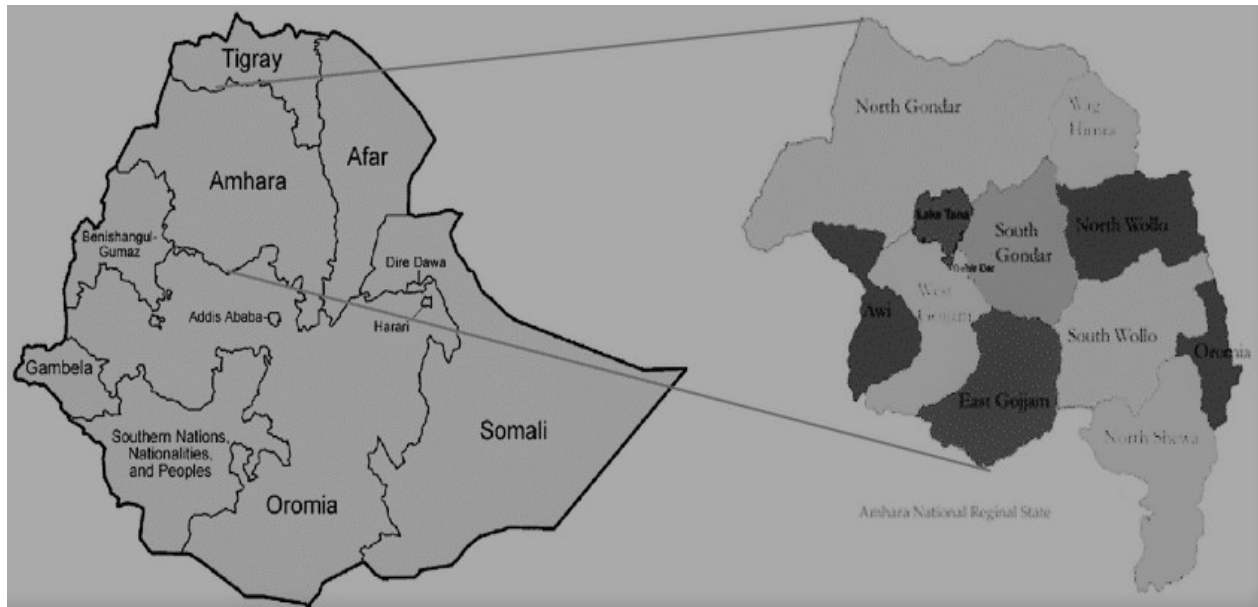
Depending on their geographical locations, the Oromo are engaged in different economic activities like pastoralism, crop cultivation, and animal husbandry (Clamons 1992). In the past, the Oromo mainly followed a cultural belief of their own which is called [wa:k’effanna:]. However, today they may practice Christian, Muslim, or [wa:k’effanna:] spiritualities (ibid).

The Oromo speak Afan Oromo (lit. Oromo Language) which belongs to the Lowland East Cushitic sub-family of the Afro-Asiatic phylum (Bender 1976; Gragg 1982; Clamons 1992; Griefenow-Mewis 2001; Kebede 2005). Apart from Ethiopia, Afan Oromo is also spoken in Kenya and Somalia (Clamons 1992). In Ethiopia, Afan Oromo is the official language of Oromia Regional State. It is used as a medium of instruction in schools and in the region’s Teachers Training Colleges. Moreover, in different Ethiopian Universities, it is taught as

a major course at the BA, MA and PhD levels. What is more, Afan Oromo is also taught in North American Minneapolis College.

1.1.2 The Amhara

The Amhara are Semitic people. They mainly live in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia which is comprised of provinces like Gonder, Gojjam, Western Wello, and Northern Shewa. They are 19,867,817 in number, which accounts for 26.9% of the country's total population (CSA 2007). Most of them practice Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and they mainly depend on mixed farming to make their living. Like the Oromo, the Amhara are also patriarchal and patrilineal. The husband or the father is the leader of the household. A woman who has lost her husband has to marry again, otherwise she will be labelled as [galəmota], promiscuous. Children who grow up in female-headed household are also considered to be arrogant as they lack the 'control' ostensibly offered by fathers (Bevan et al 2006). These cultural perceptions may be mechanisms of distancing women from economic and leadership positions.



Amhara Regional State (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amhara_Region)

Among the Amhara, there is a type of marriage called [jəmadəgo gabiʃfa] in which the parents of the children propose that their children will be married at the age of eight to twelve (ibid). This cultural practice is problematic for the female children because they may get pregnant and suffer during child delivery at this young age.

The Amhara speak *Amarigna* or Amharic, which each belong to the Southwest Semitic language family that is grouped under the Afro-Asiatic super-phylum. The origin of Amharic is traced back to the 1st millennium A.D (Bender 1983). The use of Amharic is believed to have started spreading from Northern Ethiopia to Southern Ethiopia during the 12th Century A.D (Baye 2000). However, its widest use throughout the country had been observed in the 19th century as a result of its speakers' southward movement (Appleyard 2003). Due

to this movement the language had been exposed to contact with languages of other families, especially Cushitic. Thus, Amharic syntax and vocabulary are strongly influenced by these languages (Bender and Hailu 1978; Bender 1983; Lipinski 1997; Baye 2000). What is more, following from the Amhara's dominant political position which lasted for a century, Amharic was the only official language of Ethiopia until the 1990s. Currently, Amharic is the official language of the Amhara Regional State and it is also the Federal language of Ethiopia. Furthermore, it is taught as a second language throughout Ethiopian schools. It is also taught at the BA, MA, and PhD levels in many Ethiopian universities². In the United States of America too, there are some universities that offer Amharic as a language³.

1.1.3 The Gamo

The Gamo are Omotic people who inhabit a fairly large territory of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State of Ethiopia. Their land is bound by Lakes Abaya and Chamo in the East, and the lands of the Zayse in the South, the Wolaitta in the North, and the Gofa and the Male in the west (Hirut 2013). The total number of speakers of the Gamo language is 1,107, 163, which accounts for 1.5% of Ethiopia's total population (CSA, 2007). The majority of them engage in subsistence farming while the rest may be engaged

² At Addis Ababa and Wollega Universities it is also taught at PhD level.

³ <http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/nalrc>

in the pottery trade, hide-work, grinding-stone making, and ironwork (Arthur, 2013).

Like the Oromo and the Amhara, the Gamo are also patriarchal and patrilineal people. Furthermore, they have a strict caste system which hierarchically divides them into three groups. These are: the *mala* which consists of the highest prestige, farmers and weavers; the *mana* which consists of potters; and the *degala* which consists of the lowest prestige, ironsmiths, and hide-workers (ibid).



Gamo Zone (Wondimu 2010)

Each caste is associated with different levels of prestige, purity, and power, that restrict social interactions like eating together, living together, involvement in sexual activity, sharing burial spaces, and access to leadership positions. The *degala* and the *mana* are considered impure and contact between them and the *mala* who are said to be pure, is prohibited (ibid).

The Gamo speak *Gamotstso*, which literally means Gamo language (Wondimu 2010; Hirut 2013). The language has several dialects. In most cases, each dialect has its own name associated with the place the speakers inhabit, such as Dorze, Ochollo, Daac'e, Ganta, K'uc'a, Boreda, Kemba, Bonke, etc (Hirut 2013). Mostly, speakers of the various dialects of Gamo identify themselves as distinctive ethnic communities. However, they still share a broader identity: Gamo. Since they use both the local dialectal identity that refers to their respective vicinity and the broader identity 'Gamo,' they have a dual self-identity (ibid).

Among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo societies, the treatment of male and female and the assignments of gender roles have similarities. Accordingly, male children are trained for leadership while female children are trained to serve the males. From the childhood males are trained for their later function as patriarch of the family and administrator of its property. In the absence of their fathers, the first-born sons served as the patriarch of their families. They had the privilege of representing their fathers in public meetings and affairs. By contrast, daughters participated in all domestic and extra domestic tasks. They aided in rearing their younger siblings and assisted their mothers in preparing food for their families.

Generally, the distinctive training and respect given to male and female children resulted in creating stereotypical ‘good man/good husband’ and ‘good woman/good wife’. A ‘good man/good husband’ is expected to be brave, gentle, proud, muscular, harsh, a guardian of his family and his clan/people, clever, etcetera; while, a ‘good woman/wife’ is expected to be caring, loving, obedient, respectful, calm, beautiful, hardworking, punctual, generous, polite, organized, talented in cooking, etcetera.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In societies with developed systems of gender democracies, policies of linguistic gender equality have been an issue of concern in both gender theory and political activism for over three decades. However, in Ethiopia, it is hardly articulated within the academic community. In this regard, there are only few documented papers, which in fact focus only on three of the country’s languages i.e. Afan Oromo and Tigrigna, and Amharic. Among these, Amanuel Raga (2007), Sena Gonfa (2008), Jeylan Waliyi (2002), and Wondwosen Tesfaye (2000) focus on Afan Oromo. On the other hand, Roza Tadesse (2009), focuses on Tigrigna while Zelealem Leyew (2010) focuses on Amharic. If we categorize these works in terms of relatedness to the current study, we only find Amanuel (2007), Roza (2009), and Zelealem (2010) as mention-worthy, as the rest of the studies deal with gender bias in proverbs or cultural language use. Hence, we

may say that the issue of grammatical linguistic sexism has not been well studied in the context of Ethiopian languages.

Therefore, as an input for the local or global gender mainstreaming movements and as a kind of 'starter' for other profound research activities in this field, this study intends to investigate linguistic sexism among selected Ethiopian Afro-asiatic languages i.e. Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. The findings of this study may be of importance for the local and the global gender policy makers and advocates who are struggling to deal with linguistic sexism that is believed to cause sociopolitical and socioeconomic problems to women.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In general, this study intends to investigate linguistic sexism in the gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo and examine their possible cultural sources. Specifically, it tried to:

1. Investigate how linguistic sexism manifest through gender assignment of nouns in Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Gamo.
2. Explain specific differences in the linguistic sexism that manifest through gender assignment systems of Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Gamo nouns.

3. Finally, explain the link between social gender ideologies and linguistic sexism in the grammatical gender assignment systems of nouns in the languages.

1.4 Significance of the Study

To counteract linguistic gender discrimination and enhance gender equality, in those counties that are not yet open to ideas of linguistic gender democracy, primarily, it requires meticulous theoretical elaboration. This would create a way to challenge civil society by showing that linguistic sexism is not only an ethical problem, but also a violation of human rights (Tolstokorova 2005). However, the whole process cannot be complete without the united efforts of researchers, women's rights advocates, the mass media, NGOs, government structures, and all those who are concerned with the democratic developments worldwide that would generally benefit from it at various levels (ibid). In particular, the following would be some of the contributions of the study.

- It may help the Ethiopian Ministry of Women's Affairs, Human Rights Watch, and UN Women Watch in their current fight against gender inequality by pinpointing the sources and nature of linguistic gender discriminations among Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo.

- In addition, the study may narrow down the epistemological gap and provide a better picture of linguistic sexism among Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo for further generalizations. This is particularly important for gender researchers, sociolinguists, and anthropological linguists.
- Furthermore, it may contribute to the Ethiopian linguistic study in-particular and the global linguistic study in general by providing a drop of information about sexism in grammatical gender assignment systems of nouns.

1.5 Scope of the Study

With more than 80 different languages and over 200 dialects, it was not possible to consider all the languages of Ethiopia in this study within the limited time and resources allotted for this study. Therefore, the study was only based on three selected languages. These languages are, Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Gamo. What is more, the languages featured investigated in this study were delimited to gender assignment of nouns.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to analyze and categorize the linguistic sexism that reflects in the gender assignment of nouns in the Gojam dialect of

Amharic, the Macha dialect of Afan Oromo, and the Kemba dialect of Gamo. To this end, the study was based mainly on primary data collected from native speakers of the selected languages through elicitation and structured interview.

The criteria for the selection of the three languages are: numerousness of their speakers, existence of linguistic and cultural contact among their speakers and other language speakers of Ethiopia, and the researcher's personal convenience. Regarding this, according to CSA (2007) report, the sum of Afan Oromo and Amharic speakers was about 70% of the total population of Ethiopia. In addition, as already discussed in the background of this dissertation, in Ethiopia linguistic and cultural assimilations were caused mainly by speakers of these two languages. Therefore, each of them was selected as a representative of its respective family i.e. Cushitic and Semitic. On the other hand, Gamo has randomly been selected to represent the Omotic family. So, it was believed that the three languages may fairly represent the country's population while shining some light on their respective language families.

As already mentioned, the data for this study was collected from native speakers of the selected languages. Accordingly, one informant was selected from each of the three language communities. Then the informants were grammatical data was elicited from the informants as required for this study. In addition, a structured interview was given to six people from each language.

The interview questions attempted to discern the cultural and social gender ideologies among the speakers of the three languages. In both cases, the data was tape-recorded. Finally, the linguistic sexism in the gender assignment systems of nouns in the languages are analyzed in the context of the cultural gender ideologies of the speakers of the languages.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and it consist of a background study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology of the study, and organization of the dissertation. The second chapter deals with the theoretical framework on which the study is based, and review of related literature. The third chapter deals with an overview of grammatical gender in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. The fourth chapter presents and discusses sexism in gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. The fifth chapter explains the link between grammatical gender and social gender ideology in the context of Afan Oromo, Amharic and Gamo. The sixth chapter is concerned with summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the previous chapter the introduction of the dissertation was presented. This chapter deals with the theoretical framework and review of related literature. The theoretical framework portion reviews the various theories of linguistic sexism and concepts developed from the earlier times of gender revolution to date. The review of related literature critically summarizes various related studies undertaken on Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study of language and gender which transformed the field both theoretically and methodologically began by Robin Lakoff in 1975. In her study which was published under the title, 'Language and Woman's Place', Lakoff identified 'women's register' which as she argued served to maintain women's inferior role in society. She claimed that women's speech is dominated by linguistic forms that reflect and reinforce subordinate roles. These are tag questions, question intonation, weak directives, and other linguistic traits (Lakoff, 1975). Lakoff's approach has been called the "deficit approach," (Coates 1993) because it suggests that women's speech is inferior compared to that of men. In fact, this view dates as far back as 1922. In his 1922 book, 'Language: Its Nature and Development', Otto Jespersen tried to argue that women's

speech is 'deficient' compared to that of men. However, the approach has been widely examined because of Lakoff's study which took place almost half a century later than that of Jespersen.

The deficit approach treated men's language as 'the standard' and women's language as a sort of language which 'inherently lack something'. So, shortly after the publication of Lakoff's 'Language and Woman's Place', other scholars started to reshape the 'deficit approach' by changing the angle from which the issue of language and gender inequality should be viewed. Accordingly, instead of labeling women's language as 'deficit' as compared to that of men's, they focused on the cause which lead to gender-based language differences i.e. power imbalance between the genders. Dale Spender's (1980) 'Man Made Language' is one of the earliest works in this regard. Spender's work hypothesizes that the gender differences in women's and men's language has resulted from power differences in society. Other scholars like Don Zimmerman and Candace West (1987) have followed the same line of thinking. So, a new approach called 'dominance approach' was introduced. This approach claims that women are subordinated by men in society; and the difference in women's speech resulted from male supremacy which primarily resulted in a male-centered language or 'man made language' (Coates 1993).

In fact, both approaches mentioned above commonly discuss gender-based speech differences with social gender-inequality in mind. Their difference is

only in what should be most pronounced in the course of scholarly debate. This is why other scholars suggested another approach called the 'difference approach'. Deborah Tannen is the major advocate of this approach. The 'difference' approach assumes that men and women are equal in society but belong to 'different cultures' as they have been socialized differently since childhood. As this approach hypothesizes, it is the gender cultural difference that result in the varying communicative styles of men and women (Coates 1993). Thus, in her work entitled 'You Just Don't Understand! Women and Men in Conversation', Tannen (1991) attributes gender differences in speech style to cultural differences between men and women. Tannen's work which compares conversational goals, reports that men tend to use a "report style," aiming to communicate factual information, whereas women more often use a "rapport style," which is more concerned with building and maintaining relationships.

However, Deborah Cameron (1992), argues that the Difference approach is not an appropriate theory as it has some problems. She claims that what the difference approach views as different ways of using or understanding language are essentially the result of power difference. She argues the fact that, in language, male-associated forms have been seen as the unmarked norm from which the female deviates, shows one example of power difference in society. Secondly, Cameron argues that Tannen's work which tries to introduce the difference approach falls short in terms of collected data. Third, Cameron believes that the social differences between men's and women's roles are not

clearly reflected in language use. Therefore, she argues that the difference approach lacks reliability.

In the advancement of language and gender study, the most recent approach is the "Dynamic" or the "Social Constructionist" approach. This approach claims that 'the dynamic nature and multiple factors of an interaction help a socially appropriate gendered construct'. According to this view, 'although affiliated with particular genders, the social constructs can be utilized by speakers as they deem fit. So, classifying speech into a natural gendered category (as posited in the difference approach) is inappropriate'. (Coates 1993)

Generally, as discussed so far, the study of language and gender has been under the effects of theoretical and methodological evolution. This is transforming the field in a way that benefits both men and women in many countries. However, as can be observed from the theoretical reforms discussed so far, there are some limitations in this field. First, mostly the debates were based only on gender-based speech differences. This disregards the structural aspect of language. The structural aspects and gender-based difference are both the manifestation of the gender inequality in the society. In addition, more often, the assumptions, the discussions, and the generalizations were limited to a few Indo-European languages and their speakers. So, there is still much to explore to refine the epistemological and methodological aspects of the field. Meanwhile, what becomes a concern for this study is the confinement of the

field to one aspect of language, i.e. speech. This study deals with how grammatical gender assignment manifests sexism; but, in the history of gender and language scholarship, this matter is not theoretically well accounted for. Nevertheless, assumptions regarding the interaction between language, power, and gender raised as the central part of the theories (excepting the difference theory) discussed above, are important for this study.

In general, the works of Lakoff (1975), Spender (1980), Zimmerman and West (1987), and Cameron (1992) place power at the center to explanations of the interaction between language and gender. This general assumption is applied in this study too. In addition, this study follows the views of a few other scholars that explain the link between language structure and social gender. To begin with, Nancy Bonvillian (2000) is one of the few scholars who tried to show how grammar manifests sexism. In her work entitled, 'Gender in English', she discusses how the grammar of the English language reveals and maintains sexism or gender bias. Based on the linguistic data drawn from English, Bonvillian (2000:205) postulates that language structure or 'la langue', as she labels it, persistently and covertly ascribes positive and normative qualities to men and negative and secondary ones to women. As she says, these activities are internalized through contemporary language or 'la parole'.

In addition to Bonvillian's work, which explains the link between grammatical conventions and cultural gender ideologies, Boroditsky, Schmidt, and Phillips'

(2003), psycholinguistic work entitled 'Sex, Syntax, and Semantics' discusses how social gender ideology influences grammatical gender assignment, among other things. As these scholars found out, grammatical gender is not free from social gender stereotypes. In-particular, this is observed when speakers of languages with grammatical gender persistently use male characters to describe grammatically masculine objects, and female characters to describe grammatically feminine objects (ibid). Accordingly, based on their own findings and many other similar studies carried out by other scholars, they argue that the linkage between grammatical gender and social gender shapes speakers' thoughts. Therefore, the current study considers this argument as a base in the process of scrutinizing the manifestation of sexism in gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, in light of the cultural gender stereotypes among the speakers.

The origin and functions of grammatical gender have been of concern to philosophers and linguists for a long time; however, no consensus has been reached yet. As a result, we observe two dominant and controversial views among scholars regarding what motivates grammatical gender, or what rules govern it. Some scholars argue that it follows formal procedures, while others argue that it is governed by semantic principles. The controversy has persisted from classical times and was highlighted among nineteenth-century philologists, who first began to study the diachronic development of the Indo-European languages scientifically (Kilarski, 2000).

Semantic based gender assignment theory was represented by scholars like Heider (1972), Ibrahim (1973), Castellino (1975), Grimm (1878), and Diakonoff (1988). This group of scholars believed that grammatical gender was a conceptual category and sediment of a state of prehistoric primitive ways of ordering the world through the extension of natural gender to inanimate objects through psychological personification. Grimm's work shows that in the German language, things denoted by masculine nouns were earlier, larger, firmer, quicker, more inflexible, active, moveable, creative, etc; while those which were feminine were later, smaller, softer, quieter, suffering/passive, and receptive. On the other hand, scholars like Brugmann (cf. Kilarski, 2007) believed that gender assignment is an arbitrary formal category of syntactical agreement. This view was supported by successive studies on Hittite, the earliest attested Indo-European language, which, unlike other Indo-European languages had a common gender versus a neuter, with the feminine arising later in the language's development (Kilarski, 2007).

Other linguists argue that grammatical gender is an arbitrarily assigned formal category that is useless, as languages could function without it. For instance, Fodor (1959) believed that it is grammatically redundant, as it is not related to conceptual categories, unlike other grammatical categories such as case, time, aspect, number, etc. As he argues, that the essence of gender as a grammatical category is only its syntactic congruence. As a support for his belief, Fodor

quotes Bally (1952: 45) who argues that the distinction of gender is “a linguistic luxury”. However, neither Fodor himself nor Bally have supported their arguments with enough data. Ibrihim (1978:27-28) suggests three potential roles of grammatical gender: (1) In a language with explicit inflections for gender, it is easy to express the natural gender of animate beings; (2) Grammatical gender "can be a valuable tool of disambiguation", rendering clarity about antecedents; (3) in literature, gender can be used to "animate and personify inanimate nouns."

Among extensive studies conducted on the topic of gender assignments, Corbett (1991) covers a collection of over two hundred grammatical gender systems with the goal of showing how gender assignment function throughout the world’s languages. However, like the scholars discussed above, he too ignores the social problems related to the topic. Aronoff (1992: 606) who closely observed this shortcoming in Corbett’s work strongly critiques that he is, “almost entirely silent on the hottest language-based topics, the social construction of gender roles as it relates to biological sex.”

Another scholar, Trudgill (1999), who follows Fodor on evaluating linguistic gender, argues that gendered language is a luxury in terms of its role in grammar and human communication. He believes that grammatical gender had a reason for its origin, but no purpose, in spite of the fact that two years earlier Romaine (1997) tried to show the linkage between grammatical gender

categories and social-cultural gender in her article entitled, *Gender, Grammar and the Space in Between*. This work suggests that there is a conceptual link between grammatical gender assignment and socio-cultural gender ideology. What is more, Spender's (1980) work suggests that language as a whole promotes the socio-cultural gender bias ideology. Even if Spender's work is among the most vehement with regard to the existence of linguistic gender bias, the relation between language and social-cultural gender had already been touched upon by earlier gender activists like Lakoff (1975).

Among the things Spender was criticized for, is that her generalizations are based only on English examples. However, a few years later, other scholars supported the matter by accounting it from the prospective of other languages. For instance, Perissinott (1983) studied the Mexican constitution for sentences with supposedly generic *hombre* standing not only for 'man' but for all humans, and found that about 85% of informants understood it only to refer to men. A year later, Pusch (1984) also found that German documentation bore a male bias in language, mentioning how she felt excluded because of her German passport which referred only to its male possessor' as a German citizen. Again, Gross (1991:76) showed similar results regarding the German constitution, where many sentences read as if they did not apply to women. A similar result was found by Heise (2000) who studied German masculine lexical nouns such as *Lehrer*, 'teacher' or *Bürger*, 'citizen' which are supposed to be generic.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this section, from a psycholinguistic perspective, Boroditsky (2003) tried to show that grammatical gender is among the aspects of languages that interferes with how people conceptualize the world. In her study, in which native speakers of German and Spanish were asked to describe everyday objects in English, she found they were more likely to use attributes conventionally associated with the genders of the objects in their native languages. For instance, German-speakers more often described the feminine German word *die Brücke*, 'bridge' with socio-cultural female images like "beautiful," "elegant," "fragile," "peaceful," "pretty," and "slender," whereas Spanish-speakers *el puente*, 'bridge' which is masculine in Spanish described it with socio-culturally male images like "big," "dangerous," "long," "strong," "sturdy," and "towering". Similarly, she also found that the gender in which concepts are anthropomorphized in art is dependent, in most cases, on the grammatical gender of the concept in the artist's language. Therefore, in German art, *der tod*, 'death', which is a masculine noun, is generally portrayed as male, while the same concept, which is feminine in Russian, is generally portrayed as a female in Russian art (ibid).

2.2 Review of Related Literature on Ethiopian Languages

Though the study of linguistic gender bias has been underway for more than a quarter of a century elsewhere, in Ethiopia it has barely begun. Consequently, there are only three works on Ethiopian languages and related to this study.

Namely, these are: Amanuel Raga (2007) on Afan Oromo. Roza Taddress (2009) on Tigrigna, and Zelealem Leyew (2010) on Amharic. Among these, except that of Zelealem Leyew's, all of them are MA theses. Below, we may first see the contents of each of these works and then how they are related and differ from the current one.

Amanuel's (2007) thesis is entitled, 'Gender Bias Ideology as Manifested in the Grammatical Structure of Afan Oromo'. In the context of Ethiopian languages, this work is a groundbreaking one. This work reveals, in Afan Oromo, that the gender assignment systems of nouns follow the social gender bias ideologies of the speakers. Nouns which denote objects that are small in size, powerless, and associated with negative social values, are categorized as feminine in gender; those which are large in size, relatively powerful, and have positive social value are categorized as masculine in gender. Furthermore, the study claims that in Afan Oromo, most masculine nouns are used as the generic form and using the feminine forms of these nouns causes their meaning to deviate from the meaning of the generic ones, i.e. the masculine forms. What is more, the semantic contents of verbs that are related to marriage and the relationship of husband and wife designate the superiority of male in the society that speaks the language. Moreover, the study shows that the figurative use of feminine nouns that denote female humans, also connote cowardice, shyness, weakness and the like; while masculine nouns that denote male humans connote concepts like bravery, strength, boldness and the like. In addition,

proper names in Afan Oromo reflect the social gender bias ideology in the speech communities through their semantic connotations. Finally, yet importantly, as Amanuel's work unravels, some professional and administrative titles do not have feminine forms, though currently women can hold the positions they denote.

Roza's (2009) thesis which is entitled, 'Gender Bias Ideology of Tigrigna Speakers', is very similar to that of Amanuel (2007). Their similarities are in terms of language features examined, and findings. So, according to Roza's work, Tigrigna reveals the same gender bias reported by Amanuel's work on Afan Oromo.

Zealelem's (2010) work on Amharic is entitled, 'Asymmetrical Representation of Gender in Amharic'. This work deals with the linguistic and pragmatic representation of gender in Amharic. As this work shows, gender representation in Amharic is asymmetrical and is heavily influenced by pragmatics. Accordingly, masculine is the default gender with more prominence than feminine. The linguistic coding of gender in Amharic carries socially significant meanings reflecting a male-biased grammar. Specifically, the personal and demonstrative pronouns, generic and proper nouns, nominals and other word classes are inherently masculine. Moreover, masculine gender operates not only for nouns with male features, but also for nouns with neuter gender. In Amharic, any noun with animate features is encoded as male in the

verb. The study also shows that the masculine form conveys augmentation, and the feminine form conveys diminution.

Generally, the three studies we have seen above are the only studies related to this work. Their efforts in gaining the attention of scholars and language planners of the country are of tremendous value. Yet, they have a few limitations. For example, the studies above do not explicate exceptions regarding gender assignment systems that may work against their generalizations. In addition, none of them have well-stressed the link between gender assignment systems and cultural gender ideologies. Thus, the current study, which is different in terms of scale, will try to fill the gaps observed especially in Amanuel's and Zelealem's previous studies. Above all, it is believed that a contrastive look into the linguistic sexism in the gender assignment systems of the selected languages in the current study will have a significant value in better understanding the matter. This will be especially relevant to the current global debates regarding the link between social gender stereotypes and grammatical gender assignment systems.

CHAPTER THREE: GENDER IN AFAN OROMO, AMHARIC, AND GAMO

In this chapter, we will see the overview of grammatical gender in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. Like the other Afro-Asiatic languages, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo function with binary gender systems: masculine and feminine. Let us examine this in each of the languages below.

3.1 Afan Oromo

Most Afan Oromo nouns are not morphologically marked for gender, except some sets of animate nouns which have the same root. These are respectively marked as feminine and masculine with [-ti:/-tti:] and [-sa/-ssa] as in the examples below. (Amanuel 2007)

(1)

- a) [dʒa:r-ti:/dʒa:r-sa] ‘old woman/old man’
- b) [obbole:-tti:/obbole:-ssa] ‘sister/brother’
- c) [oge:-tti:-/oge:-ssa] ‘female expert/male expert’
- d) [dargagge:-tti:/dargagge:-ssa] ‘young woman/young man
- e) [dʒalde:-tti:/dʒalde:-ssa] ‘female monkey/ male monkey’
- f) [wara:be-tti:/wara:be-ssa] ‘female hyena/ male hyena’

- g) [harra:g-tti:/harra:g -ssa] ‘female crow/ male crow’
- h) [bine:n-ti:/bine:n-sa] ‘female beast/ male beast’
- i) [hille:n-ti:/hille:n-sa] ‘female hare/ male hare’

By the same token, some feminine nominals are gender-marked by suffixing [-tu:/-u:]. These nominals mostly denote people with undesirable social characters (cf. Amanuel 2007) or people engaged in despised professions.

(2)

- a) [hat-tu:] ‘thief’
- b) [kadat-tu:] ‘beggar’
- c) [sob-tu:] ‘liar’
- d) [sa:m-tu:] ‘robber’
- e) [tolfat-tu:] ‘sorcerer’

Apart from the above animate nouns whose gender categorization is semantically transparent, there are also some other nominals that are morphologically marked as feminine following the above pattern. Observe the following.

(3)

- a) [sirb-i-tu:] ‘singer’
- b) [lol-tu:] ‘soldier’
- c) [k’ot-tu:] ‘farmer’
- d) [daldal-tu:] ‘trader’
- e) [tiks-itu:] ‘shepherd’
- f) [hadf-o:ftu:] ‘bile’
- g) [adams-itu:] ‘hunter’
- h) [ija:r-tu:] ‘builder’
- i) [urg-o:f-tu:] ‘perfume’
- j) [lik’ims -tu:] ‘throat’

In addition, some distinct terms distinguish the gender of animate nouns in Afan Oromo. Mostly these are kinship terms and terms for domestic animals. For instance, see the following.

(4)

- a) [ha:da mana:]/[abba mana:] ‘wife’/‘husband’
- b) [abba]/[ha:da] ‘father’/‘mother’
- c) [akko:]/[aka:ka:] ‘grandmother’/‘grandfather’

- d) [ada:da:]/[e:ssuma] ‘aunt’/‘uncle’
- e) [gurba:]/[intala] ‘boy’/‘girl/daughter’
- f) [ilma]/[intala] ‘boy’ or ‘son’/ ‘human female or daughter’
- g) [dubarti:]/[di:ra] ‘woman’/‘man or human male’
- h) [dibiʃfa]/[goromsa] ‘male calf’/‘heifer’
- i) [sanga:]/[dalti:] ‘ox’/‘cow’

Another mechanism used to differentiate the gender of a noun is adding the words [korma], ‘male’ and [daltu:], ‘female’ to some animate nouns as in the following examples.

(5)

- a) [harre: korma/harre: daltu:]
‘male donkey/female donkey’
- b) [sare: korma/sare: daltu:]
‘male dog/female dog (bitch)’
- c) [adurre: korma/adurre: daltu:]
‘male cat/female cat’
- d) [k’amale: korma:/k’amale: daltu]
‘male monkey/female monkey’

Most commonly, for male goat and male sheep, the term [korbe:ssa] is used instead of [korma]. Male chicken or cock is also denoted as [korma:], which is distinct from [korma] by lengthening of the final vowel. The terms [korbe:ssa] and [korma:], can also stand alone to denote the referents. In addition, they appear before the nouns unlike the above instances.

(6)

a) [korbe:ssa re:tti:/re:tti: daltu:]

‘he goat/ she goat’

b) [korbe:ssa ho:la:/ ho:la: daltu:]

‘male sheep/ewe’

c) [korma: hinda:k’k’o:/hinda:k’k’o: daltu:]

‘cock/hen’

The other thing regarding the use of the words [korma], ‘male’ and [daltu:], ‘female’, with an animate noun is that, for some animate nouns like lion, buffalo, elephant, and horse, whose referents are bigger in size, more often the feminine term [dal-tu:] changes to [dal-a:] by dropping the feminine gender marker [-tu] and suffixing the masculine gender marker [-a:]. Compare the examples below with example (5).

(7)

- a) [le:n tʃʷa korma/le:n tʃʷa dʌl-a:]
‘lion/lioness’
- b) [gafarsa korma/gafarsa dʌl-a:]
‘male buffalo/female buffalo’
- c) [arba korma/arba dʌl-a:]
‘male elephant/female elephant’
- d) [farad korma/farad dʌl-a:]
‘male horse/mare’

Since gender is not distinguished for most Afan Oromo nouns following the above mechanisms, the language uses respectively, masculine and feminine definite markers [-tʃʃa] and [-tti:] for gender marking. These are suffixed to nouns and adjective stems and they also show specificity as follows.

(8)

- a) [nars-i-tʃʃa/nars-i-tti:]
‘the male nurse/the female nurse’
- b) [po:lis -i-tʃʃa/po:lis-i-tti:]
‘the male police/the female police’

Besides, in Afan Oromo, where nouns are not morphologically marked for gender, their grammatical gender is distinguished by agreement markers which are suffixed to modifiers, verbs, or by distinct third-person singular pronouns.

(9)

a) [arb -i bine:n -ssa gudd-a:-dā]

elephant NOM beast 3M big 3M COP

‘The elephant is a strong beast.’

b) [gafars-i inni ati wara:n-te sun gudd -a:-dā:]

‘buffalo NOM 3M you speared that big 3M COP

‘The buffalo that you speared is big.’

What is more, personal pronouns are distinguished by gender in the third person singular forms (Clamons 1992, Greiferow-Mewis 2001). Observe the following.

(10)

<i>Nominal</i>	<i>Attributive</i>	<i>Absolutive</i>	<i>Possessive</i>
[ise:n/ishe:n] 3F	[ise:/ishe:] 3F	[ise:/ishe:]3F	[se:/she:] 3F
[inni] 3M	[isa:] 3M	[isa] 3M	[isa:] 3M

Most adjectives are marked morphologically as feminine or masculine in agreement with the nouns they modify. Griefenow-Mewis (2001:28), classifies

Afan Oromo adjectives into four groups based on the gender markings they take (cf. Amanuel 2007). The first group distinguishes masculinity by [-a:] and femininity by [-o:] as in examples below.

(11)

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

The second group of adjectives identifies masculinity by [-a:] and femininity by [-tu:] as in examples below.

(12)

- a) [bad-a:/tu:] 'bad M/F, wicked M/F'
- b) [bare:d-a:/tu:] 'beautiful M/F, handsome M/F'
- c) [gaba:b-a:/tu:] 'short M/F'
- d) [dab-a:/tu:] 'strong M/F'

- e) [dʒi:d̥-a:/tu:] ‘wet M/F’
- f) [la:f-a:/tu:] ‘soft M/F’
- g) [ulfa:t-a:/tu:] ‘heavy, honored, pregnant’

The third group of adjectives is marked by [-ssa] and [-tti:] or by [-ʃʃa] and [-tti:] to distinguish between masculine and feminine respectively. Consider the examples below.

(13)

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

According to Clamons (1992), this class is productive. The adjectives in this class can be used as nouns, so that [hijje:-ssa] can stand alone as a referring expression for a poor male and [hijje:-tti:] for a poor female (cf. Amanuel 2007).

Finally, the fourth group of adjectives is not gender distinctive and can be used with both masculine and feminine forms without any morphological change,

unlike the three classes discussed so far. This group of adjectives terminate with [-e:] or [i:] or [-a] (Griefenow-Mewis 2001). Consider the examples below.

(14)

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

A small group of adjectives is also marked for gender with [-a:] and [-tu:], as in [miʔa:ʔaw-a:] ‘sweet 3M’ and [miʔo:f-tu:], ‘sweet 3F’ (Clamons 1992).

Except for the group of adjectives under example (14), other adjectives in Afan Oromo are marked for agreement. For instance, in (15a) below, [gura-ʃʃ-i], ‘black 3M’ agrees with masculine noun [daga:], ‘stone’ and in (15c) [dulla- ʃʃ-i] ‘old 3M’ agrees with masculine [sanga:], ‘ox’. In contrast, [gurra: -tti:] ‘black 3F’ agrees with feminine [hinda:k’o:], ‘hen’ in (15b) and [dulla-tti:] ‘old 3F’ agrees with feminine [sa:ww-i], ‘cow’ in (15d).

(15)

a) [daga: gurra:-tʃʃ -i c'im -a: -d̪a]

stone black 3M NOM strong 3M COP

'Black stone is strong.'

b) [hinda:k'o: gurra: -tti: -n ʔin- barris -te]

hen black 3F NOM FOC flew 3F

'A black hen flew.'

c) [sanga: dulla -tʃʃ -i ʔin- du -ʔe]

ox old 3M NOM FOC died 3M

'The old ox died.'

d) [sa:ww -i dulla -tti: -n ʔin- bad -te]

cow NOM old 3F -NOM FOC disappeared 3F

'The old cow disappeared.'

In Afan Oromo, when a third-person singular subject is feminine and also a topic, its verb is marked with [-t-] which follows the stem, precedes tense and negative markers, and agrees with the subject. There is no marker on a verb if the subject is masculine, even when it is a topic. (Clamons 1992) Consider the following examples.

(16)

a) [dubarti: -n ʃʕim -tu: -n sun ʔin- du: -te]

woman NOM strong 3F NOM that FOC died 3F

‘That strong woman died.’

b) [gurba:-n ʃʕim -a: -n sun ʔin- duʔe]

boy NOM strong 3M NOM that FOC died

‘That strong boy died.’

c) [hintall -i de:r -tu: -n ʔin- bad -te]

girl NOM tall 3M NOM FOC disappeared 3F

‘The tall girl disappeared.’

d) [gurba: -n kale:ssa duf-e ʔin- bade]

boy NOM yesterday came-3M FOC disappeared

‘The boy who came yesterday disappeared.’

In (16a) and (16c) above, the feminine subjects [dubarti:-n], ‘woman’ and [hintall-i] ‘the girl’ are both topics of the verbs, [du:-te] ‘died F’ and [bad-te] ‘disappeared F’. So, they are marked for number and gender. In (16b) and (16d), the masculine noun [gurba:], ‘boy’ is the subjects and topics of the sentences, and agrees with the verbs, [du-ʔe] ‘died’ and [duf-e] ‘came’.

Afan Oromo does not show gender distinction by plural verbal inflections. The form is the same regardless of the gender of the subject nominals, or their order in coordinate constructions (Clamons1992). Consider the following examples.

(17)

a) [dubrt -o:t -i lama:-n kal:ssa duf-an fʕim -o: -da]

Women 3P NOM two NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3PL COP

‘The two women who came yesterday were strong.’

b) [di:r -ot -i lama:-n kal:ssa duf -an fʕim -o: -da]

men 3P NOM two NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3P COP

‘The two men who came yesterday were strong.’

c) [gurba: fi hintall -i kal:ssaduf -an fʕim -o: -da]

boy and girl NOM yesterday came 3P strong 3P COP

‘The boy and the girl who came yesterday were strong.’

As can be seen from the above examples, the third person plural verb, [duf-an] ‘came’ in both (17a) and (17b) is in agreement with both [dubrt-o:t-i] ‘women’ and [di:r-ot-i] ‘men’. In (17c) too, it is in agreement with [gurba: fi hintall-i] ‘the boy and the girl.’

3.2 Amharic

The Amharic gender assignment system commonly depends on natural gender. In other words, the gender of an animate noun is assigned according to the natural gender of their referents (Leslau, 1995). Some pairs of animate nouns have different terms; mostly these are kinship terms and terms for domestic animals.

(18)

- a) [bal]/[mist] ‘husband’/‘wife’
- b) [abbat]/[innat] ‘father’/ ‘mother’
- c) [wəndim]/[ihit] ‘brother’/‘sister’
- d) [aggot]/[akist] ‘uncle’/‘aunt’
- e) [blatena]/[lidʒagərəd] ‘boy’/‘girl’
- f) [wənd]/[set] ‘male or man’/‘female or woman’
- g) [wəjʃən]/[gidər] ‘male calf’/‘heifer’
- h) [bərə]/[lam] ‘ox’/‘cow’

Most Amharic animate nouns have the same root for both male and female. So, masculine and feminine gender is distinguished by definite markers [-u] and [-wa] which are suffixed to the nouns and adjective stems (ibid). These morphemes also show specificity. See the examples below.

(19)

a) [nərs-u/nərs-wa]

‘the male nurse/the female nurse’

b) [polis -u/polis-wa]

‘the male police/the female police’

In generic expressions most animate nouns are masculine (cf. Zelealem 2010). That means when the natural gender of an animate referent is irrelevant in an argument, it is the masculine form that is used. See the example below.

(20)

a)

[mannim təmari al- mət’a -m]

any student NEG-come-3M-NEG

‘No child came.’

b)

[gəbərə dəha nəw]

farmer poor COP 3M

‘Farmer is poor.’

Nevertheless, some animate nouns are feminine in generic expressions. These include a few birds, a few insects, ‘mule’, and ‘mouse’.

(21)

- a) [irgib jə- səlam milikit nat]
dove POSS- peace symbol COP 3F
'Dove is the symbol of peace'
- b) [tʃʷlifit fətan nat]
eagle fast COP 3F
'Eagle is fast.'
- c) [nib t'ənkarra sərratəñña n-at]
bee strong worker COP 3F
'Bee is strong worker.'
- d) [zinb k'oʃaʃa nat]
fly dirty COP 3F
'Fly is dirty.'
- e) [bək'lo gulbət all-at]
mule power AUX 3F
'Mule has power.'
- f) [ajit' tʃ'ira all-at]
mouse tail AUX 3F
'Mouse has tail.'

In addition, Leslau (1995) mentions [ts'əhaj] 'sun', [hagər] 'country' [məkina] 'car', and [nəfs] 'soul' as feminine nouns. Generally, the list of Amharic feminine inanimate nouns can be elaborated and categorized as follows.

(22)

- a) Celestial bodies like, [ɣʷərək'a] 'moon' and, [ts'əhaj] 'sun'
- b) Countries (e.g. Ethiopia, Japan, Italy, Spain, USA, Russia, etc)
- c) Small sized cars (e.g. Pejot 404, Toyota Corolla, etc)
- d) Ships and boats (e.g. Tekeze, Tana, Selam, etc)
- e) Small towns (e.g. Desie, Debre Markos, Sebeta, Arba Minch, etc)
- f) Others like, [b^wanb^wa] 'tap water', [məret] 'earth', and [nəfs] 'soul'

What is more, Amharic personal pronouns are distinguished by gender in the second and third person singular forms (Zealealem 2010).

(23)

<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Attributive</i>	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Possessive</i>
[anɸi] 2F	[anɸi] 2F	[anɸi] 2F	[jə-anɸi] 2F
[antə] 2M	[antə] 2M	[antə] 2M	[jə-antə] 2M
[iss-wa] 3F	[isswa] 3F	[isswa] 3F	[jə-isswa] 3F
[iss-u] 3M	[issu] 3M	[issu] 3M	[jə-issu] 3M

In Amharic, when the second and third person singular subjects are feminine or masculine their verbs are marked to agree with the subjects. Consider the following examples.

(24)

a) [antə t'ənkərra təmari nə-h]

you 2SM strong student COP 2SM

'You are strong student.'

b) [anʃi t'ənkərra təmari nə-ʃ]

you 2SF strong student COP 2SF

'You are strong student.'

c) [t'ənkərra-wu səwu t'əff -a]

strong-3M DEF man disappear 3M

'The strong man disappeared.'

d) [t'ənkərra-wa set t'əffa -ʃʃ]

strong-3F DEF woman disappear 3F

'The strong woman disappeared.'

In (24a) and (24c) above, the subjects [antə], 'you SM' and [səwu] 'man' are masculine topics of the verbs and agree with them in number and gender. In

(24b) and (24d), the subjects [anʃi], ‘you SF’ and [set] are feminine and topics, and agree with the verbs. Unlike Amharic, Afan Oromo does not have gender distinctive forms for second person singular.

Like Afan Oromo, Amharic does not show gender distinction by plural verbal inflections. The form is the same regardless of the gender of the subject nominals or their order in coordinate constructions. Consider the following examples.

(25)

a) [tinant jə-mət'-u hulət set -oʃ al-təməlləs-u -m]

yesterday who-came-3PL two woman-PL NEG-return-3PL-NEG

‘The two women who came yesterday did not return.’

b) [tinant jə-mət'-u hulət wənd-oʃ al-təməlləs -u -m]

yesterday who-came-3PL two man-PL NEG-return-3PL-NEG

‘The two men who came yesterday did not return.’

c) [tinant jə-mət'-u wənd inna set al-təməlləs -u -m]

yesterday who-came-3PL man and woman NEG-return-3PL-NEG

‘The man and woman who came yesterday did not return.’

The above examples show that the third person plural verb, [al-təməlləs-u-m] ‘did not return’ in both (25a) and (25b) is in agreement with both [setoŋ] ‘women’, and [wəndoŋ] ‘men’. In (25c) too it is in agreement with [wənd inna set] ‘man and woman’ without showing the gender of the subjects.

In Amharic, there are some animate nouns that are feminine and serve as generic. A great number of inanimate nouns are masculine in generic expressions too. However, the grammatical gender of most nouns is not predictable based on their morphological forms except in a few cases where the feminine gender marker [-it] is suffixed to feminine nouns, as in [t’ot’-it] ‘female monkey’, and [lidz-it] ‘girl’ (Leslau 1995). So, the gender of most nouns is revealed only in sentences by agreement markers. Agreement markers are suffixed to modifiers, and verbs distinguishing gender. See the following examples.

(26)

a) [antə jə-gəzza -h -at məkina k’ondʒo na -t]

you 2SM which-buy-2M-3F car beautiful COP:Fem-3F

‘The car you bought is beautiful.’

b) [anfi jə-gəzza -f -i -wu bet tilik’ nə -wu]

you 2SF which-buy-2M-3M-3M:Def house big COP:Mas-3M

‘The house you bought is big.’

As the above examples show, the subject nominals [məkina] ‘car’ (26a), and [bet] ‘house’ (26b), are respectively marked as feminine and masculine by the agreement [-at] and [-wu] suffixed to the verb [gəzza] and the copula. In addition, this verb is marked distinctively with the second person masculine, [-h] and feminine, [-j] suffixed to the same verb which has to agree with the pronouns, [antə] and [antʃi] in (26a), and (26b) respectively.

Furthermore, in Amharic singular demonstrative pronouns are distinguished by gender. Accordingly, the masculine form of the near and far demonstrative pronouns are [jih] ‘this 3M’ and [ja] ‘that 3M’, respectively; while the feminine forms are [jiʃi] ‘this 3F’ and [jaʃi] ‘that 3F’ (Zealelem 2010). Observe the following examples.

(27)

- a) [jih bet] ‘this house 3M’
- b) [ja bet] ‘that house 3M’
- c) [jiʃi məkina] ‘this car 3F’
- d) [jaʃi məkina] ‘that car 3F’

However, unlike the near demonstrative pronoun, for the far demonstrative pronouns, it is the feminine form which is marked for gender which is suffixed to the masculine form (ibid).

3.3 Gamo

Like Afan Oromo and Amharic, Gamo has masculine and feminine genders which are depicted using pairs of lexical items for animates, using gender marking suffixes (Wondimu 2010), and by modifiers (Hirut 1999). To start with, the following are instances of gender distinct nominals in the language.

(28)

- a) [azina]/[maʃʃa] ‘husband’/‘wife’
- b) [ifa]/[miʃʃo] ‘brother’/‘sister’
- c) [naʔa]/[biʔaʔo] ‘boy’/‘girl’
- d) [ado]/[indo] ‘male/female’
- e) [da:na]/[ke:ssa ajjo] ‘Mr/Mrs’
- f) [awa]/[ajjo] ‘father/mother’
- g) [ma:jiz]/[ajji awa] ‘grandfather/grandmother’
- h) [awa ifa]/[awa miʃʃo] ‘uncle/aunt’
- i) [bo:ra]/[mi:za] ‘ox’/‘cow’

For animate nouns which have the same root for both male and female, masculine and feminine definite markers [-az/-a] and [-ij] are respectively suffixed for gender distinction (Wondimu 2010). See the examples below.

(29)

- a) [kan-az/kan-ij] ‘the male dog/the bitch’
- b) [kutto-za/kutt-ij] ‘the cock/the hen’
- c) [ʃa:to-za/ ʃa:t-ij] ‘the male child/the female child’
- d) [paraz-a/para(z)-ij] ‘the male horse/the female horse’

In Gamo, animate nouns do not take gender markers in generic expressions, but in some of the dialects of the language they can be distinguished by the masculine and feminine nominal case markers [-a] and [-j/-i] respectively (Wondimu 2010:92-93). See the following examples.

(31)

- a) [kana-i sat't' -e:s]
dog-NOM: 3M bite -3M: Prog:Dec

‘A dog bites.’

- b) [maʃʃ -a loʔo-ko]
wife -FEM:Nom good-FOC

‘A wife is good.’

c) [azina -j loʔo-ko]

husband -MAS:Nom good-FOC

‘A husband is good.’

As shown in the examples above, the masculine and feminine nominative case markers [-a] and [-i] distinguish gender of animate nouns. Apart from that, in sentences, gender marking takes place by agreement marking on verbs. The following examples from Wondimu (2010:147) depicts this phenomenon.

(32)

a) [iz -a j -a -d -i -s]

she -NOM come-3FS-PERF-3FS-DEC:AFF

‘She came.’

b) [iz -i j -i -d -e -s]

he -NOM come-3MS-PERF-3MS-DEC:AFF

‘He came.’

As can be observed from the above examples, the verbs [jadis], ‘came 3MS’ and [jides], ‘came 3FS’ are distinct in form for masculine and feminine subjects.

Specifically, the masculine form is distinguished by [-a-i-], while its feminine equivalent is distinguished by [-i-e-] for agreement. In addition, the personal pronouns, [izi] ‘he’ and [iza] ‘she’ have also changed their forms to [iz-a] ‘she’ and [iz-i] for nominalization. As in Afan Oromo, in Gamo, personal pronouns have separate forms only at third person singular which alter their forms based on cases. See the following from the Dache dialect of the language (ibid:145).

(33)

<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Attributive</i>	<i>Absolutive</i>	<i>Possessive</i>
[iz-i] 3M	[iz-a] 3M	[iz-a] 3M	[iz-a] 3M
[iz-a] 3F	[iz-i] 3F	[iz-o] 3F	[iz-i] 3F

As can be observed from the above data, the nominative form of 3M is the same as the attributive and possessive form of 3F and possessive 3M and nominative 3F are the same in Gamo. Basically, the root for both masculine and feminine pronouns is the same i.e. [iz-], but they are distinguished by case markers. The case marking process shown above is the same with other nominals (Hirut 2003).

In general, Gamo inanimate nouns do not have separate morphological forms that show their grammatical gender. So, the gender of inanimate nouns can

only be inferred from agreement markers which are suffixed to modifiers and the verbs they appear with in sentences, or by definite markers and case markers suffixed to them. Regard the following examples from Wondimu (2010:114-15)

(34)

a) [ʃuʃʃ -az -a gade -n wotsts -a]

stone-DEF:MAS-Abs:MAS ground-Loc (on) put -2S:Imp

‘Put the stone on the ground.’

b) [iz -i zuma -z -ra bides]

he-Nom mountain-DEF:MAS-Gen:MAS-Loc (by) go:3MS:Per:Dec

‘He went along the mountain.’

All three languages – Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo – use a masculine and feminine gender system. Since these languages do not have a neuter form, every noun is assigned either masculine or feminine genders.

CHAPTER FOUR: SEXISM IN GENDER ASSIGNMENT OF NOUNS IN AFAN OROMO, AMHARIC, AND GAMO

In chapter three, we have seen an overview of gender assignment mechanisms in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. In this chapter, we will see how the gender assignment systems of nouns reflect sexist ideologies in the three languages. Generally, the three linguistic communities exhibit similar sexist ideologies in many ways. Yet, their languages do not equally reveal these facts through their respective grammatical gender assignment systems. In this section we will see the contrasts based on how they assign gender to different classes of nouns, i.e. human nouns, non-human-animate nouns, and inanimate nouns, under sub-sections 4.1– 4.3.

4.1 Human Nouns

Human nouns are animate nouns that specifically denote humans. These nouns have different semantic features that show the roles of men and women among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo societies. Under this section, personal names, administration titles, profession titles, religious titles, and generic human nouns are discussed.

4.1.1 Personal Names

In many African languages, personal names are meaningful and have more than one function. As Suzman (1994) writes, “In Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, and many other cultures, name givers traditionally chose personal names that pointed to a range of people and circumstances that were relevant at the time of the child's birth.” Similarly, Agyekum (2006) demonstrates that Akan personal names have meanings related to the Akan culture, philosophy, thought, environment, and religion. In many Nigerian languages too, personal names are rich with multifaceted meanings that have religious, cultural (Bariki 2009), and political (Ọnụkawa 1999) functions. Dalfovo (1982) also argues that Logbara personal names have religious functions in addition to their referential function.

However, in spite of the fact that gender ideologies are also part of the linguistic contents of African names, not much has been explored from this angle. Some of the earlier works (like those mentioned above) have either mentioned the existence of the matter without further discussions or they have totally ignored it. For instance, Suzman's (1994) work mentions that Zulu names have connotations related with gender preference without further explanations about the cultural practices from which the matter has emanated. Other works like that of Ọnụkawa (1999), Agyekum (2006), (Bariki 2009), and Ogunwale (2012) completed later, have totally ignored the issue.

In the context of Ethiopian languages, there are few studies of personal names. Among these, Zelealem's (2003)⁴ work on Amharic appears to be the earliest, while that of Tesfaye's (2014) on Afan Oromo is the latest. These two works are generally engaged in explaining the morphological structures and semantic contents of names in the two languages.

With regard to the gender ideology issue, Zelealem has discussed that there are gaps between Amharic male and female names because of male dominance in the society. Though this work is insightful in many ways, the portion of the study centered on the gender issue has not dealt well with the cultural gender ideology which in-practice caused the gap he observed between male and female names. Similarly, Tesfaye's work on Afan Oromo, has totally ignored the issue of gender ideology in spite of the fact that Zelealem's earlier work and that of Amanuel (2007)⁵, on Afan Oromo, and Roza's (2008) on Tigrigna have shown its existence. These last two works have dealt with the manifestation of gender bias ideology in the grammar of the two languages. Consequently, they have dedicated just one section each to personal names. Thus, no one has yet done a comprehensive study on how personal names manifest gender bias in any of the Ethiopian languages. This generalization may be true for other African languages as well.

⁴ Zelealem has published another article in (2010) on Amharic which is similar with that of Amanuel (2007), and Roza (2008). He included his earlier gender issue in this article too.

⁵ This work was later published in 2011 in collaboration with Hirut Woldemariam.

This section is aimed at scrutinizing how cultural gender ideologies manifest through naming practices among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo by showing the possible conceptual mappings between cultural gender roles and gender ideologies in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names.

Like in many other African languages, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names reveal connotations related to the social, cultural, economic, political, and other situations of the society, especially during the birth of the bearers. For instance, regard the following.

(1)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[bilisumma:] ‘freedom’	[nəts’annet] ‘freedom’	[dure] ‘my wealth’
b)	[kenna:] ‘gift’	[sit’t’ota] ‘gift’	[j’a:bba] ‘big’

The names under example (1) above, show the economic and political realities associated with the people during or prior to the birth of their holders. Similar to many other languages (Hough 2000) linguistically, personal names among

the three languages show gender distinction using suffixes. See the following sets of male and female names.

(2)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[k'abban-a:]	[abəb-ə]	[kuw-a]
	'shade-3MS'	'blossom-3MS'	'shade-3MS'
b)	[k'abban-e:]	[abəb-əʃ]	[kuw-e]
	'shade-3FS'	'blossom-3FS'	'shade-3FS'
b)	[guddat-a:]	[dəgg-u]	[mala:l-o]
	'growing-3MS'	'the righteous-3MS'	'exaggerated 3MS'
	[guddat-tu:]	[dəgg-itu]	[mala:l-e]
	'growing-3FS'	'the righteous-3FS'	'exaggerated 3FS'

The above sets of names have the same roots. So, they are distinguished for male and female by the third person singular gender marking morphemes suffixed to them. Accordingly, the Afan Oromo ones are differentiated by [-a:] 3MS and [-e]/[-itu:] 3FS; the Amharic ones by [-ə]/[-u] 3MS and [-əʃ]/[-itu]; and the Gamo by [-a]/[-o] 3MS and [-e] 3FS. This process follows the grammatical gender marking mechanisms for nouns among the languages. However,

personal names do not always show gender distinction through morphological processes like in the above examples. There are some names that appear without gender-marking morphemes. These names can be bestowed to any of the sexes. Regard the following examples.

(3)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[gonfa:]	[sintajəhu]	[asane]
	‘crown’	‘I have seen much’	‘human’
b)	[fʷarra:]	[idil]	[giffje]
	‘luck’	‘luck’	‘luck’
c)	[kenna:]	[sit’t’ota]	[imota]
	‘gift’	‘gift’	‘gift’

The above name can be given to either sex. Nevertheless, there are names which are not gender marked like these ones, but rather gender exclusive among the three societies. These names commonly show the male dominance or the practical marginalization of women in political and military arenas. Accordingly, the following names are exclusively given to males.

(4)

	Afan Oromo	Amharic	Gamo	Gloss
a)	[motumma:]	[mɔ̃ngɨst]	[kawo]	‘government’
b)	[le:nɟʷo:]	[anbɔ̃ssa]	[ga:mmo]	‘lion/hero’
c)	[k'e:rranso:]	[nɔ̃bro]	[ma:he]	‘tiger/aggressive’

As can be observed, the names under example (4) are gender neutral. Hence, linguistically, there is no rule that restricts their bestowal on either of the two sexes. However, due to the practical gender exclusive political roles they connote, these names are not given to females. The first triplet of names, (4a) is associated with political leadership; while the last two (4b and 4c) are metaphorical references associated with warfare. Fauna names like these ones are only given to males because practically, in that society, political and military activities are exclusively men’s assignments. So, these male names simply manifest the sociocultural gender bias of the societies.

By the same token, there are also linguistically gender neutral but culturally ‘female-only’ names that show the places of women among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo.

(5)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
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a)	[amarti:]	[siniddu]	[gi:gise]
	‘precious’	‘organized’	‘organizer’
b)	[a:nnane:]	[titina]	[indʒete]
	‘my milk/calm’	‘politness’	‘my comfortable’
c)	[k’umbi:]	[məʔaza]	[malʔʔethe]
	‘aroma’	‘aroma’	‘sweet’
d)	[lo:ko:]	[mirt’]	[loʔanfje]
	‘tall and slim’	‘model/pretty’	‘model/pretty’

As can be inferred from their meanings, the above female names depict the stereotypical good women who are expected to be precious, organized, polite, sweet or amiable, and pretty. These are expectations that match with the cultural gender perceptions or gender roles of the societies. Though these names are morphologically gender neutral, they are not bestowed to males because of their stereotypical feminine connotations.

As we have seen so far, among the three linguistic groups, cultural gender bias manifests through some grammatically gender-neutral personal names that could be bestowed on males or females, but which are restricted by practical cultural reasons. Now, let us see how the same scenario manifests through personal names that are grammatically gender marked but do not have parallel

counter parts for male or female. To begin with, the following names are exclusively bestowed to males.

(6)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[abbo:m-a:]	[azzez-e]	[ma:dd-a]
	‘commander 3MS’	‘he commanded’	‘commander 3MS’
b)	[mo:sis-a:]	[daññ-e]	[andɜ-a]
	‘3MS king maker’	‘he judged’	‘judge 3MS’
c)	[bulɸ-a:]	[gi-za -ɸəw]	[ajiss-a]
	‘governor 3MS’	‘2MS govern them’	‘governor 3MS’

As can be observed, the above names connote political power and all of them are marked with masculine gender markers like [-a] in Afan Oromo and Gamo, and [-e] and [-za-] in Amharic. Linguistically, the morphologies of the three languages permit the formation of parallel female names by altering these gender markers with their feminine equivalents, [-tu] and [-itu] for Afan Oromo, [-ɸ] and [-zi-] for Amharic, and [-e] for Gamo as in example (7) below. However, these possibilities have been blocked by the same cultural gender biased roles we have discussed under example (4).

(7)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[abbo:m-tu:]	[azzeze-ʃ]	[ma:dd-e]
	‘commander 3FS’	‘commanded 3FS’	‘commander 3FS’
b)	[mo:sis-tu:]	[dañne-ʃ]	[andɜ-e]
	‘king maker 3FS’	‘judged 3FS’	‘judge 3FS’
c)	[bulʃ-tu:]	[gi-ʒi-aʃɔw]	[ajiss-e]
	‘governor 3FS’	‘govern 2FS them’	‘governor 3FS’

The absence of the above female names in the three languages has resulted from unequal cultural gender roles among the speakers. As discussed in the introduction section, culturally, among these three societies, males and females have unequal gender roles: males are trained for leadership while females are trained to serve the males. Thus, the names given to males as in the above example, and to females as in the following example, reflect the sex-based distinctive gender roles among the societies.

(8)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[dand-e:ssu:]	[immə-bet]	[wazant-e]

	‘resilient 3FS’	‘lady/good-wife’	‘thoughtful-wife’
b)	[dah-e:]	[innat]	[irt’t’-e]
	‘mother/carrying’	‘mother/carrying’	‘calm 3FS’
c)	[ku:ll-itti:]	[k’ondʒ-it]	[gu:gunth-e]
	‘pretty 3FS’	‘pretty 3FS’	‘punctual/fast 3FS’

The above female names connote the bearers’ possession of stereotypically ‘good woman/wife’s’ characters and physical beauty. These names fall in the same theme with the ones under example (5) because their pragmatic connotations map on the stereotypical gender expectations of the societies i.e. the qualities of a ‘good wife’. Yet, unlike the ones under example (5), these are not gender neutral, but linguistically it was possible to produce parallel male names from their roots as in the following example. However, their stereotypical connotations restrict this possibility.

(9)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[dand-aʔa:]	[abba-bet]	[wazant-a]
	‘resilient 3MS’	‘good-husband’	‘thoughtful-husband’

b)	[abba:]	[abbat]	[irt't'-a]
	'father/carrying	'father/carrying'	'calm 3MS'
c)	[ku:ll-ijfa]	[k'ondʒo-wu]	[gu:gunts-a]
	'pretty 3MS'	'pretty 3MS'	'punctual/fast 3FS'

As discussed above, the meanings of Afan Oromo, and Amharic female names map on the culturally perceived qualities of a 'good woman'. These qualities are gender distinctive. Hence, we do not find linguistically parallel male names among the speakers of the languages. Instead, there are male names that reflect the qualities of a stereotypical 'good man/husband' among the societies. Regard the following example.

(10)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[di:ro:]	[wənd-u]	[zik'k'en-a]
	'the male/brave'	'the male/brave'	'brave 3MS'
b)	[ro:rris-a:]	[asfərri-wu]	[t'o:n-a]
	'aggressor 3MS'	'furious 3MS'	'winner 3MS'
c)	[diri:r-sa:]	[zərg-a-wu]	[čammenn-a]

	‘killer 3MS’	‘killer 3MS’	‘merciless 3MS’
d)	[ga:ʃʃan-a:]	[gaʃʃa-wu]	[gondalle]
	‘shield 3MS’	‘shield 3MS’	‘the shield 3MS’
e)	[dʒab-a:]	[tʻənkir]	[wolkʻkʻ-a]
	‘strong 3MS’	‘become strong 2MS’	‘strong 3MS’

The above names have pragmatic connotations like bravery, pride, physical strength, aggressiveness, and defensiveness. These are some of the culturally expected qualities of the male among these societies. These sorts of names are bestowed only on males. Thus, the following possible female names which are linguistically parallel with these male names, do not exist.

(11)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[dubare:]	[sət-wa]	[zikʻkʻen-e]
	‘female/brave’	‘the female/brave’	‘brave 3FS’
b)	[ro:rris-tu:]	[asfərri-wa]	[tʻo:n-e]
	‘aggressor 3FS’	‘furious 3FS’	‘winner 3FS’
c)	[diri:rs-itu:]	[zərg-i-wu]	[čammenn-e]

	‘killer 3FS’	‘3FS killer’	‘3FS merciless’
d)	[ga:ʃʃan-e:]	[gaʃʃa-wa]	[gondalle]
	‘shield 3FS’	‘shield 3FS’	‘shield 3FS’
e)	[ɖʒab-tu:]	[tʻənkir-i]	[wolkʻkʻ-e]
	‘strong 3FS’	‘become strong 2FS’	‘strong 3FS’

Furthermore, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo also manifest gender bias ideology through names whose semantic connotations are associated with gender preference. As we have already seen in the preceding parts of this dissertation, among the speakers of these languages, almost all social and political leadership positions are controlled by males and use male gendered language. In addition, male children are expected to expand their fathers’ and forefathers’ bloodlines by forming their own families. As a result, these societies crave male children. Therefore, when women get pregnant, they wish the child to be male. Though this practice is common among the three societies, its manifestations through personal names are not equal. For instance, among the Oromo and the Amhara, if they rear a female child while expecting a male child, they give the female child names that connote this situation.

Accordingly, names like [hata:-tu:] or [jo:fe:-te:] in Afan Oromo (cf. Amanuel and Hirut 2011) and [tihun] in Amharic share the meaning, ‘let her be’ and are instances of the practice. These names have a sense of dissatisfaction.

Pragmatically, they mean, ‘it is against our will, but since we cannot change the occurrence of the female child, we accept the situation as it is’. Nonetheless, in Gamo, the researcher did not come across this sort of name, possibly because of the confinement of our data sources to one dialect alone or because of the multiplicity of pragmatic connotations of some names (a common feature of names among the three languages) which logically requires a complete investigation of all possibilities to arrive at an objective conclusion.

The linguistic manifestation of gender preference through personal names may also take place by bestowing names that usually connote the parents’ satisfactions for rearing male children. Regard the following example.

(12)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a)	[galata:]	[misgana]	[galata:]
	‘thanks’	‘thanks’	‘thanks’
b)	[wa:k’ga:ri:]	[səmmaʔigzer]	[kuma]
	‘God is good’	‘God heard’	‘full’
c)	[tole:ra:]	[mollaliñ]	[imo:ta]
	‘it has turned well’	‘it is fulfilled for me’	‘gift’
d)	[taʔe:ra:]	[honəliñ]	[hanides]

‘it has happened’ ‘it happened for me’ ‘it has happened’

The above male names have connotations related to the parents’ contentment for rearing the male children which they were dreaming for. This is either indirectly reflected through the thanks and praise given to God for giving them the male children as in examples (13a&b) or by directly heralding the fulfillment of the parents’ dream for rearing the male children as in examples (13c&d). What is more, when parents beget just one male child who may have already one, two, three or more sisters, the male child would be given names that connote this scenario. See the following names.

(13)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
[tokki-tʃa:]	[and-u ʔaləm]	[bizz-a]
‘the only’	‘the one world’	‘the one’

The above names have a pragmatic connotation: ‘the child is the only child in the family’ in spite of the presence of female children in the family. On the other hand, the only female child in a family is not seen as a special event and is not given a similar name to celebrate this event.

Furthermore, there are some male names among the three languages whose pragmatic meanings manifest gender preference. These names usually reflect the fact that the societies are patrilineal.

(14)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
b)	[k'oritʃf-a:]	[mədihin]	[dale]
	'medicine 3MS'	'medicine'	'medicine'
c)	[fajjis-a:]	[adin-əwu]	[aʃaʃ-a]
	'savior 3MS'	'2MS save him'	'saver 3MS'
d)	[sañni:]	[zəməde]	
	'descendent'	'my relative'	

The names, [k'oritʃfa], [mədihin], and [dale] which literally mean 'medicine' and the names [fajjisa:], [adin-əw], an [aʃaʃ-a] which literally mean 'savior' in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, respectively, have the pragmatic meaning, 'healer' to mean that the bearers 'have cured or spared' especially their fathers. The notions of curing and sparing have come from the fact that the societies trace their blood lines though the male. So, the connotation here is that the births of the bearers of the names have 'saved' their fathers' and their forefathers' blood line from discontinuing. Similarly, the Afan Oromo name [sañni:], 'descendent'

and the Amharic [zəmədə], ‘my relative’, connote the fact that the fathers of the male children have received these children who would allow their blood lines to continue to exist. As can be observed some of these names are gender neutral which means they could have readily been bestowed to females too. Similarly, some of these names which are gender marked could have been morphologically reformed so as to bestow them on females. However, the above names do not have the following possible feminine counters because the societies are patrilineal.

(15)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
b)	[k’orɪʃf-e:]	[mədihin]	[dale]
	‘medicine 3FS’	‘medicine’	‘medicine’
c)	[fajjis-tu:]	[adiñ-iwu]	[afaʃ-e]
	‘savior 3FS’	‘2FS save him’	‘saver 3FS’
d)	[sañni:]	[zəmədə]	
	‘descendent’	‘my relative’	

Generally, as discussed above, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo have distinctive male names which connote patriarchal and patrilineal practices that show gender preference. This linguistic scenario has emanated from the

cultural gender ideologies of the societies that consider men to be superior and women to be inferior, respectively. As can be observed from the above discussion, the birth of female children is not celebrated as a special event through naming unlike that of the male children. In addition, women are not bestowed names that pragmatically show their role as blood line extenders.

Though not much research has been done on other African languages, one of the earliest works by Suzman (1994) on Zulu shows similar gender preference connotations in male names:

The traditional [Zulu] family would contain many children, and they were frequently named in terms of one another. Boys were and are always favored as future providers and heads of families; so, it was particularly good to have a boy first, in which case he received a name like *uVusumuzi* 'revive the home'. Girls were welcome as helpers for the mothers and sources of *lobolo*, [bride wealth]. (ibid: 263)

As discussed in this section, morphologically, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names can be derived from basic lexicons. These names generally follow the grammatical gender assignment systems of the languages. Accordingly, male names and female names are differentiated by gender marking morphemes which are usually suffixed to the roots of the lexicons. In addition, some names are gender neutral and do not need to be marked for gender. These names may be given to males or females because there are no morphological restrictions.

Content wise, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names are meaningful. They either take the basic semantic denotations of the root lexicons they are derived from, or their pragmatic connotations. In this regard, most names reflect meanings that are directly or indirectly related with the social, political, economic, and religious lives of the societies. They may also contain meanings that are associated with specific physical, mental, and environmental conditions surrounding the bearers and/or the bestowing parties during the bearers' birth.

However, linguistic principles are not always followed to bestow names for either of the sexes. It is culture that plays the central role in determining what sort of names should be given to males or females. The basic principle in this process is set by cultural gender ideologies or their manifestations, i.e. the gender role assignment systems of the societies. Names that are bestowed are dictated by this principle, usually limiting the objective conventional possibilities as set by the grammars of the languages. This practice manifests the reproduction of the cultural gender bias ideologies of the societies. Generally, personal names manifest the gender biased ideologies of the societies in two ways. The first is the bestowal of exclusive male and female names which disregard morphological conventions and follow the distinctive cultural gender roles of men and women among the societies. The second, which is not that different from the first case with regard to the ideological domain, is the bestowal of distinctive male and female names that connote

gender preferences. Therefore, among the speakers of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo languages, many male and female personal names have pragmatic meanings that map on to the conceptual gender stereotypes and/or the cultural gender roles assignment systems.

4.1.2 Administration Titles

This section presents sexism in administrative titles of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. As found in this study, there are differences among the three languages regarding the gender of admiration titles. The differences have originated from basic language variations and significant socio-political differences among the cultural lives of the three linguistic groups. Therefore, to show the differences clearly, these culture-driven linguistic scenarios among the three societies will be examined in this section.

To start with, until the 1880s the Oromo people used to be administrated by a traditional socio-political system called Gada. This administration system was democratic for males but it marginalized women (Negaso 2000). However, studies show that during this period the Oromo women had better human right protections and more respect than any other group of women in their vicinity, or even current-day Oromo women (Amanuel and Hirut 2014). Regarding women's marginalization in political and military activities under the Gada system, different administration titles during the time attest to the fact.

Thus, administration titles such as [abba: gada:] ‘leader of the Gada council’, [abba: du:la:] ‘war leader’, [abba: dubbi:] ‘chief speaker of the Gada council’, and [abba: c’affe:] ‘chairman of the legislative assembly’ reflect male domination in the Gada administration system. These titles do not have feminine forms. In fact, one cannot judge the past with the present mentality since every period in human cultural evolution has its own philosophical dimension. (Amanuel 2007) However, sometimes the past mentality is reflected in the present lifestyle of a society. Language convention is the carrier of this mentality (Bonvillian 2000).

The Oromo started to abandon the Gada administration system in favor of kingship system in the 1880s (Negaso 2000). Yet, this transformation did not bring women into leadership. Titles from that period also confirm this fact. For example, the masculine administration titles, [mo:ti:] ‘king’, [go:fta:] ‘lord’ do not have parallel feminine forms. This shows that there was a power imbalance between males and females of the language community during this period. Linguistically, the last noun [go:fta:] ‘lord’ seems to have [gi:fti:] ‘lady’ as its parallel. However, since ‘lord’ and ‘lady’ are not equal in status the titles are also not symmetric. In Oromo society, someone who used to be addressed by the title [go:fta:] or [go:fti:], ‘lord’ was a male leader while [gi:fti:], ‘lady’ was only the title of a lord’s wife and women addressed with this title did not have the right to lead (Amanuel 2007).

The Oromo kingship system did not last long because of the Amhara king called Menelik II who conquered them around the year 1885. As a result of the conquest the Oromo were forced to totally abandon the Gada administration system and adopted a feudal administration system introduced by Menelik II (Negaso 2000). Regarding gender balance in administration, the feudal system by its nature was not a good political system. For this reason, it encouraged the continuity of male domination in the administration arena. Administration titles of the time verify this. For example, [abba: lafa:], ‘landlord’, and [abba: k’oro:] ‘landowner’ do not have parallel feminine nouns (Amanuel 2007).

In terms of holding political administration posts, relatively, the present seems to be better for Oromo women. Nowadays, a few women are seen on administration posts. Yet, as the contemporary administration titles in the language show, the past male dominance in the political and social arenas still manifests through nouns which reference administration posts and some profession titles. For examples masculine nouns [dura ta:ʔ-a:] ‘chairman’, [bulɸ-a:] ‘administrator’, and [abba: ganda:] ‘chairman of a village’ refer to administration posts in the present lives of the language community.

The masculine terms do not have feminine forms, in spite of the fact that today women are allowed to hold the posts and the grammar of the language also allows the formation of parallel feminine titles by alternating feminine morphemes with masculine ones. For instance, [abba:] ‘father’ can be

substituted with [ha:dɑ] ‘mother’ to form [ha:dɑ ganda:] ‘chairwoman’ of a village’. In addition, feminine gender markers [-e:ssu:] and [-itu:] can be altered with the masculine gender marker [-a:] to form feminine titles [dura t-e:ssu:] ‘chairwoman’ and [bulʃ-itu:] ‘administrator 3F’ for female referents. (ibid)

Having discussed the linguistic sexism manifested by Afan Oromo administration titles, let us now see the scenario in Amharic in this regard. Like the Oromo, the Amhara have been a patrilineal and patriarchal society. However, there are visible political worldview differences among the traditional administration systems of the two societies. Among these differences, the major one worth mentioning is the level of rights and respects given to women. In this regard, the traditional Gada system of the Oromo, which in fact was male dominated in many ways, was much better (see Amanuel and Hirut 2014) than the Amhara’s long-used kingship system. The traditional political system of the later was not only male dominated, but also disregarded women’s rights and respect. However, the Amharic language does not overtly show how bad the system was for women.

Regarding administration titles, overtly, Amharic looks to be a relatively gender fair language. Many Amharic administration titles are gender neutral. For instance, terms like [gəʒi], ‘governor’, [astədadari], ‘administrator’, [məri], ‘leader’, [azaʒ], ‘commander’, [lik'emənbər], ‘chairperson’, [dedʒazmaʃ], ‘major general’, and so forth are gender neutral terms. To that matter, few other

administration terms that are not gender neutral have feminine counterparts. Terms like [nigus/nigist], ‘king/queen’ and [geta/iməbet], ‘lord/lady’ are two examples in this case. Nevertheless, traditionally, women had few stakes in political leadership in society. A closer look into the societal usages of gender-neutral Amharic administration terms show that these terms are sexist. This can be easily demonstrated by studying the exclusively male personal names derived from the terms. For example, [mər̥ra], ‘he led’ and [ʃəwɒngizɒ], ‘govern Showa’ are this sort of names (cf. Zelealem 2003). Furthermore, in spite of the existence of feminine counterparts in the Amharic term for ‘king’, historically there were few women who have ever reached this level of leadership. So, the practical political lives of the Amhara also show that they excluded women from leadership.

So far, we have looked at how Afan Oromo overtly and Amharic covertly depict linguistic sexism through administration titles. Now, we will see what this linguistic scenario looks like in Gamo. Like the Amhara, the Gamo practiced a kingship political system of their own. However, this practice was altered by the same 1880’s Amhara conquest discussed earlier in relation to the Oromo. So, administration terms in Gamo have two phases, i.e. prior and post- Amhara administration.

Prior to the conquest, the Gamo were led by a king. They were divided into 40 [dere], ‘societies’ each of which had its own [kawo] or [kati] ‘king’. Since like the

Oromo and the Amhara, their administration system was male dominated, this title has no feminine form or parallel. Other subordinate administration titles such as [danna], [halak'a], [huduga], and [mic'a danna] also have no feminine forms or parallels. The title of the wife of a [kawo] or [kati] was [godenitso], 'queen' but this title is not parallel with [kawo] or [kati].

The post-conquest leadership practice introduced by the Amhara followed its source. So, the Amharic terms of administration were borrowed in the Gamo language. Thus, we find terms like [astədadare], 'administrator', [məri], 'leader', [azaže], 'commander', and [lik'ewonbare], 'chairperson' being used until the present.

In this section linguistic sexism in administration titles in Afan Oromo, Amharic and Gamo have been discussed. As the gender assignment systems of the languages reveal, women were excluded from political administration in the past. However, at a certain time in the history of the Oromo and the Amhara people, there were women who were administrators and warriors. For instance, in the nineteenth century, a German missionary, Johann Ludwig Krapf (1839: vi) observed that the Tulama Oromo were led by queens. As he writes:

Female government is not unknown to them [the Oromo]: e.g. the tribe *Moolofollada* has a queen who governed over it. Her name is *Tshame*, and she seem to be a person of a high spirit; for although the king of Shoa [Amhara] has made her to pay tribute, and has taken her daughter, for a surety, in concubinage, she very often obliged him to come with an army to fetch his tribute. He is said to have often invited her to see him at Ankober or Angollala, but she never came; but once she gave him this haughty answer:- "If he wished to see her at his capital, it would be

proper for him, as a king, to overlay all the road from Moolofallada to his palace with silk and velvet; as she would certainly have done, if she had invited him.”- Also the Anko Tribe, which now inhabits the north-west of Shoa, and formerly occupied that part of Efat where Ankober* is situated, had a queen at the time it was driven from that place. Female government is not, however, general among them; but pedigree, power, valour, and riches seem to entitle to government, at least in various tribes; whereas in some others, e.g. in the eastern tribes, a kind of patriarchal government is said to exist.

As can be observed from what Krapf (1839) says, the female leader was so brave and wealthy she challenged the then Amhara leader. She was not the only female leader for the Oromo as the Wallo Oromo also had queens who ruled over them. Among them were Workitu and Mestawot who were regents to their minor sons and were responsible for their provinces. Furthermore, in 1896, Empress Tayetu Betul, wife of Emperor Menelik II who was also a Yijju-Oromo, actively advised the government and participated in defending Ethiopia from Italian invasion.

Among the Amhara there was also Empress Mentewab who was crowned co-ruler upon the succession of her son Iyasu II in 1730 and held unprecedented power over government during his reign. Her attempt to continue in this role following the death of her son in 1755 led her into conflict with Wubit, Iyasu's widow, who believed that it was her turn to preside at the court of her own son Iyoas. The conflict between these two queens led to Mentewab summoning her Qwaran relatives and their forces to Gondar for support. Wubit responded by summoning her own Oromo relatives and their considerable forces from Yeju. Mentewab summoned the powerful Mikael Sehul to mediate the dispute and

prevent a bloodbath. Upon arriving in Gondar, he was made *Ras*. Mentewab had hoped that he would help her, but instead *Ras* Mikael seized power for himself.

Empress Zewditu, the daughter of Emperor Menelik II, was another Amhara woman who ascended to power in the early 20th century in Ethiopia. She was Empress of Ethiopia from 1916 to 1930. The first female head of an internationally recognized country in Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the first empress regnant of the Ethiopian Empire, her reign was noted for the reforms of her Regent and designated heir Ras Tafari Makonnen, later Emperor Haile Selassie I. She was at best ambivalent and often persuasively opposed, due to her firm conservatism and strong religious devotion.

However, these short-lived instances did not mean that women had equal rights to men in political leadership. As the linguistic data discussed in this section shows, in general, women were marginalized in political and military leadership among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo. Today, there is a change in favor of women in the political arena of Ethiopia in general, and among the three societies under discussion. Nevertheless, no language planning has been undertaken yet to make women visible. The current status of women in Ethiopia will be dealt with in the next chapter.

4.1.3 Profession Titles

In this sub-section, linguistic sexism in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo profession titles will be discussed. The usage of profession titles is one of the main topics in language and gender research (Formanowicz, Bedyńska, Cislak, Braun, & Sczesny, 2013; Jessell & Beymer, 1992; Stericker, 1981). In many languages the masculine form of professional titles are the generic form and refer to both males and females, and the feminine form is derived from the masculine one (Amanuel 2007, Stahlberg, Braun, Irmen, & Sczesny, 2007).

Activists of gender-neutral language advocate the use of gender-neutral profession titles when the gender of the person in question is indefinite. For example, they prefer police officer to policeman or policewoman and flight attendant to stewardess or steward. In some cases, this may involve disapproving the use of certain specifically female titles such as authoress, to encourage the use of the parallel unmarked form such as author as a fully gender-neutral title.

However, the use of gender-neutral forms of profession titles applies to languages without grammatical gender. In languages such as Afan Oromo and Amharic, it requires every noun to be placed in one of the gender categories. In these languages the situation is altered by the fact that nouns for people are often constrained to be inherently masculine or feminine, and sometimes the

production of truly gender-neutral titles may not be possible (see Amanuel 2007 for Afan Oromo). In such cases, proponents of gender-neutral language may instead focus on ensuring that feminine and masculine words exist for every profession, and that they are treated with equal status.

The suffix -man had the meaning "person" in Old English, but in present-day English it is predominantly masculine. Thus, profession titles that include this suffix such as fireman, salesman, and alderman, generally imply that the holder is male. Some of these profession titles have feminine variants like alderwoman, while others do not, because traditionally the positions in question were not occupied by women (Aarts, Bas and April M. S. McMahon 2006). Today, for most of these titles, gender-neutral equivalents also exist. For example, titles such as police officer, salesperson, and sales representative are among the gender-neutral titles used currently.

In Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo many modern profession titles are borrowed from foreign languages such as English, French, and Arabic, but they also have titles of their own. See the following examples.

(16)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[barsi:s-a:]/-tu:	[astəmari]	[astama:re]	‘teacher’
b)	[barata:/tu:]	[təmari]	[tama:ra:]	‘student’

c)	[narsi:]	[nərs]	[nərsse]	‘nurse’
d)	[dokto:ri:]	[doktər]	[doktere]	‘doctor’
e)	[haki:mi:]	[hakim]	[a:kime]	‘healer’
f)	[piro:fe:sari:]	[profesər]	[piropessere]	‘professor’
g)	[indʒinari:]	[indʒinər]	[indʒinare]	‘engineer’
h)	[abba: see:ra:]	[dañña]	[dañña]	‘judge’
i)	[po:li:si:]	[polis]	[polise]	‘police’
j)	[konkola:ʃisa:/tu:]	[a]kərkari]/[ʃofer]	[ʃufere]	‘driver’
k)	[wa:rdijja:]	[zəbəñña]	[zabañña]	‘guard’
l)	[loltu:]	[wəttaddər]	[watadare]	‘soldier’
m)	[k’ote: bula:]	[arso addər]	[gabare]	‘farmer’
n)	[bulʃʃa:]	[astədadari]	[astadadare]	‘administrator’

In example (16), Afan Oromo has distinct forms for the title, [barsi:s-a:/-tu:], ‘teacher’, [barat-a:/-tu:], and ‘student’ [konkola:ʃʃis-a:/-tu:]. Unlike, the other titles in the list, for these the generic forms are the masculine forms. Borrowed terms such as [narsi:], ‘nurse’; [dokto:ri:] ‘doctor’; [haki:mi:], ‘physician/doctor’; [piro:fe:sari:], ‘professor’; [indʒinari:], ‘engineer’; and [po:li:si:] take definite markers [-ʃʃa] for masculine and [-tti:] for feminine for specific utterances in Afan Oromo. The Amharic versions of these words take definite markers [-u] for masculine and [-wa] for feminine; while the Gamo versions take definite markers [-a:] for masculine and [-ijo] for feminine in specific utterances. In all the three languages, the borrowed words are unmarked. In Gamo all the

profession titles are borrowed from English and Amharic. On the other hand, Afan Oromo words such as [abba: see:ra:], 'judge' and [k'ote: bula:], 'farmer' are masculine and they have no feminine or neutral forms; while the word [loltu:] 'soldier' is feminine and has no masculine and neutral forms.

As can be seen from the list of examples discussed, Amharic and Gamo have unmarked profession titles which makes it convenient to avoid the possible sexism that may occur.

Generally, in Ethiopia, women and men have equal constitutional rights to participate in any profession. However, practically the societies do not accept this. They sometimes prefer one sex over the other in professions. For example, in many instances private health institutions prefer to hire male doctors because many patients prefer them. The other professions that are commonly gendered are 'guard' and 'house worker'. Guards are male and house workers are female. The tradition that confined women to the house and men to the public (out of the house) environment is still present among all the ethnic groups of Ethiopia. Still among conservative families crossing the boundaries of one (gender) by the other is seen as a taboo. For example, males do not enter the kitchen, because it is females' territory. All the activities that take place in the kitchen are strictly seen as women's activities. These activities are cooking food, washing dishes and other household tasks. Among the Oromo, the Amhara and Gamo, if women run into the kitchen during any conflict between

them and their husbands the husband cannot enter the kitchen and beat them; if they do that, it is seen as a taboo. On the other hand, in the public (out of house) activities like farming certain activities are restricted to men. For example, women are not allowed to plough and sow seed, but they can weed the crops and harvest them.

4.1.4 Religious Titles

This section deals with religious sexism that manifests through religious titles in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and the Gamo. Generally, religious titles in different languages show women's places in different religions. Some religions do not allow the ordination of women. In these religions either the rite of ordination, or the role that an ordained person fulfils, has traditionally been restricted to men because of cultural or theological prohibitions.

In Ethiopia the most common faith are the Abrahamic religions. Among them Christianity is 62.8%, followed by Islam which is 33.9%. There is also a small Jewish community and community of the Bahá'í Faith in a number of urban and rural areas. Additionally, there are a few followers of traditional faiths, who mainly reside in Oromia and the Sothern Nations Nationalities and Peoples regions (CSA 2007). In 2007 over 32 million people or 43.5% were reported to be Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, over 25 million or 33.9% were reported to be Muslim, 13,7 million, or 18.6%, were Protestants, and just

under two million or 2.6% adhered to traditional beliefs (ibid). The statistics of religion among the Oromo the Amhara and the Gamo is as follows.

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Oromo</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
Muslim	47.6%	17.2%	10%
Orthodox	30.4%	82.5%	35.86
Protestant	17.7%	0.2%	49.14%
Indigenous	3.3%	-	3%
Others	1%	-	2%

Religion Statistics of Oromo and Amhara (CSA 2007), and Gamo (https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11814/ET)

As can be seen from the statistics of the three ethnic groups, the Amhara dominantly follow Orthodox Christianity while about half the Oromo and the Gamo follow Muslim and Protestant Christianity, respectively. A small portion of each of the two groups also follow indigenous religions. The kind of Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia followed by the majority of the Amhara is synchronized with their indigenous religion. Thus, in the following discussion about sexism in the religious titles of the three groups of societies, the indigenous religions of the Oromo, the Gamo, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity will be addressed together.

In Afan Oromo, the gender of most religious titles is masculine and that of few is feminine; while in Amharic and Gamo, they are unmarked. In Afan Oromo,

most religious titles are overtly marked for gender while in Amharic and Gamo they are covertly marked by gender markers suffixed to the adjectives and verbs that follow them in various utterances. See the following examples.

(17)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>
a) [abba: mu:da:] ‘Anointer’	[abun] ‘patriarch’	[babbo] ‘high priest’
b) [k’a:llu:] ‘high priest’	[p’ap’as] ‘high priest’	[bitante] ‘religious leader’
c) [ajja:n-tu:] ‘spiritual man’	[k’es] ‘priest’	[ek’a] ‘priest who prays during disaster’
d) [ekerdubbis-tu:] ‘communicator of the dead’	[diak’on] ‘diacon’	[makka] ‘priest’
e) [ra:g-a:] ‘prophet’	[debtera] ‘liturgy minister’	[aja ts’ossa] ‘mother spirit’
f) [re:dime:-ssa] ‘male nun’	[bahitawi] ‘male nun’	[awa ts’ossa] ‘father spirit’

In the above examples it can be seen that the gender of religious titles in the Amharic and Gamo are mostly masculine, but that not all of them are marked. For Amharic examples (17a)-(17e) are unmarked and only (17f) is

morphologically marked as masculine. In both languages the posts under the titles are held by males. On the other hand, in Afan Oromo some of the titles are marked as masculine and some as feminine. For example, [abba: mu:da:], [ra:g-a:] ‘prophet’, and [re:dime:-ssa], ‘nun’ are marked as masculine by morphemes [-a:] and [-ssa:]., while the rest of the title under Afan Oromo except [k’a:llu:], ‘high priest’ are marked as feminine by the morpheme [-tu:], but the posts under the titles are for males. What is more, even if [k’a:llu:], ‘high priest’ is unmarked, the post is also for males.

Even if most of the religious posts are held by males and the language also shows gender bias, in the indigenous religion of the Oromo, women have the highest religious position. As part of their gender role, Oromo women mediated between *Waaqa* the Oromo deity, and people, during disaster; and between clans during conflicts. It was their duty to pray for the peace and prosperity of the society during war or during natural disaster. It was also their duty to reconcile conflicting clans. Above all, they were the guardians of *Safuu* the law of *Waaqa* (Amanuel and Hirut 2014).

In Christianity and Islam, the two major religions among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo, until recently did not allow women to assume religious leadership positions in general. As an exception, some Christian sects have started allowing the ordination of women as priests, or pastors. For instance, this can be seen among protestant Christian sects from these three societies.

Since these exceptional religious sects are followed by any members of the three language speaking societies it may be possible to see women pastors or priests represented among the three societies. Regard the following titles from the protestant sect of Christianity.

(18)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a) [pa:steri:]	[pasətr]	[pastare]	‘pastor’
b) [luba]	[k’es]	[k’esi]	‘priest’
c) [ra:ɖji:]	‘nəbij]	[nabije]	‘prophet’
d) [fa:rfat-a:/-tu]	[zəmmari]	[zamare]	‘church singer’
e) [ke:ssumme:ssa:/itu:]	[astənagaɖ]	[gigisejisa]	‘usher’
f) [abba:wange:laa]	[wəngəlawi]	[wongel astemare]	‘evangelist’
g) [taɖʒa:ɖjil-a:]	[agəlgaj]	[madizajisa]	‘preacher’

In example (18) it can be seen that among the three languages, Afan Oromo has both unmarked and marked forms of religious titles from protestant Christianity. Accordingly, the Afan Oromo examples (18a) to (18c) are unmarked while (18d) to (18g) are marked. On the other hand, the Amharic and the Gamo examples are all unmarked. The scenario is the same with the traditional religious titles discussed earlier under example (17). However, unlike in the traditional religions of the three societies, in the protestant Christian sect all the posts under the religious titles can be assumed by both

men and women. Furthermore, women are not allowed to be religious leaders among the Sunni, a Muslim sect which the majority of Oromo, Amhara, and Gamo Muslims follow. Regarding these the religious and legal titles which are borrowed into Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo from Arabic attest to the fact. See the following list of religious and Islamic legal titles in example (19).

(19)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[ima:ma]	[imam]	[imame]	‘head of community’
b)	[kal:fa:]	[kalifa]	[kalifa]	‘vicar of God’s Messenger’
c)	[ali:m]	[alim]	[alime]	‘religious sciences scholar’
d)	[she:ki:]	[sheki]	[sheki]	‘master of a mystical path’
e)	[fak’i:]	[fak’i]	[fak’i]	‘expert of the law’
f)	[k’a:di:]	[k’adi]	[k’adi]	‘judge’
g)	[mufti:]	[mufti]	[mufti]	‘qualified jurist’
h)	[uzta:zi:]	[uztaz]	[uztaze]	‘teacher’

The Islamic religious titles in example (19) are borrowed from Arabic, and few morphological modifications were made to them to make them fit to the respective language they are borrowed into. The titles are masculine in gender and the posts they denote are also held by males. As we have seen in the examples, among Oromo, Amhara, and Gamo Sunni Muslims, women are not allowed to be religious leaders. However, many of my informants say the spirit

of the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* indicate that women should be able to lead mixed, as opposed to sex-segregated congregations⁶. Some Islamic communities have recently appointed women as imams, normally with ministries restricted to leading women in prayer and other charitable ministries.

4.1.5 Generic Human Nouns

This section deals with how some human nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo define the male gender as normative or generic in light of the socio-historical lives of the speakers of the languages. Unless specified, the linguistic data presented in this section are respectively from Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo.

The three linguistic groups are patriarchal. Traditionally, among these societies, [abba:], [abbat], and [awa] ‘the patriarch’ was the head of his family, in command of the political, social, and economic lives of his family in particular, and the society at large. According to Alpher (1987), if a society is patriarchal, generic forms of different terms will be the masculine forms. The findings of this study show that this generalization works only for Amharic and Gamo. In Afan Oromo, most nouns with normative or positive qualities are masculine while many nouns with undesirable or negative qualities are feminine. Let us see masculine ones which are common for the three languages

⁶ www.beliefnet.com

first, and then move to the differences observed between Afan Oromo and the other two languages.

Currently, the past image of the patriarch in the traditional lives of the three societies is reflected through generic masculine nouns like [abba:] of Afan Oromo and [awa] of Gamo all of which literally mean ‘father’, and [baləbət], of Amharic which literally means ‘husband’ and serve as indefinite forms to express ‘ownership’. Regardless of the obvious denotative meaning differences between the Amharic, the Afan Oromo, and Gamo terms mentioned above, one can say that the use of the terms as generic forms in all three languages has resulted from women’s exclusion from leadership and property ownership among the societies. In other words, since the patriarch was in command of every important property among these societies, the generic terms that expressed ownership in their languages have taken the masculine forms. What is more, in the past, among these three societies only the patriarchs or the eldest sons in the families represented their families in any domestic and public affairs. Therefore, the generic use of the masculine terms [abba:], [baləbət], and [awa] which mean ‘oneself’ have originated from the past traditions of representations by the male.

Last but not least, masculine nouns, like [nama], [səw], and [assa] ‘man’ and the masculine pronoun [isa], [issu], and [izako] ‘he’ are used as generic forms in all the three languages. Unlike the other terms discussed above, the usage

of these terms is common among other languages like English too. As some scholars say, these generic nouns create two major problems in communication. First, they confuse people as to whether one is referring to male alone or both male and female (Schneider and Hacker 1973). Second, they cause females to think that they are unrepresented (Harrison 1975, and Martyna1978). Therefore, they suggest that these terms need to be avoided in generic expressions by replacing them with gender neutral terms like ‘humankind’ instead of ‘man’ and ‘they’ instead of ‘he’. Otherwise, they should be used along with their feminine counterparts as, ‘man/woman’ and ‘he/she’ which are common these days in languages like English.

As we have seen above, human nouns with normative qualities are masculine among the three languages. However, when we look at the gender of human nouns with undesirable or unacceptable social qualities, they are feminine in Afan Oromo and masculine in Amharic and Gamo. See the following examples.

(20)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[hat-tu:]	[ləba]	[kajiso]	‘thief’
b)	[sob-tu:]/[afu:f-tu:]	[wɯʃətam]	[Wardanta]	‘liar’
c)	[sa:m-tu:]	[zərafi]	[fano]	‘robber’
d)	[galtu:]	[gəltu]	[eja]	‘fool’
e)	[do’na]	[mik’əñña]	[mik’añña]	‘mean’

f)	[ofitto:]	[raswəddad]	[uzze]	‘selfish’
g)	[soda:t-tu:]	[fəri]	[babbo]	‘cowardice’
h)	[maʃʃ-oftu:]	[səkkaram]	[uʃanʃʃʹa goʃ]	‘drunkard’
i)	[addagg-e:]/[ba:lage:]	[sidd]	[jeda]	‘naughty’
j)	[buda:]	[buda]	[goromte:]	‘evil eye’
k)	[tolfat-tu:]	[tʻənk ^w aj]	[maro:]	‘sorcerer’
l)	[kadat-tu:]	[ləmmañ]	[wasanʃfo:]	‘beggar’
m)	[karade:m-tu:]	[zərəbis]	[kʻomo bajiñasa]	‘gypsy’

As can be observed among the above examples, the Amharic human noun [gəltu], (20d) is borrowed from Afan Oromo. Though it is feminine in the source language, in the borrowing language it is assigned a masculine gender. On the other hand, the Afan Oromo feminine noun [buda:] is borrowed from Amharic which treats it as masculine in generic expressions. What is more, the word [mikʻəñña], ‘mean’ (as in cruel) in Gamo is borrowed from Amharic and it is masculine in both languages.

Regardless of the difference in gender assignment to the nouns under example (20), among the three societies, some of the characteristics denoted by the nouns are stereotypically perceived as women’s characteristics. For instance, women are perceived as cowards, gossipers, and liars.

Furthermore, the generic form of nouns which denote humans with low cognitive qualities and abnormal psychological states are feminine in Afan Oromo, while they are masculine in Amharic and Gamo.

(21)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[mara:t-u:]	[ibd]	[goʃe]	‘crazy’
b)	[ra:t-u:]	[zəgəmtəñña]	[lep’p’o]	‘autist’
c)	[gowwa:]	[moññ]	[eja]	‘fool’

As can be observed from example (21) Afan Oromo assigns a feminine gender to nouns that denote humans with lower cognitive capacity and abnormal psychological state. However, in Amharic and Gamo they are unmarked, but they are masculine in gender in generic expressions. This does not mean that speakers of these two languages are free from sexism in terms of the way they perceive women’s and men’s cognitive capacity. In other words, like the Afan Oromo speakers, Amharic and Gamo speakers perceive women as inferior to men with regard to their cognitive capacities.

4.2 Gender Assignment to Generic Non-Human-Animate Nouns

Under this title, how gender assignment to the generic forms of various animal names in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo reflect sexism will be discussed. In

languages which have masculine and feminine genders, the relation between biological sex and grammatical gender tends to be less exact in the case of animals than in the case of people. In Spanish, for instance, a cheetah is always *un guepardo* (masculine) and a zebra is always *una cebra* (feminine), regardless of their biological sex. To specify the sex of an animal, an adjective may be added, as in *un guepardo hembra* ("a female cheetah"), or *una cebra macho* ("a male zebra")⁷.

Regarding the pronouns used to refer to animals, they generally agree in gender with the nouns denoting those animals, rather than the animals' sex (natural gender). In a language like English, which does not assign grammatical gender to nouns, the pronoun used for referring to objects */it/* is often used for animals also. However, if the sex of the animal is known, and particularly in the case of companion animals, the gendered pronouns */he and she/* may be used as they would be for a human⁸.

In Polish a few general words such as *zwierzę* 'animal' or *bydło*, 'one head of cattle' are neuter, but most species names are masculine or feminine. When the sex of an animal is known, it will normally be referred to using gendered pronouns consistent with its sex; otherwise the pronouns will correspond to the gender of the noun denoting its species (Swan 2015).

⁷ See <https://lightspanish.com/the-gender-of-animals-in-spanish/>

⁸ See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

In specific expressions, the gender assignments of non-human animate nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo generally follow the biological sexes of the referents (see chapter three). However, in generic expressions the three languages do not follow similar gender assignment systems. In Afan Oromo and Amharic gender is assigned to nouns based on semantic features of the animal nouns. Accordingly, the generic forms of non-human animate nouns are either masculine or feminine based on sets of semantic features which usually stand in relative opposition. The most visible among these are: size, power, and value of the referents denoted by the nouns. In the following sub-sections, each of the criterion will be discussed with examples.

4.2.1 Size as a Criterion to Assign Gender to Generic Animate Nouns

Afan Oromo and Amharic have many common animal nouns whose gender assignment is based on size. Regarding Amharic, Zelealem (2010) argues that non-human animate nouns whose referents are big in size are assigned a masculine gender. However, he does not specify the non-human animate nouns which possess the opposite of this semantic feature are assigned feminine gender. In both Afan Oromo and Amharic the generic forms of nouns whose referents are bigger in size are assigned masculine gender while the ones with smaller referents are assigned feminine gender.

(22)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
<i>Masculine</i>	[arba]	[zihon]	‘elephant’
	[gafarsa]	[goʃ]	‘buffalo’
	[ɖalde:ssa]	[zindʒəro]	‘baboon’
	[farad]	[fərəs]	‘horse’
	[hantu:ta]	[ajitʼ]	‘mouse’
<i>Feminine</i>	[lo:tu:]	[inʃilalit]	‘lizard’
	[fatte:]	[inkʼurarit]	‘frog’
	[ʃʷululle:]	[ʃʷilfit]	‘eagle’
	[kʼalame:]	[tʼotʼit]	‘monkey’

In example (22), the generic forms of nouns such as [arba], [gafarsa], [jalde:ssa], [farad] in Afan Oromo and [zihon], [goʃ], [zindʒəro], [fərəs] in Amharic are marked as masculine. On the contrary, Afan Oromo nouns such as [hantu:ta], [lo:tu:], [fatte:], [ʃʷululle:], and [qalame:] and [ajitʼ], [inʃilalit], [inkʼurarit], [ʃʷilfit], and [tʼotʼit] in Amharic are assigned feminine gender. If we compare the sizes of the referents in both categories, the ones assigned masculine gender are bigger in size.

In both Afan Oromo and Amharic, demining and augmentation also have a similar pattern with the gender assignment system under discussion. Feminine

gender markers are used for demining and masculine gender markers are used for augmenting. See Amanuel (2007) for Afan Oromo and Zelealem (2010) for Amharic.

4.2.2 Power as a Criterion to Assign Gender to Generic Animal Nouns

Afan Oromo and Amharic assign gender to some animal nouns based on the relative power of the referents. In both languages the generic form of nouns whose referents are powerful are assigned a masculine gender while the ones whose referents are relatively weak are assigned a feminine gender.

(23)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
<i>Masculine</i>	[le:nɲʔa]	[anbessa]	‘lion’
	[k’e:rransa]	[nəbɪr]	‘tiger’
	[bofa]	[ʔibab]	‘snake’
	[wara:bessa]	[dʒib]	‘hyena’
	[torba:n k’aba:]	[gintʔ]	‘scorpion’
<i>Feminine</i>	[hinda:k’k’o:]	[doro]	‘chicken’
	[ho:la:]	[bəg]	‘sheep’
	[re:tti:]	[fijel]	‘goat’
	[kurup’p’e:]	[midak ^w a]	‘antelop’

[guge:]

[ʔirgib]

‘dove’

In example (23), Afan Oromo generic animate nouns such as [le:nɿʔa], [k'e:rransa], [bofa], [wara:bessa], and [torba:n k'aba:] and their Amharic equivalents such as [anbessa], [nəbɨr], [ʔibab], [dʒib], and [gintʔ], are masculine in gender. On the contrary, Afan Oromo generic animate nouns such as [hinda:k'k'o:], [ho:la:], [re:tti:], [kurup'p'e:], and [guge:] and their Amharic equivalents like [doro], [bəg], [fijel], [midakʷa], and [ʔirgib] are feminine in gender. The referents of the masculine animate nouns listed above are predators and the ones listed under feminine nouns are prey. The power relation between the two categories has influenced the gender assignment of the nouns. One can say that the grammatical scenario involved in the gender assignment system of the nouns is a metaphor of social gender stereotypes among speakers of the two languages under discussion. Both the Oromo and the Amhara perceive that women are physically weak, and men are physically strong.

4.2.3 Societal attitude towards the Referent as a criterion for Gender

Assignment to Animal Nouns

In Afan Oromo and Amharic some generic animate nouns are assigned gender based on the attitudes the societies hold towards the referents. Masculine gender is assigned to animate nouns whose referents the language speakers

hold positive attitude towards, while the ones whose referents the language speakers hold negative attitude towards are assigned feminine gender in both languages. Regard the following example.

(24)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
<i>Masculine</i>	[we:nni:]	[gureza]	‘colobus monkey’
	[ra:mmo: bokka:]	[f’ok’]	‘earthworm’
<i>Feminine</i>	[dadde:]	[dʒart]	‘porcupine’
	[tisi:sa]	[zinb]	‘fly’
	[silmi:]	[məʒger]	‘tick’
	[bu:dʒale:]	[mudʒele]	‘jigger’

The generic forms of animate nouns listed in example (24) are assigned gender based on the relative functions they have or the harm(s) they inflict upon nature or humans. Accordingly, among animate referents which are assigned masculine gender, *colobus monkey*, which unlike a baboon or ape does not destroy crops, is respected among the Oromo and the Amhara. It usually feeds on tree leaves and sometime people say it is a symbol of a monk for its stylishly black head and white face which resembles that of a monk’s outfit. What is more, *earthworm* is respected among the Oromo and the Amhara because it increases soil fertility.

On the contrary, the generic forms of animate nouns such as *porcupine*, *fly*, *tick*, and *jigger* are assigned a feminine gender because of the harms they inflict upon nature or humans. *Porcupine* usually destroys farmers' root crops while *ticks* damage the udders of cows leading to farmers' milk production decreasing. Furthermore, a *fly* is a potential agent of disease transmission and detested among the two societies. Similarly, *jigger*, a small parasitic flea that burrows into the human skin, is a harmful insect and disliked in society.

As discussed in this section, the gender of non-human animate nouns whose referents are smaller in size, relatively powerless, and detested by the societies are feminine in gender in Afan Oromo and Amharic. On the other hand, nouns whose referents possess or are perceived to possess the opposite of the listed traits are masculine in gender.

4.3 Gender Assignment of Inanimate Nouns

In the study of linguistic sexism, the gender assignment of inanimate nouns in gendered languages is a major issue because of the conceptual metaphorical mappings of social gender ideologies it involves (see Amanuel and Hirut 2011). Generally, nouns in this category have no biological sex. Hence, unlike animate nouns sex cannot be a criterion for gender assignment in various gendered languages. However, it is observed that various languages using social gender

stereotypes as criteria on the basis of which they assign grammatical gender to inanimate nouns (ibid)

Thus, under this section we would see how Afan Oromo, Amharic and Gamo use stereotypical gender perceptions as criteria for gender assignment to inanimate nouns. The nouns treated under this discussion include those that denote various referents that fall under different biological, geographical, and artificial categories. These are plants, geographical bodies, deities, celestial bodies, and human-made materials.

These entities are differently viewed, treated, and used in the lives of different societies who have different cultures. It therefore becomes important to see how these variables interact with social gender stereotypes to assign grammatical gender to nouns denoting inanimate nouns.

4.3.1 Plants

The gender assignment of nouns which denote plants differ among the three languages, like the animate nouns discussed previously. Among the three languages Afan Oromo shows a greater variation. The variation lies in the criteria used in assigning gender to nouns in this category.

In Afan Oromo, mostly nouns which denote plants are assigned gender based on: size, value, and mythological perceptions. This divides the gender categorizations of the nouns in to sets of oppositions. Accordingly, masculine gender is assigned to nouns that denote plants with bigger size, and of important value according to the myths of the Oromo. On the contrary nouns whose referents possess the opposite of these characteristics are assigned the feminine gender in Afan Oromo. However, in Amharic and Gamo, almost all plants are assigned the masculine gender. See the following examples.

(25)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
<i>Masculine</i>	[oda:]	[warka]	[wola]	‘sycamore’
	[wdde:ssa]	[wanza]	[galamma]	‘cordia africana’
	[ba:rgamu:]	[bahirzaf]	[barzafe]	‘eucalyptus’
<i>Feminine</i>	[ga:ttira:]	[t’id]	[ts’ide]	‘pine tree’
	[haddo:f-tu:]	[dubba]	[bote]	‘pumpkin’
	[unga:je:]	[k’il]	[gose]	‘calabash’
	[ra:fu:]	[guwajja]	[atare]	‘indigenous pea’
		[gommən]	[gommane]	‘kale’

As can be understood from example (25), in Afan Oromo the gender assignments of nouns that denote plants is transparent. It categorically divides the referents by the degree of their characters or perceived values which places the masculine gender as better or superior while leaving the feminine with a less important or inferior position.

Among the Oromo [oda:], ‘sycamore’ is a sacred tree. In the old times, social and political gatherings took place under the shade of the [oda:] tree. Many cultural and religious rituals were also performed under the [oda:] tree. As a result, it is respected and not allowed to be cut by anyone in the society. The sacredness of this tree granted it a masculine gender in the language of the society.

Trees such as [wadde:ssa], ‘cordia africana’, [bargamu:], ‘eucalyptus’, and [ga:ttira:] ‘pine tree’ are also respected trees but not on the same level with the [oda:] tree. Thus, they are assigned a masculine gender for their size. On the contrary, [haddo:f-tu:], ‘calabash’, which is a bitter plant is assigned the feminine gender in Afan Oromo for its strong bitterness and [unga:je:] ‘indigenous pea’ is assigned feminine gender because the society believes that consuming too much of it causes permanent deafness. What is more [ra:fu:], ‘kale’ is believed to have no nutritious value among the Oromo and it is the food of the poor. This belief influenced the gender assignment of the referent.

Generally, among the Oromo all plants are traditionally respected and protected against any harm, but the degree of their respects varies based on their functions and mythological values which tend to influence the gender assignment systems of the language. In contrast, in Amharic and Gamo the gender assignments of nouns with plant referents differ from that of Afan Oromo. The gender of the sort of nouns under discussion is invariably masculine in both languages. However, the variation between Afan Oromo and the two languages does not make the languages better than each other in terms of linguistic bias. In other words, the assignment of gender to nouns based on opposite sets of characters of their referents observed in Afan Oromo is as sexist as invariably assigning the nouns masculine gender in Amharic and Gamo, because the latter neglects the feminine gender.

4.3.2 Geographical Bodies

The gender assignment strategies for geographical bodies among the three languages have some commonalities. For instance, in the following example, landscapes and water bodies are masculine in all three languages.

(26)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Gender</i>
a)	[tullu:]	[tərara]	[zuma]	‘mountain’	Masculine
b)	[dirre:]	[meda]	[dembba]	‘field’	Masculine

c)	[k'ile:]	[gədel]	[a:fo]	'hill'	Masculine
d)	[laga]	[wənz]	[fo:re]	'river'	Masculine
e)	[haro:]	[hajik']	[abba]	'lake'	Masculine
f)	[daʃʃe:]	[midir]	[saʔa]	'earth'	Feminine in Afan Oromo & Amharic

The above examples show that all three languages assign masculine gender to most landscape and water bodies. They also equally assign feminine gender to some of these entities. In the case of the masculine ones the criteria for the assignment is not clear in any of the languages. In the case of the feminine entities at least one may be attributed to mythological beliefs as the reason for their gender assignment in Afan Oromo, while in the case of Amharic and Gamo we may not trace the reasons.

In Afan Oromo, the assignment of feminine gender to [daʃʃe:], earth follows from the gendered mythological perceptions of the language speakers. The Oromo think of the earth as the wife of the sky. Look at how the earth is portrayed among the Oromo in the following stanza of common folk song.

(27)

[daʃʃe naga:n o:lte: ?]

O earth, the wife of god

[ja: ise: ni:ti: wa:k'a:]

how was your day?

[irri ke: midfa:ni:]	<i>You are covered with food and</i>
[ɖalli ke: bisha:ni]	<i>you contain water.</i>
[ɖira:n sirra fi:ga]	<i>The living runs over you and</i>
[duʔa:n sirra ʃi:sa]	<i>the dead lays on you.</i>
[jo: sirra fi:gan nan mada:ʔe hindzettu:]	<i>If one runs over you, you would not</i>
[jo: sirra ʃi:san nan adz:ʔe hindzettu:]	<i>say you are hurting me.</i>
[ɖirta:re: ja: daʃʃe gara la:fetti: ko: ʔ]	<i>If one lays on you, you would not say,</i>
	<i>you are spoiling me.</i>
	<i>Are you alive, o earth the kind one?</i>

In the above poem, [daʃʃe:], the earth is portrayed as calm tolerant and kind. These are the stereotypical attributes of [ni:ti: ga:ri:], a good wife among the Oromo. What is more, all three societies consider water which is a masculine noun in the three languages as essential for life, but the Oromo specially believes that water is the origin of life.

4.3.3 Deities

One thing that makes the gender assignment of super natural bodies important in the discussion of linguistic sexism is the belief about the power associated with them and the consequences of switching their gender among

the speakers of the Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. In all the three languages super-natural bodies are masculine in gender. Regard the following examples.

(28)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Gender</i>
a)	[wa:k'a]	[igzihaber]	[ts'osse]	'God'	Masculine
b)	[allah]	[allah]	[allah]	'God in Islam'	Masculine
c)	[se:t'ana]	[səjt'an]	[ts'alahe]	'satan'	Masculine
d)	[hafu:ra k'ulk'ullu:]	[k'iddus- mənfes]	[ts'illo ajjana]	'Holy spirit'	Masculine
e)	[hafu:ra- hama:]	[irkus- mənfes]	[ita ajjana]	'devil spirit'	Masculine

Among the speakers of the three languages switching the gender of [wa:k'a], [igzihaber], [ts'osse], and [allah] 'God' to feminine is considered a blasphemy. In the traditional religion of Gamo, [ts'alahe], 'satan' is equally respected as [ts'osse], 'God' because they believe not doing so causes catastrophe. So, [ts'alahe], 'satan' receives similar grammatical treatment as [ts'osse], 'God' in the Gamo language. On the other hand, in the traditional religion of the Oromo, [se:t'ana], 'satan' does not exist. It was only introduced with the coming of the Christian religion to the Oromo land which mostly took place in the 19th

Century, and among the Christian Oromo the word ‘satan’ is sometimes referred to as feminine to show hate towards it.

4.3.4 Celestial Bodies

The gender assignment of celestial bodies among Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo differ from each other to some extent but all three languages have some commonalities too. Regard the following data. Under each language ‘M’ or ‘F’ is put in front of the nouns to show that they are either masculine or feminine.

(29)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[adu:] F	[ts’əhaj] F	[awa] M	‘sun’
b)	[dʒiiʔa] F	[tʃ’ərək’a] F	[agina] M	‘moon’
c)	[urɖʒi:] F	[kokəb] M	[ts’olintte] M	‘star’
d)	[bakkaɭʃa] M	[jənigat kokəb] M	[golints’ej] M	‘morning star’
e)	[sami:] M	[səmaj] M	[salo] M	‘skye’
f)	[hurri:] M	[dəməna] M	[ʃara] M	‘cloud’

In example (29), Afan Oromo and Amharic assign feminine gender to the sun and the moon, and masculine gender to the nouns in the example. On the other hand, Gamo assigns masculine gender to all the nouns in the example. In the previous two languages, the sun the moon, and ‘star’ are common

metaphors for beauty. Despite the fact that [ts'əhaj], 'the sun', [ɸ'ərək'a], and [kokəb], 'star' the moon are feminine nouns in Amharic, they are bestowed as personal names on both males and females as in [ts'əhaj] or [ts'əhajnəh] for female and [ts'əhajnə]. On the Other hand, in Afan Oromo, [ɖiʔa], 'the moon', is modified as [ɖiiʔ-o:], and bestowed on males. Furthermore, [urɖi:], 'star' is bestowed on females among the Oromo.

In Gamo, [agina] 'the moon' is bestowed as a personal name for males. In Gamo folk story, [awa], 'the sun' is the 'father' of Gamo. They say, "once a girl went to the river to fetch water in the middle of the day. Then as she started fetching water while bending over, the sun ray got her from behind and impregnated her. Then she gave birth to a baby boy whom she named Gamo. And that was the beginning of the Gamo ethnic group." (Chiro Chimbole August 12/2014 personal communication) Thus, the assignment of masculine gender to the noun, [awa] 'sun' has emanated from the mythology behind the referent.

4.3.5 Materials

The gender assignment of materials among Afan Oromo, Amharic and Gamo are mostly similar. However, sometimes the sizes of referents tend to affect the choice of gender in specific utterances in Afan Oromo and Amharic. In the following example, all the nouns are masculine in gender.

(30)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a) [bartʃˈuma]	[bərʃˈumma]	[ʔojde]	‘stool’
b) [gabate:]	[gəbətə]	[gabate]	‘wooden tray’
c) [sa:ni:]	[səhan]	[sane]	‘metal or plastic tray’
d) [mi:ndʒale:]	[tˈərəpˈəzza]	[tˈarapˈezza]	‘table’
e) [uffata]	[libsi]	[ajo]	‘cloths’
f) [ula:]	[bərri]	[wula]	‘door’
g) [kitaba]	[mətsˈihaf]	[matsˈafe]	‘book’
h) [kobbe:]	[iskiribito]	[iskiritto]	‘pen’
i) [si:ni:]	[sini]	[sine]	‘coffee cup’

The gender of nouns listed under example (30) is masculine in all three languages. However, as mentioned earlier, in Afan Oromo and Amharic, any of these nouns can be referred to as feminine if they appear smaller than their usual size. In Afan Oromo, there are also many material referents that are always feminine. These referents are mostly, utensils. For example, see the following.

(31)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a) [ʔe:l-e:]	‘a special pan made of clay and used for backing bread’

- b) [t'uww-e:] 'a cooking pot made of clay'
- c) [ha:m-tu:] 'sickle'
- d) [waf'i:-t-i:] 'a clay bowl used for eating porridge'
- e) [killo:] 'a wooden bowl used for eating porridge'
- f) [hark-e:] 'a clay bowl used for eating porridge'
- g) [har-tu:] 'broom'
- h) [dimbi:b-tu:] 'sift'
- i) [okkot-e:] 'jar'
- j) [ʔelem-tu:] 'calabash used for milking cows'
- k) [unat-e:] 'a calabash used for drinking milk or yogurt'

The nouns in example (31) are feminine in Afan Oromo. If we look at their structures almost all of them take are marked for gender by feminine gender marking morphemes such as [-e:], [-tu:], and [-t-]. In Amharic and Gamo the referents for the nouns under discussion are masculine in gender.

Furthermore, in all the three languages, many farming tools, weapons, and carpenter's tools are referred to as masculine. See the following list.

(32)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a) [k'otto:]	[mət'irəbija]	[kaltta]	'axe'

b)	[aka:fa:]	[akafa]	[akafa]	‘spade’
c)	[gindo:]	[mofər]	[kado]	Plow
d)	[hark’o:ta]	[k’əmbər]	[kambare]	‘yoke’
e)	[gadʒamo:]	[gəɖʒəra]	[maʃa]	‘machete’
f)	[t’ijja]	[k’əst]	[paɫʔe]	‘arrow’
g)	[ʔe:bo:]	[t’or]	[tora]	‘spear’
h)	[ʃuggut’i:]	[ʃiggut’i:]	[ʃuggu ʃ’e]	‘pistol’
i)	[maga:zi:]	[məgaz]	[magaze]	‘saw’
j)	[burru:sa]	[mədoʃa]	[madoʃa]	‘hammer’

The list of nouns in example (32) are masculine nouns. Most of the referents have special meanings in the daily lives of the three societies. They are used on a daily basis for farming, constructing houses, and protecting against wild animals. In Afan Oromo weapons are assigned gender based on their relative power, but their generic forms are usually masculine (see Amanuel and Hirut 2011).

4.3.6 Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are nouns denoting ideas, qualities or states rather than concrete objects. In English, a language that is said to have no grammatical gender, the gender of abstract nouns is neuter just like most inanimate nouns.

In Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, the gender of abstract nouns is mostly masculine. Regard the following list of nouns.

(33)

	<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Amharic</i>	<i>Gamo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a)	[dʒire:ñña]	[hiwət]	[deʔo]	‘life’
b)	[duʔa]	[mot]	[hajik’o]	‘death’
c)	[dʒa:lala]	[fik’ir]	[sik’o]	‘love’
d)	[ga:rumma:]	[məlkaminət]	[loʔatsi]	‘goodness’
e)	[dʒibba]	[t’ilaʃʃa]	[irts’etsi]	‘hatred’
f)	[dadʃabbi:]	[dikam]	[labbana]	‘tiredness’
g)	[dʒabina]	[t’inikare]	[monitetsi]	‘strength’
h)	[ja:da]	[hasab]	[k’ofa]	‘thought’
i)	[hawwi:]	[miññot]	[amo]	‘wish’
j)	[k’albi:]	[mastəwal]	[akeka]	‘prudence’
k)	[be:la]	[rəhab]	[koʃa]	‘hunger’
l)	[k’u:fa]	[t’igab]	[kalo]	‘satisfaction’
m)	[bo:na]	[kurat]	[otoro]	‘pride’
n)	[ʃ’ubbu:]	[hat’ihat]	[nagara]	‘sin’
o)	[soba]	[wʊʃət]	[worddo]	‘lie’
p)	[dʒuga:]	[ʔiwunət]	[tuma]	‘true’
q)	[k’ulk’ullu:]	[k’ddus’]	[geʃʃi]	‘holy’

The list of abstract nouns in example (33) are masculine in gender but in Afan Oromo, some referents who possess some of the qualities denoted by the abstract nouns are referred to as feminine. For example, [soba], 'lie' is masculine but [sob-tu], 'liar' is feminine. What is more, [du?a], 'truth' and [duga:], 'truth' can sometimes be referred to as feminine in Afan Oromo.

In this chapter we have seen how gender assignment of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo manifest sexism. The nouns discussed in the chapter were human nouns, animate nouns, and inanimate nouns. In all these categories, it has been noted that there is bias in the gender assignment systems of the three languages. In the next chapter we will see the bias in the social gender roles of women among the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENDER IDEOLOGY AND GRAMMATICAL GENDER ASSIGNMENT OF NOUNS IN AFAN OROMO, AMHARIC, AND GAMO

In the previous chapter we have seen how gender assignment of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo reflect linguistic sexism. In most of the discussions the social, cultural and historic roots of the linguistic sexism have been touched upon. In this chapter, we will see how social gender ideology links with grammatical gender in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. Before we embark on that topic, we will examine the link between language and thought based on previous research done on similar topics. Then we will see the findings of the current study.

5.1 Language and Thought

Many authors in various fields have highlighted the influence of language on thought or vice versa. For example, psychologists try to explain the development of thought and language in human evolution. Accordingly, there are two groups of concepts regarding the argument. The first is *lingualism*, which asserts that there is no thought without language. *Lingualism* does not accept possibilities of thought in the absence of language. The second concept which disagrees with the first one, states that there is something called the '*language of thought*'. According to this concept, thought has its own language other than the usual language we use in our daily communications. This

means, according to this concept, language is unnecessary for thought⁹. According to this second view, the chief purpose of language is to convey ideas from one mind, to another. The linguistic information that one receives from another person causes the receiver to entertain it with effects on their prior information. In this process thought comes first, while language is an expression. But there are certain limitations in human languages as it cannot communicate all that one thinks (Gleitman, 2005).

The *language of thought* theory relies on the belief that mental representation has linguistic structure. There are two theories that support the *language of thought* theory. The first is called *causal syntactic theory of mental practices* which hypothesizes that mental processes are causal, and they are defined over the composition of mental images. The second theory is *representational theory of mind* which hypothesizes that propositional attitudes are relations between subjects and mental representations (Birjandi, Parvis 2017).

According to *language of thought* theory, the mind works like a computer and it is always enacting computational processes. Further, mental representation has both a combinatorial syntax and compositional semantics. In other words, mental representations are sentences in a mental language (ibid).

⁹ www.iep.utm.edu

Regarding the influence of language on thought or vice versa, the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* is often quoted in linguistic works. This hypothesis asserts that the grammatical structure of a mother tongue influences the way we perceive the world.

There are more linguistic findings that support the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis*. One of them is how people of different languages count. For example, the Mundurucu or the Wuy Jugu's language has only up to five number words. In this language, they refer to the number 5 as "a hand" and the number 10 as "two hands". And they usually refer to numbers above 10 as "many"¹⁰.

Another evidence is the Pirahã language's counting system. In this system, quantities larger than two are referred to as "many". In larger quantities, "one" can also mean a small amount and "many" a larger amount. A research conducted on the Pirahã to see if their language influenced their thought proved positive. For example, they were able to represent numbers 1 and 2 accurately using their fingers but as the quantities grew larger, their accuracy diminished (Gordon, 2004). What is more, language also seems to shape how people from different cultures orient themselves in space. For instance, people from the Australian Aboriginal community *Pormpuraaw* define space relative to the observer. Instead of referring to location in terms like "left", "right", "back" and "forward", most Aboriginal Nations, such as the *Kuuk Thaayorre*, use

¹⁰ <https://www.crystalinks.com/munduruku.html>

cardinal-direction terms – north, south, east and west. For example, speakers from such cultures would say "There is a spider on your northeast leg" or "Pass the ball to the south southwest". In fact, instead of "hello", the greeting in such cultures is "Where are you going?" and sometimes even "Where are you coming from?" Such greeting would be followed by a directional answer "To the northeast in the middle distance" (ibid). The consequence of using such language is that the speakers need to be constantly oriented in space, or they will not be able to express themselves properly, or even get past a greeting. Speakers of such languages which rely on absolute reference frames have a much greater navigational ability and spatial knowledge compared to speakers of languages that use relative reference frames. In comparison with English users, speakers of languages such as *Kuuk Thaayorre* are also much better at staying oriented even in unfamiliar spaces, and it is in fact their language that enables them to do this (ibid).

Furthermore, the fact that language may influence color processing is another evidence that shows that language can affect thought. Having more names for different colors, or different shades of colors, makes it easier both for children and for adults to recognize them (Daniel, 2011). Research has found that all languages have names for black and white, and that the colors defined by each language follow a certain pattern i.e. a language with three colors also defines red, one with four defines green or yellow, one with six defines blue, then brown, then other colors (Berlin, Brent; Kay, Paul, 1969).

Furthermore, as discussed in chapter two, grammatical gender is among aspects of language that affects how people conceptualize the world. For instance, we have seen in chapter two that German-speakers more often described the feminine German word *die Brücke*, 'bridge' with socio-cultural female images like "beautiful," "elegant," "fragile," "peaceful," "pretty," and "slender," while in Spanish *el puente*, 'bridge' is masculine and the speakers of the language described it with socio-cultural male images like "big," "dangerous," "long," "strong," "sturdy," and "towering" (see Boroditsky 2003).

5.2 Grammatical Gender and Thought in Afan Oromo, Amharic and Gamo

As we have seen in section 5.1, scholars assert that thought needs language and language can affect thought. Besides, we have seen in chapter two and revised in the last part of the previous section too that studies of gender assignment to various inanimate nouns show that there is evidence that indicates a link between language and thought. The findings of this study also resonate with the claims of the previous studies. This specifically is true to Afan Oromo and Amharic whose speakers map the social and cultural gender stereotypes on gender assignment of inanimate nouns. For example, when native speakers of Afan Oromo and Amharic were asked to explain why an inanimate object is assigned masculine or feminine gender, their

explanations show the cognitive mapping of social gender stereotypes on the gender of the inanimate object.

Accordingly, in Afan Oromo, female gender is often attributed to objects that are used by women, or which are beautiful, small, and light, and male gender to objects used by men, or which are big, and heavy. See the following examples.

(1)

<i>Afan Oromo</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a) [e:le:]	‘round skillet pan for backing bread’
b) [t’uwwe:]	‘clay pot’
c) [waɣʼi:ti:]	‘clay bowl’

Objects listed in the above example are kitchen materials which are used mostly by women among the Oromo society. They are referred to as feminine. However, in Amharic and Gamo these materials are referred to as masculine in spite the fact that they are mostly used by women. Objects that are perceived as beautiful are assigned feminine gender in Afan Oromo and Amharic. See the following example.

(2)

Afan Oromo	Amharic	Gloss
a) [adu:]	[ts'əhaj]	'the sun'
b) [urɗji:]	[kokəb]	'the star'

Scholars argue that this sort of linkage between grammatical gender and social gender is restricted to language with a two-gender system see Sera et al. (2002) and Vigliocco et al. (2005), cited in Pavlidou & Alvanoudi (2013), as well as Chi-Yue, Ying-yi (2013).

In this chapter we have seen the debates about the connection between language and thought. In light of these debates we have also seen how speakers of Afan Oromo and Amharic link social gender to grammatical gender. In the next chapter the summary, the conclusion, and the recommendations of the study will be presented.

CHAPTERSIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter we discussed the link between the social gender and grammatical gender assignment systems of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. In this chapter the whole study will be summarized and this project will conclude with some recommendations. Accordingly, the summary of the work will be presented followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

6.1 Summary

This dissertation has six chapters. In the first chapter which is the introduction; the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology of the study, and organization of the dissertation were presented. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework on which the study is based and review of related literature were discussed. In the third chapter, an overview of grammatical gender in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo were presented. The fourth chapter presented and discussed the linguistic sexism in the gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. In the fifth chapter the link between grammatical gender and social gender ideology were discussed based on various literature and the data obtained from the Oromo, the Amhara, and the Gamo. Finally, this sixth chapter summarizes, concludes,

and recommends some methods of dealing with linguistic sexism observed in the three languages under study.

As found in this study, among Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, human nouns, personal names, administration titles, profession titles, religious titles, and generic human nouns manifest sexism. What is more, non-human animate nouns also exhibit a gender biased ideology among speakers of the three languages studied. Furthermore, inanimate nouns such as names of plants, geographical bodies, deities, celestial bodies, and materials, show linguistic sexism.

Furthermore, this study asserts that in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo some personal names are morphologically derived from the same basic lexicons. These sorts of names generally follow the grammatical gender assignment systems of the languages. Accordingly, male names and female names are differentiated by gender-marking morphemes which usually are suffixed to the roots of the lexicons. In addition, some names are gender neutral and do not need to be marked for gender. These names may be bestowed on males or females because there are no morphological restrictions.

What is more, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names are meaningful. Their meanings come either from semantic denotations of the root lexicons they are derived from, or from pragmatic connotations. Most names in

the three languages reflect meanings that are directly or indirectly related with the social, political, economic, and religious lives of the societies. Sometimes, names may also contain meanings associated with specific physical, mental, and environmental conditions surrounding the bearers and/or the bestowing parties during the bearers' birth.

Generally, linguistic principles are not always followed to bestow names in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. It is rather, culture, that plays the major role in deciding what names should be bestowed to children. Mostly, cultural gender ideologies or their manifestations guide in selecting names for children. Names that are bestowed dictated by the principles of gender ideologies usually limit the objective conventional possibilities as set by the grammar of the languages.

Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo personal names show gender biased ideologies in two ways. The first is the bestowal of exclusive male and female names which disregard morphological conventions and follow the distinctive cultural gender roles of men and women among the societies. The second, which is not much different from the first with regard to the ideological domain, is bestowal of male or female names that connote gender preferences. Hence, among speakers of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo languages, many male and female personal names have pragmatic meanings that map on to conceptual gender stereotypes and/or cultural gender roles. Besides, this study tried to explore how other Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Gamo human nouns

manifest sexism through the gender assignment systems. It also tried to explain its sources. As found in this study, administration, profession, and religious titles, as well as generic human nouns in the three languages, exhibit sexism.

Specifically, administration, profession, and religious titles in different historical periods of the three societies reflect male dominance. In addition, the study showed the transfer of male's egoistic practice of the past to the present social, political, and religious lives of the societies through language conventions. At present, at least, we see a few women participating in many of the stated professions. Nevertheless, because of past male dominance, we do not see some titles representing them. Furthermore, the study revealed that some masculine terms are used as generic forms among the three languages. This practice defines the male gender as normative and challenges the visibility of women in these societies. It may also create a communication barrier.

The gender assignment of the generic forms of non-human animate nouns also reflect the gender bias among the Oromo, Amhara, and Gamo. In Afan Oromo and Amharic, the generic forms of non-human animate nouns can be masculine or feminine based on certain features of the referents. If the referents are small in size, the generic forms tend to become feminine in gender, and if they are relatively large in size, their generic form becomes masculine. Apart from that, in Afan Oromo, the generic forms of non-human

animate nouns whose referents are relatively powerless, or detested by society for some reason, are feminine in gender. On the other hand, in Gamo, the generic forms of non-human animate nouns are unmarked, but they are referred to as masculine.

Moreover, inanimate nouns such as plants, geographical bodies, deities, celestial bodies, and human made materials were also examined for gender assignment in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. As discussed in this dissertation, in Afan Oromo, many traits of the referents interact with the social gender stereotypes of the society and influence the grammatical gender assignment to nouns denoting inanimate references. On the contrary, in Amharic and Gamo, most inanimate nouns are masculine.

Lastly, in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, the gender of abstract nouns is mostly masculine. It is only in Afan Oromo that one may sometimes see abstract nouns with a feminine gender.

In chapter five, the link between grammatical gender and thought have been discussed. In fact, there are two theories regarding the link between language and thought as a whole. The first theory argues that there is no thought without language while the second argues that thought does not require language as it has its own 'language' which is distinct from the ordinary language humans use in daily communications.

Many psychology and linguistic scholars assert that thought needs language. Various psycholinguistic studies carried out on how speakers assign gender to various inanimate nouns also show that thought needs language. The findings discussed in this current study resonate with the previous findings of the scholars too. This is specifically true of Afan Oromo, whose speakers sometimes map the social and cultural gender stereotypes on gender assignment of inanimate nouns. In Amharic too, the gender assignment of inanimate nouns is not arbitrary as it sometimes maps on the metaphorical images of humans on the inanimate entities.

6.2 Conclusion

The central aim of this study was to examine how linguistic sexism manifests through the gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo in the light of the social and cultural practices of the speakers of the three languages. The data for this study was collected from native speakers through elicitation and structured interview. The analysis of the data took place based on the 'Critical Discourse Analysis' approach. Based on the linguistic sexism uncovered in the study through gender assignment systems of nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo, one may conclude that:

- Human nouns such as: personal names, administration, profession, and religious titles, and generic human nouns show the past biased social, cultural, and political place of women among the language speaking societies and the maintenance of the gender biased mentality by language structures.
- Among the three languages, Afan Oromo shows more structured linguistic sexism through the gender assignment of nouns in spite of the fact that at one point in history, the speakers of the language had the *siiqqee* institution which safeguarded the rights and respect of women in the society.
- There is conceptual mapping of social gender stereotypes on the grammatical gender assignment of generic forms of nouns that refer to non-human sexed referents and those that refer to inanimate nouns. This shows that there is a link between social gender ideology and grammatical gender assignment among Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo.

The linguistic sexism discussed in the dissertation makes women to be invisible among the societies. Furthermore, it limits their aspirations, and it alienates them by causing them to feel that they are not being addressed.

6.3 Recommendations

The main purpose of linguistic studies like this is to deal with the practical problems caused by biased language. Accordingly, the researcher would recommend possible solutions to the practical linguistic sexism discussed in this study.

As discussed in chapter five, there is a link between social gender ideology and grammatical gender assignment to nouns in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Gamo. Unless this practice is halted at some point it will continue to shape the societies in a biased way. The remedy for such linguistic problems is to raise the awareness of the speakers through education (see Boroditsky 2001, Gordon 2004, and Feigenson 2004 regarding how grammatical gender assignment shapes thoughts).

To stop or reduce the linguistic sexism which manifest at the level of language conventions like the use of “man/he” as generic, and masculine administration, profession, and religious titles that do not have parallel feminine forms, it is necessary to introduce gender neutral terms. However, changing the linguistic features alone is not enough to deal with the gender imbalances in the societies. So, the ideological roots of the bias in the socio-cultural lives of the people should be examined and dealt with to change the whole scenario. As Tolstokorova (2005) argues, to counteract linguistic sexism,

primarily in those countries that are not yet open to ideas of linguistic gender democracy, it requires meticulous theoretical elaboration. This would open a way for challenging the global civil society by showing that linguistic sexism is not only an ethical problem, but also primarily a violation of human rights. She suggests that this can be achieved through united efforts of researchers, women's rights advocates, the mass media, NGOs, government structures, and all those who are concerned with the democratic developments worldwide.

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