AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT: EMPRICAL EVIDENCES FROM HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

Applying an exploratory mixed-methods research, ethnographic and quantitative findings were generated to describe and explain intercultural communication perceptions and experiences in a higher educational context in Ethiopia. The qualitative findings revealed that diversity has been prevalent among students but not in the staff or administration. The campus has been characterized as a divided academic community, exercising high power distance and lacking an effective communication system. Ethnicity appeared to be the most stratifying factor on campus interaction. The major challenges of intercultural communication were ethnicity, political affiliation, high power distance, disparity in host language proficiency, lack of a supportive context and deficiency in intercultural skills and awareness. Multiculturalism as an educational policy has not helped the university address the grievance consequences of the divided educational context. Based on the results, interculturalism, incorporating intercultural communication as its integral part, was recommended as a working educational policy.

It was reported that intercultural competency was significantly correlated with intercultural relations (r = .369, p < .01), communicating in the host languages (English, (r = .302, p < .01) and Amharic (r = .219, p < .01)), and intercultural collaboration (r = .299, p < .01). It was also positively correlated with intra-cultural relations (r = .199, p < .01) and intra-cultural collaboration (r = .234, p < .01). In line with the theory of intercultural competence, respondents with higher intercultural competency can successfully build intercultural relations (β = .357), t (284) = 41.383, p = .000); respondents who perceived greater use of the host languages in their communication had a stronger intent to form intercultural relationships (Amharic: (β = .106), t(282) = 16.686, p = .039); English: (β = .107), t(282) = 16.686, p = .039). Intercultural collaboration was also found to be a significant predictor of intercultural relations (β = .237), t (281) = 17.199, p = .000). The youth reported a higher degree of cultural identity salience (CIS) rather than ethnic identity salience (EIS) *(t [279] = -14.403, p= .000).* Boys rated their ethnic identity salience higher than their female counterparts *(t [278] = 4.471, p= .000).* There was statistically a significant difference in EIS among ethnic students *(F [5,256] =6.768, p= 0.00).* The most dominant conflict styles preferred by respondents were integrating, compromising, dominating and avoiding in the order [F (4, 273) = 94.43, p = .0001]. The effect of EIS on dominating conflict style was significant (F [19,273] =2.128, p=0.006) while CIS was significant on integrating conflict styles (F [18,273] =3.380, p= 0.000).

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Background of the study

Intercultural communication has become an integral part of everyday life for most people (Gudykunst, 2005; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Neuliep, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2008; Samovar & Porter, 2001). Various reasons have made this possible. Globalization, for instance, has been associated with the process of bringing people from various cultures and countries into a common market or workforce. The development of transportation technologies, the sweeping change of demographics, and several personal and ideological causes have also contributed to this dynamism. The planet has increasingly been a smaller village due to fast growing cyber technology and social networking such as Facebook and Twitter. As a result, face-to- face or online communication has demanded individuals to require proficiency in intercultural abilities (Byram, 1997; Jandt, 2007; Fantini, 2005; Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Bennett, 1993). Added to these, social questions for political and cultural rights among minorities in multiethnic national states have encouraged governments to adopt multiculturalism as a relevant national policy to encourage democracy and healthy interaction among citizens (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Banks, 1994; Tanaka, 2007). Unfortunately, the world has recorded a number of intercultural conflicts and political turmoils that have taken the life of so many people. These and similar reasons oblige governments and institutions to deal with this timely and vital social phenomenon.

As a result, intercultural communication studies have dominated social enquiry from various orientations and contexts. For instance, the mission of the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department in the early 1970s played a founding role. Since then, researchers from various disciplines and schools of thought (e.g. Philipsen, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Gudykunst, 1985; Kincaid, 1988; Oetzel, 1995; Fantini, 2005) have developed their own models and theories within the last three decades. A significant number of studies (e.g. Hoftsede 1980, 1993, 1983; Culpan & Kucukemiroglu, 1993; Hirokawa, 1981; Stephens & Greer, 1995; Elenkov, 1997) were conducted to understand intercultural communication in business contexts. A noteworthy figure of research outputs from foreign language pedagogy has also contributed to our understanding of intercultural

competence (e.g. Ruben, 1976; Bryam, 1997; Bennett, 1993; Risager, 2007; Fantini, 2005). Furthermore, many studies have incorporated intercultural issues in their studies of immigrants' adjustment and adaptation in foreign countries (e.g. Kim, 1988, 1995, 2001; Bourhis et al., 1997; Gudykusnt, 1995, 1998; Nishida, 1999; Giles, 1973). Despite divergence in conceptualizing and theorizing the construct, intercultural studies have been at the heart of most disciplines, organizations and national programs designed for people living in multicultural environments or immigrants integrating in host countries.

The current study deals with this challenging social dilemma: how to create a cohesive and interactive community in a multicultural environment. It aims to investigate intercultural communication perceptions and experiences at an institutional level. For this, a multicultural higher educational institution was targeted for the same cause. It is obvious that even though various stakeholders can take part in an attempt to build effective cultural dialogue among citizens, universities can play a pivotal role in this regard. Since the very beginning in the Middle Ages, universities have developed in what we today would call an intercultural environment in which the knowledge they produce has never been confined to national borders. Colleges have recently become highly diverse educational environments (Gurin, 1999; Astin, 1993; Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Stier, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2002). In addition to the indispensable work of education and research, universities have a duty to make a direct contribution to the political and economic gains of the communities they serve. In sum, the current study considers higher education as an authentic context of intercultural interaction for the fact that, like international business institutions, universities today have been highly diverse and international (Gurin, 1999; Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Astin, 1993).

A university in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University (AAU), was chosen to be the source of empirical data for the current study. The choice of this particular case was prompted as a result of three important reasons: the personal experience of the author, practical significance of the research output and methodological concerns. Firstly, born of a bilingual and bicultural family, brought up in a multi-religious community and educated in a multicultural university in Ethiopia and abroad, the author inherited a life time experience of challenges and opportunities of intercultural encounters.

Exposure to different cultural realities early in his childhood has always puzzled him to question why people from diverse cultural groups misperceive each other. His experiences as an undergraduate student in Bahir University, Ethiopia, was among the citable examples he often raises. For instance, a month before graduation in 1998, fourth-year college students had a meeting to organize themselves for a publication of a graduation magazine. Unfortunately, the meeting ended in conflict between students demanding a multilingual publication on one hand and a monolingual album on the other. Well, this was the result of an often taken for-granted ethnically divided student community which exists in most Ethiopian university environments. A lot of similar cases have motivated the researcher to study such an interesting aspect of human interaction.

In addition to his experience as a student, the author's teaching experience at Addis Ababa University added a momentous input in his desire to reflect on his students' intercultural encounters. As a Lecturer, he observed a trend students take while they take seats and make groups in the classroom. He also recorded his students' experience of interethnic communication problems and their claims for remarking of examination papers. The result revealed that ethnicity was the most important factor in these activities (Anteneh, 2009). Furthermore, the author has been an eye witness of few campus conflicts among ethnic students at the main campus of the University. The conflicts took the life of some students and resulted in property damages. Despite administrative measures, there have seldom been discussions among members of the University community regarding this unpleasant situation. For example, the president of the University called a faculty meeting with a subject *Campus unrest* on a memo written on 12 June 2007. The meeting was held on the fifteenth of the month at the Faculty of Business and Economics. Even though it was a grave problem that affected the security of everyone, the meeting ended before the time it was scheduled for. Only a few administrators close to the president responded to the questions brought up for discussion. However, all other staff members were silent and demonstrated irresponsive body language. That was an interesting episode for the author to explore the problem.

Secondly, taking into consideration the sociopolitical reality in Ethiopia, the project aspires to suggest practical recommendations to improve intercultural dialogue among cultural and linguistic

communities in Ethiopia. Practically, the study aspires to contribute to the efforts of promoting democratic culture and productive communication among cultural groups residing in this developing Horn of African nation. It is clear that healthy intercultural interaction is a prerequisite to social and economic development of every society (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Neuliep, 2009; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Samovar & Porter, 2001). The peaceful co-existence of cultural communities and interaction among them is unthinkable without effective communication skills. As most societies in the Third World suffer from the consequences of poor intercultural dialogue and an undemocratic political culture, industrious efforts in creating tolerant and intercultural societies can enhance positive interactions. For example, sources witness that studying intercultural communication in such environments facilitates effective diversity management and promotes efficient conflict resolution strategies (e.g. Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

Lastly, the author's firsthand experiences and reflections are important for methodological concerns as well. A research that attempts to grasp a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication benefits from the insider's view of the researcher in a number of ways. In the first place, the researcher possesses profound knowledge of the study area and context which saves time and maximizes efficiency of accessing quality data (Otten & Geppert, 2009). Building a rapport with the study area and approaching potential data sources would be much easier if the author has acquaintance with the research site. Intercultural studies are highly influenced by macro-level contextual factors such as politics, culture, history and demography. The researcher's knowledge of these factors accelerates conceptualizing intercultural issues based on contextual realities on the ground. Most intercultural researchers hold a detached association between the researcher and the researched. Consequently, their research has scarcely benefitted from the *emic* perspective of the researched. Therefore, based on the above motives and reasons, it makes sense to study intercultural communication in a multicultural higher education context taking Ethiopian higher educational institution as a case study. The subsequent section describes the research problem and an overview of theoretical issues framing it.

Problem statement and its theoretical base

In response to local and global demand for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, most universities adopted multiculturalism as a model of pedagogy and institutional arrangement. As a result, they admit students from various nations, ethnicity and cultures; hire staff from different backgrounds; and modify their curriculum to address equity, diversity and cultural pluralism (Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Tanaka, 2007; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 1994). However, the ideology and practice of multiculturalism have been challenged on various grounds. Even though multiculturalism considerably contributes to democratization of universities, it is criticized for creating a divided academic community. For example, in racially divided US societies, white students have felt that the new approach offered them a weaker role than their previous dominance in a university composition (Tanaka, 2007). As reported by Tanaka, people of color, on the other hand, embraced multiculturalism as a viable tool for recognizing their identity and new role on campuses. Similarly, previously mono-ethnic campuses in multiethnic countries, multiculturalism is perceived as a threat to the then dominant ethnic groups since it offers a new promise to others who were denied access to a university education. As a rule, multiculturalism is meant to embrace all cultures, in practice, it favors the culture of people of non-dominant ethnic backgrounds (Tanaka, 2007). Therefore, multiculturalism creates a divided community as its byproduct despite its considerable contribution to diversity, democratic culture and internationalization of higher education.

Furthermore, multiculturalism sometimes results in conflicts among ethnic students. While confronted with a weaker role and representation on campus, students from dominate groups attempt to reject the new system and defend their pictures. On the contrary, others explore the merits of the new arrangement to the best of their abilities. For instance, students in Ethiopian universities demonstrated a strong desire to exercise political, linguistic and cultural rights on various occasions (Balsvik, 2005, 2007; Merera, 2006; Baharu, 1994). Most of the students have been sensitive to issues such as culture, language and ethnicity. Students from previously dominant ethnic group are unhappy about their new role and the current student ethnic composition on campuses. The existence of these two groups has sometimes yielded ethnic

conflicts that adversely affected academia and interpersonal interaction among members of the academic community.

For example, in the last decade or so it has been observed that university environments in Ethiopia have been tense and have demonstrated ethnic conflicts. There have been recorded ethnic clashes among students on the main campus of AAU and other institutions of higher learning in nation. The main campus of AAU could not escape the unrest for so many years. Even though the causes of the conflicts could be diverse, the multicultural model adopted has not helped it in creating a productive intercultural dialogue among the diverse cultural groups. The other problem with multiculturalism as an approach is its weak focus on communication. It is certain that the model invites a diverse group of students to a campus environment. It also introduces a multicultural curriculum and encourages various cultural programs that promote ethnic cultures, music and food. The multicultural model of higher education has not directly encouraged cultural groups to communicate across ethnic frontiers as observations show. It barely encourages second language learning and intercultural relationships as well. These problems call for a thorough investigation into the causes of the problems and possible ways by which intercultural communication can be enhanced in such a context.

It is important to note that intercultural communication plays a crucial role in achieving social integration in culturally diverse society. Through appropriate intercultural training and experience, it is possible to build accommodative political culture and establish democratic environment on the ground of mutual respect and tolerance (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). For example, the European Council launched an important mission that works on intercultural dialogue among its member states through various programs. The aim is to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes (Cliche, Fischer & Wiesand, 2011). By the same token, multiethnic and multicultural nations can enhance democratic culture, tolerance for ambiguity and peaceful co-existence of diverse cultural groups. Unfortunately, in multiethnic and multicultural developing countries like Ethiopia, there has always been a little or no record of a scientific study of

intercultural communication. Communication, which plays a make-or-break role, is always taken for-granted. Consequently, ethnic conflicts and political turmoil have been among the usual distasteful practices in most part of Africa. The Hutu and Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the aftermath of 2005 Ethiopian election, 2008 election chaos in Kenya, and 2011 anti-government public demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are a few examples to mention.

Regarding the European experience on the matter, university internationalization programs in Europe have been on the rise very recently, as the consequence of the commencement of the ERASMUS program in 1987, the Sorbonne Agreement in 1998, the recognition of the Bologna Process model and the Education and Training 2010 Work program. Even though internationalization of higher education in Europe may add to ideological convergence and integration of university policies, it has positively contributed to intercultural dialogue among students in the region. As a result, today some universities in Europe have been offering courses in intercultural communication or running extracurricular activities that engage students and staff in intercultural dialogue. The University of Lugano and Hochshule Fulda, for example, provide courses leading to the Master of Intercultural Communication. Another example is the degree of European Master Program in Intercultural Communication (EMICC), a course of the Bologna Process type aimed at young Master's students. International offices of most universities in Germany conduct international exchange and intercultural communication programs. On contrary, the universities in multiethnic African nations hardly recognize the role of such an important endeavor. Apart from a recent attempt to diversify university environments, nothing was done to institutionalize and encourage intercultural dialogue among students from various cultural groups studying and residing on Ethiopian campuses.

Needless to say, intercultural communication can offer a conceptual basis for creating social integration and healthy interaction out of diversity within an educational context. It encourages dialogue, tolerance for ambiguity and effective communication across cultural divides (Bennette, 1993; Tanaka, 2007; Fantini, 2005). Effectiveness of higher education in a multiethnic context requires a high level of intercultural abilities and communication skills demonstrated by a campus community. It is inevitable that intercultural skills can minimize cross-cultural misunderstandings

by facilitating communication (Tanaka, 2007; Bennett, 1993; Kim, 2001; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2005; Neuliep, 2009). In this regard, universities can assist students in being sensitive to cultural differences and respond with versatility; understand cultural differences in an objective manner; and facilitate reconciliation and teach productive conflict resolution styles to their students.

Through appropriate intercultural training, universities can prepare students to successfully communicate across cultural divides. This can let students build and maintain constructive relationships among themselves. It also creates a new space for dealing with conflicts peacefully. Although intercultural communication is not widely recognized as a field of study, it makes sense to promote it as part of internationalization/nationalization endeavors to help students cope with global and local demands for communication across cultural boundaries. It is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. This is, therefore, possible through research into understanding the nature and process of such communication. Universities can provide an intercultural playground where students bring perceptions, competences and experiences. Intercultural training programs can be deal breakers in this regard. Having said this, it is vital to overview the conceptual and theoretical issues associated with intercultural communication.

As far as theoretical issues are concerned, it is important to give a glimpse of the available perspectives before proposing one for the current study. Research in intercultural communication is dominated by three major approaches (see Chapter Two for complete coverage). These are: the social science, the interpretive and the critical. These perspectives differ in their ontological and epistemological assumptions regarding human behavior. To begin with, the social science approach assumes a desirable external reality and often uses quantitative research methods of data gathering to predict human behavior (Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002). The approach is criticized for the use of culturally insensitive methods. It is also contested that human communication is often more creative than predictable (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Nevertheless, the interpretive approach examines cultural meanings conveyed by words, messages and interactions and assumes human behavior as subjective and creative (Saville-Troike, 1998; Keating, 2001). Interpretive researchers use qualitative methods such us ethnographic interviews

and participant observation. They are criticized for the scarcity of outputs and holding an outsider's perspective to communities understudy. Lastly, the critical approach includes many hypotheses of the interpretive approach but focuses more on macro-contexts such as social and political contexts that influence communication (e.g. Delgado, 2002; Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983). Critical researchers often use textual analysis as a method of study. The major limitations of this approach include: poor focus on face-to-face communication and a lack of empirical data (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

Despite growing interest in intercultural communication, there is seldom agreement among advocates of these three perspectives (Anteneh, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002). However, few publications bypass the paradigm war and the philosophical orthodoxy binding the approaches (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002). These authors came up with an integrated approach which they termed it as the dialectical approach. Ontologically, the approach assumes that reality can be both external and internal; human behavior is predictable and at the same time creative and changeable. Despite its innovative intention to combine the approaches, the dialectical approach can be criticized on a number of grounds. First of all, the approach does not clearly show the integration of the three approaches into one whole except its presentations of the concepts in binary. The authors also shy away from addressing how research methods are combined and integrated to give a comprehensive picture of intercultural communication. There are no explanations on which methods to use and how they could be used to explain intercultural variables. Moreover, even though the approach attempts to integrate conceptual issues such as culture, communication, power and context, it refrains from recognizing other variables such as intercultural competence, host language (second/foreign) proficiency and personal qualities/characteristics.

Concerning the theoretical framework, the current study generated a model which is termed hereafter as *an integrative model to intercultural communication (IMICC)*. The model is relevant for various reasons (see Chapter Three for full coverage). It integrates conceptual and methodological issues pertinent to understanding intercultural communication based on a pragmatic philosophy.

Conceptually, it is founded on the merits of the three approaches. Similar to the dialectical approach, IMICC assumes that reality is both internal and external, and human behavior is predictable and creative. Epistemologically, it recognizes that knowledge can be constructed and understood through subjective and objective ways. With respect to the subjectivity/objectivity argument, the model is in harmony with Gudykunst and Nishida (1989) that contends a rigid objectivist or subjectivist perspective is not justifiable. These authors argue that both perspectives are necessary to understand intercultural communication, but the question is how to eventually integrate the two philosophical positions to yield a comprehensive output. Nearly all theorists base their assumptions on either of the positions owing to their obedience to the school of thought they have already socialized with. Another reason that theorists use either objectivist or subjectivist assumptions is that, on the surface, these assumptions appear to be inconsistent (Gudykusnst, 2005). Some authors argue that objectivist assumptions work better when individuals are not *mindful* and that subjectivist's assumptions are more useful when individuals are *mindful* (Gudykunst, 2005; Langer, 1997).

Consistent with the recommendations of Gudykust and Nishida (1989), the theoretical framework of the current study combines conceptual and methodological issues systematically for a better understanding of intercultural communication. A holistic and comprehensive understanding of culture and communication and their intercourse largely depends upon both surface and in-depth investigation of intercultural variables and their relationships by integrating seemingly opposing concepts. Unlike the dialectical approach, the interrelation of communication science and competence research which is not used at all in most studies (Rathje, 2006) is addressed in this model. These two research traditions are integrated for the fact that communication and competence are conceptualized as two sides of the same coin on which the former is a manifestation of the latter. This approach considers the major themes of the model discovered in the course of the study as integral parts of intercultural communication in addition to those included in the dialectical approach.

Concerning methodological integration, the current framework admits the argument of the functional approach which assumes that human behavior can be quantifiable; however, it also

honors that there are unquantifiable human experiences. In addition, the model acknowledges the notion of the interpretive approach that human experience is complex and so does the study of intercultural communication. In recognition of these assumptions, multiple ethnographic data collection tools were employed to better answer the research questions. The new model credits the significance given to socio-political contexts consistent with the advocators of the critical approach. Unlike the dialectical approach, this model takes a clear methodological position and hence adapts an exploratory mixed-method approach that starts with a qualitative study and develops into a quantitative (see Chapter Four for a full discussion). As the study attempts to grasp a comprehensive understanding of perceptions, competences and practices, and enhance social integration in the academic context, qualitative and quantitative studies were systematically combined. These research methods are not exclusive and contradictory but they are rather complimentary as they were integrated systematically. Adopting a pragmatic view, the study used multiple data gathering tools as far as they helped understand the issue under study and seize a comprehensive contextual model of intercultural communication.

The research questions

The purpose of the current study was to understand intercultural communication in a higher education context and suggest a productive way by which intercultural dialogue, democratic culture and social integration can be cultivated and enhanced. Through the comprehensive empirical material, the project aimed at discovering a contextual model of intercultural communication and a relevant educational policy/institutional arrangement for multicultural higher educational environment. These purposes were outlined based on the assumption that higher educational institutions, universities in particular, can play a pivotal role in promoting social integration and fostering a democratic culture in the communities they are located in. It was also founded on the notions that contemporary university education and institutional arrangement demand a new model, past multiculturalism. The new arrangement should encourage diversity, internationalization of education and academic excellence through direct engagement of students in intercultural interactions.

To address these purposes, the study was guided by grand research questions which developed and became focused in the course of the study. Starting the research with grand tour questions was a requirement for a research that aspires to develop an understanding and generate a working theory/model based on ethnographic data collected before a comprehensive quantitative study (Creswell, 1999; Morse, 1991; Morgan, 1998). In an attempt to gain rich understanding, intensive and multiple qualitative data gathering tools were employed based on the questions prepared to guide but not restrict the study. Thus, the research did not begin with specific research questions but these questions became apparent in the course of the study, especially after the major themes emerged from the ethnographic study. Later, the themes were verified and legitimized and a clear set of specific questions were formulated from the data. As a result of the answers to the grand questions or the qualitative phase, a new model of intercultural communication in higher education context was generated and a new institutional arrangement was suggested. The grand questions that were prepared at the onset of the project are listed below.

The grand research questions:

1. What are the central themes of intercultural communication in a higher educational context?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities of intercultural communication in a multicultural university?
3. How can social integration and healthy intercultural communication be enhanced in a higher educational environment?
4. What possible model of intercultural communication can be generated from the context of the study?

Throughout the course of the study and in an attempt to generate a working model and institutional arrangement, specific research questions were generated to describe and explain intercultural communication in higher educational context. The questions were formulated after the themes were identified and the grand-tour questions were fully answered. A comprehensive Survey Form was prepared to answer these specific research questions and test the model

suggested by the qualitative component of the study. Below are listed the specific questions that guided the current study.

The specific research questions:

1. What is the level of intercultural competency (that is, knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) demonstrated by the youth?
2. How do the youth perceive their personal qualities/characterstics in their own ethnic culture and how do others perceive them in a multicultural environment?
3. What is the level of students' proficiency in the working languages?
4. With whom do the youth communicate, form relationships with and collaborate with on the task of mutual interest?
5. What are the most preferred intercultural communication styles among the youth?
6. What is the level of ethnic and cultural identity salience demonstrated by the youth?
7. What are the major intercultural conflict styles preferred by the youth?
8. Are there statistically significant differences among the youth regarding intercultural variables as a result of socio-demographic variables?
9. What are the relationships between intercultural communication variables?

Organization of the dissertation

It was a challenging task to decide on what contents to include, and what to leave out at the onset of this project. As the study intended to investigate intercultural communication based on exploratory mixed-methods research, it was not easy to figure out priorities and identify specific contents that would not change over time. However, it was possible to delimit the focus and the themes of the project and make decisions on how many chapters to produce and what major contents to include particularly after the qualitative data were generated and analyzed. Consequently, the chapters of the dissertation and its contents underwent significant improvements in the course of the study. The changes can be attributed to the dynamic and complex nature of research into intercultural communication from such methodology (Gudykunst, 2005; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989; Creswell, 1999; Langer, 1997). After the inclusion of the inevitable changes and polishing the dissertation with secondary literature, nine chapters were

produced. These chapters discuss conceptual, methodological and empirical facts pertinent to addressing the purposes of the study and answering the research questions. The following paragraphs summarize the purposes and major contents of the chapters.

To begin with, the first chapter introduces the project work by presenting the research agenda. It starts with providing background for studying intercultural communication in a higher education environment. It provides the conceptual premises and author's personal reflective accounts to justify the argument. Following this, the chapter discusses the research problem in brief. It also narrates the role of higher education in creating social integration and healthy intercultural dialogue among citizens. The chapter goes further to argue the discontents of multiculturalism as a model of diversity, internationalization and democratic institutional arrangement. After citing the prominent perspectives and research traditions, the chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the current study. After justifying the theoretical framework of the study, the preferred research design is briefed and the grand research questions are listed. The specific research questions are also listed. Lastly, the chapter ends with a summary of the organization of the dissertation.

Chapter Two exposes the review of the related literature and the state of the art. It explains diversity and internationalization as the most popular issues in contemporary higher education. Then, it presents multiculturalism as the commonly held policy and institutional arrangement adopted by most universities today. After discussing the promises of this model, the chapter explicates the problems with multiculturalism and argues for a new model past this policy. It also narrates the imperatives for studying intercultural communication in higher education. Following this, the chapter summarizes the history and the current status of the field of intercultural communication. Following this, it discusses the available approaches to studying intercultural communication. This is preceded by an overview of the most popular theories and models of intercultural communication.

Next, the third chapter presents the theoretical framework of the current study. Like the second chapter, this is also a conceptual chapter but it introduces the model of intercultural communication discovered in the course of the study. It starts with explaining what makes the new

model different from other models/theories. It moves on to discuss the imperatives for an integrative perspective in the study of intercultural communication. These are followed by the major assumptions of the model with respect to theory, intercultural communication, culture and communication. Afterwards, the chapter demonstrates the model and its central elements. Description of the model is followed by discussions of the central components which include intercultural competence, communication styles, ethnic/cultural identity salience, conflict styles, contexts and power relations. These ingredients of the model are explained with respect to how they are conceptualized by other theories and how they are viewed in the current study. Important conceptual issues related to these variables are also included in the discussions. In sum, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight the theoretical framework and discuss intercultural communication variables as conceptualized and analyzed in the current study.

Chapter Four is devoted to the research methodology. It begins with elaborating exploratory mixed-methods research as the most suitable research design for the current study. After providing conceptual and procedural issues applicable to the research design, the chapter moves on to describe the qualitative phase of the study. This includes descriptions of the ethnographic instruments and the procedures followed to recruit research participants. These precede explanations on data transcriptions and translations. Narration of the qualitative phase of the study ends with elaboration of the techniques and procedures applied to analyze, manage and report the findings. Then, the quantitative phase begins with a reminder of the specific research questions prepared to guide the quantitative phase of the study. It narrates the processes followed to pilot and develop the Survey Form. After the sampling technique and sample size are explained, a summary of the variables represented on the Survey Form and their respective measuring scales (Likert scales) are explained accompanied by calculated reliability coefficients of the scales. Finally, statistical techniques employed to analyze the quantitative data are elaborated and the data management strategies are outlined.

Then, Chapter Five provides a detailed account of the research country, setting and interview participant. Claiming the need for demographic data in this kind of research, the chapter briefs the socio-historical realities and political culture in Ethiopia. These macro-level contextual issues are

preceded by an overview of the history and the present status of higher education in Ethiopia. Then, the research setting is described and the reasons for choosing AAU as a research setting, from the available institutions in Ethiopia, are also explained. Similarly, explanation for choosing the target campus is provided. Then, a detailed description of the interview participants is presented in three categories with respect to participants' roles on the campus: student, teacher and university management. Description of each of the respondents include information on: age, ethnicity, language, place of birth, educational level, previous intercultural experiences, personal behavior and other relevant socio-demographic information which is important in understanding the perspective participants hold.

The next chapters present the outcomes of the project work. Texts, figures and tables are used to present and discuss the findings. Presentation of the results is followed by interpretations, discussions and reflections of the author. The sixth and the seventh chapters present the findings of the qualitative component of the study. These ethnographic reports narrate intercultural communication perceptions and experiences of participants from their own perspectives. The sixth chapter reveals the challenges and opportunities of Ethiopian higher educational institutions in responding to local and global demands for diversity, multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. Based on the results, the chapter gives a comprehensive account of the contexts of interaction and existing institutional arrangement. The chapter is structured to discuss diversity and multiculturalism, macro-contextual issues, institutional context, communication culture, intercultural perceptions, power relations and intercultural conflicts. Various personal stories, experiences and reflections from a diverse group of respondents are cited to support the discussions and stories developed.

With reference to the qualitative findings, Chapter Seven highlights the major discontents with the status quo and aims at suggesting possible ways by which intercultural communication can be enhanced in multiethnic higher educational context. In doing so, it addresses the problems with the existing educational policy and institutional arrangement and consequently proposes a relevant educational policy that can facilitate intercultural dialogue and learning. It specifically discusses the required institutional change, the demand for new partnership with the state,

community and institutions and the proposed revised roles of members of the academic community. The chapter outlines changes in educational policies, strategies and directions vital for the enhancement of student intercultural competence and interactional skills as part of their professional training.

The quantitative chapter, Chapter Eight, is devoted to theorizing of intercultural communication in higher education by presenting, interpreting and discussing the findings. The chapter begins with descriptions of important socio-demographic variables (gender, age, ethnicity, academic area, regional origin and religion) and campus diversity. Then, assessment of intercultural communication variables are described compared and contrasted against the socio-demographic variables. The report also presents college students' assessment of their intercultural competency. Next, the students' ratings of their intercultural qualities are reported from two perspectives: as perceived in home culture (own ethnic culture) and host culture (AAU). Students' perceived proficiency in the languages of communication on the campus is described in line with the socio-demographic variables. The chapter describes students' perceptions of intercultural areas (e.g. with whom they communicate, form relationships with and collaborate on tasks of mutual interest) as well. After the discussion of the association between intercultural competence variables, the students' preference of communication styles are also narrated. Then, assessment of students' identity salience (ethnic and cultural) is elaborated followed by a discussion on students' preferred intercultural conflict resolution styles. Added to these, the relationship between identity salience and conflict styles is also summarized. Throughout the chapter, the quantitative results are presented based on appropriate statistical techniques and discussed in line with related findings in the literature.

Finally, based on the qualitative and quantitative results, the last chapter concludes the research report and provides insights for future directions into intercultural communication research in higher education context. Apart from giving policy recommendations and practical intervention strategies, the ninth chapter offers a new way of conceptualizing intercultural communication in a multiethnic university environment based on the findings and author's reflections.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the state of the art in intercultural communication and its application to higher education. It explains conceptual issues pertinent to understanding intercultural communication in multiethnic and multicultural university campuses. The chapter begins with discussing trends and concerns rampant in a contemporary higher education. It outlines diversity and internationalization processes as the most dominant issues in the twenty-first century academia. Following these elucidations, the chapter discusses multicultural education as a popular model in addressing cultural pluralism and internationalization of higher education. Then, it highlights the major inadequacies of this institutional arrangement in meeting intercultural and communicative needs of students studying and sheltering on campuses. In response to the limitations, the chapter proposes intercultural communication as a vital tool to deal with diversity and interaction in multicultural educational contexts. Consequently, the chapter narrates the most important imperatives for the study of intercultural communication in such multicultural learning environments.

Afterwards, the chapter moves on presenting review of the related literature vital for understanding the conceptual issues. It reviews the most trendy models, theories and research traditions. It provides glimpse of the history of the field and its most popular perspectives (i.e. functionalist, interpretive, critical and dialectical). Following this, the chapter summarizes well-cited theories grouping them into seven categories with respect to constructs they focus on. More specifically, it compares and contrasts the key aspects of the theories, conceptualizations and their popularity in the field. Irrespective of disciplinary orthodoxy, the current chapter quotes prominent historical, theoretical and conceptual matters characterizing the models and the theories. Even though listing the models and theories is not the objective of the chapter, providing a clear review of popular models or theories is crucial before proposing a model guiding the current work. This chapter is followed by a proposal for an *Integrative Model to Intercultural Communication in Contexts (IMICC)* based on evidences from empirical study, the review of literature and critical reflection of the author on both. To start the current chapter, the following section exposes the principal concerns of twenty-first century higher education and the new demand for change.

Issues in contemporary higher education and the new demand

We are living in a dynamic world where interaction with people from diverse background has been a local experience. Through the processes of globalization and immigration, the world has become an intercultural environment where knowledge and sensitivity to cultural differences have been major concerns. This dynamic world has been unique for the fact that global state of affairs has become local concerns and local actions have global ramifications. These have signified a need for nurturing global citizens with useful intercultural communication skills. In advocating the need for such skills, scholars have cautioned the peril of how lack of intercultural understanding could stimulate conflicts. According to Thomas and Inkson (2004), cultural intelligence is required in bridging cultural divides and cultivating cross-cultural relations. This intelligence posits understanding the impacts of individuals' cultural background on their business behavior (Earley & Ang, 2003). This ability impacts success in international business; enables productive interpersonal contacts and decreases mutual misunderstandings. Institutional effectiveness could be achieved provided that organizations devote themselves to conscious actions in favor of the notion that no one culture possesses single valid belief system (Zhao & Edmondson, 2005). Consequently, various institutions and nations have recognized the fact that intercultural communication is not only a need but a requirement in a move towards such efforts.

In a world stretched between globalization and cultural pluralism, educational institutions, like business companies, play a pivotal role in enhancing social integration and effective intercultural dialogue among communities. As a result, education has produced a metamorphosis in missions, goals and methods. Higher education, in particular, has been modifying itself with respect to global and local needs of citizens across the globe. Most universities and colleges in the United States and many other western nations have tailored their services to the growing concerns for internationalization and cultural pluralism. For instance, the European Commission (1999), mainly the Bologna Declaration aims at mutual barter of knowhow, systematic utilization of competencies, quality development of higher education and the indispensable role of higher education for insuring sustainable development and cultural pluralism. Even though the Bologna process aims at adopting similar educational structure and easy students' mobility and staff

employment, it has promoted the sense of European identity and communication among students from member states. Consequently, during the last two decades, universities and colleges in Europe have modified their educational policies to sensitize future citizens to essential aspects of international and intercultural communication. Recently, the tone in higher education has been variously placed on internationalization, cross-cultural communication, peace studies, sustainable development, human rights and cultural studies.

In principle, universities are models of multicultural communities in which they are placed. They are set to offer quality education tailored towards economic, political and cultural realities of societies. These institutions aspire to be examples of academic excellence while promoting democratic culture and multiculturalism. As per demands for multicultural education, colleges tend to endorse excellence of students from diverse background (Steeter & Grant, 1999). This can be attributed to the fact that educational institutions should reflect sensitivity to cultural differences and promote tolerance. As most colleges host diverse group of students, they work hard to project good examples of multiculturalism. This reality becomes apparent on campuses where there is increasing diversity in students population and staff composition. Such endeavor has encouraged universities to act as models of independent world. As a result of attempts to address the needs of diverse group of populations, universities have evolved to be ideal places where human and cultural rights are exercised. This goodwill has been part and parcel of the missions of contemporary higher educational institutions. However, balancing diversity and internalization processes has been a central concern for today's universities and colleges (e.g. Banks, 1987; Clark & Gorski, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Shulman & Mesa-Bains, 1993; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). As a result, there have always been a number of controversies around promoting campus diversity that reflects the demand of all and promote productive interaction by accelerating institutional effectiveness and interpersonal communication.

Diversity in higher education: Diversity has been among the top priorities of most universities' missions and actions. In a nutshell, diversity is the coexistence of people from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural background. It is obvious that contemporary higher educational institutions have been increasingly multiethnic/multicultural working environments where diversity of various

enormities has been part of everyday experience. As indicated above, in their attempt to be democratic academic settings, universities aim to be pluralistic, equitable and sensitive to cultural differences. Universities seek to equip graduates with basics of multicultural understanding. Besides their effort to be gender blind and tolerant to religious differences, colleges struggle to offer a faire playground for students from diverse geographies. In the world that aspires to respect human and democratic rights of citizens, universities are commited to satisfy the often questioned cultural pluralism. Since the dawn of civil rights era in the United States, ethnicity and race in higher education have assumed a fundamental position in political, intellectual, and social debates about the purposes of higher education itself (Ortiz & Santos, 2009). In these institutions, the growth of ethnic groups in a national student population created opportunities and tensions that mirrored events in society around the globe.

In the past decades, university education in western societies has become more diverse. Democratization of higher education, coupled with post-colonial and labor migration, has led to an increasing number of ethnic minority and foreign students' population in colleges. For example, the share of ethnic minorities in US universities has increased (Asian- American from 0.6% to 8.6%, Latino from 0.6% to 7.3% and African-American from 7.5% to 10.5%) in the year 2006 from the figures in 1971 (Severiens & Wolff, 2009). Universities and US Department of Education have committed themselves to diversity of education. As a result, university campuses have been more diverse year after year. In similar manner, the percentage of foreign students in European countries mounted from 4.9% in 2002 to 5.9% in 2005, an increase of 34% (Eurostat, 2010). The same report shows that from the total number of students attending higher education in EU member countries, about half million are studying in other member states. This has contributed to the diversity of EU universities. The diversity has been supported with universities' effort in hosting international students from Africa, Asia and other continents. Campus diversification from both sides of the Atlantic has brought new opportunities and challenges to higher educational institutions.

Diversity is a cornerstone of contemporary higher education for many reasons. First of all, culturally diverse educational contexts facilitate students' socialization and interactional skills across ethnic or national divides. Chang (1996) reports that racial diversity has a direct positive

impact on the individual white student: the more diverse the student body, the greater the likelihood that white students can socialize with someone of a different racial group. Diverse educational environments contribute positively to the effort of reducing ethnocentric views and help students acquire multiple worldviews through intercultural interactions. Such contexts promote personal growth and healthy civil discourse. This is because diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. Diversity strengthens cohesion among communities. Moreover, diverse educational setting prepares students to become effective citizens in a complex and pluralistic society and it fosters mutual respect and teamwork. It also creates communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions than mere membership to a particular group.

More specifically, numerous studies reveal that diverse educational environments positively impact learners' educational outcomes (e.g. Smith et al., 1997; Astin, 1993; Gurin et al., 2003; Maruyama & Moreno, 2000). Higher education is especially influential if its social composition is different from the environment from which the students come from and when it is diverse enough to encourage intellectual experimentation. Studies report that socializing across racial lines and participating in discussions of racial issues are associated with widespread beneficial effects on students' academic and personal development, irrespective of race (e.g. Astin, 1993; Villalpando, 1994). Students learn more and think deeper in more complex ways in multicultural educational contexts because diversity enriches educational experiences. Students gain knowledge from others whose experiences, beliefs and perspectives are different from their own. This advantage can be best achieved in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment. It is interesting to learn that diverse environmental characteristics have also positive impacts on student retention, overall college satisfaction, intellectual self-confidence, and social self-confidence (Astin, 1993).

Added to these, diversity experiences during college has impressive effects on the extent to which graduates live ethnically integrated lives in post-college world. Studies show that students with the most diversity experiences during college enjoy better cross-ethnic interactions after leaving colleges. For example, Villalpando's (1996) reported that interacting with students of color during and after college has a positive effect on white males' post-college sense of social responsibility

and participation in community service activities. Students learn better in such environments and are better prepared to become active participants in pluralistic societies once they leave school. As Gurin (1999) confirms higher educational institutions are ideal places to make campuses authentic public places, where students from different backgrounds can take part in conversations. Students can also share experiences that help them develop understandings of diverse perspectives of other people. Moreover, for students to become culturally competent citizens and democratic leaders, universities have to go beyond simple increase in enrollment rate of students from different racial, national and ethnic backgrounds. These institutions should embrace quality campus climate and actual interactions among diverse students. Therefore, promoting diversity should be a vital aspect of contemporary higher education.

However, bringing diverse individuals together does not automatically result in positive outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). As a result, dealing with diversity has been one of the most challenging responsibilities of modern higher education. Firstly, initial contact among diverse individuals is often characterized by discomfort and uncertainty which inhibits interactions. In other words, students experience more misunderstanding on heterogeneous campus than in a homogenous one. Increased diversity in higher education could result in less cohesiveness, difficult communicative environment, increased anxiety and hopefully greater discomfort among students from varied cultural/ethnic background (Cox, 1993). Second, interaction can result in negative relationships that confirm stereotypes and prejudice (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). In some cases, these would result in intergroup conflict which can erode conduciveness of the learning environment. Ethnic students, for example, became active in their campus environments by demanding hiring of diverse faculty, establishment of ethnic studies programs, multicultural curricular, equal access to top campus offices for ethnic student leaders and banning racist behavior on campus (Ortiz & Santos, 2009).

Furthermore, increased criticism of affirmative action policies and the growth of ethnic groups on campuses, have created a fertile ground for ethnic identity as a political identity than one more associated with family, culture or tradition. As the other challenge to campus diversity, when diverse individuals work together, productivity can suffer as a result of communication, coordination and decision making problems (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). These difficulties yield

inefficiency in time management which in turn affects the outcome of tasks to be done cooperatively. To sum up, increasing diversity among university community brings the above mentioned opportunities and challenges. These have directly or indirectly influenced the diversification process most universities have been engaged in. Positive educational and social outcomes can be gained provided that individuals recognize the value of diversity, reduce stereotypic behavior, build cooperative relations and solve conflicts constructively (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). At an institutional level, diversity efforts ought to be intentional and systematic, and the progress should be regulated to enhance democratic culture and healthy intercultural interaction.

Internationalization of higher education: The other important issue in contemporary university education is internationalization of higher education. It is the process of integrating international/intercultural dimension into teaching, research and service elements of institutions. As a result of the process of globalization and international mobility, a number of institutions, business or educational, have modified themselves to meet global demands and higher education is not an exception. University education has become increasingly international in the past decade as more and more students choose to study abroad, and enroll in foreign educational programs. This growth is the result of several, but not mutually exclusive, driving forces such as a desire to encourage mutual understanding; migration of skilled workers in a globalised economy; institutional desire to generate additional revenues; or the need to build a more educated workforce in home countries, often as emerging economies. Hayhoe (1989) argues that international cooperative agreements, academic mobility, international scholarships, international curriculum studies, cultural values and political context are among the most important reasons for internationalization of higher education. Knight (1999) also outlines other causes for internationalization that include: human resources development, strategic alliances, socio/cultural development, cultural identity, citizenship development, peace and mutual understanding, and economic growth and competitiveness.

With respect to this development, higher educational institutions have taken some noticeable actions. For instance, the experiences of internationalization process in Europe and the United

States justify the efforts to globalize higher education and encourage intercultural dialogue. The efforts have been achieved through designing appropriate curriculum, organizing multicultural activities and study abroad programs. Most universities in these continents have already structured international offices in their respective universities. These offices are mandated with admission, mobility and counseling international students. EU authorities have actively pursued academic internationalization for more than two decades, as part of the move to economic and political integration. At first, the EU has promoted programs such as Erasmus that provided large numbers of European university students with academic experiences outside their home country (Huisman & van der Wende, 2005). Apart from their academic commitments, the task of European universities is to promote intercultural dialogue and transmit intercultural communication skills (in form of linguistic skills as well as communication skills) and to infuse a set of democratic values, freedom of expression, tolerance and self reflection. US colleges and universities are also undertaking hundreds of initiatives and partnerships to deliver cross border education courses and programs.

According to Stier (2003, 2006), three prominent ideologies govern the process of internationalization of higher education namely: idealism, instrumentalism and educationalism. Idealism assumes that internationalization is good per se. It outlines global life conditions and social injustices prevalent across the world. It offers an emancipating worldview which demands international concerns and interdependence of nations that require students and staff to be productive as global citizens. This perspective motivates students to question global resource redistribution and to ensure every person a decent living-standard. Therefore, internationalization of higher education should address global fairness and persuade tolerance and respect among students. However, this ideology has been criticized for its attempt to reflect western cultural imperialism and claims for global hegemony. In other words, the perspective conveys a one-way flow where the rest should accept western culture in the effort to form a global world. In contrast to this view, instrumentalism considers internationalization as a viable road to profit, economic growth and sustainable development.

Currently, many international companies seek multilingual and multicultural professionals with the knowledge of diverse cultural experiences. As a result, universities are required to train students with information, knowledge and skills graduates require competing in a complex global marketplace. It is possible to argue that this ideology assumes higher education as a global commodity. Apart from its ideological purposes, internationalization of higher education could also be used for ideological goal-attainment. For example, the Bologna Declaration assumes that internationalization of higher education can be used for ideological convergence, that is, European sense of community by imposing a larger-scale identity. Instrumentation has been criticized for lacking global solidarity as a result of promoting brain-drain, wealthy nations attracting qualified staff and students from poor countries.

The third ideology, educationalism, which does not limit internationalization to institutionalized education, recognizes personal and social value of learning itself. Exposure to new cultures is considered as a unique multilevel and multipurpose educational experience where intercultural competence, knowledge of and respect for other cultures may be developed (Stier, 2002, 2003, 2006). This perspective has been criticized for individualizing structural and global problems and focusing on enhancing personal level growth (Stier, 2006). Despite ideological differences, the common denominator in the internationalization endeavors is the recognition of intercultural communication as a central concern. The common purpose requires students to develop the fundamental values of international education which includes intercultural competence, increase respect for others' culture and appreciation for one's own culture. The mission to accommodate diversity and internationalize academics has introduced multiculturalism as a new model of pedagogy and institutional arrangement. The following section outlines the benefits and challenges of adopting multiculturalism as a policy and institutional arrangement in a higher educational context.

Multiculturalism and its promises: Multiculturalism has emerged in response to immigration and demographic changes occurring in western nations including the US, UK, EU and Canada. In their attempt to remain open and democratic societies, these nations reacted to the demand for creating multicultural communities in various forms. The variation in conceptualizing

multiculturalism has resulted in heated discourse in the literature (e.g. Gray, 1991; Leo, 1990; Gay, 1992; Banks, 1998; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 2002) and the debate among politicians have made it difficult to reach a consensus in defining the term. Multiculturalism could mean everything and at the same time nothing (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997: 1) but it is evident that it means different at different levels. For example, it could mean people who have internalized several cultures, which coexist inside them (Jonhson & Jonson, 2002: 4). On the other hand, in a political context, it means the advocacy of extending equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups without promoting any specific ethnic, religious, or cultural community values. At institutional level, multiculturalism could mean appreciation, acceptance or promotion of multiple cultures, applied to demographics of a specific place. In this level, it could be considered as institutional policy, strategy or arrangement to respect and promote diversity and cultural pluralism for the sake of institutional effectiveness. For similar call, higher educational institutions have adopted multiculturalism to promote diversity and internationalization of higher education.

Historically, multiculturalism as a philosophy or a model evolved through five major phases in the United States, and of course in other western countries but with different historical precedents (Banks, 1994). The mid 1960s Black Civil Rights movement in the United States demanded educational institutions to admit and hire people of color. It also forced schools to embrace African American studies in the school curriculum. This phase introduced mono-ethnic courses offered to African American students. During the second phase of multicultural education, other ethnic groups too (e.g Jewish Americans and Polish Americans), demanded ethnic studies courses. As a result, ethnic studies courses became more global, conceptual and scholarly. In response, multiethnic studies courses were designed for all students. The third phase, multiethnic education, however, brought the impression that ethnic studies were necessary but not sufficient to bring about pedagogical equity and educational reform. Here there was a clear departure from a mono-ethnic course offer to a multiethnic education.   The fourth phase which is termed as multicultural education passed the commonly held notion that ethnicity was the main categorical factor. It rather recognized the needs of other cultural groups such as women and people with disabilities. This step recognized ethnic, racial, gender, disability and other groups as cultural groups. As a

result, university education aimed at promoting and accommodating diversity and equity of pedagogy for all.

Banks (1998) further argues that these phases were marked by various historical precedents such as World War I, mass migration in various times, World War II and Civil Rights legal development. For example, the rise of Nativism, the Old EU-immigrants to USA (mostly Protestants) claim of being 'more American' than the new immigrants from same region (often Catholics) denied cultural pluralism. Later, *the assimilations ideology/the melting pot perspective* to multicultural education dominated US education during World War I. The melting pot perspective assumes that members of non-dominant cultures are accepted only once they give up their original identity for the purpose of developing a shared culture. Also, other cultural distinctiveness and identification with other way of life were seen as unacceptable, inferior and a threat to national unity. However, prominent philosophers such as Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne and Julius Drachsler criticized this argument and called for cultural pluralism through what they called *the salad bowl* argument. This perspective focuses on equity of pedagogy by valuing and representing diverse cultural issues in the school curriculum. These philosophers defended the rights of the immigrants living in the US and as a consequence ethnic education evolved in 1960s and 1970s. Following these precedents, the inter-group education movement caused by World War II, failure of assimilation project and the new immigrants from non-EU states in 1980s have significantly shaped today's multicultural education in the United States.

Multicultural education is at the heart of educational reform processes in the contemporary world. It aims at addressing educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic and social classes. It also gives both male and female students an equal chance to experience educational success and mobility (Klein, 1985; Sadker & Sadker, 1982). As outlined by Banks (1994: 46) multicultural education serves a number of purposes. Among these, it attempts to acquaint each ethnic and cultural group with a unique aspect of their own culture and the culture of others as well. In other words, it provides cultural groups with cultural and ethnic alternatives that help them acquire multiple worldviews. It also provides students with skills, knowledge and attitudes they require to function in their ethnic culture and mainstream culture. Added to this, multiculturalism reduces

the pain and discrimination members of some ethnic and cultural groups experience in educational institutions and wider society. Furthermore, it assists students' to master essential literary, numeracy, thinking and perspective-taking skills essential for life and work in multiethnic societies. Such educational contexts help students acquire vital skills in these areas through direct contact with students from various cultural and ethnic groups. Therefore, it is fundamental to provide students with equal opportunity to foster their intellectual, social and personal growth to the highest potential (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

The field of multicultural education focuses on three major dimensions that characterize itself as a discipline of diversity, democratic pedagogy and pluralism. First, multiculturalism attempts to transform curriculum goals and contents in a way that incorporates issues from diverse cultures and offer multiply worldview to its students. Multicultural curriculum targets multiple cultural values, democratic values and pluralistic pedagogical environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Banks, 1998; Samovar & Porter, 2001; Gay, 1992). As part of the move, teachers work hard to make use of examples and contents from various cultures. The second dimension of multicultural education is equity of education and reduction of commonly held stereotypes and prejudices. Equity of education can be possible by tailoring teaching to address academic needs of diverse group of students. Studies in multicultural environment play pivotal role in reducing racist attitudes among students (Banks, 1998). The third focus area of multicultural education is designing new institutional arrangement to impose multicultural educational environment. More specifically, students' admission, staff recruitment and appointment of leaders consider equity and democratic principles in addressing institutional pluralism. More students from diverse cultures and ethnic groups join educational institutions through affirmative action policies or other mechanisms to encourage the same purpose. Moreover, institutions facilitate various extra-curricular activities that promote diverse cultures and languages. To recap, multiculturalism is a contemporary model of pedagogy which is characterized by diverse and equitable educational environment, multicultural curriculum, extra-curricular activities and other services.

The problem with multiculturalism: Even though most western countries have adopted multiculturalism as a working model, a lot of noise and hot debate revolve around it. Critics challenge its desirability arguing that national states which would previously have been synonymous with a distinctive cultural identity of their own lose out to enforced multiculturalism. This ultimately erodes host nation's distinct culture. Some European leaders went public to criticize state multiculturalism. For example, David Cameron, current British PM, has criticized state multiculturalism in his first speech as Prime Minister on radicalization and the causes of terrorism (BBC, 5 February 2011). Similarly and few months earlier to this speech, Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, has claimed that multiculturalism utterly failed in Germany (A. Hall, 18 October 2010). Even though these speeches were challenged by their opponents, it is quite obvious that the practicality of multiculturalism have been debated among scholars and politicians. In the context of education, too, the merits of multicultural education in creating cohesive academic society and productive intercultural communication have been challenged. This model of pedagogy has been criticized on a number of grounds especially with respect to creating social integration and healthy intercultural communication among participants in higher educational environment.

It is therefore important to review few empirical evidences regarding theoretical and practical inadequacies of multiculturalism. For example, Tanaka (2007) in his unique book entitled *the intercultural campus: transcending culture and power in American higher education* reports the problems with multiculturalism in addressing intercultural needs of students. He instead proposes *interculturalism* as a feasible approach to diversity, academics and social integration on campuses. The author chose a college campus as a research site to examine and create a cohesive community in racially and ethnically divided societies. One of the findings of this empirical study revealed that one cannot create an intercultural campus by simply mixing different races and ethnic groups together. The author strongly contends that the effort has to go beyond admitting students from various backgrounds and recruiting teachers from diverse cultural orientations. As he noted, although there are clear benefits to making diversity as part of ongoing experience, multicultural education can lead to increased conflicts between ethnic groups. This could be possible for the fact that multiculturalism overlooks the needs of dominant ethnic students.

Added to these, Tanaka (2007) reported that while multiculturalism purported to embrace all cultures, in reality, it focuses on the culture of people of color. This resulted in resistance from white students and staff. The the multicultural institutional arrangement placed multiculturalism in binary opposition to western Eurocentric culture. This means a clear divide between multiculturalism and Europeanism. As a consequence, it unintentionally exacerbated social fragmentation between whites and students of color. The author concluded that multiculturalism could not articulate a new community that could be inclusive of all groups. White faculty members and students did not enjoy the new redefined roles given to them. Most black students attempted to stay in their own small circles both on campus and in classrooms. The study characterized multiculturalism as mono-cultural past and fragmented cultural future. In response to these inadequacies, the author experimented interculturalism as a model to diversity and intercultural interaction that departs from multicultural approaches. He argued that this new approach offers a new space after multicultural education. The model gives people from the dominant group (whites) also a positive role on the new campus culture.

In another study, Otten (2003) reported the limitations of multiculturalism in securing integration in academic environment and promoting internationalization in the same. The author found that despite the ideals of international exchange programs, often a certain time abroad, many international students group themselves in their national communities. He argues that Erasmus communities, where European exchange students usually meet European students, failed to build contact with host students. In support of this argument, a survey among German students found that more than 60% of them had no or hardly any contact with foreign students at their campuses (Bargel, 1998). Otten (2003) further discusses that not only the social environments lacked intercultural interactions, classroom interactions and group works tend to stay mono-cultural. Similar results from a US university were reported by Gurin (1999), who analyzed the legal and educational effects of cultural and ethnic diversity at the University of Michigan in a team of scholars. According to Gurin, most of Michigan's incoming students had little or no significant contact with members of other racial and ethnic groups. Thus, multiculturalism and internationalization do not automatically lead to intercultural communication and intercultural learning experiences.

As discussed time and again, multiculturalism and its attempt to respond to the growing demand for diversity and internationalization of higher education have been helpful but its failures to engage students in intercultural dialogue calls for a new institutional arrangement or model to interaction. The demand for healthy academic discourse and productive intercultural environment necessitate a new approach to pedagogy and communication past a mere improvement in college students' composition and curricular change. Institutional arrangement that lacks focus on communication among diverse cultural groups residing and studying in a common academic context risks the tendency of creating a divided academic community along ethnic, cultural, academic or economic lines. This could further yield conflicts among the ideally divided groups. It also denies intercultural experience participants need to exercise even though they could have grasped it from classroom inputs based on multicultural curriculum. This is true for the fact that a mere curricular change in incorporating multicultural issues may not suffice to help students internalize intercultural abilities and skills. Contemporary higher educational institutions should reform themselves to provide inclusive, comprehensive and practical intercultural experiences to promote mutual respect, empathy, sensitivity to cultural differences and tolerance for ambiguity.

Imperatives for intercultural communication in higher education context

The changing global environment has influenced the increasing cultural diversity in many contexts (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2008; Neuliep, 2009; Porter & Samovar, 2001). Like multicultural business institutions, universities have become examples of authentic intercultural contexts. Through the process of internationalization and diversity efforts, universities have been hosting culturally and linguistic diverse group of students. For their own institutional and pedagogical orientations, campuses ought to consciously address the growing need for healthy and democratic interaction among students, staff and leadership. Institutional effectiveness is hardly possible without dealing with the needs of the workforce. Among the few, healthy intercultural communication, democratic work environment and cultural sensitivity are the most commonly cited needs in the ever growing intercultural world (e.g. Byram, 1997; Gudykunst, 2005; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Samovar & Porter, 2001). University campuses are no different in the attempt to create intercultural environment for their own survival and effectiveness. For instance,

academic discourse and pedagogical practices are improbable if an environment is not good enough to encourage effective intercultural dialogue among members. In other words, higher educational institutions should consider the growing demand for intercultural dialogue in their endeavors to respond to the needs of the community they host and meet institutional expectations. In line with these points and to be more specific, there are a number of imperatives for the study of intercultural communication in higher educational contexts. The following sections deal with this call in details.

Institutional imperatives: Similar to multicultural and multinational business institutions, most universities today have recognized the merits of offering intercultural management courses to university leaders who work with culturally diverse staff and students. University managers or leaders need intercultural skills and leadership qualities to effectively and efficiently run their institutions. It is obvious that coordinating and managing heterogeneous staff and students within an organizational context represent one of the greatest challenges to institutions in the highly dynamic world in the new millennium (Neuliep, 2009). However, with good leadership qualities and organizational communication skills, university leadership and of course classroom teachers can succeed in meeting academic success and organizational effectiveness. To address these important goals, university management should create a conducive and effective communication system that encourages healthy interpersonal and intercultural interaction. Added to these, universities should build transparent and culturally sensitive academic environment. Building efficient organizational communication system based on cultural sensitivity and intercultural management skills would enhance healthy interpersonal interaction in multicultural university environment.

Attempting institutional success without an effective communication system is improbable. Universities in the first place should be models of democratic culture and efficiency in communication. Providing quality education is a collective task that involves teachers, students and administrators. Mobilizing and coordinating this group of people, who come from different cultures, demand excellent intercultural competence on the part of management. Networking and building a clear system of interaction is not the only means unless the system and the people

reflect diversity, commitment to organizational success and avoid discrimination of any sort. Organizations in multiethnic nations like countries in Africa and the Middle East are likely to emphasize group harmony and team work. Institutions of higher learning should act as models of institutional success and intercultural awareness. Most intercultural conflicts on campuses are associated with poor awareness of the leadership in dealing with intercultural conflicts and establishing transparent organizational communication network. For example, organizational cultures that fail to stay open to students and staff yield misunderstandings and miscommunication among members. In such institutions casual conflicts between two individuals can grasp racial or ethnic color and result in bitter conflict among groups on campuses. Moreover, universities should demonstrate superiority in intercultural organizational behavior and intercultural management skills to their students. Graduates who would work in multicultural workplace should experience such excellence before they join the world of work. In sum, it is no more a luxury for university administrators and teachers to attend workshops on intercultural communication rather it should be an integral part of their job.

Pedagogical imperatives: There are a number of pedagogical imperatives to argue for the growing demand for intercultural communication studies in the context of contemporary higher education. Universities as institutions, educational policies and curricular as guidelines, teachers as agents of change and students as clients must appropriately respond to the ever-increasing diversity in higher education. It is discussed earlier that a diverse working environment facilitates academic success on the part of students. Multicultural policies and curricular should be revised to embrace the need for intercultural interactions besides attempts to represent diverse cultural values and dimensions. Through direct inclusion of intercultural courses, contents or examples, it is possible to advantage various group of students to succeed academically and socially. Extra-curricular activities could also play significant roles by encouraging healthy intercultural dialogue among students.

Concerning the significance of teachers and their instructional methodology, teachers can do a miracle as they are cultural mediators and change agents. Many students learn intercultural qualities such us compassion, empathy, tolerance and democratic ideas and commitment to take

part in social and school activities from influential and powerful teachers. These teachers should acquire a comprehensive understanding of ethnic, cultural, religious and social class diversity projected in their classrooms (Samovar & Porter, 2001). As the same authors summarized, teachers in intercultural classrooms ought to: (1) create a sense of community in the classroom which is inclusive and solve conflicts in productive manner, (2) maintain structure which help students easily grasp order and purposes of daily activities, (3) involve the outside community to build a strong attachment between students and the host community, and lastly (4) push diversity of students' in group works to encourage intercultural communication. Universities ought to promote multicultural classrooms which act like an interactive world that encourage instruction and maintain productive dialogue. Such efforts in turn positively enforce instructional outputs. Teachers can use their creativity to promote intercultural interaction and create sound academic environment. For example, they can make groups from various ethnic and cultural identities when they offer group tasks, and they can also reshuffle sitting arrangements in times they feel the arrangement is homogenous (Anteneh, 2009).

Teachers, as primary agents of change, must demonstrate excellent intercultural competence, cultural sensitivity and academic competence themselves. However, they should not use the classroom as a forum to promote ethnocentric political views (Banks, 1994) instead they should display citable qualities. As outlined by Samovar & Porter (2001), teachers should understand the diversity of their classroom; know cultural origin of what they bring to the classroom; maintain open dialogue among students; be emphatic and assess acculturation level of their students with respect to students' involvement in popular and own ethnic cultures. As the primary aim of teachers is to deliver instructions effectively, they should understand students' diversity with respect to ethnic, cultural, religious and academic backgrounds. This would assist teachers to clearly identify academic problems of their respective students and support them accordingly. Teachers should be emphatic to and feel the needs of their individual students. If they are able to realize and reflect on their classroom behavior and their own actions, they may be able to effect instructions effectively. Finally, by facilitating intercultural communication and making use of diversity in action, teachers can produce competent citizens who can be successful in multiethnic and multicultural working environment.

Personal development imperatives: Acquisition of intercultural competence and experiencing intercultural communication are imperatives for personal benefits of the youth. The young generation lives in increasingly globalized world through immigration and online social networking. Universities are meant to work for holistic development of their students. There are a number of personal developments graduates can gain if they take intercultural communication courses as part of their professional training in universities. First, intercultural competence is about being successful in life. For example, such competence offers people the ability to grasp full awareness of one's own cultural identity and background (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008). Understanding and reflecting on own cultural identity would help understand others. Through intercultural learning, students can have a better picture of the perspectives of others and exercise democratic ideas into their daily life. Second, as intercultural competence is not culture specific or limited to particular set of cultural framework, people with this ability can make use of it whenever they experience new culture and new people in life. Previous cultural and language learning abilities enforce learning and experiencing forthcoming one, locally or in an international arena. This can encourage students to reduce anxiety and integrate into a new culture.

As life and work are inseparable, intercultural learning makes students to be marketable, enjoy job and deal with conflicts successfully. Today, international and multicultural companies are interested in employing multiethnic and multilingual staff. Students with intercultural abilities and second/ foreign language skills can work in more than one cultural or geographic territory. Therefore, intercultural learning increases the employability of university graduates and offers them economic advantages too. On the other hand, as life is journey and relationship is unpredictable, intercultural communication assists students to make friends from various cultures and locations. A number of people have enjoyed the merits of interethnic or intercultural relationships and marriage. Interculturally competent students find it easy to find friends, date, build relationship and even end in marriage as they develop the abilities necessary to relativize perceptions and manage conflicts productively. Such abilities are central to deny stereotyping and racism. In addition to life and work, intercultural communication positively contributes to the academic performance of students. Students who are anxious of others and posses higher degree of ethnocentric views could hardly benefit from university education which demand team work

and sharing of educational contents and activities. However, students with excellent level of intercultural competence and good intercultural experience can mix themselves with students from other cultures and collaborate with them for academic tasks of mutual interest.

Peace imperatives: Higher educational institutions can effectively respond to the demands for peaceful co-existence of people within or outside their territories. Through intercultural training and experience, they can contribute to the efforts of combating intercultural/interethnic conflicts which are fueled as a result of cultural, political, economic or other reasons. Within the last few scores, the world experienced unpleasant memories such as the Holocaust, various small scale conflicts such as Vietnam, Korea and numerous religious, ethnic and conflicts such as ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and ethnic fighting between Hutus and Tutsis in Uganda and Rwanda (Samovar & Porter, 2001). According to the Center for Systematic Peace, the world experienced 75 armed conflicts in the years 1990 and 2004 and out of these conflicts 65 of them arose between ethnic and political groups within a country, for example, in Russia, Turkey, Bosinia, Sudan and Ethiopia (Martin & Nakayama, 2008). In Ethiopia, rebel armed groups such as Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) have been fighting to divorce from Ethiopia and build their own national states claiming for cultural, political and linguistic independence. So many multiethnic national states failed to secure healthy intercultural communication, build democratic culture and secure social integration in their respective countries. Single nation-states (mono-lingual and mono-cultural) like Somalia too did not escape tribal conflicts within their territories.

Terrorism and Muslim extremism became among the core issues in world politics since the bombing of the twin buildings in New York and Pentagon on September 9, 2001. This barbaric and inhuman incidence awaked the world and the US in particular to see how conflicts and interreligious issues have been handled. Besides taking military and legal measures against the suspects, the US and other western nations have realized the significance of preparing citizens for their future in the global society. Their efforts manifested in many forms through multiculturalism as an approach to creating social harmony between or among people from various religious and ethnic groups. Recent and concurrent terrorism alerts in many European nations like Germany, France and England has produced tense environment at airports, train stations and public

gatherings. Moreover, this made local people to be suspicious of others based on some physical marks, and this has produced a new form of racism as some claim. Political or military resolutions have not helped in reducing or preventing terrorist acts and encouraging healthy social discourse among people from diverse cultural or religious background. It is obvious to argue that these domestic and international tensions around the globe call for effective and competent intercultural communication skills (Neulip, 2009). However, it would be naïve to assume that simple understanding of intercultural communication would end war and intercultural conflicts but it assists to know more about groups which we are not members of (Martin & Nakayama, 2008). Colleges, therefore, can play a leading role in an effort to avert intercultural misunderstanding and fight extremism and conflicts through intercultural education.

Economic imperatives: As globalization presents multicultural corporations and creation of a world market, higher educational institutions should offer intercultural communication courses and experiences to their students. Since the last century, a number of international business companies such as MACDONALDS, SIEMENS, ADIDAS and NOKIA established branches in various countries and employed local and international staff who work in intercultural contexts. Some companies provide intercultural and language trainings before they send employees oversee and expect economic gains. The effects of globalization in moving corporations abroad include marketing and economic reasons. As cited in Martin & Nakayama (2008), a writer of *Wall Street Journal,* claims that companies interested to see products globally need a rich mix of staff with varied perspectives and experiences. As part of economic gains, moving such corporation to new locations helped them to benefit from lower labor cost. Since multinational companies employ diverse group of staff, the working environment becomes intercultural. These companies aspire to be culturally sensitive and emphasize on cultural differences as economic gains. As a result, the companies tail themselves to cultural values and norms as part of customer handling and marketing strategies.

Domestic diversity too requires businesses to be attentive to cultural differences (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). It is equally important to say that cultural insensitivity and homogenous staff result in failure in diverse market. Understanding cultural differences involve not only working with diverse employers but also recognizing new business market and developing new products as well.

Besides economic gains of international corporations working with various staff in intercultural contexts, they are also source of employment opportunities for local staff and revenue for government. These would be possible if the local staff is trained to meet the competence needed to work in intercultural environment and a country is able to attract international companies. To these, universities play a critical role in producing culturally sensitive and professionally qualified graduates who could work in international/multiethnic national companies. The marketability of such competent graduates contributes to economic and development efforts countries are engaged in. Thus, universities are the industries in which graduates significantly shape economic and development gains of institutions and nations.

Demographic imperatives: It is obvious that the world, its people and societies are always in the state of change. The social landscapes in Europe, the US and other part of the world have increasingly been diverse. For example, in once only white dominated small and cold town in Norway, it is not any more unusual to encounter people from various parts of the world. The often cited zero or declining population growth of Germany contrary to high birthrate among Turkish immigrants project the demographic dynamism the country is experiencing. The other interesting example in the same country is the ethnic background of *2010 Deutsch Fußballnationalmannschaft* (German national football team). From the other side of Atlantic, according to US Population Reference Bureau, the nation's Hispanic and Asian populations are expected to triple by 2050 and non-Hispanic whites are expected to grow more slowly to represent about a half of the nation's population (Martin & Nakayama, 2007: 12). Diversity Visa (DV) in the US and Europeanization efforts and immigration in EU have resulted in significant demographic changes in their respective regions. The reasons for immigration could be as varied as political, economic, tourism, employment, business, marriage or education. Natural disasters of various kinds, like the 2010 earth quake in Haiti, displaced and relocated a lot of people from their villages. Development initiatives and villagization processes in various countries, for example, displaced people to new locations. Despite variation in reasons, people today are on the move and the world as a result becomes increasingly diverse and interactive.

As a result, schools have been hosting and educating students from immigrant families and have worked to fully integrate them. Likewise, universities are directly influenced by the changing demography. The number of US and EU college students studying abroad increased dramatically. For example, in the year 1994 and 1995 academic year, some 645,000 US students were studying abroad. A number of state owned integration programs in Europe have been organized to fully integrate adult immigrants by teaching them host languages, culture, history and law. For example, German media often debates on integration problems, particularly of Turkish immigrant. Despite the efforts, it was reported that the inadequacy of multiculturalism as a model of social integration did not help some Turkish immigrants to fully integrate in German culture even though some of them claim that they have integrated to the German system. Despite Chancellor Merkel's remarks mentioned earlier in this chapter, her government is working hard to create a multicultural environment and religious tolerance through organizing various programs and activities. In addition to the efforts of governments, universities could respond appropriately to these endeavors. They are the most important institutions which can provide such experiences and skills to their students who form the future of a nation. The changing demography requires universities to react to this imperative.

Ethical imperatives: Studying, working or living in intercultural environment presents ethical dilemma to people. In the first place, ethics refers to principle of conduct that governs the behavior of individuals or groups (Martin & Nakayama, 2008, 2007). Every culture offers established set of cultural values, ethical judgments, cultural patterns, norms and worldview. The established set of good and bad behaviors could be stated explicitly or implicitly and shared among members of the same culture. For example, it is uncommon for a girl in Ethiopia to introduce her boyfriend to her family while it is a usual practice in most western countries. Even though every culture is unique in providing its own ethical judgments, there are universalities among ethical judgments among cultures. There is no one culture which is inherently right or wrong but rather every culture must be understood from its own cultural framework and value system. Individuals who attempt to build healthy intercultural relationship should recognize the unique ethical issues of host cultures relativize their ethical judgments and perceive the world from the perspective of the people from the host culture.

What is ethical about ethical judgments in intercultural communication? First and foremost, a descent understanding of human and democratic rights and principles are important. These help everyone to understand human interaction and universalities of ethical issues. All cultures and co-cultures are equal and deserve the right to function, study and continuity. It is ethical to value and respect all cultures and avoid use of same yardstick to behave in various cultures and contexts. Added to these, intercultural communication is a two-way process which demands understanding of the other party as well. As institutions responsible for contributing to social dialogue, peaceful co-existence and building productive intercultural environment, universities are responsible to teach ethics and moral values important for interaction in such contexts. Academia should teach ethical issues such as respect for basic human and democratic right; value cultural diversity and credit social justice and merits of intercultural dialogue.   To avoid ethnocentrism and misunderstanding, campuses should equip students with basic ethical and moral issues necessary for sound intercultural communication. This is vital to universities' efforts in building social integration and democratic culture in multicultural nations. As universities are also research institutions, they are expected to conduct theoretical and practical research in the area. In sum, it is high time to explore intercultural communication in higher educational context because of these major causes.

Approaches and theories in intercultural communication

The scientific study of intercultural communication can be traced back to the early works of the prominent anthropologist Edward Hall and Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the US Department of State. The term was first used in Hall's influential book, *The Silent Language (1959).* This author is generally acknowledged as the founder of the field of intercultural communication (Leeds-Hurtwitz, 1990; Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999). As a field of study, the original paradigm took form in conceptualization by Hall and the famous linguist George L. Trager based on Warf-Sapir's *theory of linguistic relativism* and *Freudian psychoanalytic theory*. Hall's personal experience, such as grown up in most diverse state of New Mexico and his leadership role in African America regiment in World War II, greatly influenced his conceptualizations.

Hall honored certain academic disciplines such as cultural anthropology, ethology, linguistics and Freudian psychoanalytic theory as significantly influenced him (Hall, 1992; Murray, 1994; Sorrells, 1998). For example, Hall (1966) acknowledges that the association he made between culture and communication was based on the cultural anthropologist Franz Boas' notion that communication constitutes the core of culture. Hall's exposition to *linguistic relativism* influenced his views on how language impacts human thought and meaning. He applied this notion in his study of nonverbal communication (Leed-Hurwitz, 1990). Hall's conceptualizations were also influenced by his interest in animal behavior which was evident in *Hidden Dimensions* and *Beyond Culture* (Rogers, Hart & Miike, 2002). Freud's unconscious psychology manifested itself in the book *The Silent Language* in which he adopted the notion that *words hide more than they reveal*.

Within its short life span, intercultural communication has gained widespread attention and went through citable dynamism in conceptualization; however, institutionalization of this interdisciplinary study has often been a challenge. For example, it is generally considered to fall within the larger field of communication in the US; but it is emerging as a sub-field of applied linguistics in the UK. However, there has been low formal institutionalization of the field in Germany (Averbeck-Lietz, 2010). In most European universities, the field is structured under faculties or schools of humanities and social sciences. Various faculties such as business, media studies and political sciences and international relations study applications of intercultural communication in their respective contexts.

As the application of intercultural communication theory to foreign language education is increasingly appreciated around the world, intercultural communication classes can be found within foreign language departments of some universities, while other schools are placing intercultural programs in their departments of education. Though the field has constantly evolved in different directions, there are transnational developments and adaptations (Gudykunst, 2005). But it has been obvious that intercultural communication is the interest of most disciplines despite conceptual and methodological divergence. As in many interdisciplinary scholarly works, intercultural communication studies demand multidisciplinary approaches.

Apart from institutionalization, intercultural communication as a field of study faces epistemological paradoxes and conceptual dilemma across theories. In the first place, the controversial concept of culture, as one of the field's key components, often causes theoretical difficulties, which are being unavoidably produced in every intercultural research setting (Koch, 2009). The other dilemma is difficulty in detailing with similarities and differences within cultural groups. The study of intercultural communication is more complex since it involves individuals from socially differentiated societies which might have many identity options and face the task of constructing a unique, individual personality (Giddens, 1991; Kraus, 2006). Added to these, since cultures are often in the state of change they make the study of intercultural communication more complex.

For instance, the most recent ideas of culture, such us *transculturality* (Ortiz, 1995), *hybridity* (Bhabha, 1994), *cosmopolitanism* (Hannerz, 1996; Vertovec & Cohen, 2002) could not resolve the often tough concept of culture. Communication is the other concept which is causing theoretical complications in the study of intercultural communication. In addition to significant variation among scholars in conceptualizing communication, the interaction between culture and communication is also another nuisance to the field. However, it has been noted that the study has succeeded in securing a number of theories and models to explain communication between people from various cultures. It has also moved beyond the idea that culture and communication are more or less influential factors affecting each other in intercultural communication situation (Gudykunst, 1984, 2005). The dynamism in conceptualizing culture and communication and explaining the association between them resulted in a number of theories and models that vary along conceptual and methodological orientations.

Approaches to studying intercultural communication

In the studies of human behavior, the fact of paradigm wars has been a continuing debate over the natures of knowledge (epistemology) and reality (ontology) as well as the relationship between culture and communication in intercultural communication. Based on the available philosophical positions and different research genres, at least three perspectives dominate the literature. As

briefed in the first chapter, these are: the social science (functionalists), the interpretive and the critical (Gudykunst, 2002; Bochner, 1985; Sprague, 1994; Martin & Nakayama, 1999, 2007). These approaches or perspectives are different in their assumptions about human behavior and their focus and conceptualization of culture and communication. The approaches involve a blend of disciplines and reflect different worldviews and assumptions regarding the variables of intercultural communication. The dialectical approach (Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 2007) could also be considered as a fourth perspective even though it is not exclusively different from the other three positions. This approach takes an eclectic perspective by combining the three approaches. The following paragraphs discuss assumptions, conceptualizations and methodological orientations of each of these approaches in their investigation of intercultural communication.

The social science approach: Ontologically, the approach is framed on realism as a philosophical position and assumes that there is a real world external to individuals; things exist, even if they are not perceived and labeled. Epistemologically, it attempts to explain and predict patterns of communication by looking for regularities and/or causal relationships. In other words, it is based on the assumption that there is a describable external reality; and human behaviors are predictable (Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 2007). The goal of researchers from this perspective is to describe and predict behavior. Thus, the researchers attempt to identify and describe cultural variation in communications and predict future communication. Regarding the relationship between culture and communication, researchers from this perspective hold determinism as a possible way to elucidate the role of culture in communication and vice versa. To this view, communication is determined by the situation or environment in which it occurs or by individual's traits. Social science researchers assume that culture is a variable that can be measured (Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Gudykunst, 2002; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989).

Taking objectivist approach, these researchers carry out purely quantitative empirical research to describe and predict how culture influences communication. As a result, they base their research on systematic protocols and scientific rigor. Most commonly, the study of intercultural communication has been approached by scholars primarily from this perspective (e.g. Hall, 1966,

1976; Hoftsede, 1980, 1991, 2001; Gudykunst, 1998, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1985, 2005; Kim, 2005). Few examples of theories from this perspective include: *anxiety/uncertainty management theory* (Gudykust, 1998, 2005), *face-negotiation theory* (1985, 2005) and *conversational constraints theory* (Kim, 2005) and *communication accommodation theory* (Giles et al., 1987). Many of these theories have been useful in identifying variation in communication across cultures and addressing psychological and sociological variables in the process.

However, the assumptions and the research methods used in this perspective have been criticized on a number of grounds although many important ideas were generated from this tradition. For example, the approach is criticized for adopting a simplistic perspective to understanding intercultural communication. They are also criticized for assuming individuals in particular place and time belong to a single culture and advancing ecological fallacy by not recognizing individual makeup of persons with respect to culture. The approach is also commented for its insensitivity to cultural variation for the sake of generalization and empiricism. The other limitation could be the fact that this approach does not value the creative nature of communication and of course the dynamic aspect of culture which is often in making. Lastly, a detached role of researchers from this perspective may not really help them understand the cultural groups they are studying.

The interpretive approach: Rooted in Dell Hymes' (1974) ethnography of communication, the interpretive perspective takes subjectivist position in studying human behavior and intercultural communication. Adopting nominalism as ontological position, the approach assumes that reality is socially constructed and there is no real world external to individuals in the first place. Naming, concepts and labels are used to construct reality. The approach is founded on the assumption that culture is created and maintained through communication (Appelgate & Sypher, 1983, 1988; Collier, 1988; Orbe, 1996; Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Epistemologically, the approach assumes that communication can only be understood from the perspectives of individuals communicating. As a result scholars from this perspective (e.g. Singer, 1987; Appelgate & Sypher, 1983, 1988; Collier, 1988; Orbe, 1996) aim at describing human behavior within specific cultural groups founded on three major assumptions: (1) human behavior is creative than predictable, (2) behavior and knowledge are subjective, and (3) culture is created and maintained through interactions.

Methodologically, interpretive researchers argue that to understand intercultural communication firsthand knowledge must be obtained, and analysis of subjective accounts of research participants should be carried out. As a result, researchers employ qualitative methods which include participant observations, interviews and ethnographic field notes. Unlike the previous approach that studies culture from an outsider's view (*etic*), interpretive researches understand phenomena subjectively from insider's view (*emic*). Scholars from this perspective are interested in explaining cultural behavior in one community than in making cross-cultural comparison (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). They further contend that there is a need to recognize the complexity of intercultural communication as opposed to adopting a simplified and objective model. A number of scholars have used this approach to describe aspects of intercultural communication in different contexts.

For example, Carbaugh (1999) describes the role of silence and listening in American-Indian communities. Asante (1987, 2001) identified cultural themes shared by African American communication. Chen (1998) also developed a Chinese model of human relationship development. In these and similar works, scholars have been able to provide in-depth understandings of communication patters in particular communities. However, as far as the review of literature is concerned, there are very few interpretive studies of intercultural communication and such researchers fail to study what happens when two groups come in contact with each other (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

The critical approach: This perspective is often employed by scholars in media and literary studies. It is a meta-theoretical approach that shares ontological and epistemological assumptions of the interpretive approach regarding human nature, culture and communication. For example, critical researchers believe in subjectivity (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). However, these scholars (e.g. Best & Kellner, 1991; Delgado, 2002; Razack, 1998; Putnam & Pocanowsky, 1983; Rosenau, 1992) give more focus to the role of context in which communication occurs as a vital perspective to investigate intercultural communication. They focus on macro-level contexts such as political and social structures that influence communication. More specifically, these include socio-historical

context, ideological aspect of power, oppression and emancipation in society, and what influence these aspects have on intercultural interaction.

For example, ideological discourse of race, ethnicity, gender and social class are considered as important issues. Regarding research methods, critical scholars use qualitative research methods to explain intercultural communication. Textual analysis, which often employs discourse analysis, is the most popular method of study. It can be explained as an examination of cultural texts such as TV, movies, journalistic essays and so on (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). The critical approach, however, has been criticized for using textual analysis as the only workable tool to explain intercultural interaction. It does not use methods that involve face-to-face communication or accessing empirical data. These have limited the practicality of the results of most of the studies from this perspective.

The dialectical approach: There are also publications that provide a comprehensive summary of the three perspectives discussed above. However, it was only Martin, Nakayama and Fores (2002) and Martin and Nakayama (2007) that summarize the available approaches and proposed a fourth perspective which draw assumptions based on the three perspectives. These authors explain their conceptualization of intercultural variables such as culture, communication, power, context and identity from these perspectives. The authors contend that research into intercultural communication demands a comprehensive and holistic investigation. They assert that these three approaches can be amalgamated systematically to better understand intercultural interaction. The writers named their perspective dialectical. The word has a number of connotations; nevertheless, the authors used dialectical to refer to co-existence of opposites to explain human behavior. More specifically, the approach introduces a new way of thinking about intercultural communication that allows a very rich understanding through recognizing the coexistence of seemingly opposites. This perspective can be explained through three important aspects: characteristics, building blocks and dialectics of intercultural communication.

The dialectical approach emphasizes on three important characteristics of intercultural communication: processual, relational and contradictory. First, with regards to the processual nature, it is important to consider the dynamic nature of culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Cultures change and so do people. As a result, we cannot assume that individuals have a particular personality because they belong to a certain culture. As culture, communication and adaptation are dynamic, the study of intercultural communication should, therefore, go beyond providing a snapshot of intercultural interactions in time. It should rather balance the static and dynamic nature of intercultural experiences and cope up with this ever changing world.

The second characteristic of the approach is its emphasis on relational aspect of intercultural communication. It highlights the relationships among various constructs of intercultural communication and proposes that a comprehensive understanding of the study could be attained if the relationships among various variables are considered instead of treating them in isolation (Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 2007). For example, we cannot understand culture without understanding how members of a cultural group communicate and vice versa. The authors recommend an inclusive and in-depth approach to understanding intercultural communication. The last characteristic of the approach involves holding contradictory ideas together. This recognizes the interdependence and complementary aspects of the dialectics. For instance, as there are similarities, there are also differences among individuals from same cultural groups.

The authors identified culture, communication, context and power as the four pillars of intercultural communication. Considering it as a core concept in the field, culture is defined as learned pattern of perception, values and behaviors, shared by a group of people; that is also dynamic and heterogeneous (Martin & Nakayama, 2008: 28). The authors acknowledge that they do not advocate a single definition of culture to avoid restriction to one, and believe that the best approach to understand the complexities of intercultural communication is to view the concept of culture from the three perspectives discussed above. To recap, social scientists focus on the influence of culture on communication; interpretive researchers emphasize on how cultural contexts influence communication and critical researchers focus on contexts (and the power to

communicate) as a noteworthy instrument in shaping culture. The dialectical perspective, however, negotiate these three perspectives especially in terms of how these constructs influence intercultural interaction.

Communication is the other central concept and is defined as a symbolic process whereby meaning is shared and negotiated (Martin & Nakayama, 2008: 34). The authors argue that communication is attribution of meaning to someone's words or actions and they characterize it as a symbolic, dynamic, receiver-oriented and intentional (may be unintentional) process. Citing their personal experience, the authors agree with the notion that members of a culture create a worldview, which in turn influences communication. Context and power are the other building blocks of the dialectical approach. The authors conceptualize context as the physical or social situation in which communication occurs (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Martin, Nakayama & Flore, 2002). People communicate differently in different contexts.

Apart from the physical situation, other contextual issues such as political or historical aspects can count as part of context. For example, the tone and process of communication between contending political forces or people from unpleasant historical legacy would be shaped by these political and historical contexts. The dialectical perspective emphasizes on deterministic role of context on communication. On the other hand, the authors explain that power is always there when people communicate even though it is not always evident or obvious. They devalue the often taken-for-granted assumption that communication between individuals as being between equals. They rather suggest that in every society, social hierarchy gives some people more power than others. Various facts such as age, gender, ethnicity, position, roles and location offer different power to different people (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008).

Based on these four building blocks, the authors identified six dialectics. The first dialectic, *cultural-individual* dialectic, illustrates intercultural communication as both cultural and individual. This means that members of a cultural group share communication behavior and at the same time own behaviors not shared by anyone else. An individual, for example, may have a unique ambulation and shares various nonverbal behavior with members of his culture. The authors challenge the

deterministic perspective that assumes group membership completely shapes communication behavior. Therefore, in studying intercultural communication we should remember that individual's personality can also matter besides a usual focus on group membership. The second dialectic, *personal-social (contextual)*, emphasizes on the relationship between someone's personal characteristics and social (contextual) behavior. This dialectic values the role of context on intercultural communication and focuses on personal values as well (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Although communication is a personal level activity, people perform specific social role which may not correspond in different cultures.

Differences-similarities dialectic explains that intercultural communication is characterized by differences and similarities. People across cultures are different and similar simultaneously. The authors remind us that in the study of intercultural communication there is real difference among people but there is a tendency to emphasize on group differences. Much focus on differences can lead to stereotyping and prejudice; therefore, any study of intercultural communication should consider this dialectic in mind (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). *Static-dynamic* dialectic emphasizes on the ever-changing nature of culture and identity. Some cultural and communication patterns remain relatively the same, but other aspects of culture and identity change over time. For instance, to understand interethnic communications in the United States today, we need to be aware of the static and dynamic aspects of ethnic and race relations in the country. Thus, thinking about these concepts as both static and dynamic helps capture a comprehensive understanding.

The other dialectic, *history/past-present/future*, emphasizes the roles of time in understanding intercultural communication. The authors contend that we need to be aware of contemporary forces and realities that encourage communication among cultural groups but we ought to know that history has a significant impact in shaping current events. For example, interaction between black and white South Africans today would not be complete without understanding Apartheid even though the context today is not the same as few decades ago. The last dialectic, *privilege-disadvantage*, is about the role of power in intercultural communication. As individuals, we carry various types of privilege and disadvantage that change with respect to roles and contexts (Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002). Individuals could be privileged in one

context and disadvantaged in the other but these could also vary in time. For example, international students who are unable to speak the language of a host country are disadvantaged and those speaking it are privileged but this could change over time as students start to learn the language.

In sum, the dialectical approach presents an inclusive and wide-ranging perspective. It integrates the three perspectives and proposes the four building blocks which resulted in six dialectics of intercultural communication. Despite its novelty and conceptual richness, the approach blazes a number of conceptual and methodological concerns. First, it presents conceptual contradictions among the existing perspectives but it is unable to show the integration among these perspectives. In other words, the approach presents the dialectics in binary and fails to show the integration of the issues presented at the ends of the continuum. For example, *cultural-individual* dialectic does not show how these aspects could be fully integrated in explaining intercultural communication apart from a reminder of the role of both dialectics presented the continnuum. Second, the approach has not yet been supported with empirical research results or some sort of model that justify the perspective. Apart from conceptual discussions, the authors have not provided their own empirical case studies to prove the practicality of their approach. Lastly, the authors fail to propose or comment on possible research methods. They escaped methodological concerns and possible integration among methods to yield the expected level of understanding in the study of intercultural communication. Finally, this perspective is not yet a fully developed theory or model that negotiates the diverging philosophical positions in its investigation of intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2005).

Review of theories and models in intercultural communication

The previous section elaborates the available approaches or studies that link culture and communication. It compares and contrasts the four popular perspectives. The current section, however, moves on discussing the most cited theories and models in intercultural communication studies. It is vital to provide a comprehensive summary of the available theories before proposing a theoretical model framing the current study. Reviewing the available theories was not an easy task

for a number of reasons. For example, as the field has not yet fully established as an independent study, most of its theories emerge from a variety of disciplines which of course diverge in focus and methods of enquiry. The focuses of these theories range from constructs such as communication, intercultural competence, identity, cross-cultural variability to adaptation and acculturation. However, the existing theories are not actually exclusive to each other (Gudykunst, 2005). The other challenge in reviewing the theories is the often ignored link between disciplines studying intercultural communication or weak emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of the studies. As a case in point, intercultural competence researches seldom incorporate theories and models proposed by communication scientists and vice versa. As a discipline in dynamism, on the other hand, intercultural communication has also benefited from the interest of various schools of thought.

Despite variation in focus and disciplinary orientation, theories that address culture and communication have been studied from various disciplines including cultural studies, communication science, education, literature and linguistics. This range of disciplines has contributed to diverging theories in intercultural communication studies. Disciplinary orthodoxy and exclusive listing of the theories are not the interest of this dissertation. However, the most popular and related theories of intercultural communication and those that link culture and communication in their studies are highlighted and discussed for the purpose of grasping a full picture of the field. For this cause, the most cited theories are grouped into seven categories based on their conceptualization of the major concepts (e.g. culture, communication, competence, identity, power relations and context). In other words, these theories differ in their conceptualization of intercultural communication, the variables they emphasize on and the research methods they often employ. Description of the categories is supported with providing popular models or theories that fall under the categories outlined.

Theories focusing on intercultural competence: A number of foreign language research outputs have confirmed the need for cultural competence for people working abroad or in multicultural contexts. As a result, a major focus on intercultural competence (ICC) emerged out of research into the experiences of westerners working abroad (e.g. Peace Corp Volunteers), in the 1950s and

upto early 1970s. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the context for intercultural communication expanded to include study abroad, international business, cross-cultural training, expatriates living overseas, and immigration acculturation. Today, intercultural competence research spans a wide spectrum from international schools to foreign business training and from short study abroad programs to permanent residency in foreign cultures. Various instruments, often quantitative, were prepared to describe intercultural competence of individuals. These models have been employed in educational and business contexts to understand and enhance intercultural competence of employees or students.

Most of the theories that focus on such competence take the social science approach whereas very few of them assume the interpretive/the critical approach. The most popular theories or models under this category include: (1) *Ruben's (1976) Behavioral Approach,* (2) *Spitberg's (1988) Notion of Intercultural Competence,* (3) *Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, (4) *Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Competence*, and (5) *Fantini's (2005) A Central Concern: Developing Intercultural Competence*. Overview of the theories/models under this category is briefed below; however, specific conceptual issues referring intercultural competence are discussed in the third chapter.

From the social science perspective, one of the earliest and pioneering models to the conceptualization and measurement of intercultural communicative competence was *Ruben's Behavioral Approach* (Ruben, 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979). Ruben advocated a behavioral approach to linking the gap between knowing and doing, that is, between what individuals know to be interculturally competent and what those individuals actually do in intercultural situations. Ruben (1976) identified seven dimensions of intercultural competence namely: display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, self-oriented role behavior, interaction management and tolerance for ambiguity. Following this, *Spitzberg's (1988) Notion of Intercultural Competence* was embraced by various scholars in the field. His notion of intercultural competence as interaction was recognized by scholars who argue that intercultural interaction involves knowledge, motivation and skills.

Latter, Bennett (1993) developed a dynamic model to explain how individuals respond to cultural differences and how their responses evolve over time. His *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* consists of six developmental stages grouped into two stages: ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, and minimization) and ethno-relative stages (acceptance, adaptation and integration). To this model, effective intercultural competence is a developmental move from ethno-centrism to ethno-relativism, and the goal of good intercultural communicators is to reach the last level in which they acquire such competence or fully integrate into a new culture. Although Bennett does not explicitly describe the role of communication, he implied communication as a developmental strategy. He elaborated intercultural competence as a developmental process towards integration.

The other theory from intercultural competence research traditions is the role of the Council of Europe and its prominent foreign language researcher Mike Byram. He wrote one of the most cited books entitled *Teaching and Assessing Communicative Competence (1997)*. To him, the major components of intercultural competence are: knowledge, skills, attitudes and cultural awareness. Based on Byram's theoretical foundation, Risager (2007) proposed an expanded conceptualization of intercultural competence. She claimed her model to be more inclusive to contain ten elements; however, the components are limited to linguistic development than communicative skills. Extending ideas from this foundation, Byram and other European researchers have collaborated to combine existing theories of intercultural competence and developed a *Multidimensional Intercultural Competence Assessment* tools. Byram's model can be criticized on a number of grounds despite its founding contributions. For example, his model seldom credit communication styles and linguistic elements which are central to intercultural learning.

In his article entitled: *A Central Concern: Developing Intercultural Competence (2005*), Fantini suggested a holistic model of intercultural competence. To him intercultural competence encompasses multiple components namely a variety of traits and characteristics, three areas or domains (i.e. relationships, communication and collaboration), four dimensions (knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness), host language proficiency, and varying levels of attainment throughout a longitudinal and developmental process. Added to these models, there are a number

of related concepts which guide the study of intercultural communication from this perspective. These include: self-disclosure (Bochner & Kelly, 1974), self-consciousness (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984), social relaxation (Wiemann, 1977), behavioral flexibility (Martin, 1987) and dealing with social difficulty in host language (Funham & Bochner, 1982). The above models/ theories attempted to forward suggestions on how to help people interact in multicultural environment or how to encourage intercultural skills.

On the other hand, the interpretive/ the critical perspective to ICC stresses on the notion that intercultural competence is influenced by the contexts of communication and therefore good intercultural communicators are sensitive to various contexts. For example, Collier (1998) argues that it is important to remind that individual's competence can be enhanced or constrained by political, social or other contextual issues. To models from this perspective, effective intercultural communicators have to act in accordance with the varying contexts (e.g. historical, cultural, organizational and relational) and they should also analyze their intercultural success or failures to have a better understanding of their communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). As social positions/ roles and contextual factors play vital roles in this regard, investigation into intercultural competence should take into consideration such contextual variables and their roles in shaping individual's intercultural competence. Models from such perspective are seldom available.

Theories integrating culture and communication: There have been several theories of communication that have recognized the role of culture and attempted to integrate it in their analysis of communication behavior among people from various cultures. Most of these theories hold a deterministic association between culture and communication. They have presented a two-way interaction between these important constructs. Exemplary theories that integrate these two concepts include: (1) Applegate and Sypher's (1983, 1988) *Constructivist Theory of Culture and Communication,* (2) Philipsen's (1992) *Speech Code Theory*, and (3) Pearce and Cronen's (1980) *Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory*. Taking either interpretive or positivist philosophy of enquiry, these theories attempt to show the inseparable aspects of culture and communication. Understanding of interpersonal communication is hardly possible without including the role of cultures and codes in determining interactions and perceptions. Added to

this, conceptualization, preservation and development of culture would not be possible without communication. They contend that cultures are made, shared and preserved through communication. Apart from their discussion of the deterministic association between these concepts, the theorists argue that intercultural communication is a process that involves sharing and negotiating cultures and codes.

Applegate and Sypher's (1983, 1988) *Constructive Theory of Culture and Communication* is the first example of theories that integrate culture and communication. The theory amalgamates culture with *constructivist theory* and discusses the impact of culture on individuals' communicative behavior. According to this theory, culture defines the logic of communication and communication is a goal-oriented activity. Communication takes place when individuals have a jointly recognized interaction to share and trade meaning. The emphasis of the theory is on the interpretative nature of communication, the interconnected culture and the individual's cognitive construction of reality. The authors stress how individual differences in social perception processes shape the development and use of person-centered communication behaviors (Applegate & Sypher, 1988). Methodologically, the theory is obedient to humanist perspective to research to access dense and detailed account of everyday life of communicators. The authors argue that intercultural studies should show the relationship between culture and communication and involve value judgment and theory. Concerning training, the authors contend that intercultural communication training should be linked closely with research. It ought to focus on flexible and integrative strategic means for accomplishing effective communication.

The other example is Philipsen's (1992) *Speech Code Theory*. This is originally a theory of human communication from cultural perspective. Using six propositions, Philipsen (1992) proposed a theory of culturally distinctive codes of communication. Moreover, in his recent publication, he emphasizes the role of culture and code in influencing communication and how these concepts are used to make sense of self and others. In explaining the role of culture, one of the propositions of the theory explains that whenever there is a separate culture, there is a distinctive speech code. Speech codes are defined as historically enacted, socially constructed system of terms, meanings, rules and a premise pertaining to communicative behavior. Cultural communication is

conceptualized as the negotiation of cultural codes. The purpose of such communication is securing a balance between the influences of individualism and community in the process of building shared identity while preserving individual dignity. In most of Philipsen's publications, communication is explained as a heuristic and performative resource for acting cultural purposes in the lives of individuals and communities. It is through communication that members learn the specific means and meanings in the community and take part in joint conversations.

Pearce and Cronen (1980) developed the *Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory (CMM)*. According to CMM, two people who are interacting socially, construct the meaning of their conversation. Each of the individuals is comprised of an interpersonal system which helps explain actions and reactions. CMM is often considered as a rule theory and is based on US- Pragmatism (e.g. Dewey, 1920). Taking the interpretive perspective, the theory aims at understanding who we are, what it means to live a life and how that is related to particular instance of communication (Cronen et al., 1988: 67). CMM also seeks to render cultures comparable while acknowledging their incommensurability and generate critique of cultural practices. Recognizing its deterministic role, CMM assumes that cultures are coevolving structures and actions and they are polyphonic. Concerning intercultural communication, the authors argue that it is important to describe the cultural context if we attempt to understand communication within and/or across cultures. With respect to the nature of communication, the authors discuss that human communication is inherently imperfect and all communication is idiosyncratic and social.

Theories focusing on cross-cultural variability in communication: There are various theories that describe intercultural communication using cultural level dimensions. Most of these theories are based on cultural dimensions/variability outlined by Hoftsede's (1980, 1991, 2001). These dimensions include: individualism- collectivism, low- high uncertainty avoidance, low-high power distance and masculinity- femininity (for full explanations see Chapter Three). Each pair of dimensions is placed on two ends of a continuum, but one end tends to dominate the other in a given culture. Hofsede's cultural dimensions have been used to describe about 70 countries and regions of the world. While individualism-collectivism explains the strength of the tie between an individual and his/her group; low-high power distance stands for the extent to which the less

powerful members of the society accept the unequal distribution of power. Low-high uncertainty avoidance deals with society's tolerance to ambiguity while masculinity-femininity refers to the distribution of roles between genders in a society. These dimensions have been used to describe communication between people from different cultures. Theories that focus on these dimensions include: (1) *Face-negotiation Theory* (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), (2) *Culture-based Conversational Constraints Theory* (Kim M.-S, 1993, 1995) and (3) *Expectancy Violation Theory* (Burgoon, 1992; Burgoon & Ebesu Hubbard 2005).

Stella Ting-Toomey's *Face-negotiation Theory (FNT)* focuses on intercultural conflicts and cultural variability in intercultural communication. It explains why members of two different cultures manage conflicts differently. Conflict is defined as a face-negotiation process in which individuals' situated identities or faces are questioned or threatened. Face, as a technical word in the theory, refers to a claimed sense of favorable social-self worth that a person wants others to have (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998: 187). FNT assumes that people in every culture are concerned with the presentation of his/her face. Regarding the role of culture, culture provides the frame of reference for individuals and group interactions because it consists of values, norms, beliefs, and traditions that play a central part in how persons or groups identify themselves (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In agreement with the relationship between culture and communication proposed by Hall (1959, 1976), FNT argues that culture affects communication. Culture is learned, modified and passed from one generation to the other through communication.

Ting-Toomey looked at intercultural interaction, including conflict and negotiation, along with Hofstede's notion of individualism versus collectivism and Hall's ideas of low and high context assumptions. For example, the author argues that members of collectivistic cultures use other-oriented face-saving strategies more than members of individualistic cultures. On the contrary, members of individualistic cultures use self-oriented face-saving strategies more than members of individualistic culture. Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) contend that members of collectivistic cultures prefer relational, process-oriented conflict styles whereas members of individualistic culture employ outcome-oriented conflict styles.

Kim's *Culture-based Conversational Constraints Theory (CCT)*, on the other hand, explains how certain conversational strategies vary across cultures. M.-S. Kim (1993, 2005) contends that conversations are goal-oriented and require coordination between communicators. The central focus of the theory, however, relates not to *what is said* but rather to *how what is said is to be said*. M.-S. Kim (1993) identified two types of conversational constraints: task-oriented and social-relational. The former emphasizes a concern for clarity (e.g. the extent to which the intentions of the messages are communicated explicitly) while the latter accentuates a concern for others and focus on avoiding hurting other's feeling and minimizing imposition on an audience (Kim M.-S., 1995). M.-S. Kim outlined five communicative strategies namely: 1) clarity, 2) minimizing imposition, 3) consideration for the other's feelings, 4) risking negative evaluation by the receiver, and 5) effectiveness. These strategies pendulant on the notion that a given culture reflects more of either: social-relational (collectivistic cultures) or task-oriented (individualistic cultures). Kim M.S. (1993) explains cross-cultural differences in the choice of these communicative strategies. For example, members of collectivistic culture prefer face supporting strategies such as avoiding hurting the feeling of audiences or minimizing impositions; however, members of individualistic cultures view clarity as a more important strategy.

As the last example, Burgoon's *Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT)* can also be cited as among the theories that incorporate cross-cultural variability to describe communication between people from different cultures. In a nutshell, this theory assumes that there is a single purpose to a specific, embedded, communicative environment and violations of this purpose can disadvantage those who violate the expectations. EVT focuses on the context of individuals' expectations and how others respond to violations of these expectations. The theory lays on the assumption that every culture has guidelines for human conduct that provide expectations for how others behave (Burgoon, 1978). It assumes that people carry expectancies in their interactions with others; learn their expectancies from the culture at large and the individuals in that culture; and make predictions about nonverbal communication.

These expectations are based on social norms and rules, as well as individual patterns of behavior (Burgoon, 1995). Deviations in expected behavior, therefore, cause others to become alert. Burgoon (1992) argue that the content of each culture's expectancies vary along Hoftsede's (1980) dimensions of cultural variability. For instance, members of collectivistic culture expect communication styles such as indirectness, politeness and non-immediacy more than members of individualistic culture. Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be intolerant to deviant behavior more than members of low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Burgoon and Ebesu Hubbard (2005) summarize cross-cultural and intercultural variations in *Expectancy Violation Theory.*

Theories focusing on effective communication and decision: Even though all theories directly or indirectly attempt to promote effectiveness in communication, some theories give more focus to the outcome of the process. These theories often use interpersonal communication models to explain communication among people from different cultural groups. Epistemologically, they take existentialist perspective and use quantitative data gathering techniques to explain intercultural communication. They see intercultural communication as a kind of group communication. Most of these theories focus on minimizing barriers to communication by enhancing better communication strategies. There are four theories that are characterized by these assumptions. These are: Barnett and Kincaid's (1983) *Cultural Convergence Theory*, Gudykunst's (1995) *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory*, Oetzel's (1995) *Effective Group Decision Making Theory* and Y.Y. Kim's (1997) *An Integrated Theory of Interethnic Communication*. In sum, even though the central concepts and constructs they address could vary significantly, theories under this category assume that the study of intercultural communication should aim at minimizing constraints or misunderstandings to attain maximum level of efficiency and effectiveness in communication.

Firstly, *Cultural Convergence Theory* (Barnett & Kincaid, 1983; Kincaid, 1988) is one of the exemplar of communication theories that emphasizes communication outcomes. Based on Kincaid's (1979) model of communication, the authors developed a mathematical theory of the effects of communication on cultural differences. Barneth and Kincaid (1983) contend that all participants in a closed system will converge over time on the mean collective pattern of thought if

communication is allowed to continue. However, information introduced from outside the system can delay *convergence* (i.e. results in divergence). This notion is further discussed in Kincaid (1988) which states that in a relatively closed social system in which communication among members is unrestricted, the system as a whole is inclined to converge towards a greater cultural homogeny. To this theory, communication plays an essential function in cultural convergence within and across cultures. It is defined as a process in which two or more individuals or groups share information in order to reach a mutual understanding of each other and the world in which they live (Kincaid, 1979: 31). Finally, the authors argue that effectiveness in intercultural communication depends on the extent to which communication is allowed to continue within or across cultures to attain cultural convergence.

Secondly, Gudykunst's (1985) *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM)* is concerned with the net product of managing anxiety/uncertainty and reaching effectiveness in intercultural communication. The theory is an integration of Berger and Calabresse's (1975) *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* and Tajfel's (1981) *Social Identity Theory*. The key concepts in AUM are uncertainty (inability to predict other's behavior or attitude) and anxiety (feeling of being uneasy or worried). These concepts were used to explain intercultural adjustment (e.g. Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988). Gudykunst (1988, 1995) used the notion of the *stranger* as a central concept in discussing intercultural communication. To this theory, intercultural communication is one type of intergroup communication.

AUM assumes that individuals' communication can be influenced by cultural membership but individuals can choose how they communicate when they are mindful. Mindfulness is the other central concept incorporated in the theory later. Gudykunst (1993) expanded the theory using competency framework and a number of axioms. For example, when anxiety and uncertainty are above individuals' maximum threshold, they are unable to communicate effectively because they are focused on anxiety or they cannot predict the behavior of the stranger. When their anxiety and uncertainty are below their minimum thresholds, they cannot communicate effectively either because they do not care what happens due to low anxiety or over confidence about their predictions due to low uncertainty.

Oetzel (1995) proposed a *Theory of Effective Decision Making (TEDM)* by integrating *Vigilant Interaction Theory* (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992) and *Cross-cultural Theory of Face-negotiation and Conflict Management* (Ting-Toomey, 1988). The theory takes the influence of culture on group processes as its basis. It presents different group characteristics and their way of making decisions. Oetzel's theory contains fourteen propositions that focus on homogenous and multicultural groups. Within multicultural groups, there exist different decision-making strategies within individuals due to diverse cultural backgrounds. These different strategies may lead to conflicts in the process. The diverse backgrounds of individuals also result in different strategies for dealing with conflicts. As stated in the propositions, when members of a homogenous group activate independent self-construal, they emphasize task outcomes; but when they activate interdependent self-construal, they emphasize relational outcomes. Regarding conflict styles, when most members activate independent self-construal, the group uses dominating conflict strategies. On the other hand, if they activate interdependence self-construal they use avoiding, compromising or obliging conflict styles.

The last example under this category is Y. Y. Kim's (2005) *An Integrated Theory of Interethnic Communication (ITIC)* which is based on her earlier publications, that is Y.Y. Kim (1994). She argues that her model provides a framework for integrating research from a variety of disciplines taking pragmatic actions. She identified four important components to explain interethnic communication: (1) behavior, (2) communicator, (3) situation and (4) environment. These components are represented in a set of circles (from center to outer circles as in the order given above). In explaining behavior, represented in the most inner circle, Y.Y. Kim (1997) uses an associative-dissociative behavior continuum. For example, it contends that behaviors closer to the associative end of the continuum facilitate communication process by enhancing mutual understanding; however, behaviors at the dissociative end contribute to misunderstanding and miscommunication.

More specifically, associative decoding behaviors include mindfulness, personalization and particularization but dissociative behaviors include stereotyping, categorization and making attribution errors. With respect to the communicator, the author focuses on cognitive structure,

identity salience and group biases. The third circle, the situation, is viewed as physical setting. The outermost circle, the environment, is conceptualized as national and international factors that influence intercultural communication. She identified interethnic heterogeneity, interethnic salience and interaction goals as important factors of the situation. She also pointed out that history of subjugation, institutional inequality, ethnic stratification, and ethnic group strength as significantly influencing interethnic communication.

Theories focusing on accommodation or adaptation: There are a number of theories that associate intercultural communication to processes such as accommodation or adaptation of individuals to a new or dominant culture. Most cited theories that relate it to these processes include: (1) *Communication Accommodation Theory* (Gile, 1973; Gile et al., 1987), (2) *Theory of Intercultural Adaptation* (Ellingsworth, 1983), and (3) *Co-cultural Theory (*Orbe, 1998). These theories were amalgamated with various theories or refined in various times. The central focus of the theories is describing major concepts and strategies people employ to adapt or accommodate to a host or dominant culture. These theories recognize the role of context in influencing the efficiency of adaptation or accommodation. They also describe various strategies individuals employ to meet the purpose of adapting or accommodating. The examples outlined below brief the major assumptions, concepts, processes and strategies peculiar to the theories.

The first theory for review under this category is *Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)*. Began as *Speech Accommodation Theory* and then expanded and modified in course of time (see Gile, 1973; Gile et al., 1987; Gallois et al., 1988; Coupland et al., 1988; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Coupland & Jawarski, 1997). CAT integrated issues from *Ethno-linguistic Identity Theory* and assumed an interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in interactions. CAT explains some of the cognitive reasons for code-switching and other changes in speech as individuals seek to emphasize or minimize the social distances between themselves and their interlocutors. The theory posits that communicators use strategies named as convergence or divergence to decrease and increase communicative distances respectively. Convergence is defined as a strategy through which individuals adapt their communicative behavior to become similar to their interlocutor's behavior.

There are four key components of the theory: (1) the socio-historical context, (2) the communicators' accommodative orientation, (3) the immediate situation, and (4) evaluation and future intensions. The socio-relational context includes the relations between groups having contact with respect to history, vitality and the status of groups and cultural values. Communicators' accommodative orientation refers to their tendencies to distinguish encounters with out-group members. The immediate situation is influenced by the socio-psychological states of the community, goals and addressee focus, sociolinguistic strategies (e.g. discourse management), behavior and tactics (language use) and labeling and attributions (Gudykunst, 2005: 15). The last component refers to future intent to interact and accommodate with others.

The other example is Ellingsworth's (1983) *Theory of Intercultural Adaptation (TIA)* which was designed to elucidate how communicators adapt to each other in purpose-related encounters. Based on eight laws (discussed in Ellingsworth 1988), the theory assumes that all communication involve some degree of cultural variability. Consequently, it argues that study of intercultural communication should start from interpersonal communication but additionally incorporate cultural factors into consideration. Regarding the association between adaptation of communication styles and culture, Ellingsworth (1983) contents that adaptation of communication styles affects the use of culture-based belief differences.

There are two central concepts in the theory: *adapting communication* and *equity in adaptation*. It is stated that functionally adaptive communication and equity in adaptation facilitate task completion. Conversely, non-functional adaptive communication and imbalanced power relation (disadvantaging situation) lead to slowing task completion. In other words, when the communicative situation favors one communicator or one communicator has more power, the other person has more burdens to adapt. The author suggests that effective intercultural communication could be achieved and cultural beliefs of individuals could change if there is more adaptive communication and equity in adapting communication.

The last example of theories that focus on accommodation/adaptation is Orbe's (1998) *Co-cultural Theory*. Grounded in *Muted Group Theory* (e.g. Kramarae, 1981) and *Standpoint Theory* (e.g. Smith, 1987), the author employs a *Phenomenological Approach* (e.g. Husserl, 1964; Lanigan, 1988) to develop the theory. The theory provides a framework by which co-cultural group members negotiate attempts by others to render their voices muted within dominant societal structure (Gudykunst, 2005: 16). The vast majority of the work on co-cultural communication comes from the perspectives of minorities including people of color, women, people with disabilities, different sexual orientations and lower economic class (Orbe, 1998). The theory is framed on five major assumptions: (1) certain group of people are privileged in every society, (2) dominant group members create and maintain communication systems that reflects and promotes them, (3) co-cultural group members are marginalized in the dominant societal structure, (4) co-cultural group members' experiences vary but share marginalization and underrepresentation within dominant societal structure, and (5) co-cultural group members use certain communication styles to achieve success when confronting oppressive dominant structure.

The goals of co-cultural groups could be: assimilation, accommodation or separation (Orbe, 1998). Assimilation is an attempt by co-cultural group members to be part of mainstream culture while accommodation is a motivation to try to get the dominant group members to accept them. Separation, on the contrary, is their attempt to reject the possibility of common bonds with dominant group members. The combination of the goals and communication approach resulted in nine communication orientations in which different practices tend to be used (Gudykunst, 2005). In sum, co-cultural orientations include the major matrix of preferred outcomes (assimilation, accommodation and separation) and communication approaches (nonassertive, assertive and aggressive) of the theory.

Theories focusing on acculturation and adjustment: Theories under this category focus on acculturation of immigrants living in a foreign soil and the adjustment of the sojourners. As the world has been increasingly diverse through immigration and other similar social phenomena, acculturation of immigrants and their adjustment have been the concern of researchers and institutions for many years. However, there has not been a clear list of theories that address these

important human interactive processes until recently. Since a decade or so, few theories that focus either on acculturation or adjustment have been recorded. For instance, Y.Y. Kim's (2001) *Communication Acculturation Theory* and Bourhis' et al. (1997) *Interactive Acculturation Model* focus on acculturation of immigrants. On the other hand, Gudykunst's (1998) *Uncertainty Management Theory* and McGuire and McDermott's (1988) *Communication in Assimilation, Deviance and Alienation States Theory* emphasize the adjustment behavior and processes sojourners engaged in. The following paragraphs summarize these popular theories in addressing acculturation and adjustment as central framing concepts in their discussion of intercultural communication.

Y.Y. Kim's *Communication Acculturation Theory (CAT)* initially emerged as causal model of Korean immigrants' acculturation to Chicago (Kim, 1977). Even though the theory has been refined many times (e.g. Kim, 1979, 1988, 1995 & 2001; Kim & Ruben, 1988), the most recent version portrays cross-cultural adaptation as a joint effort, in which, a stranger and the host nationals are engaged in (Kim, 1995). The theory has evolved by adding important variables such as *stress*, *adaptation* and *growth dynamics*. It focuses on immigrants becoming intercultural. Kim's (2001) theory contains assumptions based on *Open-systems Theory* incorporating axioms (law-like statements about relationships between units in a theory) and theorems (derived from axioms). The axioms included important principles: acculturation and deculturation, stress-adaptation-growth dynamics and intercultural transformation.

The theorems from the axioms prove a positive correlation between host communication competence, host communication activities and intercultural transformations. It is also reported that there is negative associations between these variables and ethnic communication activities. Moreover, host receptivity and conformity pressure correlates positively with host communication competence and host communication activities and negatively with ethnic communication activities. Conversely, ethnic group strength is negatively related to host communication competence and host communication activities but it is positively correlated with ethnic communication activities. The authors also argue that strangers' preparedness for change and their adaptive personalities are correlated positively to host communication competence and host

communication activities. Based on functionalist perspective, Y.Y. Kim investigated the association among these important variables to discuss acculturation, stress-adaptation-growth dynamics and intercultural transformation.

The second example that emphasizes on acculturation is Bourhis' et al. (1997) *Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM)*. Adapting Berry's (1980, 1990) models of immigrants acculturation and their immigrants response to a two-items survey, Bourhis and colleagues were able to explain immigrants' acculturation behavior in a host culture. The authors argue that communicative outcomes between host nationals and immigrants are the result of acculturation orientation of host nationals and immigrants influenced by state integration policies. The authors have identified four acculturation orientations: *assimilation*, *integration*, *separation* and *marginal orientation* based on responses of immigrants to two questions.

The *yes-no-items* were: (1) do you want to maintain your native cultural identity and (2) do you want to maintain good relations with members of the host culture? If immigrants' responses are *yes* to both questions, they use integration orientation towards the host culture but if the answers are *no* to both items, they employ marginal orientation. However, an *only-yes* to the first item or the second justifies separation and assimilation orientations respectively. Bourhis et al. (1997) used the same model to develop hosts' acculturation orientation but the questions were modified as: (1) do you find it acceptable that immigrants maintain their cultural heritage and (2) do you accept immigrants' adaptation to your culture? A *two-yes* response explains host nationals' integration orientation towards immigrants while a *two-no* answer represents exclusion orientation. A *yes* response to the first (and *no* to the second) item explains segregation and a *yes* to the second (a *no* to the first) represent assimilation orientation towards immigrants. Combining these two models, Bourhis' et al. (1997) developed the theory and predicts if there could be consensual, problematic or conflict relational outcomes between hosts and immigrants.

On the other hand, there are two examples of theories that focus on intercultural adjustment. First, Gudykunst provides the field with two theories of intercultural communication but with varying focus, i.e. one on effective outcome and the other on adjustment. As discussed under

theories focusing on effective outcomes and decision, the effective communication outcome version of *Anxiety Uncertainty Theory* (e.g. Gudykunst, 1999) is framed on perspectives of individuals communicating with strangers(others approaching individuals in groups). Nevertheless, the adjustment version is written from the perspective of strangers (e.g. sojourners) entering new cultures and interacting with host nationals. Gudykunst (1998) included two additional axioms focusing on adjustment. The author states that when entering into a new culture strangers are uncertain about host nationals' attitudes and behaviors towards them and often experience anxiety. The author further argues that strangers cannot communicate effectively with hosts if their uncertainty and anxiety are too high. Also, when uncertainty is too low, strangers become overconfident that they understand hosts' behaviors and do not question accuracy of their predictions. When anxiety is too low, strangers are not motivated to communicate with hosts. Therefore, it is recommended that strangers should manage their anxiety and uncertainty to communicate effectively and adjust to the host culture.

The second example is McGuire and McDermott's (1988) *Communication Assimilation, Deviance and Alienation States Theory*. This theory explains immigrants' adaptation and adjustment into a host culture in three states: *assimilation*, *deviance* and *alienation*. Individuals achieve assimilation state when their perceptions are receiving positive responses from hosts' communication. The authors state that assimilation and adaptation are not the end outcomes of the process but temporary outcomes of the communication process as every immigrant deviates from social norms or rules of the host culture at some point. The authors contend that hosts' response to immigrants' deviation from host culture norms can persuade immigrants' interactive behavior. When immigrants are in the state of deviance, they experience tension with the new culture. Host nationals tend to react with neglectful communication (negative message or absence of communication). Host nationals' neglectful communication could lead immigrants to alienation state which makes them feel isolated and ineffective. This may force immigrants to pull out from the host culture or refuse to use the host language. Therefore, alienation or assimilation of immigrants is an outcome of the relationship between deviant behavior of the stranger and neglectful communication of the host national (McGuire & McDermott, 1988).

Theories focusing of identity: The last focus area of theories reviewed is the role of identities in intercultural interactions and transformation. More specifically, the theories under this category identify processes such as identity negotiation or management as an integral part of intercultural communication. These theories identify various typologies of identity, emphasize on its dynamic nature and place in intercultural communication in general. Added to the deterministic role of identities in intercultural interaction, the theories also investigate how identities change in the process of intercultural interactions. Despite their multiplicity, identities are considered to be central in impacting intercultural integration and productive communication between people from different cultures or between strangers and host nationals. Most of these theories extend interpersonal communication theories to explain intercultural communication as a process through which individuals adapt, negotiate and manage identities. Four theories are summarized to explain these associations: (1)Collier and Thomas' (1988) *Cultural Identity Theory*, (2) Cupach and Imahori's (1993) *Identity Management Theory*, (3) Ting-Toomey's (1993) *Identity Negotiation Theory*, and (4) Hecht's (1993) *Communication Theory of Identity*.

Firstly, Collier and Thomas' (1988) *Cultural Identity Theory (CIT)* proposed an interpretive theory of how cultural identities are managed in intercultural interactions using six assumptions, five axioms and one theory. CIT discusses the association among cultural identity, intercultural competence and intercultural contact. Through the assumptions and the axioms, the theory explains that individuals negotiate multiple identities in intercultural discourse. Regarding cultural identity, it is outlined that this social identity varies as a result of scope (e.g. how general identities are), salience (e.g. importance of identities to individuals) and intensity (e.g. how strongly identities are communicated to others).

To the theory, intercultural communication is possible by discursive assumptions and strength of differing cultural identities. In other words, it is a function of interactions between people ascribing different cultural identity. With respect to intercultural contact, the authors argue that the more norms and meanings differ in discourse, the more intercultural the contacts could be. Intercultural competence is an important component in this theory. It is a central concept to validating cultural identities. It involves negotiating mutual meanings, rules and positive outcomes. The higher

individuals' intercultural competence, the better they are able to develop and maintain intercultural relationships. To sum up, this theory takes intercultural contact, cultural identity and intercultural competence as interrelated variables in the process of identity negotiation and intercultural interaction in general.

Secondly, Cupach and Imahori's (1993) *Identity Management Theory (IMT)* was organized based on interpersonal communication competence as a framework. IMT conceptualizes identity as providing an interpretive frame of experience. The early works of Goffman's (1967) *Self Presentation* and *Face Work* contributes foundational role to this theory. Similar to *CIT*, IMT recognizes the fact that identities vary along scope, salience and intensity. IMT also views that individuals own multiple identities. Recognizing the multiplicity of identity, the theory identifies two identities as central to identity management. These are: relational (e.g. identities within specific relationships) and cultural (in line with Collier & Thomas, 1998). It argues that identities are revealed through the presentation of face (Cupach & Imahori, 1993).

Regarding intercultural communication, the authors contend that it happens when interlocutors have different cultural identities. Moreover, they explain intercultural competence as the ability required to maintain face in interaction or manage face successfully. The authors further argue that individuals go through three major steps to be competent in building intercultural relationship. These phases involve: (1) trial and error (e.g. process of finding shared identities), (2) enmeshment of identities of participants into mutually acceptable convergent relational identity, and (3) negotiating identities. Competent intercultural interlocutors use relational identity from the second phase as a basis for negotiating their separate cultural identities.

Thirdly, Ting-Toomey's (1993) *Identity Negotiation Theory (INT)* is founded on five major assumptions: the influence of cultural variability, self identification, identity boundary regulation, inclusion-differentiation dialectic and coherent sense of self. The author argues that cultural variability influences the sense of self whereas self-identification involves security and vulnerability. Identity boundary regulation motivates a tension between inclusion-differentiation dialectics whose management influences the coherent sense of self. Consequently, a coherent

sense of self impacts individual's communication resourcefulness (e.g. the ability to use competence and resources in diverse interaction). The theory explains that the more secured individuals' self identifications are, the more open they are to interact with members of other cultures; and conversely the more vulnerable they are, the more anxiety they experience. Added to these, the authors discuss that communication *resourcefulness* and *motivation* are central concepts in identity negotiation theory. The greater individuals' resourcefulness, the more effective they are in identity negotiation. At the same time, individuals' motivations to communicate with strangers influence the degree to which they seek out communication resourcefulness.

Lastly, Hecht's (1993) *Communication Theory of Identity (CTI)* forwards another theory focusing on identity based on eight assumptions about identity. Arguing that identity is a communicative process and must be studied in the context of communication, the theory explains that identities have various properties (e.g. individual, social and communal), content, relationship levels of interpretation and semantic properties expressed in symbols and meanings. Identities are further discussed as enduring-changing-effective, cognitive-behavioral-spiritual, codes expressed in conversations, defining membership in communities and involving subjective-ascribed meanings. Relating identities and communication, the theory assumes that identities prescribe modes of appropriate and effective communication. In explaining the multiplicity of identities, the author lists four identity frames: *personal*, *enacted*, *relational* and *communal*. Personal frame refers to the personal distinctiveness of individuals; and enacted frame is the identity enacted during interaction with others. Relational frames, on the other hand, stand for identities that emerge in relationships with others and are part of the relationships as they are jointly negotiated. Communal frame refers to identities held by a group of people which consequently links the group together. The author provides various assumptions regarding each of these identity frames.

CHAPTER THREE: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT

The theoretical framework of the current project and its major conceptual issues are discussed in this chapter. The framework is proposed as a model and termed here as *an integrative model to intercultural communication in context (IMICC).* The model is based on empirical research, review of related literature and reflective accounts of the author on both. Grounded on ethnographic study and quantitative survey, the findings revealed major themes of intercultural communication which became the fundamental elements of the model generated in the course of the research. These themes were checked for consistency and tested for reliability across responses and tools of data collection. After rigorous and consistent data legitimization and triangulation, the emerged themes were refined with the literature in the field. In the process, a practical and integrative model became vivid. In obedience with the research design employed and the nature of the data generated, a comprehensive quantitative survey representing the themes confirmed the model. The quantitative study was done to test the model and grasp comprehensive findings to answer the research questions. Consequently, IMICC has taken full shape in the course of these processes. For full explanations of the research process and the development of the model see Chapter Four. In this chapter, the model and its fundamental concepts are elaborated.

What is new and why integrative

An integrative model to intercultural communication in context is relatively different to similar works on a number of grounds. First of all, the model attempts to escape disciplinary or institutional orthodoxy. As review of literature testifies, most intercultural researches hardly bypass disciplinary affiliations even though they deal with issues that cross disciplinary and methodological divides. For example, there has been a clear and untouched rift between communication scientists and intercultural competence researchers in their attempt to address communication between people from different cultures (Rathje, 2006). However, IMICC amalgamates conceptual issues from both research traditions as the empirical study revealed the worth of a combination of concepts from these disciplines. The primary source of the model and conceptualizations of its major constructs come from the empirical study.

The model has also adapted a number of concepts from various theories. For example, Fantini's (2005) conceptualization of intercultural competence matches the general theoretical perspective held at the onset of the current study and of course goes in line with the qualitative findings that revealed the perception of the research participants regarding the construct. Conceptualization of other variables too (e.g. identity, communication styles, power relation, conflict styles and context of communication) have predominately been influenced by various theories and publications (e.g. Fantini, 2005; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Neuliep, 2009; Tanaka, 2007; Collier & Thomas, 1998; Kim, 1997).

Concerning philosophical and theoretical bases, most theories/models line up behind the social science, the interpretive or the critical perspectives. Most published empirical research or conceptual papers show more loyalty to theoretical foundations than what actual outputs depict. Researchers that framed themselves on predictability of human behavior hardly value the creative and complex nature of intercultural communication and focus on generalizations which could to some extent risk ecological fallacy. In similar fashion, those faithful to the creative aspect of human nature downplay regularities among cultures and offer us experiences that could not be generalized to explain human behavior. Few researchers attempted to escape such philosophical orthodoxy and used pragmatism as a guiding philosophical orientation. Such scholars integrated the available theoretical orientations and attempted to explain human nature as both predictable and creative.

The most interesting example in this category as discussed in the previous chapter is the dialectical approach that takes an eclectic theoretical position. In agreement with this approach, the current model integrates conceptual issues from the three popular theoretical perspectives. However, the new model extends itself to integrating not only perspectives but also conceptual issues from theories across disciplines. Concepts from various disciplines (e.g. communication science, linguistics, intercultural learning, anthropology, and cultural studies) are considered because they evolved as the major themes of intercultural communication during the empirical study. More importantly, the current model extends the four pillars of the dialectical approach (i.e. culture,

communication, context and power) and includes other important concepts such as identity salience, intercultural competence and conflict styles.

The other distinctive aspect of this model is its approach to intercultural communication research. While discussing theoretical and conceptual issues, most works do not provide detailed account of their research methodology. However, there are also few publications that describe their methodological designs (e.g. Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Smith & Schneider, 2000; Teng, 2005). However, these publications do not usually avoid the methodological war that divides scholars on quantitative-qualitative paradigms. Most studies from communication science and competence research traditions prefer quantitative methods but few publications, often from interpretive orientation, favors an ethnographic approach. There are also a number of publications that base themselves on textual analysis of secondary sources.

In a nutshell, it is rare to find research outputs that employ multiple methods, especially with mixed-methods research approach, to explore intercultural communication. As an approach, the dialectical perspective advocates integration of the available perspectives; nonetheless, it scarcely addresses how various methods can be used to describe this complex human experience. A number of scholars recommend the merits of using qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of this dynamic human behavior. Few researches have used qualitative data to support their quantitative findings (e.g Carrigan, Pennington & McCroskey, 2006; Fantini, 2006). However, this model is unique for its use of exploratory mixed-method research that gives equal status to both qualitative and quantitative studies. Inclusion of the reflective account of the author is also another important aspect that contributes to the same cause.

Besides its integrative nature, the model is grounded on empirical research in higher educational context. The field of intercultural communication has recorded a number of theories and models often from diverging disciplines or school of thoughts. Most of these researches from the critical perspectives and the dialectical approach offer the discipline general and often abstract concepts. There are a number of publications that explain the significance of context. For example, Neuliep (2009) offered the field a comprehensive model explaining intercultural communication through

various sequentially arranged circles representing various forms of context. However, this theoretical model does not provide empirical data to explain the feasibility of the model apart from a description of the theoretical importance of the subsequent chains of contexts. On the other hand, a number of research publications, especially from the social science perspective (e.g. Kim, 1997; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Lee & Gudykunst 2001; Hoftsede, 1980, 2001; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005) presented a number of cases and empirical studies. These studies, however, seldom deal with educational contexts which are potential settings for understanding intercultural interactions. On the contrary, the current study is based on empirical data generated from a context (higher education) which is not often explored by the social science researchers of communication science.

Lastly, negotiating theory and practice is the other peculiar aspect of the current model. IMICC assumes that theory and practice are two sides of a coin. Theory can be generated from practice and practice can be systematized to evolve a theory. In an attempt to find universal instruments measuring intercultural communication across cultures, a number of theories trade appropriateness of instruments for standardization and generalizations. Despite recognition of the role of culture and context, researchers who have committed themselves to theorizing intercultural communication often downplay contextual and cultural issues. For example, Hostsede's (1980, 1991, 2001) dimensions of cultural variability treats cultures as national cultures that cannot change over time and hardly consider the existence of various cultures within a nation.

Furthermore, instruments which are often used by scholars across disciplines create artificial categories owing to the use of a single parameter to measure all cultures. For example, in reality there is no culture named East African as labeled by Hoftsede. On the other hand, hard-line interpretive researchrs provide us research outputs confined to specific contexts and cultures. They are engaged more in improving practice than providing theoretical insights that could be applicable to other similar contexts as well. On the contrary, the current model evolved from empirical data and intended to improve practice and generalize outputs relevant to higher education context. To sum up, evolving as a new model past problems of multiculturalism, escaping disciplinary and methodological orthodoxy and balancing theory and practice, the model

proposes a practical integration of concepts and methods to better understand intercultural communication in higher education context.

There are a number of reasons to explain the fact that intercultural communication research demands an integrative or a combined perspective. These causes can be seen from three dimensions: theoretical, methodological and practical. Irrespective of disciplinary inclinations, the theories focus on various aspects of intercultural communication (for full discussions refer Chapter Two). As a result, the field offers literature scrambled across disciplinary and theoretical divides. Interdisciplinary approaches to intercultural studies have not fully flourished in the literature except in a few publications (e.g. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008). Added to this, institutionalization of the field is still in the making and the domain of the field is not yet concrete. Most universities and research centers pocket the discipline in various departments such as communication science, education, linguistic and cultural studies.

As a result, intercultural studies have not yet fully established as independent departments even though there are attempts to offer intercultural graduate programs in various areas. As a young discipline and being the interest of researchers in various disciplines, the resulting theories are as diverse as the disciplines. These have resulted in diverging theories that present often incongruent conceptualization of basic concepts such us culture and communication. Even though the attempts have positively contributed to theorizing intercultural communication, it is high time to work on the convergence of theories/ concepts to have a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication and improve practice. This, however, does not mean researchers should agree on all aspects.

In addition, as mentioned time and again intercultural communication is a complex social phenomenon and its study requires a comprehensive and holistic approach (Gudykunst, 2005; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Koch, 2009).Theoretical or conceptual integration is not an end in itself. There is a demand for an integrative or mixed approach to research in intercultural experiences. However, as indicated, most studies employ either quantitative or qualitative research methods of enquiry and seldom integrate them. Very few publications that are not yet

developed full theories such as Martin and Nakayama (1999) and Gonzalez and Tannon (2000) attempted to integrate objectivist and subjectivist assumptions (Gudykust, 2005). However, recently a number of publications encourage the merits of integrating these research methods for comprehensive understanding of the construct. As the study of intercultural communication demands a complex approach and a benefit from combination of these methods, its success rests highly on not only a mere mix of the research methods but a systematic integration which could yield reliable outputs. Therefore, it is imperative that intercultural studies should integrate methodological orientations to grasp a comprehensive understanding (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989). But the integration should be planned, intentional and follow scientific procedure.

Besides these conceptual and methodological concerns, the empirical findings of the current study hinted a practical demand for an integrative approach. The current investigation into the nature and the challenges of intercultural interaction in higher education context reported themes that were identified by various theories (namely, identity, intercultural competence, context, communication styles, conflict styles and power relations). Even though these areas were addressed in various theories but with a varying degree of focus, they were not treated with a proportionate level of significance. However, the empirical study projected that these are the central ingredients of intercultural communication in the context studied. As mentioned before, theories can be grouped with respect to the emphasis they give and their assumptions about culture and communication. The findings of the current study, however, identified these themes as equally important and central to our conceptualization of the construct and improving communication in the given context. Therefore, there is a practical cause for integrating the themes and designing a model that reflect the objective reality in the context considered for the study. This is the result of the attempt to find a context friendly and practical model that could foster productive intercultural communication and a democratic culture in higher educational context. In conclusion, the current status of the field coupled with the outcome of the current study justifies the imperatives for an integrative model of intercultural communication.

Assumptions about theory and intercultural communication

Having given this background, the subsequent section outlines the central aspects of IMICC. The forthcoming subsection narrates the philosophical foundation of the model, its assumptions about intercultural communication and the conceptualization of its variables. It is obvious that theories and models adopt particular ontological and epistemological assumptions about reality and human nature. Therefore, it is important to brief the philosophical and theoretical assumptions upheld in the current model. The section also discusses the assumptions taken regarding intercultural communication process, its central concepts (i.e. culture and communication) and the association among these concepts. Generally speaking, this part of the chapter focuses on theoretical descriptions and arguments of components or variables holding the model. Methodological concerns and the instruments prepared to measure the variables of the construct are described in the fourth chapter.

Assumptions about theory: Based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions they hold, theories of intercultural communication can be categorized under the objectivist approach or the subjectivist approach (Gudykunst, 2005; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989; Burell & Morgan, 1979). To objectivists, the real world is external to the perception of individuals and their major purpose in research is to find regularities in behavior. As a result, objectivists contend that human behavior including intercultural communication is measurable and predictable. However, subjectivists claim that there is no such thing as external to individuals and argue that reality is understood through understanding individuals' perspectives. Subjectivists view reality as a social construction and human behavior as creative. Despite the contributions coupled with the inadequacies of theories from either side, there have seldom been agreements among theorists from these two exclusive paradigms. In intercultural communication studies, in particular, there are hardly any theories that pass the paradigm war. In other words, there are no fully developed theories that negotiate philosophical positions in their investigation of intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2005).

The current study, however, addresses this gap regarding meta-theoretical assumptions. It assumes that reality or the real world is a twofold entity carrying objective and subject aspects. We live in a material and perceptual world where perceptions become reality and reality influences perceptions. Even though there are concepts or facts which are universal to humanity, some facts or concepts are socially constructed and shared among individuals in a given culture. There are universally accepted or real facts; and there are also perceived facts shared by people in a particular cultural system. Therefore, both exist in binary because some aspects of human behavior can be predictable while others remain to be creative and culture bounded. Intercultural communication can be understood by looking at regularities or causal relationship and variability across cultures. The aim of the current model is to understand intercultural communication from the perspective of the individual and draw pragmatic conclusions based on cultural regularities and variability. Consistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions discussed so far, the study adopts pragmatism as a methodological position. This methodological assumption is in romantic relationship with the philosophical assumptions of the model and allows the study to use multiple data gathering tools.

Assumptions about intercultural communication: Generally speaking, intercultural communication involves face-to-face communication (computer assisted also) between or among individuals from different cultures. It occurs when individuals own different cultural identity (Collier & Thomas, 1998). The term is also broadly used to include all aspects of the study of culture and communication. The most popular sources define intercultural communication as a symbolic process that involves meaning negotiation. For example, Gudykunst and Kim's (2003) define it as a transactional, symbolic process involving attribution of meaning between individuals from dissimilar cultures. Thus, it occurs when individuals of different cultures interact and attempt to negotiate meaning. This interaction is a perceptual process that involves the exchange of meaning. Ting Toomey (1999) also defines it as a symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two or more cultural communities negotiate and share meanings in an interactive situation. With similar conceptualization, Samovar & Porter (2001) see intercultural communication as communication between individuals whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter meaning and communication process.

Most of these definitions are investigated with culture defined as distinctiveness of countries as well as smaller grouping based on ethnicity, social class, gender, age, etc. Most of them are built on generalized and unquestioned national cultures; and consequently intercultural communication is assumed to be a kind of interpersonal communication between individuals from diverse countries. Such treatment of culture has been criticized in much of the literature (e.g. Girouk, 1998; Ho, 2000; Moon, 1996; Nakayama, 1997; Ono, 1998; Jensen, 1998) for it tends to normalize and perpetuate the hegemony of privileged cultural identity. It also homogenizes the diverse views of various ethnic or cultural groups within a nation by means of exclusion, trivialization, and marginalization. Jensen (1998) rejected such conceptualization and defined intercultural communication as involving individuals from the same country but different ethnicity. Interestingly, most recent definitions expanded to treat communication between individuals from various cultural groups such as professional, disciplinary, sexual orientations and gender as intercultural. The definitions have been changing in line with the dynamism in conceptualizing culture and communication.

In the current model, intercultural communication is conceptualized as interpersonal communication between or among individuals who perceive themselves as distinct from others. It is a symbolic exchange process in which individuals make use of verbal and nonverbal clues to negotiate meaning and identity in interaction. In this perceptual and dynamic process, individuals attempt to minimize misunderstanding and communicate effectively by being culturally sensitive and owning multiple cultural frameworks. Fascinatingly, a great deal of sources use terms such as cross-cultural, international and intercultural synonymously in their investigation of a communicative act between individuals from different cultures. However, these concepts are understood in this study as conceptually different. For example, cross-cultural communication involves comparing particular behavior in two or more cultures whereas intercultural communication involves examining behavior when members of two or more cultures interact (Gudykunst, 2000). International communication, on the other hand, is the study of mass-mediated communication between two or more countries with differing background. The assumptions regarding intercultural communication as conceptualized in the current model are summarized below.

Assumption 1: Intercultural communication is a complex and dynamic human interaction. As it is interpersonal communication between individuals who hold relatively dissimilar cultural identity, it demands individuals to understand the perspective of the other who carries different perceptions and experiences regarding interactions. In other words, it is a group phenomenon exercised by individuals. This ongoing and perceptual interactive process involves mismatched expectations that stems from varying cultural membership (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The dynamism in its key components such as culture and communication makes it more complex than communication between individuals from a homogenous cultural group. Intercultural communication is a dynamic process for the fact that all intercultural experience could vary significantly, and every episode is a progressive process of developing understanding and a new identity. As a result, it is an identity negotiation process that creates a third space for communicators. In short, it is an interactive, complex and dynamic human experience.

Assumption 2: Intercultural communication takes various forms. Since very recently, intercultural communication has not anymore been limited to interaction between races, ethnicities or nationalities. It refers to any form of interaction among individuals who identify themselves as different from other cultural groups based on various grouping behavior. For instance, communication between individual from distinct co-cultures, genders, institutions, professions, and seniority can be considered as intercultural as far as people are cultured with a particular worldview. This conceptualization of intercultural communication results in various forms. Therefore, interethnic communication, interreligious communication, intergenerational communication, interracial communication and inter-organizational business communication can be considered as intercultural for the fact that the groups hold a peculiar cultural system regardless of the framing factor. This assertion can be attributed to the changing nature of the culture concept.

Assumption 3: Intercultural competence manifests as intercultural communication performance and develops through the same. Effective intercultural communication is a manifestation of holding strong intercultural competence that individuals acquire through trainings or intercultural experiences. The former can be reinforced through the latter (actual engagement in

communicative action). In general, it is possible to argue that a stronger intercultural competence is a predictor of effective intercultural communication. Therefore, there is inseparable association between competence and communication as they are two sides of the same coin.

Assumption 4: Second/foreign language learning fosters intercultural communication. Proficiency in a second or foreign language rewards intercultural behavior. Language consists of cultural and linguistic elements important in understanding perspectives held by others. Communicators who own an expected level of linguistic competence of a target culture can better communicate with individuals from a host or second culture. Consequently, they can integrate better than those individuals incapable of speaking the target language. For example, immigrants in a new host culture can escape isolation and the challenges of every day intercultural interaction if they acquire expected level of proficiency relevant for interaction with host nationals.

Assumption 5: Conflicts are inevitable in intercultural communication. This form of communication is characterized by misunderstandings and conflicts that results from cultural differences and incompatible worldviews. From the onset, every intercultural communicator attempts to interpret the actions of others from his own cultural perspective which usually yield misunderstandings. This ethnocentric view declines in the course of adaptation to a new culture or learning of a new cultural perspective. The move to ethno-relativism helps the communicator to act in accordance with the perspectives and expectations of the other. In an effort to integrate to a host culture sojourners experience anxiety and uncertainty which are inevitable in the developmental move towards acquiring the perspective and the cultural framework of the host culture. However, at any level and as a part of the move towards integrating into a new culture or interacting with individuals from other cultures, individuals experience intercultural conflict of various forms and intensity. As a result of cultural variability in conflict resolution styles, individuals experience difficulties in troubleshooting problems productively (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Even though it is not completely avoidable, the frequency of conflicts individuals experience declines as they integrate into the host culture or acquire the desired level of intercultural competence and productive conflict management strategies.

Assumption 6: Intercultural communication is not an end but a means to democratic culture and social harmony. Individuals who experience intercultural dialogue in this ever-changing world gain holistic personal development that allows them to interact effectively in a multicultural environment. Apart from enjoying the merits of healthy dialogues and social harmony, individuals maximize their excellence in meeting personal goals and organizational effectiveness. At a societal level, descent intercultural communication among diverse group of people encourages productive cultural exchange, peaceful co-existence, social integration and the culture of tolerance. Such communication accelerates citizens' sensitivity to cultural differences and viewing differences positively. Intercultural communication is the proper tool to impact intercultural personality and inculcate democratic culture in a given multicultural environment. As a process, it helps communities benefit from opportunities while minimizing the challenges of diversity. At an institutional level, it is a corner stone to build social integration and maximize institutional effectiveness.

Assumption 7: Effective intercultural communication is attained through appropriate intercultural learning. Intended and conscious intercultural training is relevant for the youth who is now living in the most interactive world. Their effectiveness in this form of communication depends on the extent to which the youth acquires knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and awareness appropriate for such interaction. Institutionalized training can facilitate effectiveness in studies, work or life in a multicultural environment. For example, international business companies and some universities have recently been offering intercultural training to their respective staff members or students to effect healthy interaction and organizational effectiveness. Moreover, some universities, for instance, organize various extra-curricular activities and semester abroad programs to effect intercultural dialogue which promotes abilities in intercultural communications.

Assumptions 8: Intercultural studies should take a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and integrative perspective. As it is a complex human interaction that brings uncountable factors into play, it is wise to take a very comprehensive approach to research to grasp authentic and rich understanding of intercultural interaction. As it involves various variables such as identity, conflict, context, power relation and competence, a thorough investigation into this construct demands basing the study

on both qualitative narratives and quantitative descriptions rather than surface-level comparative descriptions of cultural variability. For example, with respect to contextual factors, as university and the surrounding social and political environment are inseparable, studies in such contexts should recognize macro-level contextual factors such as state political culture in a given state, history of ethnic relationships and socio-cultural issues that influence communication at interpersonal level. The immediate institutional culture (micro-level) and its communication also shape intercultural communication among individuals. On the other hand, because of its nature and disciplinary evolution, intercultural communication studies are interdisciplinary like gender studies and development studies.

Assumptions about culture and communication: The controversial concepts of culture and communication, as the two key components, often causes conceptual difficulties and make the study of intercultural communication a highly complex activity for researchers. It is because these two core concepts are difficult to define and their association needs a thorough understanding (Otten & Geppert, 2009; Koch, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Hall, 1992). More interestingly, these concepts are among the most searched concepts on the web engines. These concepts are extensively defined more than most other popular constructs in social studies in spite of the significant differences among scholars in conceptualizing the terms.

A number of publications have listed definitions of these concepts. Due to the abundant definitions of the terms and continuous rephrasing of terminologies, categorical listing of the definitions of culture and communication hardly provides help for the current research. However, it is vital to provide a review of the most popular definitions and their theoretical background before explaining how the concepts are used in the current model. Added to this, it is also crucial to clarify the link between these concepts and their place in intercultural communication. Historically, most theories advocated a deterministic association between culture and communication as both influencing each other (e.g. Hall, 1976; Hoftsede, 1980). Most recently, intercultural communication moves beyond the idea that the two concepts are more or less influential factors affecting each other and consider the interaction between them (Gudykunst, 1984, 2005; Koch, 2009).

Conceptualizing culture: Culture is a central concept in intercultural communication. It is a term which means many things to many people and thus has been defined in many ways. Definitions of culture range from all inclusive which assume culture as everything to narrow definitions which equate culture with opera, music and ballet. Regarding the available definitions, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) listed more than 150 definitions of culture they found in anthropology publications. Hall (1959) also explained *the voice and echo* association between culture and communication as culture is communication and communication is culture. He argues that culture and communication are two sides of a coin. The definitions of culture have expanded and diversified since Hall's conceptualization of culture but they still have their own limits and unresolved conceptual divergence. As a result, even most recent conceptualizations about culture (e.g. *hybridity* (Bhabha, 1990, 1994), *transculturality* (Ortiz, 1995; Welsch, 1999), or *cosmopolitanism* (Hannerz, 1996; Vertovec & Cohen, 2002)) hardly resolve the puzzle of reaching agreement on the culture concept. For simplicity of understanding, a number of scholars (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Hall, 1992; Reuter & Hörning, 2004) employed various approaches to summarize and explain the diversity in conceptualizing culture in intercultural communication.

For example, Bradford J. Hall (1992) summarized the diverse conceptualizations of culture based on three meta-criteria (namely, form of culture, function of culture and locus of culture) from three principal theoretical perspectives on intercultural communication: traditional perspectives, coordinated management of meaning and ethnography of communication. To him, form stands for what counts as culture and how culture is defined by researchers; function refers to what culture serves and locus is where culture can be operationalized and cultural belongings reside. Concerning the form of culture, those holding traditional perspectives define culture based on the notion that culture is community-rooted on a shared group membership whereas coordinated management of meaning sees culture as conversation which is a shared set of social values and norms. However, ethnography of communication conceptualizes culture as code which is an inter-subjective resource for meaning making. In line with their conceptualization of form of culture, these perspectives view function of culture as: 1) the identity function which is associated with the community form, 2) the grammar function which ties in with the conversation form, and, 3) the sign function, that is linked to the code form, in the order explained in this paragraph.

Regarding locus of culture, B. J. Hall summarizes that the traditional perspectives claim that culture resides in the expression of identity with group membership. Scholars from coordinated management of meaning theory contend that culture is located in the individual's head and mind, as well as mediated in their practices and conventions. Advocates of the last perspective, ethnography of communication, argue that culture resides in the inter-subjective discourses, symbols and signs that transmit social meaning. These three analytical meta-criteria are not exclusive but interrelated tightly (Otten & Geppert, 2009). As clearly indicated in B. J. Hall (1992), there is a closer association and consistency in which a particular perspective conceptualizes forms, functions and locus of culture. For instance, a study of intercultural communication from ethnography of communication see culture as a system of shared codes, functions as integrating meanings and thus employ discourse analysis to identify symbols and signs to explain the meaning embedded in it.

For similar reason but differently, Reuter & Höning proposed two opposite fundamentals of culture in interaction: being culture and doing culture. According to the former perspective, human action is directly rooted in one antecedent cultural knowledge system. It focuses on the static nature of culture and fixed nature of all social actions in genuine traditions, norms and values. The latter, doing culture, emphasize on the dynamic nature of culture and the creative nature of human interactions. It sees culture as it appears in practical action and thus focuses on the pragmatic of culture (Reuter & Hörning, 2004: 10). As a result, those advocating this notion of culture suspend the pre-existing belongings and predefined cultural distinctions of incommensurable semantic worlds for theoretical reasons and for analytical purposes.

Very recently, Martin & Nakayama (1999, 2007) presented a comprehensive summary of the various concepts of culture from the three popular perspectives. Researchers from the social science paradigm see culture as a set of learned and shared patterns of perception (e.g. Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Samovar & Porter, 2001; B. Hall, 1992; Keesing, 1974; Marsella, 1998). For example, to Marsella (1998) as cited in Samovar and Porter (2001) culture is a shared learned behavior which has both external (e.g. artifacts) and internal representations (e.g. values, attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, Keesing (1974) contends that culture provides people with a system that

generally allows them to know how to communicate with members of their culture and how to interpret their behavior. Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005) defines culture as a learned meaning system that is shared at varying degrees with interacting members of a community. In sum, according to this perspective, culture is a system of learned and shared behavior that influences perceptions and action.

On the other hand, interpretive scholars view culture as shared and learned, however, they tend to focus on contextual patterns of communication behavior rather than group-related perceptions (Martin & Nakayama, 2007: 85). These scholars argue that culture is a continuous meaning-making and sharing process and it is expressed in symbols and signs (Hymes, 1972; Geertz, 1973; Carbaugh, 1988; Philipsen, 1992; Cappai, 2008). For example, Philipsen (1992) defines culture as a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meaning and rules of behavior. This definition is in agreement with the famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz's notion of culture. Geertz (1973) defines culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols. Cultural research from any of the interpretive theories (phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, social constructivism and ethno-methodology) would not consider culture as fixed territory, nation, ethnicity or language. Interpretive researchers view the relation between culture and communication as the former influences the latter and the latter reinforces the former. The researchers emphasize practices of interactive construction and de-constructions of cultural meanings and cultural differences.

Lastly, definitions of culture from the critical perspective conceptualize culture as heterogeneous, dynamic and a contested zone (Martin & Nakayama, 2007:87). Most researchers from this paradigm focus on the diversity of a particular cultural group rather than its regularity or uniformity. And they often study the disputable nature of cultural boundaries or identities. These scholars have been criticizing researchers that attempt to categorize cultures and view culture as static human behavior. Instead they argue that cultural processes are dynamic (e.g. Hannerz, 1996). A number of cultural conflicts and power struggle manifest the contested aspect of culture as explained by critical researchers. The challenges of drawing a clear divide between cultural groups and the contested and multiple nature of cultural identity people seize tell us that members

of a cultural group are not exactly alike. Viewing culture as a contested zone or a site of struggle, critical researchers understand the complexity of culture and significance of power and context in shaping culture and vice-versa. Regarding the relationship between culture and communication, critical researchers hold the view that communication reshapes culture (Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

The current model, however, acknowledges the approach seized by the dialectical approach (Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 1999, 2007) in conceptualizing culture. The approach sees culture dialectically as both static- dynamic, homogenous-heterogeneous and as a most contested zone of struggle. The approach considers the definitions held by the three perspectives. It encourages more flexibility in defining and conceptualizing culture. To IMICC, culture is defined as a learned dynamic and complex system of perception that guides behavior and manifest itself in internal and external representations. It is a learned group behavior which is not genetically determined or acquired at birth. It is the result of intentional or unintentional conditioning to a particular group worldview that people develop through communication. Culture is learned through proverbs, folktales, legends, myths, music and of course formal/informal instructions. Members of a cultural group learn the accumulated values, perceptions, abilities and behavior through communication that involves face-to-face, mass media or other electronic channels. It is through communication that culture is learned, shared and maintained.

Moreover, it is viewed as a warehouse of accumulated values, beliefs and behavior (Martin & Nakayama, 2008; Neuliep, 2009; Samovar & Porter, 2001). This accumulated symbol system changes over time; and passes to generations through communication. There are cultural components that seldom change through time and there are also aspects that vary over the course of time. No culture is inherently stable and homogenous. The emerging view in intercultural communication challenges the commonly held view that cultures are stable and homogenous (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 1999). A simplistic association of culture with nations, ethnicity, race and other predetermined markers has limited our understanding of its complexity. There are various forms of cultures such as organizational culture, academic culture, professional culture and other forms of culture created by individuals sharing a particular knowledge system. This software of the

mind is visible through observable physical manifestations such as music, opera or food and also expressed through attitudes, worldviews, abilities and values. It is this shared belief system that guides human perception and action. This collective concept is influenced by and determines contextual variables including power, history, sociopolitical reality and institutional behavior and individuals.

If these justify the predominant characteristics of culture, it is necessary to question what there in culture and how can it be studied. To better understand the components of culture, it is vital to adopt the *Iceberg Metaphor* discussed by Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005) to explain the layers of culture which include surface-level culture (popular culture), intermediate-level culture, and deep-level culture. The metaphor portrays culture like an iceberg in which the deeper layers are hidden from our view whereas the small part is visible as Hall's (1998: 59) states *culture hides more than it reveals*. The part that floats on a sea is metaphorically represented as popular culture. Individuals see only this upper-most layer of cultural artifacts (e.g. fashion, music, cultural clothing, etc) which basically refer to artifacts that are observable and prevalent in our daily life. This level represents the surface slice of the embedded richness of a culture.

The second level, or the intermediate-level, is made up of symbols, meanings and norms. A symbol is a sign, verbal or nonverbal, that reflects meaning. Meaning is the interpretations that individuals attach to a symbol (e.g. a Cross sign can signal Christianity and two middle fingers pointing upwards and the rest downwards making a *V*-sign that signifies victory). The last level, from top-down, is termed as deep-level culture and includes traditions, beliefs, norms and values. Tradition includes myths, ceremonies and rituals shared by a group of people whereas cultural belief means the worldview people hold. Cultural values, on the other hand, refer to the set of criteria that guide behavior. A number of cultural value dimensions have been identified to study and describe various cultures (e.g. Hall, 1976; Schwartz, 1992; Hoftsede, 1980, 1991, 2001). Cultural norm refers to the collective expectation of appropriateness of behavior.

Studying culture in intercultural communication has primarily focused on the hidden dimensions of culture or the last layer of the metaphor. The most important dilemma in this regard has been the search for universal frameworks that can be used for studying cultures or should every culture be studied from within and in its own right (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). The answer to this reminds us of the often cited methodological paradigms: *etic* and *emic*. These refer to two different perspectives for analyzing culture. The *etic* perspective assumes certain cultural phenomena as universally existing and appropriate with minor variations within any cultural system. Thus, cross-cultural comparison is possible or desirable. *Etics* are studies outside the system in more than one culture; their structure is theoretical and they are used to develop generalizations about relationships among variables (Triandis, 1994). Researchers from the social science approach hold such perspective.

On the contrary, the *emic* perspectiv*e* takes a certain cultural phenomenon as inextricably founded in a specific cultural system. Therefore, it cannot be understood and interpreted from outside the cultural system or using external parameters. *Emics* are ideas, behaviors and concepts that are culture specific. Therefore, they are used to analyze a particular culture but could seldom be used for cross cultural comparison. Interpretive/critical researchers employ such approach. In the current framework, however, *etic* and *emic* perspectives are not viewed as contradictory but they are rather complementary if both are used appropriately and pragmatically as recommended by few publications such as Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009).

Research on intercultural communication has mainly concentrated on the major cultural values to understand cultural differences. Based on comparative studies of a wide range of cultures, specific value patterns or dimensions have been discovered from the *etic* perspective. Famous social psychologists and anthropologists namely Geerz Hoftsede, Shalom Schewartz, Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck, and Edward Hall identified a number of key dimensions on which cultural groups can be compared and studied (see Hoftsede, 1980, 1991; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Hall, 1976, Gudykunst, 2005; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). For example, Hoftsede (1984, 1991, 2004) identified four value dimensions: individualism-collectivism, high-low uncertainty avoidance, high-low power distance

and masculinity-femininity. Later, he added long-term-short-term orientations as the fifth dimension. Hoftsede investigated how cultural values influenced corporate behavior in various countries when he was working for IBA. He described cultural variability among national cultures based on the tendency that cultures incline to either side of the continuum representing the value dimensions.

Individualism-collectivism value pattern is the first and most important dimension that determines an individuals' sense of self. Individualism stands for value tendencies of a culture emphasizing the preference of personal identity over cultural or any other form of social identity. Represented on the other end of the continuum, collectivism refers to the value tendencies of a culture emphasizing social identity over individual identity, collective rights over individual rights and group desires over individual desire. For example, high individualism has been popular in the cultures of the United States, Great Britain, Canada and other western countries while collectivism is predominantly a cultural value of countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East (Hoftsede, 1980, 1991, 2001; Ting-Toomey & Chung 2005). In individualistic cultures, competition rather than cooperation is highly encouraged (Samvora & Porter, 2001). The most common individualism values include: freedom, honesty, social recognition, comfort and personal equity; however, the top collectivistic values are harmony, face-saving, respect for parents, fulfillments of other needs and equal distribution of rewards among children (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Traindis, 1995).

High-low uncertainty reduction, on the other hand, is the extent to which individuals who are threatened by ambiguous situations react by avoiding or establishing more structure to compensate for uncertainty. In other words, it is the extent to which members of a culture are not anxious about conflicts and the extent to which they can avoid it (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). High-uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g. Portugal, Greece, Belgium and Japan) avoid uncertainty needs with defined procedures and exhibit conflict avoiding behavior. Nevertheless countries with low-uncertainty avoidance (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United States) take risks and accept uncertain conditions (Hoftsede, 1980, 1991, 2001).

High-low power distance is the extent to which a less powerful member of a social group or institution accepts unequally distributed power. People in high-power distance countrries (e.g. India, Brazil and Greece) believe that uneven distribution of power is a fact of life; however, low-power distance countries (e.g. Austria, Finland, Denmark and Norway) hold that inequality in society should be minimized (Hoftsefe, 1980, 1991, 2001; Samovar & Porter, 2001). In the former, high hierarchy is preferred whereas in the latter less hierarchy is acceptable. Masculinity-femininity as cultural value dimensions refers to the degree to which masculine or feminine traits are valued and revealed. According to Hoftsede (1980), masculinity stands for the extent to which a society is male dominated and demonstrate ambition, differentiated sex-roles and achievements (e.g. Ireland, Greece, South Africa and Austria) but cultures that value femininity are contrary to this and show stress caring and nurturing behavior (e.g. Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark).

The popular cross-cultural psychologist Micheal Bond and Chinese Cultural Connection extended Hoftsede's work by adding another dimension called Confucian dynamism. The group identified four dimensions of cultural variability: Confucian work dynamism, integration (correlates with individualism), human-heartedness (correlates with masculinity-femininity) and moral discipline (correlates with power distance). The only dimension that did not correlate with Hoftsede's dimensions was Confucian work dynamism which Hoftsede refers to as long-term orientation (Hoftsede, 2001; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). This dimension included ordering relationships by status, being thrift centered, having a sense of shame and emphasizing collective face-saving (Samvor & Porter, 2001). Members of such culture value social order and long-range goals, and if threy are employed demonstrate strong work ethics and respect for bosses. Hoftsede labeled this dimension as long-term orientation and included it as a fifth dimension in his cultural variability framework. Examples of cultures with long-term orientations include China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan whereas those with short-term orientation include Pakistan, Nigeria, Canada, Great Britain and the United States (Hoftsede, 2001).

As indicated in various sections of this work, Hoftsede's work has been criticized on conceptual and methodological grounds despite its popularity and significance. Conceptually, his assumption of cultures as national cultures has been challenged for the fact that there are various multiethnic

and multicultural nations that project multicultural identity (Jensen, 1998). His work has also been criticized as a hasty generalization and downplaying individual differences among members of a cultural group. It is culturally incorrect to reduce individuals to stereotypes based on dominant values. The other interesting comment is his conceptualization of culture as static and homogenous. It has been believed that cultures are dynamic and heterogeneous (Martin & Nakayama, 2007: 104). Hoftsede has also been criticized for cultural insensitivity as he intends to use same yardstick to measure all cultures. His critics argue that Hoftsede's work reflects Eurocentric views or may have a western bias (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Methodologically, the representativeness of the sample of subjects working for IBM to their respective countries has also been challenged. It has been questioned how figures at a country-level could be used to explain individual behavior even though Hoftsede contends that figures reflect central tendencies for the national group as a whole. Nevertheless, his work has been widely quoted in most studies of intercultural communication, business management and social psychology.

Contrary to Hoftsede, Schalom Schwartz developed cultural framework/ value constructs for comparing cultures not only at country level but also at personal level. This prominent social psychologist distinguishes the value priorities of individuals and of social groups and has found ten different value constructs. Individual-level constructs include: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence tradition, conformity and security. These constructs were summarized under two bi-polar dimensions: openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Even though this framework is popular in social psychology, it is seldom cited in intercultural communication studies. Very few studies have suggested the significance of this cultural framework in conceptualizing the various kinds of self-attributes that individuals may be aware of during interactions. Studies have found a link between Schwartz values and organizational behaviors (e.g. Schwartz, 1999).

However, similar to Hoftsede, two cultural variability frameworks, by Edward Hall and by Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck, are also popular in intercultural communication literature. Hall (1976) listed three dimensions of cultural differences which include: mono-chronic and poly-

chronic time, high and low context communication, and the use of personal space (Hall, 1976). Putting the pair of dimensions on a continuum, Hall argues that behavioral patterns of different cultural groups tend to fit to either side of the continuum representing the dimensions. Firstly, individuals reflecting mono-chronic time are characterized by doing one thing at a time, focusing on effectiveness and efficiency. On the contrary, individuals with poly-chronic time values tend to do various tasks at a time and emphasize participation rather than task performance and adherence for time table.

Secondly, low-context communication refers to patterns of communication that use explicit verbal message whereas high-context communication depends on patterns of communication that depend heavily on context, social roles and nonverbal channels. Lastly, concerning personal space, Hall (1976) identified four uses of personal space: (1) intimate distance (a suitable distance for love making or whispering), (2) personal distance (a suitable distance for casual conversations), (3) social distance (a suitable distance for formal business interaction), and (4) public distance (a suitable distance for public speaking such as lecture or performances). He argues that an individual's perception of appropriateness of distance differs across cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck are the other anthropologists who developed cultural orientation framework (COF) for evaluation of cultural differences (see Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). The authors argue that every culture finds solutions for problems on five universal questions or orientations: (1) what is human nature (human nature orientations)? (2) What is the relationship between humans and nature (person-nature orientation)? (3) What is the relationship between humans (relational orientation)? (4) What is the preferred form of activity (activity orientation)? and (5) what is the orientation towards time (time orientation)? Regarding human nature orientations, the range of potential answers are: basically evil, mixture of good and evil and basically bad. The ranges of potential solution for person-nature orientation are: people subject to nature, people in harmony with nature and people the master of nature. With respect to relational orientations, cultural groups are to make a choice among authoritarian, group-oriented and individualistic.

Being, being-in-becoming and doing are potential options for the question of what activities are preferred. The doing solution stands for achievement-oriented activities; the being solution means living with emotional vitality and being-in-becoming means living with an emphasis on spiritual renewal and connection (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Concerning time orientation, possible solutions comprise of: past oriented, present oriented and future oriented. Every culture must respond to these universal questions but their preferred solutions vary across cultures. This approach has been applied to intercultural interactions in business contexts; however, it is suggested that it has not been in tune with heterogeneous and dynamic nature of many national or ethno-linguistic cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

As discussed above, various cultural frameworks or cultural variability from various disciplines have been developed to discuss cultural differences in intercultural communication. However, only a few of them (e.g. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Hall, 1976; Hoftsede, 1980, 2001) are more popular and widely cited in the literature linking culture and communication. As most of them assume cultures are homogenous and static, they seldom consider individual differences within cultural groups and seldom consider the dynamic nature of culture. It is important to remember that *culture hides more than it reveals* and the danger of committing ecological fallacies in an attempt to produce universal measure to compare cultures. There are of course regularities across cultures but they dialectically exist with cultural variability. The study of intercultural communication should be founded on a richer investigation into the deep structure of culture rather than a simple and surface comparison based on the cultural variability models often from the *etic* perspective. To recap, this empirical study on cultural differences in communication recognizes culture as homogenous-heterogeneous, static-dynamic and universal-variable concept.

The nature of communication: Due to its complex and ubiquitous nature, communication is difficult to define. As with the case of culture, hundreds of definitions of communication have been published in communication and related literatures. These definitions diverge with variation depending on individual scholarly interests and disciplinary orientation. Dance (1970) listed 98 definitions of communication and later Dance & Larson (1976) compiled a record of more than 125 definitions of the term. Since these publications, a number of definitions and conceptualization of

the term have been proposed but there is no commonly acceptable definition of communication (Neuliep, 2009; Samovar & Porter, 2001). The diversity of the definitions can be attributed to the nature of the construct and disciplinary orientations of scholars conceptualizing the term. Nevertheless, most communication scientists agree on certain assumptions and characteristics of communication and the current model is in agreement with the following assumptions about communication.

Assumption 1: Communication is a symbolic process. It involves the use of symbols that carry messages to the audience who could agree or not with the meaning (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Neuliep, 2009). A symbol is something that stands for something else. All communication messages are made up of two kinds of symbols: verbal symbols and nonverbal symbols. Through these symbols, meaning is shared and negotiated between communicators. That means communication occurs when individuals attribute meaning to the symbols signaled to them. The meaning attached to the symbols in intercultural context is the function of individuals' cultures, ethnic groups, families or own unique experiences (Gudykust & Kim, 2003). The association between symbols and their referent is arbitrary and varies from culture to culture. In principle, culture creates agreement among members regarding common meaning of symbols. This does not necessary mean that all members of a culture share a common meaning for every symbol rather it means that there is a substantial amount of consensus among them. As a result, members of a given culture can communicate with relatively better understanding on most topics. It is this characteristic of communication that makes intercultural communication more problematic.

Assumption 2: Communication involves transmitting messages and creation/negotiation of meaning. Using appropriate verbal and nonverbal symbols, individuals transmit messages to their audience who interpret the messages. This interpretation can be influenced by individuals' personal and cultural values. As a result, the meaning that individuals assign to stimuli can be uniquely of their own. No two individuals can assign same meaning to a particular event, object, or message. Messages can be transmitted from one individual to the other but meanings cannot be (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Interestingly, meaning is created and negotiated in the process of interaction. The meaning seized by the audience would not exactly be the same as the message

sent. In communication, as senders and receivers switch roles, transmission and interpretation of message are not static activities. A number of factors such as channel of communication, situation and individuals involved in the process can influence the degree to which individuals interpret messages. Through this process, individuals modify themselves and negotiate a new meaning to the original message they presented. In sum, effectiveness in this complex human experience depends on cultural and personal values that influence transmitting and interpreting messages which eventually result in creation and negotiation of meaning in the interactive process.

Assumption 3: Communication is a dynamic and interactive process. The term *process* describes the ongoing and ever-changing nature of human communication. Communication has no beginning, no ending, and is continuously moving forward. It is incorrect to think of communication as static; it is rather, like time and existence, in a continuous process. When individuals speak of communication as having *taken place*, they are speaking symbolically of the arbitrary, seemingly freezing of the process. As a dynamic process, communication is flexible, adaptive, fluid and impossible to replicate (Neuliep, 2009). Every communication is unique even though same individuals communicate same message using a similar channel in a similar setting. It is also an interactive process for the fact that communication happens between two or more people interacting by exchanging symbols and negotiating meanings.

Whether or not individuals are actually talking in a communication situation, they are actively involved in sending and receiving messages. They are participating continuously and simultaneously in a communication which characterizes itself as a transactional process. Added to these, communication has past, present, and future implications. Previous intercultural experiences have impacts on present and future interaction. Finally, switching social roles in various communicative scenes can also complicate the dynamic nature of communication. Defined by society and affected by individual relationships, roles control everything from word choice to body language. Interestingly, they do not always stay static in a relationship. As a result communication changes to meet role expectations and relationship between communicators.

Assumption 4: Communication is a systematic process involving several components. This assumption confirms that communication does not occur in a vacuum rather it involves an organized functioning system and components. There are two basic systems that operate in any human communication: elements inside the individual, the internal system, and elements outside the individual, the external system. The internal system is composed of all those elements that make up a unique individual such as inner psychology and cognition. The external system is composed of contextual elements outside the individual such as immediate interacting environment and physical and social factors surrounding the communicators. Individuals blend these two systems in their attempt to make sense of their communication. The blend of these two systems is made up of various components namely: sender-receiver, message, channel, setting and noise.

Communicators play the role of both sender and receiver. Communication channel takes various forms such as face-to-face and mediated. Message is the symbol communicators bring to the communication arena. The setting refers to contextual factors surrounding the scene of communication. This includes cultural context (the largest inclusive system affecting communicators) and immediate physical environment (such as physical and social surrounding). The last component, noise, stands for any form of destruction to the communication process that could result from internal noise (e.g. personal health conditions and personality), external noise (e.g. bad weather or an uneasy environment) and semantic noise (a word implying different meaning to different people). For effective communication, communicators should blend the two systems, play their roles appropriately and recognize the impact of all the components of the system.

Assumption 5: Intention is not a necessary condition for communication. Most communications have intentions but they could be explicit or implied. However, individuals can communicate positive or aversive messages without their intentions. Some unpleasant or important communication happens without the intention or the aim of the sender. This means that behavior that was not meant to be communicated could be interpreted by the audience and this unintentional act could influence the message communicated. In such situations, people

communicate messages affected by their emotions or unexamined habits. A typical example of this could be body language that conveys a different message to the receiver. This is because individuals' communicative behaviors could be based on habits and emotions rather than intentions (Triandis, 1977). They often react to others on a merely emotional basis or unconsciously/subconsciously acquired habits of communication without being aware of the possible messages communicated. Even though it is highly effective to start communication with intentions, individuals should be aware of unintended messages communicated to their audience.

The model and its analytical tools

Based on the theoretical positions discussed so far and the empirical evidences discovered in the course of the study, the following model with six analytical tools was developed to describe intercultural communication in higher educational context. The components whose sum frames the model comprises of: (1) intercultural competence, (2) intercultural communication styles (in short communication styles), (3) ethnic/cultural identity salience, (4) intercultural conflict resolution styles (in short conflict styles), (5) power relations, and (6) contexts. These tools are represented in Figure 3.1. Following this pictorial presentation of the model, descriptions of the major components are provided. In the discussions, recaps of the tools from varied theoretical perspectives are elaborated before the concepts are explained as they are viewed in this model. Below; however, only major conceptual issues in the model and its components are overviewed. The preceding figure illustrates the proposed model of intercultural communication in higher education context.

Figure 3.1: An integrative model to intercultural communication in context
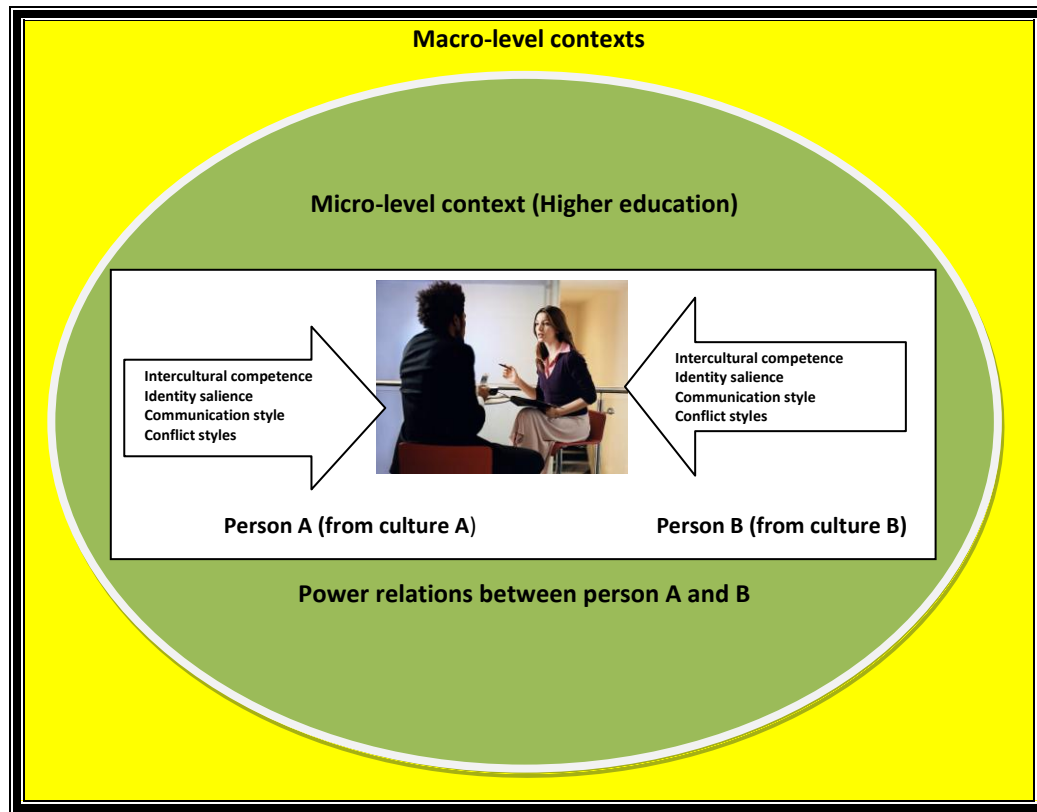
As graphically illustrated in the figure above, intercultural communication is an interactive process that involves individuals from two or more cultures. The key components of the model are located internal and external to the communicators. Irrespective of their locus, the components come to play in the process of symbol exchange and meaning negotiation. Among the elements external to the individuals (in this case Person A and Person B) is context. It is the interactive frame in which communication takes place. There are two levels of context: macro-level and micro-level. The macro-level contexts are the outermost territory that remotely influences interaction. The most popular contexts at this level include: historical contexts, socio-political contexts, economic context and geopolitical contexts. The second level, micro-level context, is the immediate institutional context in which communicators work, study or reside.

For instance, in the current study higher education or academia is the micro-context that projects the nature of academic interaction and institutional arrangement. Power relation is the second factor external to individuals in interactional scene. It refers to authorities' individuals own as a

result of their position in an institution, influences they have acquired as a result of their membership of a particular group or the social role they play. All individuals own particular power as related to each other. On the other hand, among the components internal to the individuals' intercultural competence plays a pivotal role in the process. As a multitude of acquired abilities to communicate effectively and appropriately, intercultural competence unfolds itself when individuals are engaged in communication. Individuals hold different level of competence that changes overtime.

Similarly, identity salience (ethnic and cultural) are located within individuals but are brought to interaction influenced by various causes. Variation in the magnitude of identity salience would impact interaction in a number of ways. As identities play a game changing role, intercultural communication is perceived as a process that involves identity negotiation. Added to these, communication styles and conflict styles make up part of the analytical tools located within individuals. Communication styles preferred by individuals could vary across cultures as do conflict resolution styles which are vital in troubleshooting intercultural misunderstanding and managing conflicts. As illustrated in the figure above, the model is integrative in a way that these analytical tools are interactive and interrelated. The process involves exchange of symbols, identity negotiation and creating and sharing meanings. All components of the model are elaborated below.

Intercultural competence: The concept of intercultural communication competence (in short intercultural competence) has been investigated in language pedagogy and communication science. In the former, the focus of intercultural competence (ICC) takes us back to the earlier notion of communicative competence (e.g. Widdowson, 1979; Bachman & Palmer, 1982; Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Nunan 1991). Communicative Language Competence Development Model was the most popular approach to second/foreign language learning since 1970s. As discussed in a number of these sources, communicative competence is meant to include grammatical, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies individuals need to communicate in a second/foreign language. However, language specialists have been convinced that second/foreign language learning without awareness to cultural dimensions in

language use is incomplete (Ruben, 1976; Lund, 1996; Byram, 1999; Bennett, 1993; Ellis, 2005; Fantini 2005). Language educators have, therefore, included intercultural competence in their investigation of second/foreign language teaching and research. The move from communicative competence to intercultural competence has introduced a number of models and assessment tools in the field of language pedagogy. Most of the studies adopted the social science perspective in their conceptualization and assessment of the construct.

On the other hand, very recently a major focus on intercultural competence has also emerged out of research and publications from communication studies (e.g. Chen & Starosta, 1996; Wiseman, 2001, 2002; Collier, 1998; Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Neuliep, 2009). This interest was motivated by perceived cross-cultural communication problems that adversely affect communication between people from different cultures. Most of the studies of ICC from this research tradition assume the social science approach and attempted to list the key components of the construct. On the contrary, few of the available models (e.g. Collier, 1998, 2005) took the interpretive approach/critical approach to contextualize intercultural competence with respect to contextual factors. However, it is obvious that most studies from the communication science tradition seldom focus on intercultural competence as they emphasize the communicative component of intercultural communication.

In the course of its evolution, intercultural competence has been used synonymously with a number of terms and encompasses a variety of abilities. Though they are often used interchangeably, each alternative implies additional nuances. The most cited synonyms of the term include: cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural competence, multiculturalism, cultural sensitivity, ethno-relativity, international competence, biculturalism, global competence, and cross-cultural adaptation. For example, cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural competence often imply holding a comparative perspective than an interactive orientation. Global competence and international competence refer to the abilities individuals need to interact in a global arena and are often associated with general human behavior. Added to these, biculturalism or multiculturalism is often related to diversity and cultural pluralism rather than the communicative skills individuals need to interact in an intercultural environment. Cross-cultural adaptation

contextualizes itself as abilities individuals need to adapt to a host culture. Intercultural sensitivity is the ability to differentiate and experience relevant cultural differences whereas intercultural competence is the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways (Hammer, Bennet & Wiseman, 2003)

Let us see the definitions and components of ICC proposed by scholars taking essentialist or the social science perspective. To begin with, Ruben (1976) identified seven dimensions of ICC: display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, self-oriented role behavior, interaction management and tolerance for ambiguity. Based on these elements Ruben (1976) developed the *Intercultural Behavioral Assessment Indices (IBAI)* for the measurement of ICC. To him, ICC consists of the ability to function in a manner that is perceived to be relatively consistent with the needs, capacities, goals, and expectations of individuals in a given environment while satisfying all of these. Following this, Spizberg & Cupach (1984) argued that there are three necessary conditions (i.e. knowledge, skills and motivations) that must exist to consciously and consistently be competent in intercultural communication. This component model of competence explains knowledge as an individual's awareness about what is appropriate in communicating with individuals from other cultures and motivation stands for the desire individuals possess to engage themselves in intercultural interaction. Skills, on the other hand, refer to the actual communicative performance.

Extending this view, Byram (1997) discusses the components of ICC as: knowledge, skills and attitudes. Later he elaborated that ICC includes knowledge, attitudes, interpretation and relating skills, discovery and interaction skills and critical awareness of culture and political education (Byram, 2000). To him, knowledge refers to knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor country. This is about having knowledge of social processes and knowledge about self and other people. Skills of interpreting, discovering interaction and critical cultural awareness are important in addition to holding positive attitudes about self and others. In other words, intercultural competence involves the acquisition of particular skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and ways of looking upon the world. Later, Byram and associates refined the earlier version of intercultural competence to include six dimensions:

tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness and empathy.

Added to these conceptualizations of ICC, Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)* presents six stages of intercultural development which can be grouped into two: ethno-centric stages (individual's own culture is the central worldview) and ethno-relative stages (individual's own culture is one of many equally valid worldviews). The former stages include denial, defense, and minimization arranged in developmental order. Denial, as the first stage, means being comfortable with own culture and unmotivated to a new culture or being afraid of cultural differences. The second stage, defense against differences, projects awareness of cultural differences but holding an incomplete understanding or strong negative feelings about them whereas minimization refers to recognition of cultural differences but viewing them as cosmetic work and capitalizing on the notion that all human beings are essentially the same.

The next stages comprise of acceptance, adaptation and integration. The acceptance stage is about being aware of and appreciative of cultural differences in behavior and action. Individuals at this stage begin to interpret phenomena in context and are interested in other cultures. The second ethno-relative stage, adaptation, represents the ability to consciously shift perspectives into alternative cultural worldviews and act in culturally appropriate ways. Integration, as the final stage of intercultural development, refers to the abilities individuals require to use multiple cultural frames of reference in evaluating phenomena as a manifestation of internalized multicultural frames of reference. According to DMIS, with each successive stage individuals acquire a greater ability to understand and own a more positive experience of cultural differences.

Finally, Fantini (2001, 2005) defines ICC as a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself. He identified components of ICC as: a variety of traits/characteristics, three areas or domains, four dimensions, host language proficiency, and varying levels of attainment throughout a longitudinal and developmental process. The most cited traits/characteristics of intercultural communicators are: flexibility, humor, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance

for ambiguity and suspending judgments (Fantini, 2005). He contends that ICC involves abilities in: establishing and maintaining relationships, communicate with minimal loss or distortion and collaborate in order to accomplish a task of mutual interest. Similar to other models (e.g. Byram, 1997; Spizberg & Cupach, 1984; Risager, 2007), Fantini states that ICC comprises of four major dimensions which include knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness. However, unlike the others, Fantini (2005) stresses that awareness is central to intercultural development and ICC abilities are reinforced through reflections and introspection. He also argues that proficiency in the host language enhances ICC development. Fantini (2005, 2006) characterizes ICC as a developmental process with occasional moments of stagnation and even regression.

As discussed above, some of the models seek to explain the types of motivations and abilities individuals need to function in culturally diverse settings and others on the processes individuals undergo in developing the needed motivation and abilities. Others emphasize an individual's adaptation and development when confronted with a new culture. Still others focus on personal traits/ characteristics or linguistic competence of communicators. It can be argued that most of them seldom provide a comprehensive perspective to ICC. However, Fantini (2005, 2006) came up with the most comprehensive and holistic perspective to conceptualizing and measuring ICC. The definition of ICC in this model matches the conceptualization and measurement advocated by Fantini's conceptualizations. From the various intercultural assessment tools examined, none is based on as broad conceptualization as this. However, unlike Fantini (2005, 2006) the current study follows a different approach and methodological procedures in recognition of the role of context in shaping the individuals' perception. There have also been differences regarding the contents of the specific components of intercultural competence as the result of the dictation of the ethnographic findings of the current study.

In agreement with the conceptual framework of the study and the findings regarding the construct, intercultural competence can be defined in the current study as a multitude of abilities acquired or developmentally learned to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from other culture. It is not a single ability but a complex of multilayered cognitive, linguistic, cultural and communicative abilities that manifest in interactive performance. ICC is an aggregate of abilities

acquired unconsciously or learned consciously during intercultural experiences or through training. Intercultural communication performance and competence are inseparable as the former is the manifestation of the latter. ICC is a lifelong learning or a developmental move towards democratic behavior, multiculturalism and ethno-relativism. Individuals with higher intercultural competence demonstrate multiple worldviews that help them act appropriately in multicultural and multilingual interactive environment. They are culturally sensitive and understand the perspective of others.

According to IMICC, the key components of ICC comprises of: intercultural competency, personal qualities, proficiency in the host language and intercultural areas. Intercultural competency refers to cognitive, psychomotor and affective manifestations of these abilities. These include knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness. Intercultural knowledge refers to an individual's knowledge of cultural and intercultural interaction which includes knowledge of history, politics and social norms and values of one's own and others' cultures. It is about the individual's understanding of contextual and cultural values in acting and managing communication in a diverse interactive environment. Intercultural attitudes stand for individuals' feelings and motivation about intercultural communication and willingness to interact with people from other cultures or knowledge system. On other hand, intercultural skills are the actual performance or act of individuals to demonstrate effective and efficient communication with people from other culture.

The last competency, intercultural awareness, refers to an individual's ability to be sensitive to other's culture; interpret other's cultural values and reflect on own behavior. Awareness differs from knowledge in that it is comparative and reflective abilities individuals demonstrate regarding their own and other's culture. It ultimately assists to spell out what is deepest and most relevant to one's identity. Personal characteristics/qualities refer to personality traits that are appropriate for effective intercultural interactions. These could be innate personal qualities or acquired in life that are related to one's cultural and situational context and which form part of an individual's intrinsic personality. These qualities can be developed or modified through training or educational efforts.

Proficiency in the host language is another important aspect of ICC. The ability to communicate in the host language greatly enhances ICC development in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Grappling with another language confronts how one perceives, conceptualizes, and expresses oneself; and, in the process, fosters the development of alternative communication strategies on someone else's terms. The other ability represented in the construct is intercultural areas which involve abilities in three areas. These are: the ability to establish and maintain good relationships, the ability to communicate with minimal loss or distortion and the ability to collaborate in order to accomplish a task for mutual interest. To sum up, intercultural competence is defined as a multitude of abilities which encompass intercultural competency, personal characteristics, proficiency in host language and abilities to communicate and make relationships or work with individuals from other cultures.

Communication styles: This is the other important variable in the description of intercultural behavior. It refers to the way individuals use verbal and body language in their interaction with others. In other words, it is the preferred way in which individuals interact with one another (Samovar & Porter, 2001). This involves use of verbal language that includes listening and speaking, and thinking skills such as critical thinking, interpretations and reflections. In face-to-face intercultural interaction, individuals make use of tone, gesture and other non-verbal clues to support their views and positions. The term can also be defined as the tonal coloring, meta-message that contextualizes how listeners are expected to receive and interpret verbal message (Martin & Nakayama, 2007: 220). Numerous publications (e.g. Hall, 1976; Ting-Toomey, 1985; Okabe, 1983; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008) discuss variability in communication styles among individuals from diverse cultures. The most important and most studied distinctions are: high-low context styles, direct-indirect styles, elaborated-understated styles and formal-informal styles.

High-low context styles dimension is one of the most known dimensions of communication styles in the field of intercultural communication proposed by Edward Hall. To Hall (1976), human interactions can be divided into high-context and low-context communication systems. High-context emphasizes how intention or message can be communicated through contexts (such as

social roles or positions) and non-verbal clues (e.g. tone, gesture and silence). The latter focuses on how intensions or messages are expressed through overt verbal message. High-context communication is one in which most of the message is embedded in the context and/or internalized in the individual leaving little information in the verbal message (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). This type of communication style depends on understanding messages without dependence on verbal symbols.

On the contrary, low-context communication involves explicit communication in which messages are fully represented in the verbal code and depends largely on overt verbal communication. As summarized by Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005), high-context communicators favor indirect verbal style, understanding non-verbal clues and valuing the significance of silence but low-context communicators prefer direct verbal style, animated conversation tone and informal verbal treatment and outspokenness. Most intercultural studies identify western cultures (e.g. German, English and American) tending towards low-context style but Arabic and Asian (e.g. Japan, China and South Korea) tending towards status- based high-context style. It is therefore important to notice the cultural variability among individuals in their choice of communication styles and their impact on their intercultural communication effectiveness.

Direct-indirect styles stand for the degree to which individuals reveal their messages using overt verbal codes and downplay high-context communication. This continuum reflects the extent to which culture impacts choices. It also shows differences among communicators in how they reveal their intensions through tone of voice and straightforwardness of the content of the message. A direct communication style, therefore, demonstrates the speaker's true intentions and desires explicitly but an indirect style is designed to obscure the speaker's true intensions and desires (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Samovar & Porter, 2001; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). In a direct communication style, verbal messages reveal the communicator's intent with clarity and are enunciated with appropriate tone of voice. On the contrary, an indirect communication style obscures the communicator's intensions and is carried out with a softer tone (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

As most sources report, Americans prefer direct communication styles which can be clear and straightforward but Asians (e.g Koreans) prefer indirect styles as other factors such as keeping harmony of relationship or politeness are more important than clarity (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Samovar & Porter, 2001; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Many English and German statements/proverbs reveal preference for direct communication style. These include: *Do not go beat the bush, get to the point*, *Sagen Sie Ja oder nein* (say yes or no*), in black and white*, etc. On the contrary, a lot of Amharic statements/ proverbs (e.g *be lefalefu baf yitefu* (disclosure threaten the speaker) and kaf *yeweta afaf* (once it is said out loud, it is impossible to undo it) explain the merits of indirectness.

Elaborated-understated style is associated with a balance given to outspokenness and silence. In other words, it is about the amount of talk that individuals' value and their attitude towards silence (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008). Elaborated communication style involves the extended and rich use of expressive verbal code but understated communication style values brief, simple assertions and the excessive use of silence. The concept of silence plays a central role in this dimension and could communicate different messages to individuals across cultures. For example, Hall (1983) argues that silence serves an important communication device among Asian and Native American communication behavior. In most of these, cultures a prolonged pause could communicate roles (superior /inferior) but in western culture it could be viewed as unnecessary stops. Even though refraining from speaking could have different meaning in different cultures, in most Ethiopian cultures, for example, it communicates politeness, respect and socially acceptable conduct. A number of Amharic proverbs/ statements such as *zim bale af zinb aygebam* (a quite man can safely avoid unforeseen/unexpected disagreement or conflicts) and *zimta werq new* (silence is golden) reflect the fortune of silence.

Self-disclosure is also another vital element in this dimension. This refers to individuals' willingness to reveal something about them and the willingness to pay attention to the other person's feedback about them (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). It includes breadth (the number of topics an individual is willing to share with others) and depth (the level of intimacy or emotional vulnerability individuals are willing to reveal in a conversation). Communication styles vary across openness

with respect to these dimensions (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Elaborated style tends to value self-disclosure and use of expressive language whereas understated style credits silence and weak use of self-disclosure.

Formal-informal styles, on the other hand, are the degree of formality one is expected to demonstrate in the communication act. Formal style emphasizes the significance of upholding status-based and role-based interactions and high power distance; however, informal style focuses on the significance of informality, casualty, and role suspension in communication (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Cultural differences regarding this dimension can cause serious problems at interpersonal or organizational levels. For example, in often known informal communication styles in American education, teachers could prefer to be called by their first names but in Egypt, Iran and Turkey teacher-student relationship is extremely formal and demands a formal communication style (Samovar & Porter, 2001). In cultures that prefer formal communication styles, interaction capitalizes social roles and hierarchical-based interaction. On the contrary, cultures that value informal communication styles accentuate horizontal interaction and personal qualities in the process. In other words, the distinction rests on the choice between valuing either individual qualities (person- oriented) or his/her social role/ status (status-oriented). For example, some studies report that the Japanese value formal style; however, Americans prefer informal style (e.g. Okabe, 1983).

It is common to find cross-cultural communication publications comparing and contrasting communication styles preferred by individuals from various cultures. However, it is wise to see communication styles dialectically: as both culturally embedded and individually determined. Individuals speaking a similar language and coming from a similar culture could vary in their preference of communication styles. Researchers need to avoid stereotyping referring to specific cultural groups for the fact that there are individual differences across cultures as a result of personal values. Added to this, it is important to recognize communication styles as cultural and contextual. No group uses a particular communication style all the time (Martin & Nakayama, 2008: 139). For example, formal-informal style is affected by the context of communication. Communication in a formal classroom environment may demand more of a formal style than

communication between friends at home. Effective intercultural communication depends on recognition of cultural variability regarding individuals' preference of communication styles and avoidance of unexamined stereotyping in the same. Therefore, unfamiliarity with cultural differences in communication style could result in intercultural misunderstanding and is sometimes responsible for many problems that arise as a result.

Ethnic/cultural identity salience: Identities have a profound impact on intercultural communication processes. Given the multiple identities individuals project and negotiate in their everyday relations, it becomes clear how their identities and those of others make intercultural communication a challenging experience. Individuals develop their identities through interaction with others and through this process they gain meanings, values, norms and styles of communication (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Through interaction with family, friends and significant others, individuals discover themselves and form their identities. Through communication, they communicate their identities to others. This association between identity and communication places the role of identity at the heart of intercultural studies. Therefore, it is important to define identity, describe its nature, types, formation, development and place in intercultural communication.

Various theories of identity have documented a range of definitions. To the social science perspective, identity is created by self by relating to others but the interpretive perspective claim that identity is formed through communication with others and lastly the critical perspective contends that identity is shaped through social and historical forces (Martin Nakayama, 2007). The term identity is used in this model as a reflective self perception we own, negotiate, reinforce and maintain through interaction with others and is characterized as: dynamic-static and personal-cultural. Much of the research on identities have been conducted within the framework of social identity as conceptualized by social psychologists (e.g, Lewin, 1948; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stryker, 1980) and acculturation theoriests (e.g, Berry et. al, 1989). Even though it can be categorized in various forms, identity can be seen from two fundamental levels: personal and social/collective.

Personal identity includes any distinctive attributes that are associated with individualized self in comparison to those of others but social/collective identity includes membership to an identifiable group such as social class, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and the like (Martin and Nakayama, 2007; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The concern of individuals with respect to these identities varies among cultures. For instance, individuals from collective cultures are highly concerned with social-based identity but those from individualistic cultures may be highly conscious of their personal identity. In addition to their personal identity, individuals can identify with multiple social or collective identities such as gender identity, ethnic identity, national identity, racial identity and cultural identity. These social identities develop through interaction with others and often change over time. A number of theories of identity development confirm that individuals go through a developmental process often from unexamined to integration/ resolution stages (see Phinney, 1989; Hardiman, 1994, 2003). They go through the developmental stages with varying length of time.

Cultural identity and ethnic identity play significant roles in intercultural communication especially in collective cultures (e.g. Kim, 1994; Ting-Toomey, 1993; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Hechts, 1993; Cupach & Imahori, 1993). They are important concepts in the discussion about culture, communication and intercultural communication. Numerous studies have focused on the influence of communicative process on ethnic identity formation and negotiation (e.g. Ting-Toomey, 1993; Hecht, 1993) but others have emphasized the issue of cultural identity (Collier &Thomas, 1988; Collier, 2005; Jensen, 1998). These are important social identities that influence individuals' view of themselves (Phinney, 1992).   These identities are related to communication process individuals are engaged in with members of other ethnic groups and their expectation for intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2001). However related, these identities are separate identities and have independent influences on individual's attitude, values, and behavior. Thus, it is vial to hold clear definitions of these social identities.

It is difficult to define cultural identity as its conceptualization has been fluid. Nationality, ethnicity or other factors could be sources or bases for conceptualizing the term. Here, cultural identity can be defined as the emotional significance that individuals attach to their sense of belongingness or

affiliation with the larger culture or nation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). In multiethnic national states, there are ethnic cultures and national culture as well in which ethnic identity and cultural identity can be associated with the cultures respectively. To elaborate this, we can refer to Ethiopian cultural identity as a more inclusive kind of social identity than ethnic cultural identities such as Amhara, Oromo and Somali in Ethiopia. Cultural identity is made up of value contents and cultural identity salience (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The former refers to the expectations individuals possess in their mindset which can be conceptualize with respect to value dimensions guiding individuals' behavior; however, the latter stands for the strength of attachment individuals hold with the larger cultural framework. Most studies evaluate intercultural communication by focusing either on value content (from cultural variability perspectives) and identity salience (how important identities are). Cultural identities, therefore, vary along with cultural variability and salience (Collier & Thomas, 1988).

On the other hand, ethnic identity is defined as a multidimensional construct that includes issues of group membership, self-image, ethnic affiliation and in-group and intergroup attitudes (Ting-Toomey et.al, 2000; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Unlike some publications that equate national/cultural identity with ethnic identity (e.g Hoftsede, 1999), ethnic identity is defined here as predominately a matter of membership to a particular ethnic group in a homogenous or a heterogeneous national state. In other words, it is part of an individual's self-concept that derives from their knowledge of membership in an ethnic group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981). Ethnic identity is related to the association with a particular ethnic culture or ethnicity. Thus, ethnic identity in the current work refers to how individuals conceptualize themselves as members of ethnic groups in Ethiopia (i.e. Amhara, Oromo, Tigre, etc). However, it is obvious that ethnic taxonomy in Ethiopia is difficult because people categorized on the basis of one criterion, such as mother tongue or full name, may be divided on the basis of another such as ethnicity.

Concerning variability, ethnic identity as well varies across ethnic value contents and ethnic identity salience. The first refers to the ethnic values that individuals subscribe to and practice but the second refers to the degree of importance of ethnic identity to individuals. Some researchers

report significant differences in identity salience because of ethnic background. For example, researches show that African Americans have a stronger ethnic identity and a weaker cultural identity but on contrary European Americans have a weaker ethnic identity and stronger cultural identity (Ting-Toomey et.al, 2000).

Intercultural conflict resolution styles: Conflict is an unavoidable human activity that affects communication. Like any other intercultural experiences, it takes various forms such as interpersonal, ethnic, political or even international. For instance, conflict between two individuals can be termed as interpersonal conflict and if it is at the societal level, it is known as political conflict. Conflict between countries can be called international conflict. However, it is important to define intercultural conflict as the concept has gained considerable attention in intercultural literature despite the conceptual noise associated with it. Literary, intercultural conflict can be conceived as a conflict between two or more cultural groups. Much of the research in intercultural conflicts comes from few popular sources (e.g. Kim, 1989; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey et.al, 2000; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). These authors defined it as the experience of emotional frustration or mismatched expectations between individuals from different cultures who perceive incompatibility between their goals, values, communicative behavior and outcomes of intercultural dialogue. Consistent with this characterization, Hocker & Wilmot (2000) cited in Martin & Nakayama (2008: 211) defines intercultural conflict as involving perceived or real incompatibility of goals, values, expectations, processes or outcomes between two or more individuals or groups.

In general, intercultural conflict comes from misinterpretation of someone else's behavior, or perceived incompatibilities in attributions regarding other's behavior. These perceptual incompatibilities and cultural dimensions become key factors in how conflict is perceived, managed and resolved (Neuliep, 2009). There are a number of unique characteristics that make intercultural conflicts different from other kinds of conflicts. As summarized by Martin & Nakayama (2008), the major aspects include: (1) notions that intercultural conflicts are more ambiguous than intra-cultural conflicts, (2) language may sometimes leads to intercultural conflict, and (3) intercultural conflicts are characterized by contradictory conflict styles. Since it involves people from different

cultures, intercultural conflicts are more difficult than interpersonal conflicts between people from a homogenous culture. Even though language is an important tool to deal with conflicts, weak language ability or different communication styles can yield conflicts. Variation in use of conflict styles can also result in incompatible conflict management strategies.

Added to these characteristics, Ting-Toomey (1999) listed five major features of intercultural conflicts. The list comprises of: 1) conflicts involve intercultural perceptions holding ethnocentrism, stereotyping and attributions, (2) conflicts are interactional which are verbal and nonverbal, (3) conflicts involve interdependence that result in consequences, (4) conflicts involve interest and goals, and (5) conflicts involve protection of intergroup images. More specifically, intercultural conflict can be an experience of a minimum of two cultural parties over content, identity, communicative and procedural issues. Interestingly, conflicts are often perceived differently by individuals. With respect to this, there are two orientations to conflict: conflict as opportunity and conflict as destructive (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). The first orientation is usually based on the assumptions that conflict is an inevitable and normal human experience. It thus encourages direct dialogue; problems can be addressed through negotiation and it could also be a lesson for averting a more destructive conflict in the future. The latter view takes a skeptic orientation and assumes that conflict is violent and against peace; confrontations are often destructive; and disputants should be corrected as change risks the current status quo. Generally, conflict is not necessarily a positive or negative phenomenon. However, it is the conflict management style that may lead to unpleasant or productive consequences.

Few theories of intercultural conflict have dominated the literature, namely, Y.Y. Kim's (1989) *Model of Intercultural Conflict* and Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Face-negotiation Theory*. Kim contends that conflicts occur at three interdependent and related contextual levels: macro-level, intermediary-level and micro-level. Kim characterizes the macro-level represented in the most external circle including history of subjugations, an ideology of structural subjugation and minority group strength. The second level stands for forces in actual location of conflict such as segregation, intergroup salience and status discrepancy. The micro-level factors, on the other hand, refer to individual level factors such as communicators' attitudes, biases, frustration and divergent

behaviors. To this model, intercultural conflicts are the products of these interrelated contextual factors. Therefore, managing intercultural conflict demands an investigation and productive resolution of these problems.

On the other hand, to Ting-Toomey intercultural conflict is a face-negotiation process whereby individuals engaged in conflict perceive that their situated faces are threatened or questioned (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Face is a person's sense of favorable self-worth or self-image experience during the communicative process (Neuliep, 2009). Ting-Toomey (1988, 2003, 2005) and Ting-Toomey & Kurogi (1998) identified three types of faces, namely, self-face (concern for own image), other-face (concern for other's image), and mutual-face (concern for both parties' mutual images and the relationship). To her, one's face can be preserved, damaged or repaired in interactions. Cultural variability in face saving strategies has been studied. For instance, individuals from collective cultures use other-oriented face saving strategies but those from an individualistic culture prefer more self-oriented face saving strategies.

The ways in which individuals react to conflict may be influenced by cultural variability and this influence the way they handle and resolve intercultural conflicts. Many authors have developed various classifications of intercultural conflict resolution styles (in short conflict styles). Intercultural conflict styles refer to patterned and nonverbal responses to conflict in a variety of frustrating conflict situations (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). However, in terms of understanding specific conflict styles, Rahim's (1983, 1992) conceptualization of conflict styles are employed in this study. For example, Rahim (1992) bases his classification of conflict styles on two conceptual dimensions of concerns for self and others. His conflict model is compatible with Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) self-face and other-face dimensions proposed in her *Face-negotiation Theory*. Therefore, five specific styles of managing conflicts have been documented in the literature (see Rahim, 1986; Rahim & Magner, 1995; Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Neuliep 2009). These intercultural conflict resolution styles are: dominating, avoiding obliging, compromising and integrating. A number of demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity and cultural variability are found to result in variation in conflict styles across cultures.

First, dominating conflict style is a controlling/ competitive style that reflects high concern for self and low concern for other person. This style is characterized by aggressive, defensive, and controlling to intimidating conflict tactics (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Dominating style is identified as having a win-lose orientation and forceful verbalization which in some cases could be counterproductive (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Individuals using this style employ authority, expertise or rank to win conflict and achieve their goals at the expense of others' interest. Second, avoiding conflict style reflects dodging the conflict topic, party or situation altogether and include behaviors ranging from gossiping over the topic and denying the existence of the conflict (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). This style is known for a low concern for self and the other person because it ignores both self-face and other-face needs. Third, obliging conflict style is accommodative in a sense that it is characterized by a concern for the other-face or other persons' conflict interest above and beyond their own conflict position. They prefer to satisfy the conflict need of the other person before satisfying their needs. Such individuals value their relationship with the person as more important than their personal conflict goal (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

The fourth style, integrating refers to high concern for both self and the other person and is often characterized by an open and direct approach to arrive at a resolution accepted by both individuals in a conflict scene. Using an integrative approach, individuals use non-evaluative descriptive messages, qualifying statements and mutual interest clarifying questions to seek common ground solutions (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005: 273). This collaborative style involves high concern for self and the other person in conflict. Even though it is the most time consuming style among the five conflict styles (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 1993), it is seen as effective in most conflict situations (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). This style is collaborative, objective, and creative and is able to recognize feelings. Last, compromising is characterized by a give-and-take concession and reaches a common or midway resolution. In other words, a person who balances both self-face and other-face takes a compromising style (Neuliep, 2009). This moderate style involves sharing and exchanging information in which individuals find a mutually acceptable win-win solution. In using this style, individuals tend to employ fairness appeals, trade-off suggestions and quick fixes (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). In some cases, this style is more effective than the integrating style because people feel forced to give up what they value.

Regarding cultural variability, *Face-negotiation Theory* (see Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) can better assist us to understand cultural variations in intercultural conflict resolution styles. With respect to individualism-collectivism cultural dimensions, individuals from the former prefer to preserve their own self-esteem during conflict and become more direct; however, the latter are concerned about maintaining group harmony and as a result avoid confrontation but prefer accommodating conflict styles. Individualists tend to employ dominant and competitive conflict styles while collectivists prefer integrative and compromising conflict styles to manage conflicts. Concerning differences with respect to ethnicity and gender, some publications reported significant differences. For example, European Americans employ dominating conflict styles in dealing with romantic relationships in contrast to Asian Americans (Kim M.-S & Kitani, 1998). With respect to gender, men are more solution-oriented whereas women feel better discussing relationships (Martin & Nakayama, 2008). Individuals with strong cultural identity tend to use integrating, compromising and emotionally expressive conflict styles but individuals with strong ethnic identity use integrating conflict styles (Ting-Toomey et.al, 2000).

Contexts: There is no communication without a context for the simple reason that communication cannot be held in a vacuum. As a complex and dynamic term, context plays a central role in intercultural communication. Communication occurs at varying levels of contexts and takes different forms. It varies across contexts. The variation among contextual factors makes interaction more challenging and meaning negotiation a time consuming process. With respect to dissimilarity in communication contexts, there are different forms of communication that project relatively different interactive behavior among communicators. For example, Jadt (2007) identified international, global, cross-cultural and intercultural communication holding different forms and purposes which eventually influence the nature of communication. On the other hand, different levels of communication such as interpersonal, intergroup, public and mass communication are characterized by different forms and communication behavior.

The field of intercultural communication has documented a number of sources that address the concept of context in various ways. Firstly, intercultural studies from the social science perspective focus on communication styles, identity, intercultural competence, conflict styles and cultural

variability. Few sources attempted to describe contexts of communication across cultures and categorized cultures with respect to criteria they set (e.g. Hall, 1976; Hoftsede, 1980, 1991, 2001). Nevertheless, still very few publications have overly credited the significance of context in intercultural communication (e.g. Neuliep, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002). Secondly, interpretive or critical researchers explicitly addressed their investigation of intercultural communication in line with forms and contents of contexts of interactions. Similarly, but with different focus, critical researchers emphasized macro-level contexts but with less regard to micro-level contextual factors.

However, few publications included context as a fundamental element of their approach or used context as a key framing factor in their studies. For instance, the dialectical approach (Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 2007) adopted context as one of the four pillars of intercultural communication. On the other hand, Neulip's (2009) *Contextual Model of Intercultural Communication* is the most popular example for considering context as the main analytical tool. As identified by Neuliep cultural, micro-cultural, environmental, socio-relational and perceptual contexts influence the nature and style of communication. The cultural context includes socio-political, historical and collective group behavior whereas the environmental context refers to the immediate geographical space between communicators. The socio-relational context comprises of the social roles and group memberships (e.g. sex, religious affiliation, age, etc) while the perceptual context stands for personal, perceptual, motivational and personality factors. Apart from these sources, in most intercultural research, context is not among the major analytical tools. As intercultural variables are framed in cultural and contextual factors, it is important to provide comprehensive contextual data to present a comprehensive picture of the construct under study.

In the current model, context is defined as a multilayered communicative environment within which communication takes place. It is a multilayered concept for the fact that there exist various forms of contexts that could be arranged at two levels: the macro-level and the micro-level (see Assumption 1 below). Contexts are dynamic and of course perceptual. They are in a continuous state of change and are interpreted differently by communicators. Individuals in dialogue are influenced by a multitude of contextual variables. One can argue that contexts are a non-linear and

multilayered interactive framework that directly and indirectly shapes communication and are themselves interpreted subjectively by individuals in communication. The communicative environment is made up of physical, social and perceptual components. The physical setting refers to the immediate interactive environment which includes the physical plant, infrastructure, location, items around the communicators and the institutional set up in which communication is held. The social component of the environment stands for the number of individuals engaged in the context of interaction and the relation between the communicators. The major assumptions regarding contexts are outlined below.

Assumption 1: Contexts take various forms and levels. Context is not a linear concept rather it is a complex construct with multiple layers of a communicative environment. These layers are made up of two major levels: the macro-level and the micro-level. The macro-level is seemingly the foremost circle of the interactive environment but practically manifests in every communicative event. This level is associated with national/cultural and demographic issues pertinent in shaping assumptions, perceptions and actions. More specifically, this level comprises various forms such as political context, historical context and socio-economic context. It is also related to power relation as a result of these contexts. For example, a political context that demonstrate democratic culture can enhance tolerance and healthy intercultural communication whereas a context projecting unresolved inequality hinders individuals from enjoying intercultural dialogue.

The second, the micro-level, represents the immediate physical, social and institutional environment where communication is taking place. The social composition and the infrastructure significantly matter as the organizational context shapes the nature of interaction. For example, university classroom contexts are organized differently from health institutional contexts as the nature of the organization, physical set up and organizational behavior are not the same. The second level includes socio-relational context as well. This context refers to the social attachment or personal relationship between communicators. In sum, the context of intercultural communication presents a multitude of layers with various forms of contexts in which all come to play when individuals are engaged in actual dialogue.

Assumption 2: There are no two identical contexts. Because of various factors, there are no two identical contexts despite any similarities between them. For example, intercultural communication in higher education in Ethiopia and Germany may share some common features as a result of the universal aspects of university education and institutional arrangement; however, they would not be same with respect to the socio-political contexts the universities are located in, the cultural value system in the two countries and institutional behavior prevalent in the universities. Even within the same institution, communication among individuals from various cultures would not be similar as a result of various contextual factors. More interestingly, this does not mean that there are not universal intercultural behaviors shared among students in universities across the globe. As a result, lessons learned in a particular higher educational context can have implications for another.

Assumption 3: Intercultural communication is contextual. It is evident that intercultural communication is between individuals come from diverse cultural, political, socio-economic situations. Such macro-level factors are impeded in the perceptual framework of communicators. Besides, individuals engage in intercultural dialogue occupying dissimilar views as a result of variation in their perceptions and interpretations of contextual factors. In other words, most of the forms of context are represented in the individuals' cultural framework and culture-context association. Diversity of context composition with respect to factors such as race, ethnicity, language, gender, economic class and sexuality complicates interaction. In addition to these, the major components of intercultural competence are also shaped by contexts. This in turn will have a great net impact on individuals' abilities to interact. For example, identities are negotiated in interaction which is influenced by the contexts of communication.

Assumption 4: Communicators act differently in different contexts. Individuals are sensitive to their interactive context and make use of it to adapt to stimuli that take their attention and act in accordance with the context. There are various factors such as social roles, content of message, power relation and context that force individuals to act differently in different contexts. However, the complexity and dynamic nature of these factors encourage individuals to behave differently in different contexts. For instance, a history of inequality may favor one group over the other and this

may push members of a disadvantaged group to prefer silence or indirect communication styles. However, a contrary context in a different location may motivate the same individuals to employ directness and disclosure, keeping other factors constant. Regarding physical setup and condition, a suffocated and highly populated classroom discourages a two-way classroom communication as individuals tend to avoid interactions because of the difficulties surrounding them. Moreover, a classroom teacher acts differently when he goes home and has time with his kids. Finally, because of various reasons an individual's communicative performances vary along with various contextual and related causes.

Power relations: The other most important variable in this model is power relations among individuals in the intercultural scene. In every society, there is always a social hierarchy that advantages some groups over others. Individuals in power create and maintain systems that reflect and promote their own cultural or political thinking and communicating (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Orbe, 1998; Allen, 2004; Jensen, 2006). Dominant groups use all possible means to secure domination whereas subordinates or minority groups employ various strategies such as boycotts, strikes or armed struggle to resist or refute domination. It is evident that there could be implied power negotiation if not struggle among individuals from such social strata when brought into contact in an intercultural setting. In the process, power is produced and negotiated as a result of various sources of power. Membership to particular cultural, political or professional group may privilege one and disadvantage the other in a given context. Even though this privilege varies across contexts, individuals' intercultural interaction is highly influenced by their membership to a given group.

Although power relation is evident in every community, the bulk of literature on intercultural communication often takes the aspect of power for-granted. In other words, the role of power has not earned the focus it deserves. However, the concept plays a societal dividing role through construction of others as different and inferior/superior to self. It is vital to see how the aspect of power is addressed in the literature before explaining how it is conceptualized in the current work. For the same reason, it is good to adapt the summary of the approaches proposed by Jensen

(2006) to elaborate the available conceptualizations of power and the focus given to this element of intercultural communication.

The summary classifies the publications into four categories and namely: (1) *power inscribed*, (2) *power as description*, (3) *power as motivation*, and (4) *power related to research*. Regarding the first approach, most intercultural literature recognize the role of power but the concept of power is not directly addressed in their works. These works have inscribed in normative perspectives or in language of the norm (e.g. Prosser, 1978; Samovar & Porter, 1991; Hall, 1976). In the second approach, *power as description*, power is addressed as a description of how individuals explain their actions with respect to power. Hoftsede's (1980) notion of power distance is a popular example to elaborate this approach. As indicated in his works, Hoftsede describes power distance across cultures as high or low. This work has been criticized for failing to investigate how power relations work in action and it seldom attempt to investigate power relations among communicators. Nevertheless, Hoftsede is more explicit in his description of power than many critical empirical studies (Jensen, 2006).

However, *power as motivation* is rooted on the flaws of these two approaches and a motivation for research focus. In this approach, power is viewed as an entity being produced in the process of communication and supported by structures in actual contact. Studies from this perspective addressed inequality and its impact on intercultural interactions. The work of Erickson's (1975) *Intercultural Encounter* is a practical example in this regard. The findings of this work witnessed that interactions are highly influenced by structures in the American university system and it also identified ethnicity as an important factor in intercultural communication. The last approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the relationship between the researcher and *the other* in intercultural research (Jensen, 2006).

According to *power related to research* as an approach, power is prevalent everywhere and is a product of relations among individuals in a given society. The focus of this approach is on the question of who brings rich findings with respect to power relations particularly with reference to the role of the *other* (whom considered as the subject of most western studies). It is convincing by

all means to involve insiders in research, decode domination by privileged western researchers and encode self-determination. For example, Jandt & Tanno (2001) suggested encoding self-determination (*other's* autonomy to carryout research) in research claiming that this provides a richer and truer understanding. The authors contend that privileged researchers who speak for a multicultural others can reinforce oppression. They argue that it is vital for *the others* to speak for themselves and perform their own research.

As diverse as its conceptualization and approaches, the field of intercultural communication especially with respect to power lacks theoretical consolidation. As stated earlier, most works hardly deal with power relation in their investigation of intercultural interactions (Jensen, 2006). Among the available models/theories, it was Hoftsede's (1980) which is more explicit in its description of power even more than many of the critical studies. It was only few sources (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008; Martin, Nakayama & Flores, 2002; Jenson, 1998) that overtly included power as a central element of intercultural communication even though they have not yet developed their approach into a theory/ or model. It is practically impossible to deny the noteworthy role of power relation in a multiethnic working environment that projects intercultural communication between individuals as a daily experience. In other words, we cannot understand intercultural communication without considering the power relation among individuals in the interaction (Martin & Nakayama, 2008).

In line with this assumption, the current model takes power relation as a vital concept in intercultural interaction in multiethnic higher education context. Power is defined here as a perceptual ability of influence individuals seize as a result of external factors (e.g. group membership, social structure, political orientation, social roles and position in organizations) that advantages/disadvantages them to dominate/resist domination in intercultural communication. Power relation is perceptual since it is a socially constructed concept that changes over time and situation. It is the ability to impact others and promote a favorable system of interaction and use all possible means to uphold the status quo and strive for more. Unlike other abilities, power is acquired from external factors. For example, membership to a dominant cultural group or a

political party can favor one and disadvantage the other despite personal factors such as personality, appearance or competence.

Moreover, in highly stratified societies, individuals from the lower class are disadvantaged with respect to power and as a result are committed to resist domination by the higher class. Similarly, social roles individuals play and position they hold in their workplace impacts communication due to the inequality of power bestowed upon them. As roles and positions change, power too is dynamic. This makes intercultural communication more problematic. In institutions, organizational structures provide an uneven distribution of power that shapes the tone and style of communication between employees and managers. Various macro-level contextual factors such as history of inequality and emancipation, national political structure and current political reality could offer disproportionate power to members of various groups. For example, the inequality of power distribution especially in repressive minority-ruling multiethnic states could complicate intercultural communication among citizens. In line with description, the following assumptions about power can be listed.

Assumption 1: Power comes from predominately external sources. The major sources of power for individuals could be their membership to a particular cultural group, position in a given organizational structure or social roles individuals occupy in societies. Membership to dominant or popular cultural, political, linguistic or economic groups offers a stronger power. On contrary, membership to minority or subordinate groups offers waker power. Social roles (e.g. father, mother, children, community leader, teacher, student, etc) are the other sources of power. Families are the first social institutions that teach social roles, associated communication styles and basics of interactions for their children. Roles, which offer a varied degree of power to individuals, are bestowed upon individuals by societies and played by individuals in their communities. Power also comes from individuals' position (e.g. manager, secretary, guard, etc) in organizations and is supported by organizational structures. As a result, individuals hold various magnitudes of power and authority.

Assumption 2: Power is prevalent in all communications. Power is pervasive in interactions and manifests itself in the process (Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Jensen, 2006). There is no communication that does not confirm an established inequality among communicators or that negotiate power relation between individuals. In other words, all forms of communication project power relations between individuals; however, it is predominantly significant in intercultural communication as power stems from various sources. The sources of power could come from primary dimensions (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age and sexual orientation) or secondary dimensions (e.g. locations, educational background, positions in organization and marital status) as summarized by Loden and Rosener (1991). Members of dominant groups (from any of the primary or secondary levels) aspire to design and maintain a communication system that favors their worldviews and dissociate others. On contrary, members of subordinate/minority groups struggle to resist, seize a better power or minimize the existing power distance. This makes intercultural communication a process that involves a struggle for a better ability of influences.

Assumption 3: Power is produced in the intercultural communication process. People communicate power through interaction and in the process they maintain, strengthen or weaken their power. As communication is a creative process and involves identity negotiation, the power individuals hold become vivid in this creative process. Members of dominant cultural groups attempt to maintain their domination while individuals from subordinates/minority cultures work hard to reject this domination. In the process, the magnitude of power relations between the individuals in the intercultural communication scene becomes clear as a confirmation of the preexisting power distance between the communicators or as a new and negotiated power relation. Added to this, individuals are continually engaged in seizing a favorable face. They utilize various strategies to hold a better face and ability to influence in relation to the other. In other words, communicators aspire to build or secure authority and use it in their interactions. Thus, power can be produced in the process of communication as a confirmation of the already established relation or rejection of the status quo to seize a new or negotiated ability of influence.

Assumption 4: Power is dynamic with relation to context and social roles. For instance, the power a teacher owns in his classroom in relation to his students during lecture hours is stronger than the power he holds while he takes students out hiking outside the school even if his role remains the same. This is because a classroom context is more formal and structured than an event organized out of the school. The power bestowed on the teacher would not be the same in relation to the school principal or other members of the school management. The changing nature of social roles can also vary the power vested upon individuals. For example, the same classroom teacher owns a weaker power at home in a conversation with his mother than in the other two contexts described. The teacher may use various communication styles, language and nonverbal clues tailored to the settings. Therefore, the power individuals hold changes in line with their social roles and context of communication.

Assumption 5: There is cultural variability in power relations. The relation between culture and power is a complex and a two-way process. For example, as described by Hoftsede (1980) cultures vary on the extent to which less powerful members of a society or institution accept the disproportionate distribution of power. He described cultures as more of low-power distance and high-power distance based on the extent in which members of a culture tolerate uneven distribution of power. Even though the tendency of dominant cultural groups to maintain the status quo is similar in most cultures, the extent of power exercised by dominant groups varies across cultures. Highly democratic societies recognize the cultural rights and demands of minorities as they advocate liberal ideology that downplays unfair inequalities of power individuals seize as a result of membership to a particular cultural group. On the contrary, governments and societies that advocate group rights and collective political views preserve the disproportionate power given to dominant groups. In general terms, the extent and the nature of power individuals seize vary across cultures and this eventually influence communication between people from different cultures.

Assumption 6: Studies of intercultural communication should integrate power relation. As argued time and again, power relation is a significant component of intercultural communication and as a result it is important to explicitly address power in intercultural communication research. A few

works (e.g Hoftsede, 1980) have provided descriptive analysis of cultural variability regarding power distance based on quantitative surveys; however, there are seldom empirical studies from the social science perspective to reveal practical criticism of the impact of inequality of individuals. Even though critical researchers focus on monocultures, their focus on power relation has significant impact on this regard. Generally speaking, it is methodologically sound and politically correct to amalgamate *emic* and *etic* perspectives on power relations and involve *the other* in the process to access truer, richer and practical data that fosters understanding of intercultural communication.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current chapter discusses the research methodology, methods, procedures and techniques employed to access empirical data and to answer the research questions outlined in the first chapter. It begins with explaining the methodological philosophy adopted for this particular study and then moves on to describe the qualitative and the quantitative phases of the study in separate sections. The qualitative component explains the tools, procedures and techniques used to grasp an in-depth understanding of intercultural communication in the study context. Based on the qualitative findings, a comprehensive quantitative survey was generated. To make sense of this data, *an integrative model to intercultural communication in context (IMICC)* was used as a guiding theoretical framework (as detailed in Chapter Three). In this chapter, philosophical, methodological and practical issues in designing, collecting and analyzing the empirical data are explained.

Mixed-methods research

Intercultural communication, as a discipline, is no a stranger to mixed-methods research although the term mixed-methods and its design are relatively new to the field. As elaborated in Chapter Two, there are three main conceptual perspectives to the study of intercultural communication: the social science perspective (e.g Hall, 1976; Hoftsede, 1983; Gudykunst, 2005; Kim, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1999), interpretative (e.g. Applegate & Sypher, 1983; Baumann, 1999; Collier, 1988) and critical approach (e.g. Best & Kellner, 1991; Razack, 1998; Rosenau, 1992). Most empirical intercultural researches from these traditions employ either qualitative or quantitative research methods. Most works depend on quantitative instruments to describe intercultural communication variables.

For instance, a number of quantitative inventories to measure intercultural competence such as Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992), Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), A Culture-Generic Approach to Intercultural Competence (Arasararnam & Doerfel, 2005), European Multidimensional Models of Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997;

Risager, 2007) and Behavioral Approach to Intercultural Competence (Ruben, 1976) were developed. Others have solely employed qualitative methods to describe intercultural communication behavior (e.g. Carbaugh, 1999; Asante, 1987, 2001; Chen 1998). Currently, however, there are few researchers who recognized the merits of using qualitative and quantitative methods in their studies (e.g. Fantini 2005, 2006). Most of them used comprehensive survey forms that demanded respondents to answer close-ended and open-ended items. These researchers aimed at complementing quantitative findings with qualitative explanations.

Researchers have also used qualitative interviews to build quantitative surveys for several years. However, these researchers have minimized the role of mixed-methods for various reasons. A practical example for this is the work of Carrigan, Pennington and McCroskey (2006). Although a mixed-methods design was not the intent of the authors, they found great success in implementing explanatory sequential design (quantitative data collected before qualitative). The authors collected quantitative data to examine the impact of a semester intercultural communication experience had upon students' levels of ethnocentrism and interethnic communication apprehension. Then, they obtained non-significant findings. For this reason, they conducted a qualitative research to fill the discrepancy resulted from the quantitative study. They reported that mixed-methods design is relevant for broader assessment of students' involvement in intercultural communication. The current study, however, is different from the works of these authors. The mixed-methods design used here is intentional and systematically designed based on exploratory sequential mixed-methods design (qualitative data collection preceded quantitative).

There has been much discussion about the name: mixed-methods research, and therefore it is relevant to explain the term and the philosophical assumptions upheld in the current study. The research approach has been called *multi-trait/ multi-method research* (Cambell & Fiske, 1959), *integrated* or *combined* (Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCormick, 1992) and *qualitative and quantitative methods* (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). It has also been called *hybrid* (Ragin, Nagel & White, 2004), and *methodological triangulation* (Morse, 1991) as well. Today the most often used name is mixed-methods research, a term associated with *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Methodological work on mixed-methods

research paradigm can be seen in several recent publications (e.g. Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 2003; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Newman & Benz, 1998; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). In recent years, many authors have begun to advocate MMR as a separate design of its own (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttmann & Hanson, 2003). Most recently, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) advocated for considering mixed-methods research as a legitimate design in educational research.

In current study, mixed-methods research (MMR) is defined as the class of research where the researcher systematically combines quantitative and qualitative research tools, methods, approaches and concepts for richer and broader understanding. It is a method by which the researcher purposefully minimizes the limitations of mono-method research for quality and generalizable findings. The method is characterized by methodological plurality and integration of *epic* and *emic* perspectives to research. Despite variation in a mixed methods research design, MMR follows a systematic procedure or model to produce justifiable, legitimate and valid research outputs. Unlike few research which suppliment qualitative and quantitative tools, MMR values both methods as central elements. Adopting MMR, the current study aims at understanding intercultural communication in higher educational context. It also seeks to forward possible strategies on how to enhance communication and social integration in an academic context. By using an exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), comprehensive data was generated to meet these purposes (is discussed later in this section).

From a philosophical stand point, the current study embraces pragmatism as an appropriate philosophical foundation for mixed-methods research. In terms of epistemology, pragmatism offers an attractive philosophical partner for MMR (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It provides a framework for designing and conducting the research. The purpose of pragmatism is to find a negotiated ground between philosophical and methodological dogmatism and to locate a workable solution (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It rejects traditional dualism and generally prefers more moderate and commonsense versions of philosophical dualism based on how well they work in solving problems. Its assumptions rest on the idea that no one paradigm allows researchers to

arrive at truth alone, rather a combination of paradigms is most practical in allowing us to fully understand a phenomenon.

In other words, pragmatic worldview is problem-centered and shades light on how research approaches can be mixed productively (Hoshmand, 2003). Its logic of inquiry includes the use of induction (or discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of hypotheses) and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one's results (de Waal, 2001). Pragmatic perspective combines deductive and inductive thinking by integrating qualitative and quantitative study. It provides a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry; and offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that help researchers better answer their research questions. As these epistemological assumptions rely on *abductive* reasoning (that moves back and forth between induction and deduction), it helps the current study to convert qualitative data into a theory and then test the theory through quantitative assessments.

Using *an integrative model to intercultural communication in context*, the current study combines both conceptual and methodological issues systematically based on established pragmatic perspective to understanding intercultural communication. Therefore, it attempts to integrate seemingly contradictory philosophies and methodological issues for better understanding of competences, perceptions and practices. Although the research operates primarily from a pragmatic perspective, researcher's reflections and observations were also important. As an insider, it is pragmatically sound to contend that the researcher's reflective accounts can yield richer data. Few studies in intercultural communication recognized the need for conceptual and/or methodological pluralism (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 1999; Martin, Nakayama & Flore, 2002; Gudykunst, 2005; Koch, 2009). Their argument falls under pragmatic philosophy to intercultural communication studies. These scholars justified the need for integrating possible perspectives and proposed conceptual integration. However, the authors failed to clearly show the demand for methodological pluralism. Since studies in intercultural communication are broad, diverse and deep (Otten & Geppert, 2009; Koch, 2009), they demand a holistic and comprehensive approach to research.

Why mixed-methods research? Since integration of qualitative and quantitative studies is one of the unique aspects of this study, it is vital to give some justifications. There are several strengths to employ mixed-methods research. Firstly, the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone. In line with this, it is advised that intercultural researchers need to be reflective and avoid methodological ethnocentricity to yield substantial understanding (e.g. Otten & Geppert, 2009; Asante, Yoshitake & Yin, 2008). A possible combination of the methods provides a more comprehensive view of intercultural communication. For example, investigation into the context of interaction, nature of interaction and power relation among participants demands accessing richer data through unstructured interviews and ethnographic field notes. A simple survey would not help to better explain these important variables. On the other hand, an in-depth data generated through qualitative study alone may not suffice to provide a generalizable report. Therefore, integration of qualitative and quantitative studies yields richer, comprehensive and holistic understanding of intercultural communication in a given context.

Secondly, mixed-methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. Amalgamating these two research designs by-passes often cited difficulties of mono-method empirical studies. For instance, as most scholars argue, a purely qualitative study is deficient because of subjective interpretation made by the researcher and the ensuing bias created by this (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is therefore difficult to generalize findings to a larger group. It is also criticized for departing from original research objectives and dependence on the experience level of the researcher (Cassell & Symon, 1994). The weaknesses of qualitative methods can be compensated by clearly stating the research purpose, crosschecking with the results of the quantitative analyses, and strong theoretical foundation of the research.

On the other hand, quantitative methods ensure high levels of reliability of gathered data. However, exclusive use of quantitative methods in intercultural research has been criticized on varies grounds. For example, quantitative methods are weak in understanding context of communication; and the voices of participants are not directly heard in the same. The weaknesses of this method, such as failure to provide information about the context of the situation, inability

to control the environment, and pre-determined outcomes, are compensated by interaction with the research participants during interviews, learning about the context, and uncovering new research themes. Therefore, combining both methods of inquiry in one ensures high reliability of data, better understanding of the contextual aspects of the research, flexibility and openness of the data collection, and a more holistic interpretation of the research problem.

Thirdly, mixed-methods research is practical and encourages multiple worldviews or paradigms (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is practical because researchers are free to use all possible methods to answer their research questions. In the current study, a number of data gathering tools, as far as they are able to provide richer data, were employed to deal with the research purposes.   The study used numbers and words to describe and explain intercultural communication as experienced by participants in higher education. It was not restricted to one particular paradigm, but it employed all effective means to address the research problem. As a result, MMR encouraged the researcher to think about a paradigm that might encompass quantitative and qualitative research methods: pragmatism or using multiple paradigms. This study assumes that qualitative and quantitative studies are not contradictory but rather complementary and can be seen dialectically. Despite the merits of using these two paradigms, conducting mixed-methods research is not easy since it complicates the research methodology and requires clear presentation of research design and procedures. In the next section, detailed explanation of the research design or the type of MMR adopted for the current study is discussed.

The research design and the process model: Various mixed-methods designs have been proposed in the literature (e.g. Morgan, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 1999; Sandelowski, 2000). An *Exploratory sequential design (ESD)* was preferred to guide investigation into intercultural communication in higher educational context in Ethiopia. This variant of exploratory design is a two-phase procedure that helps researchers organize their research process. This design starts with a qualitative phase to explore a phenomenon and then moves onto a quantitative phase. Because it begins qualitatively, it is best suited for exploring intercultural communication and similar phenomena (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttmann & Hanson, 2003). The qualitative data provided understanding of the participants' perceptions and practices regarding intercultural

communication. ESD assisted to obtain comprehensive data regarding intercultural perceptions and convictions of the research participants. Using this design, the researcher built on the results of the qualitative phase to develop an instrument, identify variables and state propositions for testing based on an emergent model (Creswell, 1999; Morgan, 1998). In an attempt to come up with context friendly model of intercultural communication in higher education, the design seized was appropriate.

Regarding the research process, the researcher had to decide on two important factors to construct a mixed-methods research. These are: (1) whether one wants to operate largely within one dominant paradigm (qualitative or quantitative) or not, and (2) whether one wants to conduct the phases concurrently or sequentially (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). One has to decide on whether to give the quantitative and the qualitative components of the design equal status or to give one paradigm a dominant status (Morgan, 1998; Morse, 1991). The time order in mixing the qualitative and the quantitative phases is also important to consider.

In the present study, both qualitative and quantitative studies are given equal status. Despite the trend to emphasize on either (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) of them, this study is not limited to such tradition but it rather benefits from giving equivalent value for both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. Through MMR, one can create more user friendly and creative designs since the method provides more flexibility and practicality (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). With respect to sequence, qualitative data were collected before quantitative data. Specifically, as the study used explanatory sequential design (QUAL →QUAN), an equally emphasized qualitative phase was followed by a quantitative phase (see Figure 4.1. below). Therefore, in such a model qualitative data are collected and analyzed followed by quantitative data that are collected and analyzed for further understanding of the research problem (Morse, 1991; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Figure 4.1: Visual diagram of exploratory sequential design used to collect and analyze data
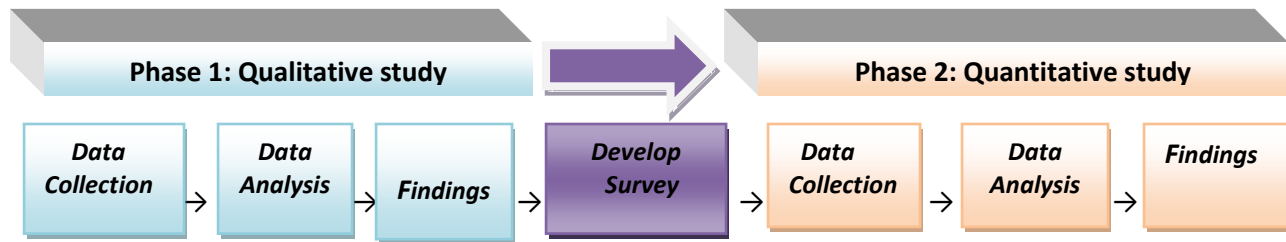
For specific procedural clarity, the research process adapted *mixed-methods process model* recommended by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) to further guide the exploratory sequential design preferred for the current work. This model includes eight general and major steps: (1) determine the research question or goals, (2) determine whether a mixed methods design is appropriate, (3) decide on the model, (4) collect data, (5) analyze the data, (6) interpret the data, (7) legitimize the data, and (8) draw conclusions and write the report. These major steps were followed in the course of this study. For example, the grand research questions were outlined on the onset of the project. Although the purpose remained the same, the specific research questions evolved after the qualitative phase generated themes of intercultural communication. The second step demanded justification of the appropriateness of MMR for this particular work. As clearly presented in the section above, the appropriateness of mixed-methods research for this particular study was justified. Then, relevant considerations were made to make the right model of mixed-methods research as already explained.

This was followed by decisions on designing instruments of data collection. Details on qualitative and quantitative data collection, procedure and analysis are discussed in separate sections later in this chapter. After formulating the specific research questions and collecting the data, the results were analyzed, interpreted and conclusions were drawn. It is important to further explain how the last three stages (data analysis, interpreting, legitimizing and reporting) of the process model were addressed. The data analysis stage of the model incorporates a seven-stage conceptualization of the mixed-methods data analysis process. These steps include: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, (3) data transformation, (4) data correlation, (5) data consolidation, (6) data comparison, and (7) data integration. As the first stage demands reduction of the dimensionality of the qualitative data collected through interviews and ethnographic field-notes, thematic analysis of the qualitative data

was made through the help of NVIVO 9 (one of the most commonly used qualitative data analysis software).

The quantitative data too was reduced by descriptive statistics and using various statistical techniques. The results gathered through such process were displayed using appropriate methods of presentation. The qualitative data were displayed using textual report, while the quantitative findings were presented using tables and charts. This was followed by data correlation which was eventually preceded by data consolidation. At this stage, the qualitative and quantitative data were discussed separately and combined eventually to create new or consolidated variables or data sets. These data sets or variables were constantly compared and contrasted for further understanding and discussion. Then, the consolidated and compared data were integrated into two separated sets (qualitative and quantitative). The data collected was legitimized and proved for validity through triangulation, validity checks and crosschecking. Finally, the research report was written. For details of data collection procedure, analysis and reporting see the qualitative and the quantitative components discussed separately in the following sections.

The qualitative study

This study explored intercultural perceptions, practices and competencies held by participants in a higher education environment. The qualitative phase was pivotal to the study for a number of reasons. Cultural and communicative aspects can be attributed to context specific features. An understanding of these features was obtained by spending time in the study area and discussing the practice of intercultural communication as perceived by participants. Consequently, qualitative exploratory work was necessary to develop understandings and suggesting possible strategies to enhance interaction in higher educational institution. This allowed the researcher to focus on the context that may shape the understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1994: 10). The qualitative study provides a holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Patton, 1980) and ability to interact with the research subjects in their own language and on their own terms (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Qualitative methods allow for obtaining an in-depth information on participants' reflections on their perceptions, competences and practices of intercultural communication and how that affects intercultural practices and relationships among participants. The qualitative component of this study took interpretive ethnography as an appropriate approach. It sees informants, their interpretations, and perceptions, meanings and understandings of intercultural communication, as the primary data sources (Mason, 2002). Consistent with the recommendation by Blaikie (2000), this study does not oversee informants as mere data sources, but rather seeks their perceptions from their own point of view rather than imposing the author's view. As a result, rich and quality data were accessed through frequent contact with informants and attachment with the research area. Adequate and appropriate quality empirical data was generated from a university in Ethiopia to explain the major themes and variables of intercultural communication. Interviews, FGD, ethnographic field notes and documents analysis met the merits discussed above. In the sections below, brief explanation of the research informants, tools and techniques of data analysis are briefed.

Data collection: Tools and procedure

To achieve the purpose of developing the intended understanding about the practice of intercultural communication with all its ramifications, and to gain a multidimensional appreciation of the research context, there is a need to consider different types of data. In other words, the use of multiple methods was, therefore, a requirement in this study. As it is known, mixed- methods research is a hybrid in that it generally utilizes a range of methods for collecting data rather than being restricted to a single procedure. Various tools have been suggested in the literature. For example, Bhawuk and Triandis (1996) suggests ethnographic observations, content analysis, and in-depth interviews when doing a study with the aim of uncovering intercultural realities either in-depth or from a holistic but unique perspective. In this study, the data gathering methods include interviews, FGDs, ethnographic field notes and document analysis. The data that was collected through the instruments were validated and triangulated to check data authenticity and trustworthiness.

In this study, the researcher is both an ethnographer and insider whose reflections and personal experiences would enrich understanding of the issues and problems. His role as a social scientist and strict adherence to theoretical, methodological and ethical requirements stands on a firm ground. As an insider, his personal experiences and reflections on the issue at hand would add further contents on interpretations and narrations of facts and figures. There is a value added in a researcher's own experience during his ethnographic observations and teaching career at Addis Ababa University. These were used to give sense to understanding opinions and facts. However, his knowledge and personal reflections were not considered as primary data sources and perspective for looking at the data. They rather took secondary position in the study and were used during description of contexts, interpretations and discussions. Each of the tools of qualitative data collection used in the study is discussed in the following sections.

Ethnographic interview: Participants, focus areas and procedure

The primary means of data collection of the study was qualitative interview with participants in the intercultural communication context. Interviewing is one of the fundamental techniques used in qualitative research on cross-cultural and intercultural communication (Aneas & Sandin, 2009). Ontologically, the study assumes that individuals' knowledge, views, interpretations and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which explains their intercultural perceptions and experiences. Kvale (1983:174) defines ethnographic interview as, "an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Interviews can, therefore, depict how social explanations and arguments are constructed through rich, in depth and complex data (Mason, 2002). As a social reality, researching intercultural communication perceptions and practices demands accessing rich and quality data to answer the research questions. Qualitative interviews are preferred because they provide rich and detailed answers from the perspectives of the interviewees (Bryman, 2004).

With regards to recruiting interview participants, the strategy adapted to access data was purposive sampling which is called snowball sampling. Purposive sampling technique helps the researcher to reach potential informants who hold prosperous data that better explain the question at hand (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sampling process was guided by two important

purposes. The first is generating diverse perspectives held by the category of research participants. This demanded the researcher to address informants from different ethnicity, faculty, religion, roles and political views. Studies have shown that factors such as ethnicity, religion, race, gender, age and similar variables in certain contexts can be potential sources of bias (e.g. Lee, 1993; Scheurich, 1995). As ethnicity is one of the most stratifying factors at AAU, appropriate attention was given to involve informants from diverse ethnic background. The same was true with political orientation of participants. As observations show, religion and political orientation are also divisive factors. On the campus, there is a clear lining up with respect to the vivid divisive factors and as a result the interview aimed at generating data from various group of people. Attempt was also made to address participant from varied geographic locations and field of study. Therefore, grasping diverse views along these stratifying factors was vital to encourage diversity of response.

The second guiding purpose was locating the source of deeper and richer data. This was made through three major techniques. As the researcher was a lecturer on the study campus, he owns prior knowledge of various intercultural encounters in the University. Researcher's previous works (e.g. Anteneh, 2009) in the area was a source of knowledge for him to recruit potential informants. His teaching and previous positions as a Head of Students Affairs Committee (SAC) in one of the departments helped him build rapport with potential informants. The other means to identify sources of rich data was based on the recommendations of teachers, administrators and students themselves. The knowledge of these people assisted in identifying individuals who are willing to provide data regarding their experiences. This helped to pick individuals who experienced opportunities and challenges of intercultural communication on the study campus. The other strategy was identifying offices and University authorities who were directly involved in administrative and academic affairs. There were a number of intercultural and interethnic cases managed by these officials. The target offices include: Offices of Students' Service, Office for Academic Reviews and Standards, Public Relations Office and offices of university presidents.

The researcher had been in continuous contact with AAU faculty throughout the study period. His previous preliminary investigation on campus unrest and public presentation in the same work encouraged most of the staff members to be willing and interested to give information and take part in the interview. The faculty helped in locating individuals with rich experience with the topic

under investigation. Since the study uncovers sensitive personal intercultural experiences, approaching respondents through such strategy was mandatory, for example, facilitating situations to contact their students who were willing to sit for the interview. Members of the leadership and students of the investigator too were engaged in the same help. However, none of them introduced the researcher to the interview candidates face-to-face for ethical reasons. After getting the name and the address of the prospective interviewees, the researcher contacted the candidates in person. After the possible list of interviewees was prepared, the researcher contacted each for further examination. The first encounter with each of them was made to explain the purpose of the study and build confidence in the whole process of the interview. The second day was to work on identifying mutually convenient time and place for conducting the interview.

Even though attempt was made to contact individuals from diverse backgrounds, recruiting of participants were not restricted to ethnicity, political position and direct conflict experiences. Rather than seeking a specific number of interviewees, data were collected until theoretical saturation was reached (Kvale, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher continued to interview until hardly new information emerged during coding and no further themes were identified in subsequent interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Added to these, the interviewees were not limited to specific set of time frame and as a result they were able to reflect on the issues for as long as they needed. Roughly thirty-six individuals from various ethnicities, religion, gender, roles and departments agreed for the interview. However, a total of thirty informants (10 students, 11 teachers and 9 members of the University management) were interviewed and considered for the study. The interviews took twenty-seven hours and forty-five minutes in sum (about 7 hours with students, 11.30 hours with teachers and 9.15 hours with the University leadership). Each participant's interview lasted approximately thirty minutes to two hours and twenty-five minutes.

Regarding the ethnic background of the interviewees, an attempt was made to interview participants from various ethnic groups. The ethnic composition of interview participants can be summarized as: 13 (Amhara), 1 (Anuak), 1(Gamo), 1 (Mixed), 9 (Oromo) and 5 (Tigre) . Asking someone's ethnicity in Ethiopia was one of the most difficult tasks. Some people were offended when they were asked their ethnic identity directly while some others were comfortable to

respond. As the question may damage the interview outcome; the researcher was careful and systematic to ask it. Depending on the background of the interviewee, the question was provided either as part of the demographic questions or at the end of the interview or through other questions such as mother tongue, place of birth and political view. Demographic profiles and descriptions of the interview participants are presented in Chapter Five.

With respect to the contents of the interview**,** the first section of the interview aimed at asking personal profile of the respondents. This include: age, place of birth, ethnicity, languages, educational background, intercultural experiences and roles at AAU. The purpose of this part was to have a comprehensive picture of the interviewees' background that might influence their perceptions and actions. The participants were also encouraged to give additional personal information that they think could be relevant. Besides, interviewees were asked to reflect on their perception of their ethnic/cultural identity and how that influenced their interaction with people from various ethnic groups. Emphasis was given to solicit information on participants' intercultural experiences. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), experience is central to intercultural communication as everyone socializes to experience his/her world around as real. Therefore, it is impossible to avoid prior intercultural experiences as we understand the world on the basis of our experiences. Added to this, such experience is predictive of present or future intercultural interaction with others. For complete review of the contents of the interview, see Appendix 4.1.

The second important point was participants' perception of intercultural communication and what qualities and abilities they think are necessary to be interculturally competent. In this, they were required to define, describe and narrate the behavior of an individual whom they think is qualified to build healthy relationships with individuals across ethnic, religious or party lines. Interviewees were also demanded to converse the relevance of second or foreign language learning in successful intercultural interaction.   The questions also focused on what specific abilities (knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) individuals need to interact in ethnically diverse university contexts. The respondents were encouraged to cite examples from their own experience to support their arguments. As a result, a number of attributes or qualities were listed. At times the interviewees failed to understand technical words, such as intercultural competence; however,

they were given explanations so that they could list down the most important characteristics of an effective intercultural communicator.

Regarding the third focus area, context and power relation, participants were required to critically evaluate AAU as a context of intercultural communication and describe power relation among the university community. Under these themes, respondents reflected on issues such as diversity and multiculturalism. They specifically addressed ethnic composition, gender disparity and religious diversity among the students, the teaching staff and the University management. They evaluated the conduciveness of AAU for healthy intercultural communication. More specifically, participants explained the nature of grouping among members of the University with respect to various divisive factors. They also discussed the nature of campus unrest they experienced. They also explained the relation between the students and the teachers. They told the nature of classroom and on-campus communication among these two groups. They also reflected on the power relations between the teachers and the University leaders. Teachers commented on the nature of communication between junior and senior staff members across faculties. Overall, respondents evaluated AAU with respect to its diversity, composition, context and power relation.

The fourth focus area of the interview dealt with the challenges and opportunities of intercultural communication experiences at AAU. Participants were asked to discuss causes of ethnic clashes/ campus unrest often experienced in the University. They responded to questions such as: Who were the actors, what were the issues raised and how were they managed? Participants evaluated the magnitude of the conflicts and how clashes erupt on the main campus. Emphasis was given to personal experiences of the interviewees regarding the issue at hand. Interviewees were encouraged to discuss cases, experiences and examples that explain their experiences. In times participants were not able to provide specific examples and cases, the interviewer cited popular examples for reflections. For example, interviewees were reminded of the recent fight between Oromo and Tigre students (the event happened during the interview period) on the main campus of the University. On the other hand, respondents were also able to reflect on opportunities they seized in this intercultural environment. The informants also cited various examples and cases that positively influenced their intercultural skills and living with people from other cultures.

The last area of investigation was what possible strategies were appropriate to enhance healthy intercultural interaction in the University environments and secure social integration. The participants recommended what should be done with respect to enriching students' intercultural competence, enhancing organizational communication, revising the curriculum and promoting effective academic environment. Participants did not shy away from discussing what accountability the state, administrators, teachers, and students should exercise. A number of comments were given on facilitating second language learning and intercultural learning on the campus. Many suggestions were given on practical strategies that should be excercised by the Cultural Center, Students' Services, the available clubs and various extra-curricular activities of the University.

Regarding the interview procedure, the interviews were held in an environment suitable for recording and with consent of the respondents. Most of the interviews were held in the office of the interviewer, OCR 221 or ILS Building on the main campus as per the choice of the interviewees. Most interviewees preferred the office because it was quit, confidential and in easy reach from classrooms or offices. With some teachers and members of the University leadership, interviews were made in their own offices as per their choice. Interviews should be held in a setting that is quiet and private (Bryman, 2004). Interview schedules were arranged and rearranged based on the convenience of the participant. It was important to remind that qualitative interviews tend to be flexible; interviewees can be interviewed in different occasions as interviews can depart from any schedule (Bryman, 2004). *Protocol of Agreement of Data Confidentiality* was signed by the researcher confirming that the information provided by the interviewees would be used for the research purpose only; their real names would not appear on the research report and their personal data would not be given to a third party. Needles to say, the intention was to create trust rapport and to secure commitment to data confidentiality (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002; Sheridan & Storch, 2009).

The interview processes were relatively unstructured, but focused on eliciting aspects of intercultural communication experiences and perceptions as viewed from the perspectives of the participants. Attempts were made to conduct individual in-depth interviews with participants to probe deeply to their tacit knowledge, thereby ensuring data authenticity. Despite variation in

questioning strategies, the contents and focuses of the interview for the three groups of respondents (students, teachers and members of the University management) were the same. The interviews were open to newly emerging themes and as a result participants were left with the autonomy to reflect issues that they think were appropriate and relevant. As agreed with the participants, all the interviews were recorded using digital recording devices and eventually stored on the personal computer of the researcher. They were audio recorded to preserve the events in a fairly authentic manner for subsequent data interpretation; in addition, notes were taken during the interview. These strategies were employed to secure the validity of the data. The interviews were held in either of the working languages of the University: English or Amharic based on the preference of the interviewee. In few cases, interviewees switched from Amharic to English or vice versa. Interview held in Amharic were later transcribed and translated into English.

Focus group discussions: Participants and procedure

In addition to individual interviewing, two focus group discussions (FGD) were held with professionals engaged in teaching and research on language teaching, communication, multicultural education, curriculum studies and anthropology. FGD is a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data (Bryman, 2004). It was originally used in communication studies and the idea behind this method is that group processes can help people explore and clarify views in ways that would be less accessible in a one to one interview. The method was designed to benefit the outcome of the research in a number of ways. Firstly, the informants' firsthand experience and expertise in the research area would definitely enrich the data generated using other tools. As most of the participants have been working in the University for long years, their reflections on their experiences were vital. Coupled with this, the courses they taught or the research they were engaged in were directly or indirectly associated with the major themes of intercultural communication. Therefore, their expert views were potential source of data.

Added to these, the FGD offered the researcher the opportunity to study the way the target experts collectively make sense of intercultural communication. FGD reflects the processes through which meaning is constructed in everyday life and as it can be regarded as more

naturalistic than individual interviews (Wilkinson, 1998). As a result, its outcome was used to triangulate the data generated through the ethnographic interviews. It is obvious that in one to one interviewing, interviewees are seldom challenged, they might say things that are inconsistent or even untrue, but in FGD individuals challenge each other's view. As FGDs capitalize on communication between research participants on a given topic, they provided the opportunity for allowing informants to probe each other's reasons for holding certain views.

Like the ethnographic interview, snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants. Based on the nature of the course and their qualification, courses they teach and the research they were engaged in, two groups of thirteen professionals from various faculties participated in the FGD. Unlike the procedure followed to address research participants for the interview, ethnicity or other demographic variables were not considered in screening informants for this method of data gathering. This was for the fact that the purpose FGD was to collect experts' view through an interactive strategy. Teachers and authorities who took part in the one to one interview were not invited for the FGD.

Recruiting of participants was made based on the pool of fifteen potential participants who expressed willingness to take part in the study. The pool of the candidates was organized after contacting the respective department heads or program coordinators who offered the list of courses and the profile of the potential research participants. Examining their qualifications and course catalogue of their respective faculties, list of possible candidates was outlined. Following these, the researcher contacted the candidates and briefed them with the purpose of the study and frequently visited them to build rapport and encourage willingness. In the very beginning it was not easy to come up with specific time and date that could be convenient for all of the candidates because most of them were engaged in teaching and other academic activities.

Later, two separate dates and time was planned and the potential candidates were offered two options without informing them who would take part in each FGD. Finally, two FGDs with sample size of six and seven participants (see Table 4.1. below) were scheduled. As the literature shows, there is no agreement among experts with respect to the sample size of a given FGD. Morgan

(1998) suggests that the typical group size is six to ten members. He recommends smaller groups when participants are likely to have a lot to say, topics are controversial or complex; and larger groups when involvement with the topic is likely to be low. Smaller focus groups, with four to six participants are, however, becoming increasingly popular because the smaller groups are easier to recruit and host, and they are more comfortable for participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Despite these, most experts agree that the ideal size of a focus group is six to eight participants (Bryman, 2004). To recall, the FGD was meant to gain understanding of people's intercultural experiences and expertise. It is important to remind that the FGDs were held after ethnographic interviews were completed to facilitate further discussion and triangulation of data generated from the interview.

Table 4.1: FGD participants, home institutions and expertise

Focus groups	Participants	Colleges and Institutes	Qualification and specialization
FGD 1	Afewerqi	College of Education	PhD in Curriculum Studies
	Getu	College of Social Sciences	MA in Anthropology
	Hassen	Institute of Language Studies	MA in TEFL
	Paulos	College of Education	PhD in Communication
	Tamirat	College of Education	PhD in Multicultural Education
	Waqo	Institute of Language Studies	MA in TEFL
FGD 2	Dagim	Institute of Language Studies	MA in Ethiopian Literature
	Jirata	Institute of Language Studies	PhD in TEFL
	Kassa	Language Research Center	MA in Literature
	Selamneh	College of Education	PhD in Sociology of Education
	Tilahun	Institute of Language Studies	PhD in Literature
	Tolla	Institute of Language Studies	MA in Multicultural Education
	Yirdaw	Institute of Language Studies	MA in TEFL

Regarding the FGD procedure, after the themes of the FGD were set and the schedule was confirmed, formal letter of invitation for participation (see Appendix 4.2) was handed to the participants a week before the time it was scheduled for. The letter stated the themes, time, date

and room prepared for discussion. The themes of the FGD were: (1) Challenges of intercultural communication in Addis Ababa University, and (2) How to improve and promote healthy intercultural communication in the academic context. During the sessions participants were informed that they could discuss in any order without assuming a particular pattern of turn taking. They were advised to reflect their own personal experiences and conceptualizations of the themes provided. They were informed that their real names would not be used in the research report for confidentiality reasons. The discussion was held round a table and the researcher assumed the role of moderating/facilitating the discussions. The first FGD lasted about one hour and half and the second took roughly two hours. The discussions were audio recorded, transcribed and translated from Amharic to English.

Ethnographic field-notes and documents

The third data gathering technique was ethnographic observation with field notes. Since the onset of the project, the researcher was taking notes on his observations and keeping record of relevant documents for analysis. Assuming the role of an observer, the researcher played an overt role of ethnographic researcher to support description of the research setting, the research participants and the context of interaction to give a full picture of the interactive environment. This technique was also used to triangulate the data generated through other instruments such as the interview and FGDs. For example, the tape recorded interviews were supported with notes and reflective accounts of the researcher regarding the setting and the participants involved in the study. The notes were made up of detailed summaries of events and behavior specifying the key dimensions of what was observed and followed.

Brief notes which were later in the day written in full form were taken to keep the authenticity of what was observed or heard. In addition to the observations and note taking, documents relevant for understanding what was discussed with the research participants were accessed from the research site. This was done partly to corroborate the information obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions. In short, the researcher, as an ethnographer, kept field diary of day to day observations, along with his own ideas, thoughts, and feelings recorded continually and described in detail. The ethnographic observations with field-notes were conducted continually and throughout the research period.

This technique of data collection utilizes three major techniques: namely ethnographic observations and note-taking, informal and off-record discussions and document analysis. The first technique aimed at describing the physical, socio-cultural and communicative context of the study site. With continuous ethnographic field notes, AAU's context of communication was described and events were pictured and described to give a mental picture of the setting. Notes were continually taken from the interactive locations such as the teachers' lounge, the Cultural Center and classrooms. Researcher's dairy book documented the everyday observations and reflections. The notes taken were not only descriptive but also narrative and reflective accounts that surface the *emic* view of the investigator. For descriptions of the study setting and locations/events observed see Chapter Five.

The second technique employed for similar purpose was informal discussions and off-record interviews. In a situation the researcher was able to raise the topic in random but important settings, he used to talk to people what they perceive and think about intercultural interactions at AAU. In such cases the researcher noted down the experiences and perceptions of people immediately after he left them. As a result, quite a significant number of opinions, facts and experiences were gathered. In addition, off-record interviews were also held with individuals who refused to be audio recorded but were potential sources of information. For example, some interviews with students, teachers and deans counted as part of the ethnographic field work.

The last but important technique used in this method was document analysis. It was made to achieve the purpose of understanding the practice of intercultural communication and further triangulate the results obtained from other data sources. This technique was specifically used to answer issues such as: (1) diversity and composition in the University, (2) policies and strategies to address intercultural issues and problems, (3) representation of intercultural issues on the curriculum, and (4) intercultural/ interethnic issues raised in faculties. To respond to these issues various documents were collected and analyzed. First, the personnel database of employees at AAU main campus was accessed from the relevant departments. This summary assisted to plot a general picture of personal profile and employment history of members of the administrative and academic staffs.

The document provided name, place of birth, date of birth, gender, marital status, date of employment, salary and rank/position of the employees. However, the document did not provide ethnic background of the employees. As far as a short conversation with data manager at the archive of the Personnel Department was concerned, employees were once asked to provide their ethnic background on a form distributed to them. However, incomplete or no data was provided regarding this item. Therefore, the personnel files did not provide clear picture of the ethnic background of the employees.

The other document considered for the study was the Registrar's summary of students' admission. The admission form and a summary of the students' population were accessed from the Office of the Registrar. This was done to grasp a complete picture of the students' population on the main campus and was used as a sample frame for the Survey Form administered to the sample of students. The other documents considered for analysis were the AAU Senate Legislation (2007) and the Students Handbook (2008). The first document provided policy and strategies regarding AAU's mission, goals, organizational structure, responsibilities and accountability of each of its units. Institutional arrangements regarding diversity and multiculturalism were stated in the same document. The Students Handbook introduces the University and its institutional arrangements.

The manual narrates academic and disciplinary issues students should be aware of and obey. The document clearly states the University's position regarding staff and students interaction. It also states how conflicts are handled and orders are established. In addition to these documents, samples of undergraduate curricular were analyzed to see if intercultural issues and problems are represented in the courses or curricular guides. For this purpose, randomly selected sample of three curricular from the three departments on the main campus were reviewed. Curricular for Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology (from College of Education), English Language and Literature (from Institute of Language Studies) and Political Science and International relations (from College of Social Sciences) were analyzed.

Lastly, with regards to intercultural clashes and its management, a number of documents and notices were collected to see the magnitude of the problems and how conflicts were managed. For the same purpose, students/teachers complaints from various departments, meeting minutes

and notices posted were considered. Students' applications and teachers' complaints and minutes of meetings were documented from various departments. However, there were a number of challenges to access minutes that address ethnic issues and even if the minutes were obtained they did not surface the problem discussed orally. This was one of the challenges of accessing written and documented data regarding interethnic conflicts. Even if people discuss the issue orally, they failed to produce the documents for various reasons. Most of the administrators/teachers were afraid to provide the documents they had at hand. The oral information was considered as part of the ethnographic field notes.

Data transcription and translation

Transcription of the audio recorded interviews and FGD was one of the most important steps in preparing the ethnographic material for analysis. The audio documents were saved on the personal computer of the researcher with pseudo-names for confidentiality reasons. Given the sensitivity of the issue, special attention was given to save the documents in locked file folders. Hand written transcriptions were also saved in a confidential locker to avoid unforeseen disclosure of the personal profile of the research informants. The thirty interviews (eleven with teachers, ten with students and nine with the management) and two FGDs were then transcribed by the researcher. Even though the job demanded a lot of time and patience, verbatim transcription of each of the recording was done to keep the perspective of the participants.

The job of transcription was given to the researcher to accustom him to the rich data generated through the interviews. In qualitative studies, it is highly recommended if the researcher is engaged in conducting and transcribing interviews. The merits of such a task is to give a better understanding of the situation and perspective of the research participants. The FGDs and twenty-three interviews were held in Amharic (and the rest seven interviews were conducted in English). Finally, the handwritten documents were made ready for typesetting.

Employing secretaries for typesetting the handwritten interviews was necessary. Given the bulk of data generated, it was practically imperative to hire secretaries for word processing. As skilled secretaries who could work on Amharic software (such as Geez 2004) were not available at Justus Liebig University (author's host university) in Germany, five competent typesetters from Addis Ababa were hired for the job. The secretaries had no personal knowledge of the research informants. The hired secretaries signed commitment for data confidentiality to obligate them to the agreement. The contract demanded the secretaries to destroy the data after they submitted the final copy. The secretaries committed themselves not to pass over the data to a third party. All the handwritten interviews were typed, edited by the researcher and finally saved in soft and hard copies. After both the Amharic and English interviews were done, the Amharic interviews and FGDs were made ready for translation.

Hiring qualified translators for the job was not easy. The following were among the criteria used to contact potential translator: (1) graduate degree in language, communication, literature or related fields, (2) previous experience in translation and related works, (3) commitment to data confidentiality, and (4) good record of professional ethics. In line with these set of requirements, four professionals were hired for the job of translating the Amharic interviews into English. The professionals were graduates of Teaching English as a Foreign Languages, Journalism and English Literature. All of them hold graduate degrees in their area of specialization.

As with the secretaries, the translators too signed commitment to data confidentiality and consequently destroyed the data after the job was done. Clear orientation was provided to the translators regarding issues to consider while translating the documents. The translation was not left to the mercy of the translators but every of the document was edited by the researcher. This involved the process of checking, crosschecking and validating the documents. The researcher was frequently doing these jobs by comparing and contrasting the ideas included in both Amharic and translated versions of the interview. Final hard and soft copy of the translations were collected and stored for analysis.

Qualitative data analysis and management

After all the relevant qualitative data were saved and organized in appropriate folders, the first task was to thoroughly describe the demographic profile and relevant intercultural background of the interview respondents. This is vital to better understand perspectives held by the participants as demographic variables (age, gender, educational status, language, ethnicity, experience, etc) are significant determinants of intercultural perceptions and competences. For this purpose, comprehensive descriptions and narrations of the three groups of respondents are presented in the next chapter (Chapter Five). Added to this, descriptions of the research setting were also included in the same chapter. After describing the research setting and the participants, the qualitative data generated from the three data sources were made ready for analysis. The next step was to choose appropriate qualitative data analysis methodology/theory.

Grounded theory methodology (GTM): Due to its interdisciplinary nature, intercultural communication seeks inspiration by theories and methods of analysis from various corners of the social sciences and humanities. Given the general recognition of qualitative research methods and analysis in this field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2006), the interdisciplinary nature of qualitative intercultural communication research generates a wide range of theories and methods of data analysis. Most researches witness that there is no such thing as a specialized qualitative tool-box for intercultural communication (e.g. Otten & Geppert, 2009). It is evident that intercultural researches adopt or adapt methods of data analysis helpful in other fields.

Taking this into consideration, the current study was guided by Grounded theory of data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory methodology (GTM) is simply a systematic generation of theory that contains both inductive and deductive thinking. *Constructivist Grounded Theory Method* of data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, 1990) was believed to be the compatible data analysis and interpretive framework for this particular study. It is both approach to and method of qualitative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994). It allows the exploration of various theories in different fields and the emergence of new or deeper interpretation of intercultural experiences (Sheridan & Storch, 2009: 1).

Among the attempts made to apply GTM in intercultural research, Sheridan and Storch (2009) presented a comprehensive linking of the theory in their study of intercultural communication among migrants. However, it is quite evident that intercultural research with Grounded Theory was advocated in the early history of the field. For example, Blackman (1983) had already recognized the merits of applying Grounded Theory methodological issues. He argued that such application would significantly help to contribute to intercultural research in terms of theory, doing research in systematic manner and charting of researcher's experiences and perspectives resulting from intercultural contacts.

Consequently, as this study attempts to grasp a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication in higher educational context from corpus of data generated through interview, FGD and ethnographic field notes, the choice of this methodology is practical and scientific. In line with the argument of Strauss & Corbin (1998), the researcher had enough contact with the study area and thus the theory can help him to draw on his experiences during his stay at AAU.In sum, GTM helped the current study to develop a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication, arrive at sound conclusions and include researcher's reflection in the course of the study.

Data analysis with NVIVO 9 software: A qualitative data analysis software program NVIVO was employed to help the organizational and analysis of data generated using the qualitative methods. The computer program was helpful to move beyond description to theorizing while satisfying standards of requirements of Grounded Theory and meeting the desired research goals of the study. Scholars (e.g. Bazeley & Richards, 2000; Gibbs, 2002; Morse & Richards, 2002) described the benefits of using NVIVO software program in managing, analyzing, and theorizing based on qualitative data generated from interviews, focus group discussions and ethnographic field notes. For this particular study, as previously indicated, GTM would be used to guide the analysis of understanding intercultural communication perceptions, practices and competences held by participants in the research scene. In the following few paragraphs, description and narration of how the Theory was used in NVIVO and the complete description of the process of data analysis is presented.

In the analysis, the software program NVIVO facilitative the iterative process of Grounded Theory in several ways. The researcher made the interview documents, FGD and his ethnographic notes and documents ready both in hard and softcopies for analysis. He had already accustomed himself to the texts through reading, rereading, organizing and filing the documents. The researcher recoded the documents in the software. As the data were integrated into the project, memos were attached to interview and FGD documents and coding categories. The program allows for open coding, axial coding (making links between codes), coding according to demographic profiles, and exploring of ideas visually with a modeler. The program also allows text searches, ideas to be linked, data coded and ideas to be drawn while being able to access the original data as needed. Supported by this software, the researcher constantly read, asked questions, interpreted the data, decided what to code and used the computer program to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the process. However, this does not mean the computer program did the job of analyzing and generating theory. Rather it was used as a tool to facilitate the job. The job of managing, reading, coding, analyzing and developing theory was entirely left to the researcher.

In this project, the interviews and FGD were the main source of data and were saved as individual documents in NVIVO 9. Ethnographic field notes and University documents were saved as document memos. Saving these documents as memos allowed the analysis to distinguish them from interviews and FDGs which were the main focus for the analysis. As part of the process, internal annotations and external files were attached to any piece of text in the transcript to record referential information that were vital for context but could interrupt the flow if placed as text in the document. Internal annotations, on the other hand, are brief and conceptual similar to footnotes. For instance, when an interviewee reflects on his perception of power relations on the campus, an internal annotation was used to note his/her perspective. The external annotations were usually larger files which could be in pictorial, visual and audio formats. For example, audio records from the interview were used when it was important to have word-by-word reference. Furthermore, contextual information and researcher's notes were also linked to the documents in the form of memo. Unlike internal and external annotations, linked documents were coded directly. Compounded interlinking of documents were created using colors, formatting, linking annotations, memos documents and nodes. This was vital to see the conceptual links and

associations in the data, an important element in GTM (Weaver & Atkinson, 1994; Fieldring & Lee, 1998).

In a nutshell, the qualitative data analysis process in the current study followed five major steps: (1) coding, (2) writing memos, (3) going more than categorizing, (4) attributes and (5) moving from describing to theorizing. The first process, started with open coding or dissecting the data into concrete parts, examining the data for similarities and differences, and grouping together conceptually similar data to form categories. Conceptual names to categories (referred in NVIVO as node names) were active to encourage the researcher to think about process rather than mere descriptions (Glaser, 1978). Participants own words were also used to stay true to the data. Monitoring consistent use of codes was achieved through two functions: one that records the researcher-defined description of a node and one that allows the researcher to attach a memo directly to the node.

The second task was writing memos which were essential to the development of theory. Through this, the researcher moved from a descriptive mode of placing conceptually similar issues together to thinking about analytically about the emerging themes. Consistent with Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), different memo names were created to facilitate thinking at different levels. Memos referring to each interview were named after the transcript name and linked directly to the transcript. Memos, in Grounded Theory, serve various purposes including clarification, category saturation, theoretical development, and transparency. Without memos, qualitative data analysis will shy conceptual density and integration (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). NVIVO allows various features to write, color, sort and link memos with documents.

Thirdly, the coding and the memo writing steps were followed by analytical techniques such as questioning, detailed word-by-word and line by line analysis, comparing and contrasting examples and cases and being aware of implicit assumptions. These were some of the techniques used to move from mere descriptions to theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the early stages of coding, the text search tool was used to search previously coded documents for instances of a newly developed category. With the NVIVO facilities, coding stripes facilitate the task of comparing categories. In other words, it was possible to view nodes in comparison with each other. As Grounded Theory is characterized by constant comparative method which includes comparing

incidents in each category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), comparison between nodes were made since they were organized in hierarchical structure. This made finding nodes easier, assisted in viewing categories in relation to other categories, and made matrix searches easier and facilitated higher order coding. Making comparisons at categories or subcategories level (axial coding to Strauss & Corbin, 1998), helped the analysis to move from thick description to explaining the phenomena of interest.

In the fourth step, demographic information were stored as attributes and used to search data and compare responses. Demographic information for interview participants were recorded as document attribute, thus attaching the participants' profile to his or her entire interview. Therefore, the researcher can search, for example, for all references to intercultural competence by a teacher (as indicated by the attributes attached to participant's name node). Clicking on each individual case reveals all the text for that particular interview participant. The last step, moving from describing to theorizing, involves various tools including conditional/consequential matrix, paradigm model and descriptive storyline. Matrix is simply a heuristic diagram to assist the researcher in identifying conditions and consequences of the core categories. Core category is the central theme or problem of interest that emerges from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the current study, it includes intercultural competence, context, power relations, conflicts, communication styles and ethnic/cultural identity salience.

The second Grounded Theory heuristic tool, the paradigm model, was used to structure the data in more systematic manner. This helped the researcher to guide his understanding of the main intercultural issues generated from the data, primarily from the interview and the FGD participants. The modeler within NVIVO facilitated this stage by allowing direct access to the data. Added to these tools, writing storyline (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was employed to further understand how the concepts in the data fit together. This was an important step to verbalize the main concepts and the relationships among themselves. Working through these grounded theory tools, a preliminary model of intercultural communication in higher educational context was developed. To check how each case fits to the emerging theory and what difference exist among category of respondents, the research returned to the data time and gain. This helped him to refine and

develop the model, more specifically an Integrative Model to Intercultural Communication in Context.

The quantitative study

In the first phase of the study, the intention was to grasp a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication in higher educational and develop a working model for the context. The finding of this phase was used to assist the development of the quantitative survey. After analysis of the qualitative study, clear concepts and themes were identified. The major themes were: (1) intercultural competence, (2) ethnic/cultural identity salience, (3) context of communication, (4) power relations, (5) communication styles and (6) conflict styles. These constructs were defined and used as analytical tools for further investigation into intercultural communication in the University context. Based on the findings, the following specific research questions were formulated to guide the quantitative component of the study:

1. What is the level of intercultural competency (that is, knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) demonstrated by the youth?
2. How do the youth perceive their personal qualities/characterstics in their own ethnic culture and how do others perceive them in a multicultural environment?
3. What is the level of students' proficiency in the working languages?
4. With whom do the youth communicate, form relationships with and collaborate with on the task of mutual interest?
5. What are the most preferred intercultural communication styles among the youth?
6. What is the level of ethnic and cultural identity salience demonstrated by the youth?
7. What are the major intercultural conflict styles preferred by the youth?
8. Are there statistically significant differences among the youth regarding intercultural variables as a result of socio-demographic variables?
9. What are the relationships between intercultural communication variables?

Developing and piloting the Survey Form

DeVellis' (2003) eight-step guideline in scale development was followed to answer the research questions and guide the preparation of the Survey Form. These are: determine what to measure, generate item pool, determine the format for measurement, review item pool, include validation items, pilot the items, evaluate the items and produce the final scale. In response to the first question in the guideline, the above research questions were prepared to determine what the study intended to measure. In this step, the researcher should clearly identify the constructs so that the contents of the scales would be concrete and valid. As indicated above, six major themes/constructs were identified and represented in the questions. At this point, the researcher had to make several decisions concerning the specificity of the constructs that would be measured and whether he should create a new survey or adopt from the existing scales. This step is similar to the second step proposed by Devellis. Since there are enormous list of scales and measurements that address the constructs to be measured, the researcher sought to combine reliable scales to give a more comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication. Informed by the results of the qualitative phase of the study and up-to-date literature, the researcher prepared various scales addressing the constructs at hand. The scales preferred to measure these constructs/variables are described under the components of the Survey Form in the subsequent subsection.

In response to the third step of DeVellis' (2003) guidelines, various formats of the Likert scale were prepared. Each of the scales was determined to have properly waited items and successful response formats. In the forth step, the guideline recommends having the initial item pool reviewed by experts to confirm or invalidate the construction of the scales. For this purpose, the draft Survey Form was accessed to five English language teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at AAU. The meeting with these professionals improved the language and the contents of some of the scales. Besides, the teachers argued that students might not respond to open-ended items especially if many items are included on a questionnaire. Therefore, open-ended items were discarded from the scale. All in all, the teachers who reviewed the Survey Form evaluated it as clear, concise, and highly relevant to the constructs to be measured. This step helped to secure better face validity of the scales prepared.

In addition, the Form was pilot tested to check reliability and practicality of the instrument. For pilot testing the Form, twenty-seven students attending Communication course in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature were selected. The researcher was offering a course to two groups of third year students. After the pilot Survey Forms were completed and returned, the following lessons were taken to improve the quality of the instrument. First, the language difficulty level of the questionnaire was revised. Some of the items were found to be difficult for the students to comprehend. With discussions and consultation with the consulting teachers, the difficulty level of the items was made to meet the comprehension level of the students in Ethiopian higher educational institutions without change of contents of the scales. Some of the instructions were rewritten and reformatted. For example, instruction assessing host languages proficiency was rewritten and the format was revised. The improved version of the instruction was clear, simple and rated logically during the actual administering of the questionnaire. Added to these, the pilot study revealed the fact that the Survey Form demanded more dissent time than the planned one hour in-class activity. Initially, the questionnaire was piloted in the classroom but students could not finish answering the items on the questionnaire. Students needed more time to finish it. As a result, they were allowed to take the Form home and bring it the following day. Lastly, rough calculation of the reliability of each of the scales on the Form was calculated and items were revised for better alpha levels. After items and scales were revised, the Survey Form was made ready for administering to the sample of respondents.

Survey participants

During the study period, the total number of undergraduate students at AAU was 22,409 of which 6651 were female students (22.79%) and 15,759 were male students (77.1%). In the study campus, the total students' population was 7000 (Central Registrar's document). The campus hosted varied number of students across faculties: College of Education (2583 students), Institute of Language Studies (1880 students), College of Social Sciences (1051 students), Law School (883 students) and School of Informatics (603 students). Out of this figure, 350 main campus students were randomly selected applying stratified random sampling technique based on field of study. Based on the data collected from the Office of the Registrar and respective departments, a proportionate number of

students were sampled from each program to respond to the Survey Form. Interviewed students and those who were considered for the pilot study were not invited to take part in the survey. The highest percentage of the respondents (44.1%) was sampled from the largest college of the target campus, College of Education. That is followed by Institute of Language Studies and College of Social Sciences each contributing to 30.8% and 12.0% of the research participants. The rest were from Law School and School of Informatics which account 8% and 5% of the respondents respectively.

Three hundred fifty copies of the instrument were duplicated and made ready for administering. These copied questionnaires were sealed in envelops and were delivered to sample of respondents through their respective teachers. Teachers were contacted to administer the questionnaires to the sample of respondents. This technique was used to increase the number of questionnaires to be returned. It is obvious that questionnaire return-rate is an integral part of any survey research. As the teachers had day to day contact with the students, they could collect the completed questionnaires on time. In addition, students feel more responsible to complete the questionnaires and return them on time if the questionnaires are offered to them by their teachers than other people whom they had no contact at all. Using a checklist provided by the researcher, the teachers were able to keep record of the distributed and collected questionnaires. The teachers returned 299 completed questionnaires. These questionnaires were collected from all the teachers and filed immediately. The completed questionnaires were recorded with respect to the code given to each respondent.

The Survey Form: variables and scales

The Survey Form is the main instrument of data collection for the quantitative phase of this study. This Form is made up of instructions, introductory remarks, items assessing demographic data and scales measuring variables of intercultural communication addressed in the current study. The Form starts with briefing the purpose of the Survey and describing the contents of the same. It goes further to explain respondents' commitment to responding to items of the questionnaire. It discusses the fact that the questions could be answered in any order and at different moments.

The questionnaire declares researcher's commitment to data confidentiality and the response given would be used for this research purpose only. In case respondents had questions or complaints, email and telephone addresses of the researcher were indicated on the Form. Apart from the introductory and general instruction sections, the Survey Form was made up of socio-demographic items and seven various scales assessing intercultural communication variables. The first section accessed demographic data using open-ended items (for details see Appendix 4.3).

To measure and describe the major themes of intercultural communication identified in the qualitative stage of the study, the variables were represented on the Survey Form with various formats of Likert scale. Respondents were supposed to rate themselves against the items on the Likert scales with response values that range from three to five options. The variables were conceptualized and defined to represent the constructs addressed in the current work. Conceptual discussions of the variables were presented in the third chapter of this dissertation. In this section, however, brief description of the contents of the variables and the items on scales are elaborated. Added to this, the variables are also discussed visa-vise the research questions answered through these scales. Reliability estimates of the scales used to measure each of the variables are indicated along with the results of the study in Chapter Eight. The following table summarizes the variables, the respective research questions and scales used to assess the variables.

Table 4.2: Summary of variables, research questions and measuring scales

S/N	Variables	Research questions	Scales and items
1	Communication styles	What are the most preferred intercultural communication styles among the youth?	Three-point Likert scale (39 items)
2	Conflict styles	What are the major intercultural conflict styles preferred by the youth?	Four-point Likert scale (20 items)
3	Ethnic/cultural identity salience	What is the level of ethnic /cultural identity salience demonstrated by the youth?	Four-point Likert scale (10 items)
4	Intercultural areas	With whom do the youth communicate, form relationships with and collaborate for the task of mutual interest?	Six-point Likert scale (24 items)
5	Intercultural competency	What is the level of intercultural competency (that is, knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) demonstrated by students at AAU?	Five-points Likert scale (50 items)
6	Host language proficiency	What is the level of students' proficiency in the working languages?	Six options rating scale (2 items)
7	Personal qualities	How do the youth perceive their personal qualities/characterstics in their own ethnic culture and how do others perceive them in a multicultural environment?	Five-point Likert scale (30 items)

Intercultural competency: A number of intercultural competence assessment tools and models have been recommended in the literature usually from competence research perspectives (e.g. Ruben, 1976; Byram, 1997; Benette, 1993). However, most of them shy to provide comprehensive and holistic assessment tools to address various dimensions of intercultural competence. Extensive review of the available ICC assessment tools was made to ascertain areas of convergence and divergence regarding intercultural communication. Comparing these findings with the themes discovered in the course of the current study, Fantini's (2005) intercultural competence assessment tool become the most comprehensive and theoretically matching the perspective held. Based on the themes generated from the qualitative study and guidelines from this construct, a more holistic and comprehensive tool was prepared. A 50-items intercultural competency assessment scale was produced to measure participant's perceptions of their intercultural abilities.

This five-point Likert scale was composed of five major intercultural competencies: intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, intercultural skills and cultural awareness. The number of items prepared for each competency can be summarized as: knowledge (13 items), skills (9 items), attitude (15 items) and awareness (14 items). Participants were required to grade themselves using the scale from 0 (not at all), 1(very poor), 2(poor), 3(satisfactory), 4 (high) to 5 (very high) against items of the scale.

The knowledge component of the scale assessed students' knowledge of cultural and intercultural issues. The items addressed issues that range from asking general questions on their knowledge of their own culture and other cultures in Ethiopia and their experiences on intercultural interaction in the University. The items requested respondents to rate their abilities to recall, cite, compare, contrast and discuss the rules for individual and social interaction and knowledge of social groups in Ethiopia. It also measured students' knowledge of culture, historical and political realities in Ethiopia and other related issues important to understand intergroup interaction in diverse environments in Ethiopia. In line with the recommendation of Fantini (2005) and Byram (1997), the items on the scale included information about students' knowledge of people, cultures, communication rules, interactional context and expectations governing interaction with members of other cultures.

The second component, intercultural attitudes, measured students' willingness to interact, learn, show interest, reflect and deal with various dimensions of intercultural experiences in the University environment. As this refers to the ability to relativise one's self and value others (Byram, 1997; Risager, 2007), this component of the scale explored the attitude students demonstrate while interacting with people from other cultural groups, learn other languages, show interest in learning other cultures, adapt in a multicultural environment and communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds. Intercultural attitudes represented in the items comprised of willingness, curiosity and readiness to disqualify beliefs about other cultures and beliefs about one's own. This means willingness to relativise perceptions and behavior and devalue ethnocentric views. These abilities were represented on fifteen-items scale.

Intercultural skills, on the other hand, were assessed using nine items that explored students' ability to interact effectively and efficiently in multiethnic and multicultural environments. This included their competence in interpreting events from other cultures, acquire new knowledge of culture and communication from interactions, and demonstrate flexibility while interacting with intercultural cultural frame of references. This component of the scale involved items on students competence to adapt to multiethnic campus environment, engage in meaningful dialogue with people from diverse background, resolve conflicts and misunderstandings when they arose and monitor they behavior during and after interaction. All the items on this section attempted to measure respondents rating of their actual communicative performance in intercultural higher educational context.

The last component, intercultural awareness, was assessed using thirteen items that aim at describing students' cultural awareness. This refers to students' ability to use perspectives, practices, and products in one's own culture and in other culture to make evaluation (Byram, 1997; Risager, 2007). For this, the items invited students to rate how much they realized the importance and consequences of their perceptions about self and others in the University context. Specifically, they were asked to evaluate how they were viewed by members of their culture and others, how their ethnic identity affects their interaction and their personal choices influence their interactions. Added to these, the items required students to reflect and critically evaluate their roles, practices, perceptions and interactional behavior in the University environment. The items required on students' ability to critically evaluate themselves, consequence of their perceptions and intercultural interaction with students from diverse background.

Personal qualities: Based on the results of the qualitative study and Fantini (2005), fifteen attributes of intercultural communication were included on the Survey Form. During the qualitative phase of the study, participants were asked to list down personal qualities or attributes of an interculturally competent individual. These attributes were relevant and appropriate to respondents' intercultural experiences based on their responses. The attributes included: tolerance, flexibility, cooperativeness, sense of humor, politeness, adaptability, communicativeness, openness, tolerance for ambiguity and differences, motivation, self-reliant,

empathy, clear sense of self and respect. Three of the attributes were presented in negative formats (these are, intolerant, lack of sense of humor and impolite) and the other items were all stated in positive. However, during the analysis the negative responses were transformed into their positive version. Using these attributes, a scale with two components was prepared. In the first part, respondents were asked to rate themselves against the fifteen attributes as they were perceived in their own culture. In the same way, the second parts of the scale required respondents to rate themselves against the same attributes but as respondents were perceived by others at AAU. This was prepared to compare and contrast how students were perceived in their own culture and in the host culture (AAU). Respondents were expected to rate the attributes based on a five point Likert scale with response values: 0 (not at all), 1(very low), 2(low), 3(moderate), 4(high) and 5(very high)).

Perceived host language proficiency: To assess the perception of students regarding their proficiency in the languages of communication and academics in the University context, a two items scale was prepared. Respondents were asked to rate their English and Amharic proficiencies. On the scale, six options of language ability were provided for each language. The options were: (1) no ability at all, (2) able to communicate only in a very limited capacity, (3) able to satisfy basic survival needs, (4) able to communicate on some concrete topics and to satisfy most work needs, (5) able to speak fluently and accurately, and (6) proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. Respondents were supposed to circle any of these options to show their ability of the respective languages. It is obvious that Amharic is the official language of the Federal Government of Ethiopia while English is the medium of instruction in higher education in Ethiopia. As a result, these languages were considered as the host languages of the University.

Intercultural areas: The other intercultural variable assessed in this study is intercultural area. This refers to the area individuals communicate, form relationships with and with whom they collaborate to work a task of mutual interest (Fantini, 2005). With whom intercultural communicators interact is a very significant factor to explain the nature of interaction. On the top of this, what language they prefer to communicate is also other determinant of their intercultural interactions. Assessment of the nature of collaboration and with whom students prefer to

collaborate are also vital to consider. To have a comprehensive understanding of this variable, a scale of twenty-four items were prepared focusing on three major areas: (1) In the University, with whom college students established good relationship with, (2) with whom they were able to communicate in Amharic, English and own language, and (3) with whom they collaborate to accomplish tasks of mutual interest. The scale expected respondents to rate these areas against six point Likert scale that range from: 0 (not all), 1 (very limited), 2 (limited), 3(satisfactory), 4 (well) to 5(extremely well).

Intercultural Communication styles: The other variable considered for this study was communication style demonstrated by the youth.   The intention was to describe the communication styles preferred by students while they are interacting in their own culture and the host environment. For this purpose, thiry-nine items were prepared and represented on the Survey Form. The scale assessed communication styles students employed while interacting with students from their own culture and with those in the University. For the sake of comparison and contrast, items with similar contents were roughly divided into two groups and respondents were required to rate themselves against items into two sections (in own culture and host culture (AAU)). Respondents were required to show their agreements or disagreements against the items on three point Likert scale with the options: (1) Yes, (2) No and (3) Not sure. The major communication styles represented in the scale included: direct, indirect, elaborated and understated.

Ethnic/cultural identity salience: In order to measure ethnic identity and cultural identity salience, a four point Likert scale (that ranges from 4: strongly agree; 3: agree; 2: disagree; to 1: strongly disagree) of ten items was prepared based on Ting-Toomey et al. (2000). Five of the items were made to measure ethnic identity salience whereas the rest five were prepared to measure cultural identity salience. As far as the review of literature is concerned, different number of items were used by different scholars to measure ethnic/cultural identity salience.

Intercultural conflict resolution styles: The other variable of the study was intercultural conflict resolution styles (conflict styles in short) preferred by students at AAU. For this purpose, a twenty-items Likert scale was designed based on the scale recommended by Ting-Toomey et al. (2000).

The items of the original scale were reduced, revised and modified to fit the cultural and contextual realities in Ethiopia. It was also modified based on the output of the qualitative study. The scale was rated on a four points Likert scale with response values ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) moderately agree, to (4) strongly agree. The scale invited respondent to rate how they communicate in various intercultural conflict situations. The scale assessed five conflict styles: integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging and compromising. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement for every item on the scale values. Their responses indicated the types of conflict styles preferred by them when encountering intercultural conflicts.

Quantitative data analysis

Concerning data cleaning, a rough examination of the Survey Form showed that some items on some of the scales were not completed for unknown reasons. Some respondents jumped some of the items or completed some of the scales irresponsibly. Therefore, such respondents were rejected and they were not considered in the study. Given the sensitivity of the topics addressed in this study, it was not surprising that some respondents fail to answer some of the items. Respondents who fail to answer majority of the items on the scales were excluded from the study. As a result of the variation among the respondents' incomplete responses, the number of participants considered for various scales varied accordingly. All in all, respondents who provided complete answers to the items on the scales were considered for the study.

As regards to data feeding, Ms Office Excel 2007 was used to code, save, retrieve and manage the data generated through the Survey Form. Once the data were filed and ready for computer feeding, each of the questionnaires was coded using three digit numbers (from 001 to 299). New MS Excel files were opened for each of the scales representing the variables. The responses on each of the scales were logged on the horizontal column of the data sheet on the Excel while the code of each of them was written down on the left most vertical column. The responses saved in each Excel file were checked and crosschecked to verify the data feeding process was accurate. This process was also important to accustom the researcher to the row data. After all the responses were entered in the computer, the excel sheets were saved as hard and soft copies.

With regards to methods of data analysis, a number of statistical techniques were used to describe and discuss relationships, associations, predictions and differences among intercultural communication variables addressed in this study. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software was employed to assist the process of data analysis, presentation and interpretation. The data saved on Ms Excel documents were transferred and processed using SPSS. The analytical techniques applied to data from the Survey Form included: (1) Descriptive statistics, (2) frequency distributions, (3) Chi-square (4) T-test and (5) Correlations, and (6) Analysis of variance namely One-way ANOVA, Repeated Measure ANOVA and Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA). Descriptive statistics (using means and standard deviations) of the variables were calculated to see the observable values. These would help to obtain general description of the variables under investigation. The descriptions were used to compare and contrast observable similarities, differences and relationships among intercultural variables. For statistically accuracy, the above listed techniques of data analysis were used. For example, T-test was employed to see differences of means (e.g. to test the mean differences between male and female respondents in their perception of their ethnic identity salience). This test was important to prove if the difference between the means were statistically acceptable.

Oneway ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was also employed to see the differences among ethnic groups with respect to intercultural variables. For example, to see if there was statistically significant difference among ethnic groups with respect to intercultural competence, one-way ANOVA was employed. On the other hand, Two-way ANOVA (Repeated Measures) was used to see if the difference among mean values of variables was statistically acceptable. For example, it was used to check if there was acceptable difference among the mean values referring various conflict styles. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was also used to prove if the co-variation between variable was statistically justifiable. Other statistical tests and tools were also used to explain the variables treated in this study. Finally, charts, tables, figures and graphs were used to present the outputs of the research. Every presentation is followed by interpretations and discussions.

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY COUNTRY, RESEARCH SETTING AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the research setting and the interview participants' profile. It also offers general information about the study country. The macro-level contextual issues which might influence understanding are also discussed. More specifically, sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic and demographic information of the target country are briefed. Basically, for better understanding of intercultural communication practices in a given context, it is indispensable to have a clearer picture of the socio-political history and the current political culture of the target country. The socio-political sphere is an umbrella that holds the prevailing worldviews and thoughts of a society in a particular geographical or perceptual territory. Failure not to provide historical and political realities, run the risk of perpetuating the existing relation between cultural groups within a nation.

Description of the research site in a mixed-methods research is important for various reasons. First of all, understanding intercultural communication perceptions and practices demand a comprehensive knowledge of the research setting. The conduciveness of a context of interaction depends on the set up of the interactive context. For example, having more time to stay and work together in particular working environment influence the rate of interaction. Communication in a higher education context where students study and live on the same campus would not be similar to those who study but live in separate locations. This is because physical proximity plays a significant role in communication. Secondly, as every context has its own unique aspects, it is important to value the nature of the institutions under study. For example, a higher education as a context of communication is not similar to a business context since both have different missions and arrangements. Every institution has its own unique organizational behavior and culture of communication. In sum, understanding the setting is vital to grasp a better picture of intercultural communication in the context identified for the study.

Similarly, understanding of intercultural communication is hardly possible without recognizing demographic profile of the research participants. There are a number of socio-demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, place of birth, ethnicity, language and social roles) that influence

perceptions and practices. In this chapter, brief overview of the interview participants is provided. Further details which contribute to understanding the perspectives of the respective participant are also included. The interviewees are described in three categories based on roles (students, teachers and university management). It is obvious that the role people play influence their communicative behavior. Added to the attention given to participants' roles, brief descriptions of their ethnicity, regional origin and language are considered for comparing and contrasting how the issues under investigation are perceived and practiced. In addition to these factors, participants' educational background and area of specialization are also discussed to see the perception of participants with regards to intercultural communication. The descriptions also include the number of years participants were associated with the research area. Moreover, previous intercultural experiences and beliefs are also considered in the descriptions. The factors considered in the description are thought to influence participants' perception and practice of intercultural communication.

Study country: Sociopolitical history and political culture in Ethiopia

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) is a federation of nine regional states (and two city administrations) structured on ethnic lines and cultural boundaries. Ethiopia is Africa's oldest independent country and apart from a five-year occupation by Mussolini's Italy, it has never been colonized (BBC, 2011). It is located between E 3° and 15° N latitudes and 33° and 48° longitudes (see Figure 5.1. below). Most fact books such as UN (2009) estimate Ethiopia's population as 85 million. However, the total reported population of the country is 80 million (CSA, 2008). The population is characterized by a complex pattern of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. With respect to ethnicity, it has been difficult to trace a complete map of all ethnic groups residing in the country. It is usually assumed that there are over eighty groups having distinct cultural traditions. There are more than 75 languages spoken as mother tongue (Hudson, 2003). Ethiopian languages belong to Cushitic, Semitic, Omotic or Nilo-Saharan language families of the Afro-Asiatic super-language family. Regarding history, the country traces its origin back to the Abysinnian Kingdom that emerged in the northern highlands in the fourth century BC.

Figure 5.1: Map of Ethiopia

Courtesy: CIA (online)

Regarding history and politics, the history of modern Ethiopia and its state formation have been contended by diverging political forces which have been influencing the political ideology and the culture in the country. These have been a major cause for political friction and current political discourse in the country. Its history is marked by completion between northern aristocratic dynasties and conflict with southerners and Muslim emirates from nearby lowlands. The notion of *'nation-building'* was attempted by northern kings but it was a northern emperor called Menelik II (1866-1889) who was able to put the notion of centralized Ethiopia into effect. The Emperor and his army occupied Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Gurage, Welayita and other ethnic groups into present day Ethiopia. In the process, this Abyssinian Emperor was able to create the modern empire state of Ethiopia (Bahiru, 1991; Teshale, 1995; Messay, 1999). Nevertheless, the expansion towards southern regions was accompanied by cultural dominance of the core Abysinnian elites and exploitation of the people of the south (Clapham, 2002; Bahiru, 1994; Teshale, 1995).

However, this *nation-building* process and the history of modern Ethiopia are analyzed in three different terms. To the first group, the legacy of the imperial period is a source of pride often for northerners/Amharas and their associates. They argue that present day Ethiopia would have been inconceivable without the imposition of cultural and linguistic values of Amhara ethnic group over all others (Merera, 2006). The second group characterizes Ethiopian state formation as a *national*

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oppression in which the imperial regime deprived ethnic groups the right to exercise their human and democratic rights. This thesis came into the political discourse during Ethiopian Students Movement (ESM) of the 1960 and advocated by ethnic based nationalists including the ruling party, Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The third group of elites conceives the process as colonial by which Abysinnian settler class occupied a large part of the country. Such view is publicly advocated by ethno-nationalist rebel groups such as Oromo Liberation Movement (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). These three contending political ideologies captured the political discourse in the country and the political parties are lined up on these three ideologies.

It is important to overview the major political episodes to understand these ideologies and the argument of various political forces. The first is the 1970s revolution which overthrew the imperial regime and introduced the country with Military-socialist dictatorship. Ethiopian Students Movement at Addis Ababa University (AAU) and schools across the nation demanded for political reform, land for the tender, cultural and linguistic freedom, and the right for self-determination in Maxisit-Leninist and anti-imperialist terms. Sooner, the movement progressed from phase that demanded reform to the goal of dismantling the imperial regime (Balsvik, 2007). The first well organized Marxsist-Leninist position on the question of Ethiopian 'nations' came in an article by Wallelign Mokonnen, a leader of the student movement, who argued that Ethiopia was not yet a nation but an Amhara-ruled collection of a dozen nationalities with their own languages and cultures. Walelign challenged that Ethiopian unity is rather a simple imposition of Amhara culture and language on all other nationalities. The student movement played a significant role in creating political consciousness and drawing a new direction to political discourse in the country. Instead of creating a genuine democratic revolution and answer the questions of ethnic groups, Ethiopia became a socialist country and was a one-party state ruled by Mengistu Hailemariam (1974-1991) who promoted militaristic nationalism by means of authoritarian and highly centralized system. The struggle for collective and democratic rights of ethnic groups was thwarted by the socialist military group which changed the political uprising into bloodsheds.

Desperately, a handful of AAU students and associates joined armed struggle against the Mengistu regime. The regime committed genocide and mass killings through national campaigns known as 'red terror' and 'white terror.' As summarized by Loukeris (2004-2005), these mass killings rather intensified armed struggle against the regime by a number of opposition groups such as: ethno-nationalists (Tigray People's Liberation Front and Oromo Liberation Front) and Marxist- state nationalists (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party). Though divided, the political groups were to large extent products of AAU students' movement and Ethiopian students' Diaspora in Western Europe and the United States. In 1991, the ethno-nationalist fronts led by Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPDRF) under the control of Tigray People Liberation Front over (TPLF) over turned the military dictator and controlled the political power in Addis Ababa. At the same time, Eritrean People's Liberation Front came to power in Asmara and declared independence of Eritrea after a thirty year old secessionist war against imperial and military regimes of Ethiopia with approval of the ruling party, EPRDF.

As the second episode, the transformation in political structure and constitutional arrangements since 1991 has been radical and unique in the history of modern Ethiopia. The new structure introduced ethnic-federalism and the politics of ethnicity as a solution for the long-standing political turmoil in once highly centralized unitary state. The new Constitution (1995) is cited as unique and often controversial for the fact that it is the first of its kind in introducing the principle of unconditional self-determination up to secession (see article 39) for every *nation*, *nationality* and *peoples*. It also uses ethnicity as its fundamental organizing principle. The bottom line was to create a democratic multicultural and multinational country and to put an end to centralized authoritarian regime. The Constitution presents itself as a deal unreservedly entered into by *nations*, *nationalities* and *peoples* of Ethiopia. The Constitution defines these three terms as group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar custom, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly territory. The constitutional definition of nationality is imprecise and gives no standard criteria for distinguishing between these three terms. The terminologies can be used as required to refer to ethnic groups within population ranging from thousands to several millions as though they whereof the same order (Turton, 2006).

The Ethiopian model of ethnic federalism and the current political arrangement is viewed by the three political ideologists differently (Merera, 2006). To Ethiopian nationalists, the new model of ethnic-federalism is a conscious tactic to undermine national identity and pride following from the history and continuity of the Abysinnian Empire and Ethiopian state. They see Article 39 as an intentional step backward from *nation-building* process and as a proof of EPRDF's anti-Ethiopian position. However, secessionists and other ethno-political parties perceive the political transformation and provisions of the constitution as a lip-stick on the pig and argue that the constitution cannot be put in action and EPRDF has not departed from the culture of minority dominance politics. They contend that Article 39 cannot be put in action as far as EPRDF is in power. However, the ruling party and its associate view the new politics structure as the national therapy for holding multinational Ethiopia collectively and they see the creation of ethnic-based political structure as the only meaningful approach for defusing ethnic discontents. The national politics is dominated by these three conceptions, and the political culture is characterized by lack of cross party dialogue and fearful relationships. Even though the country has gained a lot in economic terms, it has been criticized for its human rights records by international human rights advocates such as Amnesty International and Human Right Watch.

Ethiopian higher education context: An overview

African universities share a number of similarities. They depart from universities in Europe and the United States on a number of grounds. Most of the universities were established around the time of liberation from colonialism circa in 1960. Despite dramatic history of crises, African universities expanded rapidly and were able to produce professionals who could assume various roles in their societies. Although this section focuses on Ethiopian higher education, the themes and facts included are also reflected in similar universities. For instance, in most African universities, students study, dine and reside on campuses and these have offered them a unique forum for discussions, formation of groups and activists who challenge autocratic and dictatorial leadership. African university students have struggled for democracy, fairness and building processes. Use of torture against university students on African campuses is not uncommon (Balsvik, 2007). There has always been a destructive relationship between universities and states in Africa. This has

interrupted and adversely affected institutional autonomy and freedom of speech in most academic institutions. As a result, universities are often closed all of a sudden and police occupy campuses.

In Ethiopia, higher education began with the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950. However, until the final decade of the twentieth century, higher education in Ethiopia was not given due attention, its curriculum was not always relevant to the country's problems nor was its capacity in line with the country's needs for trained individuals (MoE, 2002). Concerning students body, the universites were male dominated, predominately Christian and attracted students from few ethnic groups (Balsvik, 2005). Apart from foreign teachers and administrators, the Ethiopian university students' ethnic composition was predominately homogenous until a couple of decades ago. However, very recently, Ethiopian higher education has transformed significantly in terms of composition, objectives and interactional behavior. Higher Education Proclamation No. 351/2003 (FDRE, 2003) expect universities to expand university education services that are free from discrimination on grounds of race, religion, sex, politics and other similar grounds.

The changes in political structure and educational ideology brought a lot of optimism in Ethiopian higher education. For example, Ethiopia has dramatically increased the number of universities it has ten years ago into significant figure. The number of public higher education institutions has also grown from only two universities eight years ago to twenty-one in 2009/2010 and more are planned to be established (MoE, 2010). New universities have been established in almost all regional states admitting students from all states. The nation has also facilitated and encouraged the establishment of private institutions of higher education and there are now more than sixty such institutions. Added to this, there has been a steady increase in the number of students in higher education. Between 1994 and 2002 alone there was a 45% increase (MoE, 2002). In December 2001 the government reported that the total number of students enrolled in regular degree programs has increased from 13,347 in 1996/97 to 23,320 in 2000/01. In 2010, the total number of students was growing at 15.0% per annum (MoE, 2001). The growth of higher education, particularly in the government sector, is the highest of all educational levels-enrolment

with an annual average increase of over 33% per year (MoE, 2007). However, the road to quality education, diversity and building democratic campus environment was rough. Despite efforts to diversify campuses and create multicultural study environment, universities in Ethiopia have been tense and ethnic conflicts have often been on record.

The research setting

In 1950, with the invitation of Emperor Haile Sellassie, Lucien Matte, a Canadian scholar, took full responsibility for founding the first college in Ethiopia (Balsvik, 2005; Kehoe, 1962) and he served as the university president for twelve years. The charter of Haile Selassie I University was inaugurated with the emperor as its first chancellor in 1961 (Balsvik, 2005).Within the following decade, various colleges was established in Addis Ababa and few other locations across the country (Student Handbook, 2008). In 1962, the University was renamed for the former Emperor Haile Sellassie I University. Following the down fall of the Emperor in 1974, the University acquired its current name in 1975. Currently, AAU includes twenty-five teaching facilities (AAU, 2007; AAU, 2008). These academic units offer undergraduate degree and/or graduate programs including PhD in diverse fields through Regular and Continuing Education. The University offers two separate programs under associate vice presidents for each. The first, the regular program, runs a two-semester full time teaching programs within an academic year. Every academic institution offers undergraduate and/ or graduate regular programs. The second, Continuing and Distance Education, offers two separate programs: Summer and Extension programs. The Summer Program is in-service teacher training program which admits school teachers for Bachelor of Educarion degree during their summer holidays. The extension program is also called evening program but with identical curriculum with the regular program.

This University was selected to be the research setting where empirical evidences were collected to explain and discuss intercultural communication in Ethiopian higher educational context. There are a number of strengths to choose AAU for investigating intercultural communication practices and perceptions in a higher educational context in Ethiopia. To begin with, it is the oldest and of course the biggest institute of higher education in the country. Added to this, AAU has been at the

heart of the social and political discourses in the country for more than half a century. Students of the University led a number of struggles for political changes the country has experienced. Besides these, this institution of higher learning prides itself to be the intellectual headquarter of educated and qualified Ethiopian elites. Highly qualified professionals concentrate in this University as compared to the staff profile of other universities in the country. Most university lectures, professors and assistants in other universities of the country are graduates of this University since graduate programs were offered by only AAU until recently. As a result, there is a significant mirror imaging of AAU's organizational behavior, pedagogy, curriculum and teaching practice in other universities in the country.

The history of AAU with respect to inter-party, interethnic and inter-religious interaction has been interesting for critical reflection. Moreover, there have been intercultural and interethnic conflicts which spread to the rest of the universities in the country. Campus unrest has been among the major challenges of the University so far. This has been a public knowledge since the last two decades. Students of AAU led conflicts of various kinds that were echoed in the rest of the universities in the country. Studying root causes of campus unrest, intercultural conflict and related variables at AAU is important since AAU has always been at the heart of the matter whenever there are conflicts in universities across the country. Therefore, AAU remains to be an ideal site for in-depth investigation into prominent themes, challenges and opportunities of intercultural communication. In other words, AAU becomes a potential source of knowledge in understanding the nature of intercultural interaction among Ethiopian adolescents.

Furthermore, students' composition at AAU would relatively be the same as other universities in the country. This is because it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to assign qualified high school graduates to all public universities. Random lottery assignment would not result in significant ethnic, gender or religious disparity among students' population across universities. As the largest university in the country, AAU admits greater number of students from diverse background. On the contrary, the young universities in the nation host limited number of students. Last but not least, researcher's professional experience as a lecturer in the University assistd him to access quality data from participants. The researcher was a lecturer on the same campus of the

University and worked as Students Affairs Committee (SAC) in his department. These two jobs coupled with his studies in the same University facilitated the research process. For example, building rapport with interview respondents and keeping ethnographic field-notes (in class and on campus) would not be easier without being an insider. Moreover, as an insider, the researcher holds his own views and experiences which would assist to grasp ground on the issues being addressed. His personal reflections were also considered, even though they take secondary position in the study.

Among the available AAU campuses, the main campus (see figure 5.2), which is often called Sidist Kilo Campus (SKC), was purposely selected to be the target campus of the study. The campus is located few kilometers north of Piazza, which is often regarded as the city center. This campus was originally the palace of Emperor Haile Sellassie. It is located a couple of kilometers from the National Palace, Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament of the Federal Government and other most important government offices. Its location has made the University campus to be at the center of security concerns. The compound is a home for a large complex of buildings that includes: administration buildings, classrooms, museums, libraries, meeting halls, cafeterias and students' dormitories.

Figure 5.2: AAU main campus   Figure 5.3: AAU Office of the President
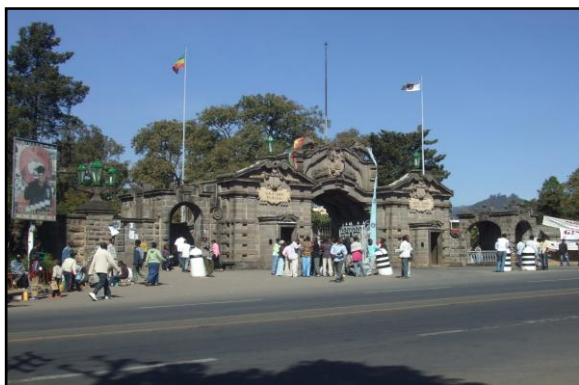
The former palace building (Figure 5.3) houses Offices of the President, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, a museum and library of the Institute. Students' dormitory and Office of the Dean of Students are located at the backside of this building while the other academic, administrative and

finance offices are scattered on the right. Finance Office, the main Registrar, AAU Cultural Center and sport fields are located in walking distances. Various classroom buildings commonly named as Old Classrooms (OCR), New Classrooms (NCR), Law School and New building (NBR) are dispersed at the center of the compound. Kennedy Memorial Library, Office of Graduate Studies and Christmas Hall are located at the center but left of the Office of the President. With respect to colleges and schools, the campus is a home for College of Education, College of Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, Institute of Language Studies, Faculty of Journalism and Communications (only for graduate program), Institute of Educational Research and Ethiopian Languages Center. The campus has enough space and eye catching physical plants that impress most visitors and students. Most tourists visit AAU Museum which is located in the first floor of the main administrative building. The front gate gives the campus greater grace and magnificent attraction.

There are also other causes to choose Sidist Kilo (SKC) as the target campus of the study. First of all, this is the first and oldest campus of the University. Since its transformation from palace to campus, SKC has been the main campus of AAU where a number of decisions, which are significant to the study of intercultural communication, are made. AAU is usually associated with this historic campus for the fact that it has been a politically sensitive campus. As far as the history of the University is concerned, it was this campus that has been actively engaged in social, political and cultural transformation in Ethiopia. For example, Students Movement of the 1960s, which resulted in the downfall of the Haile Sellassie regime, was started and fueled in this compound. SKC has been the center of students' demonstrations, political unrest and campus conflicts. Since its foundation, the campus hosted a number of significant political and cultural discourses that shaped the political and social realities in Ethiopia. Even though students from other campuses join main campus students, most conflicts, demonstrations, debates and questions emanate from students residing in this campus. Students from this campus have headed most conflicts and movements that have spread all over the rest of AAU campuses.

Added to these, the campus has covered a larger geographic area and hosts the largest number of students in the University. This helps to target a diverse population of research participants. In addition to diversity, students' academic area is also important to consider. For example, students from Technology and Science faculties, who reside between one and two kilometers, have not

been observed starting demonstrations. However, as it is known, students from humanities and social sciences are inquisitive and interested in social questions and democracy. Residents of this campus are students from various disciplines of social sciences and humanities. This might have been one of the reasons why students of this campus lead most of the demonstrations and debates. On the contrary, the rest of the campuses host smaller number of students and they seldom start on campus conflicts but they join after it is fueled by students on the main campus. Lastly, students on this campus are geographically at closest proximity with the highest University authorities. Because of these reasons, this campus is purposely chosen to acess rich and profound data that address the purpose of the study discussed.

Descriptions of interview participants

The previous sections briefed the macro-level contextual issues focusing on the sociopolitical history and present political arrangements. This was thought to be important because it is unrealistic to understand institutional behavior without grasping an overview of the macro-level realities. Institutions like AAU are not islands but they rather function within a given national and international influences. Contextual description of the study campus and the University, past and present, is also relevant to understand the setting and the dynamism of intercultural communication in more authentic and valid manner. Understanding intercultural communication among people demands a comprehensive knowledge of the context of interaction and the background of the participants. Therefore, it is also useful to give clear picture of the people who participated in the qualitative study to better understand their perspectives from their background. Short descriptions of the interview participants are given below in addition to tabular summary of their demographic data.

Student participants: Ten students were interviewed for in-depth analysis of intercultural communication in an Ethiopian higher context. The interview took about seven hours. The participation of students in terms of ethnicity is as follows: three Oromo, three Tigre, two Amhara, one Anuak, and one Gamo. Given the fact that most frequent conflicts were between students from major ethnic groups (recently between ethnic Oromo and Tigre students), it was quite acceptable to contact higher number of students from Oromo and Tigre ethnic groups. As far as recent campus conflicts witness, most conflicts were between these two ethnic groups even

though there were also circumstances that involved the rest of ethnic groups as well. Besides, even though addressing proportionate number of respondents from each ethnicity was not the purpose, it was still evident that larger proportion of student participants were drown from dominant ethnic groups in the campus. All respondents speak their ethnic languages as mother tongue. Concerning regional origin, the interviewees came from the major states in Ethiopia. In terms of stay on the campus, all of them lived between three and four years in the University. With regards to field of study, the students were from most of the faculties on the main campus which offer undergraduate studies in languages, literature, teacher education, social sciences, informatics and law. Summary of the overview of student participants (with psudo-names) is displayed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Overview of student participants' profile

S/N	Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Language	Regional state	Field*	Year**
1	Getahun	M	21	Amhara	Amharic	Amhara	INF	fourth
2	Giday	M	21	Tigre	Tigrigna	Tigray	LING	fourth
3	Hagos	M	21	Tigre	Tigrigna	Tigray	HIS	fourth
4	Hordofa	M	30	Oromo	Oromo	Oromia	LAW	third
5	Meaza	F	21	Amhara	Amharic	Amhara	AMH	fourth
6	Mohammed	M	28	Oromo	Oromo	Oromia	INF	fourth
7	Obang	M	20	Anuak	Anuak	Gambella	ENG	third
8	Seid	M	19	Oromo	Oromo	Oromia	FLL	third
9	Tsegaye	M	36	Gamo	Gamogna	SPNN	GEO	fourth
10	Tsige	F	21	Tigre	Tigrigna	Tigray	SOSA	fourth

This refers to students' academic area or the subject they major in their respective faculties or colleges. The acronyms can be explained as follows: PSIR (Political Science and International Relations), INF (Informatics/Information science), LING (Linguistics), HIS (History), LAW (LAW), AMH (Amharic), ENG (English Education), FLL (Foreign Language and Literature), GEO (Geography) and SOSA (Social Science and Social Anthropology).

** Year stands for the number of years students stayed in the University. For example, third means junior student who stayed in the University for three years for an undergraduate degree program.*

Getahun: Born in a small town in the South Wollo Zone of Amhara State, Getahun speaks Amharic as a mother tongue. The people in Wollo are famous in inter-religious marriage and interethnic tolerance. After completing school education in the town he was born, Getahun moved to AAU where he experienced life away from home. He was assigned in a dormitory where six students were hosted, and of which four of them were ethnic Oromo. There were Christians, Muslims and nonbelievers sharing the same room. Unlike some student interviewees, he preferred to live and study with students from other ethnicity than his own. He argued that there were no significant intercultural interactions problems until campus unrest broke up and split students along ethnic lines. He was sad on why students from Amhara ethnicity further divide themselves into specific geographic areas. This humble man reflected on the most common assumptions held, his daily intercultural experiences at AAU and of course his recommendations on how to encourage sound interaction on the campus. This 21-years-old young man was a junior student in the Faculty of Informatics.

Gidey: Like those who were born in Asmara and relocated in Ethiopia after Eritrea's independence in 1991, young Gidey, who is now 21, was born in Southern Eritrea and moved to Adigrat, one of the big towns in Tigray State, with his family. After completing elementary education, he joined secondary school in Mekelle. He is ethnic Tigre and he speaks Tigrigna as a mother tongue in addition to Saho, a language spoken in Eritrea and Tigray State. Gidey improved his Amharic and English language proficiencies when he moved to AAU. Like most other student interviewees, he was afraid of AAU environment the time he arrived. He confessed the bias he had against other ethnic groups and the frustration this had brought to his day to day interaction. He cited examples and cases that affected him adversely remembering the unrest following the 2005 election. 2005 post-election violence messed up universities across the country. People associated Tigre students with the ruling party and as a result they were afraid of possible attacks from other students. Gidey reflected on the trends of intercultural communication at AAU. He also evaluated the causes of ethnic conflicts in the University. He forwarded his assessments and suggestions for improving interethnic interaction on the campus. Gidey was a graduating student in the Department of Linguistics.

Hagos: He, 21, was a graduating student in the Department of History. Hagos was born in Asmara when the city was part of Ethiopia. Like Gidey, this young man experienced deportation early when he was in primary school. The resettlement of his family in Adigrat did not end up their displacement; they were rather moved to Mekelle, during the bloody boarder conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998. Hagos was born from ethnic Tigre family and speaks Tigrigna as a mother tongue. Despite displacements and coming from homogenous Tigrigna speaking community, Hagos speaks a very good Amharic in addition to English. As he narrated, his early days at AAU were so challenging with respect to communication and adjustment to the new environment. Unlike other students who were assigned to live with students from their own ethnic group, Hagos joined a group of Oromo students who seldom speak Amharic. He was afraid of them and was frustrated by his own preoccupation that teachers at AAU were harsh and the University often experiences ethnic conflict. This young man was open and sympathetic to share his experience of intercultural communication.

Hordofa: Hordofa was a 30-years old man. He comes from Oromo family who lives in a small agricultural town in Bale Zone of Oromia State. Typically of most Oromo students, he was proud of his ethnic identity. Like most other interviewees, AAU was his first intercultural experience for he was educated in his home village. Hordofa hardly forgot his first day at AAU. He was surprised that a group of senior students of various ethnicities and religions lined up around the gate of the University to receive and help new-coming students from their ethnicity or religion. He was assigned with students from Harar, a big town in the eastern part of Ethiopia. As he narrated, his dormitory life was a source of fear for the fact that these students chew Khat and smoke cigars. [*Khat is an evergreen shrub (Catha edulis) native to tropical East Africa, having dark green opposite leaves that are chewed fresh for their stimulating effects. Students from some regions chew Khat regularly thinking that it helps them to concentrate on their studies. Chewing Khat in Ethiopian University compounds is strictly forbidden*]. Hordofa thought that he would not mix with these students even though all were from his own ethnic group. Later, he discovered that the students were rather friendly and helpful. However, the following year, he was assigned to share a dorm with students from SPNN State. These students hardly speak Amharic and as a result they could not communicate with him well. Hordofa speaks Amharic and English too. He argued that his stay

at AAU helped him to improve his proficiency in these languages. Like all interviewees, he shared his personal experiences of intercultural difficulties and proved his fear of discrimination. He mentioned various cases and examples of challenges of inter-ethnic interactions at AAU. Hordofa was a gentle, descent and honest junior student in the Law School.

Meaza: She, 21, was born from ethnic Amhara in Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara State. She was a fourth year student majoring Amharic language in the Institute of Language Studies. Like most of the students from monolingual family, she speaks only her mother tongue, Amharic, in addition to English as a foreign language. She did not move out of her home town until she joined the University. When describing her early experience at AAU, she sadly explained that she was left alone on the campus where relationships and interactions of freshman students was merely intra-cultural, usually based on ethnicity and place of origin. She was placed in a dormitory where all other students speak a language that she did not speak. Narrating some of her unfortunate situations, she uncovered the challenges of communication with dorm-mates who speak other languages. She, for example, emotionally told how some students were unhappy about using Amharic for communication. She expressed her sadness regarding how ethnicity was linked with students' grading, communication and relationship. In addition to her criticism of campus intercultural interactions, she discussed the practices and perceptions affecting academic and intercultural learning. She did not shy to describe herself as less sociable, sensitive and aloof to city life in Addis Ababa.

Mohammed: He is a 28-years old graduating student who stayed in the University for the last nine years for a degree in Informatics. Even though he was supposed to graduate from the University in four years, Mohammed dropped out of the University, dismissed and re-admitted many times for various reasons. He argued that he was among the unlucky students who were punished for demanding cultural, religious and linguistic rights. Mohammed was born from Oromo family in a small town called Gelemso, West Harerge Zone of Oromia State. Like most patriotic Oromo students, he was proud of his ethnic identity; and like loyal Muslim students, he took part in various demonstrations in favor of religious rights. Physical marks on his face and body witness the damage he acquired when he was involved in these demonstrations on and out of the campus.

Mohammed was very popular among students and teachers. He speaks excellent Amharic and good English. He was bold, orator and outgoing. The interview with this energetic guy accessed a number of examples, cases and issues relevant in understanding campus conflict, interaction and power relation among the University community.

Obang: This young man, 20, was born from ethnic Anuak family in a very small village in Gambella State. This state is considered to be among the most deprived regions of the country with respect to infrastructure, access to education, health care and other facilities. Obang speaks Anuak (as a mother tongue), Nuer and English. As he grew at a crossroad between Ethiopia and Sudan, he was exposed to international people who travel for commerce and missionary purposes. Therefore, apart from early exposure to intercultural interaction he developed an excellent command of English even though he couldnot speak Amharic. Most students from Gambella and Somali regional states do not speak the official language of the country fluently. On account of being born in one of the warmest region of the country, Obang could not tolerate the cold weather in Addis Ababa when he moved to AAU. He said AAU was his dream university for its history and excellence in academics. Sharing his early experience of being labeled as Sudanese than Ethiopian by most University staff and students, he could not hide his anger of discrimination based on physical marks. However, as he said, he was able to win the hearts of so many people from various ethnic groups. At the moment, he was able to communicate in Amharic. He was citing excellent proverbs in Amharic. He said his childhood experience of intercultural interaction might have helped him in his mastery of the AAU academic context. He shared his assumptions and practices of intercultural communication. Obang was a third year student in the Department of English Education.

Seid: Unlike most of the students who were able to express themselves in Amharic than English, this 19 years old third year student preferred to be interviewed in English. Like Mohammed, he was born in Gelemso and completed his school studies in the same town and came to AAU to study Foreign Languages and Literature. Unfortunately, from local languages, Seid speaks only Oromo. He argued that he is firm with regards to religion and ethnicity. Like the other Oromo interviewees, he is proud to be Oromo and like the Muslim informant, he is loyal to his religion. This young man admitted that he shared college dormitory only with Oromo students for the fact that they speak

Afaan Oromo and can chew Khat together. As he argued, chewing Khat is part of everyday life in his home town. However, he said he knew chewing Khat is forbidden on campuses of AAU. He participated in a number of demonstrations on and out of the campus. This open and humble young man reflected on his intercultural experiences at AAU and commented on what should be done to improve the interactive climate on the main campus of the University.

Tsegaye: Unlike the other interviewees, Tsegaye, 36, had ten years of teaching experience in primary schools in Dawro Zone of SNNP State. Born in this State, Tsegaye comes from Gamo ethnic group and speaks Gamogna as a native tongue. Compared to other interviewees, he is the most multilingual for the fact that he speaks Wolaitigna and Dawrogna in addition to Amharic and English. This senior student in the Department of Geography holds a certificate and a diploma from a public teacher training institute and a private university college respectively. He shared his experience of learning a second language and culture while teaching young children whose language he did not speak. He offered practical and personal examples of minimizing conflicts through learning the language and culture of others. Like most other participants, he reflected on his experience of intercultural interactions in various locations of the University. Even if he was sad with respect to some of his experiences on the campus, he was optimistic about the future. This cheerful man provided ample examples and cases to justify his perceptions and experiences regarding the issue under study.

Tsige: This 21-years old female student from the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology was born in Tigray State. As she said she moved to Addis Ababa and then to Tigray and Eritrea when she was very young. She lived in different districts of Tigray. She started schooling in Addis Ababa where the language of instruction in primary schools is Amharic and then moved to Tigray when she was second grader. In Tigray, she restarted grade one but this time in Tigrigna. She completed her secondary school in Adigrat. Tsige was born from ethnic Tigre family and speaks Tigrigna and Amharic languages. She said people in Adigrat speak Amharic as well for the town hosts Ethiopian Defense Force which often speaks Amharic as a language of communication. As a result, Tsige speaks excellent Amharic. She argued that she was keen on learning other languages. AAU was not her first campus experience for she joined Arbaminch University and studied there

for one solid year before she left it for health reasons. She narrated her first experience at this University with respect to language and communication. She looked sad when she explained how she was discriminated because of her ethnicity. Tsige is an optimistic, open and communicative girl who reflected on possible strategies to improve campus interethnic interactions.

Teacher participants: The second group of interviewees comprises of eleven university lecturers and professors. Table 5.2 summarizes the ethnic background of the interviewees as: seven Amhara, two Tigre and two Oromo. The University's personnel database is highly dominated by Amharic speaking staff members. This information is based on the list of academic and administrative staff members collected from the Personnel Department of the University in May 2009. The document summarizes names, place of birth, birth date, gender, marital status, position, qualification, salary and related employment data of the staff members. This has been so since the establishment of AAU, even though, there have recently been a growing number of employees from other ethnicities. As the table shows, diverse group of people with respect to ethnicity were interviewed. Concerning regional origin, the teacher participants came from the major regional states: four of them from Amhara, two from Tigray, two from Oromia, two from Addis Ababa and one from SPNN.

The interviewees were from all of the faculties and colleges on the main campus of the University but the name of their respective departments were given pseudo-names. With regards to teaching experience in the University, there is a significant variation among participants. Participants held three to thirty-seven years of teaching experience on the campus. Some of the interviewees were educated and have been working on the same campus for so many years and these people had served the University in the three regimes. The least experienced teachers provided a new line of argument for they deviated from the seniors in most of the issues brought for discussions. Therefore, the age gap helped the interview to collect diverse perspectives and line of arguments. A brief description of the participants is presented in the paragraphs following Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Overview of teacher participants' profile

S/N	Name	Age	Regional state	Ethnicity	AAU experience*	Department**
1	Ayenachew	44	Amhara	Amhara	4 years	PSIR
2	Belay	59	Addis Ababa	Amhara	37 years	SOSA
3	Chalachew	46	Amhara	Amhara	11 years	GEO
4	Fedissa	40	Oromia	Oromo	4 years	LING
5	Fitamo	44	SPNN	Amhara	6 years	IER
6	Habtom	48	Tigray	Tigre	18 years	CSTE
7	Mathias	30	Addis Ababa	Oromo	3 years	HIS
8	Tayu	54	Oromia	Amhara	29 years	INFO
9	Teklay	27	Tigray	Tigre	3 years	FLL
10	Yihune	45	Amhara	Amhara	7 years	LAW
11	Yimer	42	Amhara	Amhara	5 years	PHILO

This is based on the academic staff list published by AAU Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (2006/2007). Since the interview was held in 2009, the difference (3 years) was added to the figure indicated on the publication. This document may not include the experiences of teachers in other institutions in case not recognized by AAU.

*** Additional acronyms to those presented in Table 5.1 include: IER (Institute of Educational Research), IES (Institute of Ethiopian Studies), CSTE (Curriculum Studies and Teacher Education), THART (Theatre Arts), and PHILO (Philosophy).*

Ayenachew: Mr Ayenachew, 44, was a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations. He was born in Amhara State from Amhara family. He did not like to be identified by his ethnicity and he preferred to be called *Ethiopian* than Amhara. [There are a number of people who do not identify themselves as Amhara even though they are so or are from mixed family]. He emotionally expressed his early intercultural encounter relating it to his short lived interethnic marriage which resulted in divorce. Mr Ayenachew blamed the introduction of ethicized political system in Ethiopia in early 1991 as one of the reasons behind his divorce. He said he was married to a girl from other ethnicity and has a child from her. With regards to education, Mr Ayenachew holds a Masters degree and had long years of teaching experience in higher education. He knew AAU as a student and a lecturer. Politically, he inclined to opposition parties even though he was not a member of one. It was always common to find him arguing against the

government with people whom he knew were members of the ruling party. Mr Ayenachew is outspoken, interactive and enjoyed discussion on intercultural and inter-party issues that matter on the campus. He has taught a number of courses for the last 20 years in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia but he has never been abroad.

Belay: Dr Belay, 59, was among the senior scholars in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. He was born in Addis Ababa. He completed his high school in the same city. The doctor cited his experience in this school as foundational for his professional growth. At the school, students used to write articles on school magazines and participated in school debate organized by students. He was among the early graduates of the University. After graduating from AAU, he lived in various towns in three major states of the country (Tigray, Amhara and Oromia) and Asmara in Eritrea. For his graduate studies, Dr Belay lived in Europe for more than seven years. Added to this, he visited various countries in Northern America and Africa for short periods of time. He worked in various capacities in the University. Besides his rich academic and personal experience in cultural issues, he wrote a number of articles and books on Ethiopian culture. Even though he could not identify himself to any of the ethnicity in Ethiopia, he speaks Amharic as mother tongue and English as a foreign language. Dr Belay cited a number of examples and cases to explain his experiences of intercultural interactions on the campus during the three regimes. As an active observant and critic of linguistic, cultural and identity issues, the interview with him provided immense data on the major categories of intercultural communication.

Challachew: Mr Challachew, 46, a lecturer in the Department of Geography, was born from Amhara family in Amhara State. Like Mr Ayenachew, he would prefer to be called *Ethiopian* than identified by his ethnic background even though he was born from Amhara family. After completing high school, he joined Asmara University. After graduation, he was assigned to teach in Asmara University but shortly relocated to Ethiopia as the result of Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. Mr Challachew is very popular in having opposing political view against the government but enjoys fair discussions on issues that matter. His reflections on intercultural interaction in Ethiopian higher educational context focused on the influence of macro-political sphere. He gave a number of personal cases that affected his intercultural communication and professional

development. He explained that he was among the victims of ethnic discrimination and unfair interethnic interactions. As an experienced teacher, his commitment to fully engage in the interview assisted in understanding the diverging views people hold. Mr Challachew was politically active, academically strong and open for discussions. He speaks Amharic and English with excellent proficiency.

Fedissa: Fedissa, 40, was born in Eastern Wollega, Oromia State. His father and mother are from Oromo ethnic group. His first language is Afaan Oromo. The moment he went to school, he didn't know any Amharic word. So, he started school in a second language right from the very beginning which was a very frightening experience as he explained. His parents did not know any language other than Afaan Oromo. In a place where he was born, Afaan Oromo is the dominate language and the dwellers knew very little about the existence of other languages before they experience other places. Mr Fedissa completed his school education in the same province and moved to a college, for diploma and then BA and MA degrees. After teaching in schools and colleges in Oromia, he was employed by AAU as a lecturer and currently doing his PhD. Mr Fedissa discussed his challenges of interethnic communication at AAU and justified how he, himself, was mistreated in different occasions. After reflecting on the context of interaction and power relations on the campus, he moved to justifying what should be done to enhance healthy intercultural discourse and interaction at AAU context. This politically conscious and professional linguist was highly concerned about issues such as ethnic identity rights, linguistic rights and respect for human and democratic rights.

Fitamo: Mr Fitamo, 44, was born in SPNN State. He was from an Amharic speaking family who live in a village occupied by speakers of Wolaita, Hadiya, and Kembata. Although his mother tongue is Amharic, his culture was dominantly from the South. His forefathers told him stories about how they came from the North. His friends or relatives were people from local ethnic group. He grew up in a society of complete diversity but harmonious daily life. His first employment after graduation was in a town where he was born. This small town is located in the SPNN. It was a very big market place. It was thought to be one of the biggest market places in the region. People speaking different languages used to trade. Mr Fitamo was interested in how people live in complete harmony despite significant diversity in language and culture. Regarding his experience in higher

education, he was hired at a college in Addis Ababa and then moved to AAU where he was working as a lecturer in the Institute of Educational Research (IER) for the last six years. This gentle man shared ample experiences and cases that justify his reflections on the matter under study.

Habtom: Mr Habtom was an assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies. He was teaching in the University for the last fifteen years. He comes from Tigre ethnic family and speaks Tigrigna as a mother tongue. This 48-years-old man was educated in Tigray and Addis Ababa but visited a number of European countries including Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom and Denmark. Sharing his intercultural experiences in these countries, he cited challenges and opportunities he had with respect to acquiring intercultural communication skills. He narrated a number of cases that justified how he was wrongly treated by few staff members because of his ethnicity. He further argued that people, especially from some ethnic groups, are treated unfairly for the fact that they do not belong to an ethnic group dominating the campus. In the interview, he focused on the role of communication and cultural centers in creating conducive intercultural environment. Mr Habtom participated actively in teaching and research in undergraduate and post graduate programs and was keen on issues like culture, language and communication.

Matias: Mr Mathias, 30, is a junior lecturer in the Department of History and was teaching in the University for the last three years. He was born in Addis Ababa. He said he lived in multiethnic environment and was highly influenced by the urbanization in Addis Ababa. He was born from Oromo speaking family. Mathias was sad he could not speak any Ethiopian languages other than Amharic even if he was born in a multicultural city and had a chance to visit most parts of the country. He narrated his interests and engagement in art. After leaving high school, he was employed in various art institutions. He was engaged in such activities besides his teaching job at AAU. Mr Mathias was highly interested in cultural and anthropological studies. This communicative lecturer commented on a number of occasions and cases that uncovered the practice of intercultural encounters at AAU. He also provided comprehensive evidences regarding intercultural and political realities at AAU.

Tayu: Mr Tayu, 54, was born in Arsi Zone of Oromia from Amhara ethnic family. Even though he comes from predominately Afaan Oromo speaking village, Tayu could not speak Afaan Oromo. Concerning his education, he completed high school in Arsi and then joined a teachers college and AAU for his college studies and by now he holds a MA degree. After teaching in different high schools, teacher training institutions and colleges, he joined AAU as a lecturer in the Department of Informatics. Mr Tayu served as a lecturer and school teacher for the last thirty-one years. He also lived abroad for some time. He took part in various curriculum development and planning processes at national level. As he noted, these experiences helped him understand the nature and interaction pattern of participants in higher educational institutions. Comparing and contrasting his experiences in the three regimes, Mr Tayu offered a comprehensive descriptions and analysis of cultural and multilingual issues to be addressed in these institutions. On the top of all these, he brought his classroom observations and reflections regarding intercultural communication in AAU to support his arguments.

Teklay: As one of the youngest academic staff in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Mr Teklay, 27, holds BA and MA degrees. He was born from Tigre ethnic family in Tigray and completed his high school there. Unlike most recent students from small villages in Tigray, Teklay speaks excellent Amharic in addition to his mother tongue, Tigregna. He attributed his success to his early interest in Amharic literature and music. As he used to live in a village not far from military camps in which people mainly speak Amharic, he was capable of making friends who speak Amharic and eventually learned the language. As a participant-witness of one of the recent conflicts on the campus, Mr Teklay uncovered the root causes of interethnic clashes and possible actors in the process. He also narrated his personal experiences with respect to building healthy intercultural relations in the University. Mr Teklay thinks he developed good intercultural skills and enjoys living with people from other cultures.

Yihune: Mr Yihune, 45, was born in a small town in Eastern Gojam Zone of Amhara State from ethnic Amhara family. He recalls the role of his father, who speaks about six languages, as model for his interest in being a friend of students from other cultures/ethnicity when he was in Asmara. He gave a number of cases to justify how his intercultural encounters in Asmara improved his

social and interactional skills. He cited the role of one of his best friends, from Oromo ethnic group, in shaping his intercultural skills. Even though he was born from Amharic speaking ethnic group, as he argued, he enjoyed the company of many friends from other ethnic background. Since the last seven years he was employed as a lecturer in the School of Law. For this, he narrated his recent application that appeared to the Office of the University President. He narrated his unfortunate allegation against his teaching career. He quoted how he was dismissed from his job for a reason relevant for the current study. He offered a wide range of explanations on the process of intercultural interactions in the University environment. Mr Yihune criticized the campus climate and gave a number of recommendations on how to improve the practice of intercultural interaction on the campus.

Yimer: Mr Yimer, 42, was a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy for the last five years. Before his employment at AAU, he was teaching in various schools and a college in Oromia. He was born in Amhara State, from Amhara family and joined a college for teacher education after completing school at his home town. Citing his unpleasant experience in Oromia State, he argued that he was denied access to promotion and further education since there was the policy that such merits should be given to ethnic Oromo staff members. However, lately, he secured a chance to study for MA degree at a university abroad. Mr Yimer explained his childhood experience at multi-religious province and further education oversea helped him to grasp thorough knowledge of how to interact with people from other cultures. Citing his experience with his students at AAU, Yimer justified that he was successful in dealing with diversity positively. He further argued that the campus was not doing good enough to facilitate intercultural communication among its participants. This humble and gentle junior staff offered various personal experiences that were trembling stones to his attempt to teach effectively in this multiethnic university context.

University management participants: Based on the position they held, University presidents, directors, officers and department heads were interviewed for the purpose of understanding the practice of intercultural communication in AAU. With respect to ethnicity, three of them were Oromo, two Amhara, one Mixed and the rest two did not provide their ethnicity during the interview (see Table 5.3). These officials were among those who make decisions related to students' academic and disciplinary problems. For instance, as the Presidents' Office is the highest

decision making body, the interview helped to identify the perspectives of the University administration with respect to the topic at hand. Interview with the Public Relation Officer was also significant to understand the nature of organizational communication, intercultural conflict management and experiences of the Office. Interview with one of the department heads provided cases and issues relevant for the study. Interview with the Associate Register reported his reflection on his observation on ethnicity and grading.

Added to these, interview at the Cultural Center highlighted the practical activities of the Center and the overall intercultural practices in the University. Also, the President of the Students Union proved the perceptions, experiences and fears regarding the issues addressed in the current study. As a head of the students' body, the interviewee shared a number of examples to prove his observations. Overall assessment of the practice and perception of the university management regarding campus unrest and interethnic interaction was also collected. Off record interviews and discussions with the Dean of Students and an Assistant Dean at one of the institutes were held to yield data regarding students' cases, service, dormitory assignment, cafeteria and activities of various clubs on the campus but this was considered as part of ethnographic field notes.

Table 5.3: Overview of leadership participants' profile

S/N	Name	Age*	Position	Regional state	Ethnicity
1	Andinet	35	Associate Vice President	Amhara	Amhara
2	Brook	65	President	Addis Ababa	Not given
3	Dawit	20	Students Union	Oromia	Not given
4	Jabessa	55	Department Head	Oromia	Oromo
5	Sitotaw	40	Director	Amhara	Amhara
6	Tadelech	26	Officer	Addis Ababa	Oromo
7	Tesfaye	57	Director	Oromia	Amhara
8	Thomas	45	Associate Registrar	Addis Ababa	Mixed
9	Weyeso	46	Director	Oromia	Oromo

* *The age of the informants, who did not provide it during the interview, was calculated based on the data from the Personnel Department. The figures show the age of the respondents in 2009, the time the data was collected.*

Andinet: Mr Andinet is an Associate Vice President of the University. He was born in Amhara State. Regarding his studies, he holds two degrees. He had 7 years of work experience at AAU in administrative and academic positions. Regarding his early intercultural encounter, Andinet explained his experience in a big town in Amhara State. Even though he was working in ethnic Amhara community, he was not able to communicate effectively. To his surprise, he said he felt more secured when he was working in a small town in Oromia, even though the people speak a language he could not speak. He argued that there are co-cultures within ethnic cultures that make intercultural communication difficult. He could not hide how he was considered as a threat and was jailed whenever there were problems in that small town in Oromia. He shared a number of his experiences at Oromia, AAU and another college and explained the nature of intercultural communication practiced in Ethiopian universities. As a member of the management team, he told the perspectives held in the management. Andinet critically reflected on his role as a student, teacher and now a member of the leadership and shared his perceptions and practices from these three positions.

Brook: Professor Brook, 65, was among the senior academic staffs of the University. The Professor spent twenty years in exile in USA. He did his undergraduate and graduate degrees there. During his 20 years stay in the USA, he taught in various universities. This dynamic and hard working scholar was active in various academic and political discourses organized by various activists and academic institutions in the nation. He wrote a number of publications on issues such as democracy and human rights. After returning home, this Ethiopian professor worked for a private organization that wants to act as an impartial contributor to building government. Mr Brook, however, held controversial picture among the public and Ethiopians in the Diaspora. During the interview period, the Professor was the President of AAU. The interview with him provided relevant data regarding the experience of the University in handling intercultural and multicultural concerns. The Professor narrated the trends and the future directions of the University in addressing intercultural communication and diversity on the campus.

Dawit: Dawit, 20, was a third year student. He was the President of AAU Students' Union and the federation of Ethiopian university students unions at the time of the interview. He was born and educated in Oromia. He was a good ranking student both at school and in the University. Even though he could not respond to the question referring his ethnic background, he speaks only Amharic language besides English. This young man visited different countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. In Ethiopia, he visited most places such as Gondar, Jijiga, Jimma, Ambo and towns in the south. His visits were often to universities as he was the head of the unions. Mr Dawit was involved in different activities at AAU and the national university students' unions for the past three years. As he mentioned, his positions advantaged him to visit various universities and deal with authorities to combat the concern of students. As the President of AAU Students' Union, he acted as a middleman between the students and the University leadership. His narration of various campus conflicts and chaos surfaced the perspective students hold regarding interethnic interactions and conflicts.

Jebessa: Dr Jebessa, 55, is a department head and an active member in Ethiopian politics. He was born in a rural area in Oromia. He is from Oromo family. He speaks Amharic, Afaan Oromo and English. He was to a foreign African country for two years to do his MA degree and for five years in Europe for his PhD. Apart from these, there were times when he stayed in the USA and other countries for short time but frequently. He went to France many times. Concerning language learning, he said he should have learned Arabic during his two years stay in one of the Arab countries. Mr Jebessa narrated a number of his intercultural experiences and reflected on the nature of interaction at AAU. He critically examined AAU's intercultural interaction and framed his examination in the context of the present political situation and the role of different political forces in the country. Mr Jebessa positioned his argument from a political perspective. As an active member of Ethiopian students movement of the 1960s, he shared his part in AAU students movement and his role in politics in the last thirty or so years. Dr Jebessa served AAU for the last twenty-three years.

Sititaw: Mr Sitotaw, 40, was serving the University as a director. His job involved him in academics and managing student complaints. Mr Sitotaw holds two MA degrees from AAU and a university in Europe. He took school leaving examinations in Amhara State, where he was born and grew. Mr Sitotaw comes from Amhara family and he speaks Amharic as a mother tongue, in addition to English. During the interview, he clearly described the trend of intercultural communication on the main campus of the University and raised the most common intercultural/interethnic cases that were managed in his office. He also evaluated the existing undergraduate curriculum with respect to addressing culture, ethnicity, gender, communication and language issues. His experience as an international student in Europe and his visits to various countries in Africa helped him reflect on the differences between home and oversea experiences. In addition, his experiences at AAU, both as a student and teacher, were relevant to explain challenges and opportunities of diversity and intercultural communication in a higher educational context. He provided a lot of concrete cases and examples to support his arguments.

Tadelech: Miss Tadelech, 26, was an officer and lecturer and was serving the University in these capacities for the last three years. She was born in Addis Ababa. But she went to SPNN State and lived there until she completed school. She speaks Amharic and English, but does not speak her ethnic language. She speaks Amharic as her first language. Tadelech did two degrees at AAU and had profound experience with respect to studying and living with students from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. As a lecturer and officer, she discussed a number of issues related to intercultural interactions. She brought a number of cases and examples to describe the nature of internal and external communication practiced at AAU. She examined how the communication channels and system practiced at AAU were correlated with intercultural communication management and enhancing of academic excellence. This young woman briefed the perspective of the management with respect to addressing intercultural communication and diversity.

Tesfaye: Mr Tesfaye, 57, worked for the Cultural Center. He was born in a small town in Oromia. Confessing as a son of ethnic Amhara landlord, he criticized the unfair actions of his family who own the land of the native ethnic groups in the area. His childhood taught him how people were ignored and ill-treated in their own villages. He shared the anguish and sadness people acquired as

a result. Unlike most Amharic speaking interviewees who fail to learn other languages, Mr Tesfaye speaks Afaan Oromo in addition to Amharic and English. He published an Amharic-Oromo dictionary and wrote and played a number of theaters. He was a critical reflector on cultural and political issues held by students and the staff on the campus. He commented on the level of accountability and professionalism of the staff and the academic culture in the University. Mr Tesfaye narrated the history, challenges and prospects of the Cultural Center. From the interview it was easy to learn that this home and abroad educated professor was keen on culture, politics and human right issues clearly, supporting the political views of the ruling party.

Thomas: Mr Thomas, 45, was an associate registrar in one of the faculties on the main campus of the University. He was born in Addis Ababa from a mixed family. He identified himself as a city boy who enjoys cosmopolitan life style. He was educated in the same city. Since he was born in the vicinity of the University and employed there, he has a wealthy account of AAU as an academic and intercultural environment. During the interview, he reflected on the most common attributions students make when they fail courses. All grade change applications and student complaints visits his office every day. He argued how ethnic background and regional origin come to play during such complaints. Mr Thomas shared uncountable examples to support his premises. Unlike the other interviews under this category, Mr Thomas was a member of the administrative staff who is not involved in teaching responsibilities.

Woyeso: Dr Woyeso, 46, was a director of one of the programs of the University. He was born from Oromo family in Oromia which he described it as a multicultural town. He said he had never associated himself with people from his own ethnic group. After completing school in the same town, he joined Asmara University for BA degree. Describing his experience in the University, he said thirty of his classmates were from different areas and they did not have problem of intergroup communication. They came from different towns of the country. Even though he was not abroad, his experience of living with people from diverse ethnic groups helped him to share enough interethnic interactional behavior. Besides, his attachment with AAU as a student and now a teacher and director offered him a number of intercultural experiences. He did not shy to list down

the weaknesses of the staff, the students and the leadership in addressing this important element of campus interaction.

Descriptions of the ethnographic sites and event for field-notes

The teachers' lounge: This setting was the most frequently visited site by the researcher throughout the study period. The lounge is located on the left underground floor of the Institute of Language Studies, often called Old Classrooms (OCR), building. The notice board down the stairs warns students that the service is reserved for teachers and administrative staff only. Customers order drinks or food at the cash point which is located opposite to the main door of the lounge. Help yourself orders are served on the right back of this point. Customers line up to provide their orders at the counter. There were three round tables circled by leather chairs near the main door and about ten square plastic tables surrounded by plastic chairs scattered around the center, in front of the TV stand (see Figure 5.4 below). There are also five tables located at the corridor opposite to the coffee machine. This corridor leads to the kitchen and the backdoor. About four to six people can sit round the circular leather tables while a maximum of four people can dine on a single squared plastic table. In principle, all the tables are not reserved and anyone can occupy them as far as they are not taken. The ethnographic field- notes revealed the nature of interaction among the staff in the teachers' lounge. The researcher observed sit-taking behavior of the staff during the field work.

Figure 5.4: Sample of pictures from the teachers' lounge

Classrooms: In the academic year 2009, the researcher was teaching a course entitled *Communication* to two groups of third year students majoring English. The researcher was a lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. As part of the ethnographic study, the researcher was teaching the course while keeping record of the nature of classroom interaction and intercultural cohesion among the students (N=87). The students were from various ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The course was offered in the second semester of 2009 academic year for about three solid months. The course had three contact hours every week. The method of instruction involved lectures, group work and presentations. Frequent contact with students and observation provided data on the nature of interaction among students in the classroom. At the end of the course, students sat for oral and written exams as part of the assessment. The teacher, as ethnographer, used to keep notes on classroom episodes relevant for understanding intercultural communication in the classroom.

General staff meeting: As part of this ethnographic observation, the researcher attended a general staff meeting called by the President of the University on May 20, 2010 at 2pm. As the President delegated his vice, the meeting was chaired by the Academic Vice President. It was held at a Conference Hall at Sidist kilo. The meeting was called in response to a recent conflict between Oromo and Tigre students on the main campus. The agenda of the meeting was *Campus Students Conflict* even though academic and other administrative issues were also addressed. A number of notices were communicated to the University community before and after the meeting. The agenda of the meeting was clearly explained. The Vice briefed that there were two conflicts that broke on May 1 and May 4, 2010. He further explained the extent of life lose and property damage. The chair of the meeting apologized for the tight security situation on the campus, especially at the main gate. He explained how the conflict was started, how it was managed and the current status of the problem. He reminded the staff to be alert and exercise their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. After briefing the case, the audience was invited to ask questions and reflect on the problem. The staff was also requested to forward possible ways of managing conflicts on the campus. The meeting was adjourned after questions and answers.

The Cultural Center: The researcher observed few cultural programs run by students at the Cultural Center of the University. This Center is located on the main campus. The Center is situated between the Personnel Department and the Budget Office in front of the Edir Lounge. It is a very old hall furnished with old and dusty chairs and carpet. The receptionist sits left to the main door. The hall is furnished with old and broken wooden chairs. The stage, where cultural programs are displayed, is made from old wooden carpet. The rooms at the back of the stage function as stores and offices. The rooms were filled with old and dusty documents and musical instruments. Despite budget problems, students are enthusiastic about the programs they ran. There were ethnic literary and cultural programs were managed by students themselves. Except Friday, days of the week were reserved for ethnic programs. The researcher was able to attend three literary and cultural programs. Students also staged various cultural programs in classrooms as well in times the Center is occupied.

Figure 5.5: Sample of pictures demonstrating students' cultural shows

CHAPTER SIX: INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

This chapter describes and narrates intercultural perceptions and experiences of the research participants in an Ethiopian higher education context from their own perspectives. Taking Addis Ababa University as a case study, the study reports the challenges and opportunities of contemporary multiethnic higher educational institutions in responding to the growing demand for quality education and productive intercultural communication. As it is acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Tanaka, 2007), higher education is an ideal context for intercultural communication. Such communication has been at the heart of the daily experiences of students who come from homogenous cultural societies and suddenly experience diversity on university campuses. Exploring perceptions and experiences from the participants' perspectives plays a pivotal role in understanding institutional practice and promoting productive communication. To this effect, contemporary universities have transformed a lot in accommodating diversity and encouraging intercultural interaction to offer quality education and learning environment to their students. The question is how far such institutions have been successful in meeting the intended demands of quality education, democratic culture and productive intercultural dialogue.

The current chapter, therefore, intends to respond to this concern through an ethnographic study that depends on multiple qualitative data collection tools, namely interviews, focus group discussions and field-notes and documents. The results of the qualitative component of the study addressing the above mentioned issues are presented and discussed in five major sections. The first section narrates multiculturalism as a policy and institutional arrangement in Ethiopian higher education. In this, diversity at Addis Ababa University (AAU) is discussed followed by what multiculturalism has offered to this multiethnic university. Next to this, the second section explains macro-level contexts focusing on the relationship between the State and the University. Political and historical contexts are emphasized as they are found to dominate the link between the two. Then, the third section describes the micro-level contexts with an emphasis on the context of communication, ethnicity and institutional communication culture. As ethnicity is found

to be the most stratifying factor in the University, its manifestation in intercultural communication, instruction and campus life are narrated from the experiences of the participants. The fourth section describes participants' perceptions and practices of intercultural communication. The last section, explains stories, personal reflections and premises of intercultural conflicts and campus unrest as reported by the research participants.

Diversity and multiculturalism

Diversity and campus composition: As discussed in Chapter Five, Ethiopia is aggressively engaged in expanding its higher education. In connection with this the number of students who are admitted to AAU graduate and undergraduate programs has been increasing each year. Regarding undergraduate admission, it is a tradition that students are assigned to universities across the country centrally at the national level. Article 58 of the University's Senate Legislation (AAU, 2007:110) confirms the fact that admission and or placements to all regular undergraduate programs are processed through the Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia until such time as the University establishes its own admissions policies and procedures. The Ministry holds a principle that students are randomly assigned across the universities in the country irrespective of gender, ethnicity, talent or any other factor but it takes students' university choices into consideration. People have been divided on the argument whether students should be randomly assigned to different public universities across the country. The first groups of respondents, who agree with the current arrangement, claim that the random assignment of students encourages campus diversity and does not limit the students' experience to their regional states. The second group asserts that students should be assigned to universities not far from their home and more importantly in their regional states. People advocating the second arrangement cite this as a strategy to avoid possible campus conflicts among students coming from all regions and ethnicities.

Related to the trend of higher education expansion, it is important to see how far the University has been increasing its intake capacity. As Table 6.1 show the number of students has increased each year with 48,837 registering in the 2007/8 academic year with 10,763 of those graduating. In

the last decade the number of enrolled students has increased threefold from 17,353 in 2001/2 to 48,837 in 2007/8. Undoubtedly, this significant increase in students' statistics brings new demands from a diverse group of students and possible institutional change to meet the new requirements of the change. The most important questions are what do these figures mean and how far figures match the multicultural educational policy adopted by universities in the country. Article 157 of the Senate Legislation (AAU, 2007) states the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) will be established to promote diversity and multiculturalism in the University. But during the study period the office was not fully established. Generally, it is important to wonder if diversity is addressed in the expansion process to encourage equity of pedagogy and effective intercultural dialogue.

Table 6.1: Data on enrollment and graduates of AAU

Academic Years	Enrollment Total	Graduate Total
1971/72	7762	1232
1981/82	20077	3626
1991/92	18140	2573
2001/2002	17353	2064
2004/2005	40431	7382
2006/2007	47641	9739
2007/2008	48837	10763

Source: Students Handbook (AAU, 2008: 12)

Gender representation: As findings show, AAU is a male dominated institution of higher learning although considerable changes were observed. Females were not represented in the student population as indicated in Table 6.2. Among the students on the main campus of the University, female students made up only 30.55% (N: 2370) of the student body. Whilst male students formed 69.45% (N: 5387). This finding is consistent with various studies (e.g Balsvik, 2005). It is obvious that gender disparity is prevalent in all sectors of education in Ethiopia. In the first place the role of women in the society is marginal as the literature and practice depict. Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women in a subordinate position (Haregewoin & Emebet, 2003). This is a shared reality in most part of the third world. As sources show, about two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women, and adult illiterate women account for 61% in sub-Saharan Africa (UNFPA, 2005).

According to various statistical abstracts of the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia, the share of female students has increased from 21% to 25% between the years 1998/99 and 2002/03. Nevertheless, the gender gap remains significant even though the Education and Training Policy (FDRE, 1994) affirmed the necessity of female education and included gender equality issues. For example, enrolment ratio, the ratio of total enrolment at primary or secondary education to the corresponding school age population, shows disparity between the two sexes. This gender gap increases with the increasing level of education and as a result females are not represented in universities in Ethiopia.

Table 6.2: Gender representation at Sidist Kilo campus: Across faculties

College/ Faculty	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Education	2422	72.51	918	27.49
Informatics	533	60.36	350	39.64
Language studies	1349	71.76	531	28.24
Law	330	54.73	273	45.27
Social Sciences	753	71.65	298	28.35
Total	5387	69.45	2370	30.55

This disproportionate gap was also reflected across most of the faculties except at the Law School. Although it was a very exceptional case, most of the female students at this school come from Addis Ababa city and of course from the best private schools in the town as their families can afford to pay. Students from certain economic group are being pushed to certain areas of specialization. In some cases there is a replication of economic strength. If students are from a well to do family, they most likely join a better department and can win better jobs after graduation. Such realities are reflected in the University especially in the Law School. Most participants of the interview agreed with this attribution. For example, Dawit, a student of the school and President of the Students Union, is quoted confirming this premise.

Dawit: Students assigned to the Faculty of Law are those who are academically good. Especially, those who have attended prestigious schools in Addis Ababa dominate the faculty. *(Interview)*

Regarding women's representation in the faculty, they are not again favored in employment. For example, as analysis of AAU staff profile reveals, out of the total number of full time teaching staff (N: 460) on the main campus, females account only 10% (N: 49) while males dominate the academic staff profile with 90 % (N: 411). It is a public knowledge that in Ethiopia and other similar developing countries women are underrepresented in the formal sector of employment. To justify this assertion the survey conducted by the Central Statistical Authority (2004) reported that women account for less than half (43%) of the total employees in the country. Almost all interviewees and FGD participants agree on a gender gap on the campus. The following remark by the President of the University is representative of the University community on gender disparity in all sectors of the University

Brook: Gender representation among the faculty, for example, is very poor. Especially in higher ranks, we have only two female full professors. That is an indication of how they are underrepresented. *(Interview)*

Article 159 of the AAU Senate Legislation (2007) mandates the establishment of Office of Women's Affairs to identify challenges female students and staff may experience and to suggest possible ways in which gender can be mainstreamed in the curriculum and the teaching and learning process. An interview with an expert at the Curriculum and Standard Office explains the demand for mainstreaming gender in the undergraduate curriculum to create awareness among the University community. He says his office dealt with various cases which were gender sensitive. Sitotaw tells that some female students reported sexual harassment by their teachers. He also does not deny the fact that insignificant number of female students have also falsely accused their teachers and abused the system. He stresses that the University community should be aware of the existing problems regarding gender disparity and sexual harassments as well. The verbatim quote from Sitotaw is quite telling.

Sitotaw: There are many teachers who intentionally target female students and sexually harass them and threaten to give them bad grades. There are justifications for this. This problem is prevalent as the University management is not doing its job. That is why the issue of gender has shown to be the weak side of the University. This is so embarrassing. Most female students implicitly tell me their stories almost every time. These days considerable attention has been given to HIV/AIDS and gender matters. I repeat that gender is not mainstreamed in the curriculum. *(Interview)*

Ethnic diversity: The other interesting theme that evolved in the course of the study is ethnicity as the most dominant factor. It was found that ethnicity is the most significant grouping factor at Addis Ababa University. In support of this, the study on the dating behavior of students on the main campus of the University, Getnet (2009) reports ethnicity as the major determining variable on campus interaction and personal relationship formation. To simplify the presentation, this section deals with ethnic diversity on the campus and later a full account of ethnicity perceptions and experiences are narrated in separate section. See also the quantitative component of the study (Chapter Eight) to collaborate the extent of ethnic diversity discovered through the qualitative study with the quantitative results.

As the daily observations and field-notes of the author in various scenarios reveal, there is a clear observable ethnic diversity among the students at AAU. The three credit hours course offered by the researcher to two groups of students confirmed the same. Consistent with his observations, almost all participants of the interviews and FGDs strongly agree that there is significant increase in student ethnic composition.   Almost all informants agree that there is a significant change in students' ethnic composition in the University. Contrasting the change with the realities decades ago, the research participants from diverse roles and ethnicities contend that there is a considerable change. The following excerpts from a fourth year ethnic Tigre student, an ethnic Amhara lecturer, ethnic Oromo lecturer and the President make the assertion more vivid.

Hagos: Because AAU is diversified, many languages are spoken on the campus. Based on my everyday encounter, I think this campus hosts many ethnicities. *(Interview)*

Ayenachew: It is true that, in the old days, most students were from the Amhara ethnic background. Even when students from a different ethnicity came, people in the registrar went to the extent of changing the given names of students. Of course, I heard this from a person who was a registrar officer. When some names were not familiar to the Amharas and to make them simpler, or due to some other reasons, they used to be changed. Such cases were there. *(Interview)*

Fedissa: There is a huge difference between now and before because in the old times schools were situated in urban areas where mainly Amharic speakers or the ruling classes dwell. Therefore, it was the children of those people who got the opportunity to join schools. They were the most favored ones. *(Interview)*

Brook: I think there is a significant difference. We have students from all locations. Referring to the statistics, the proportion of Oromo students is higher, and in the same way the ethnic proportion of other ethnic groups is also higher. It is true in terms of ethnicity. In the past, certain cultural groups were disadvantaged. *(Interview)*

It is consensual among the University community that access to the University is open for all cultural groups, in contrast to the opportunities few decades ago. Educated in their first language and having completed their school studies based on regional curriculum, diverse group of students who speak diverse languages join AAU. However, with respect to fair representation of ethnic students in the University, there is a noticeable difference among respondents. For example, ethnic Anuak student from the Department of English Education strongly states that the students' ethnic representation is fair. Asked if ethnic composition of the student population is a fair reflection of the national figure, an ethnic Oromo student from the Law School responds with hesitation but agreement. On the contrary, one of the vice presidents of the University challenged the argument that ethnic groups are fairly represented on the campus. How about looking into their actual words?

Obang: We can say that the ethnic composition at AAU is a fair representation. **(Interview)**

Hordofa It is more or less possible to say that all *nations* and *nationalities* are reasonably represented. There are people from many *nations* and *nationalities.* Of course there might be

some problems. In our department, Geography, for example, there is only one teacher who is an Oromo. There is an insufficiency of ethnic teachers. The rest of the teachers are from the Amhara and the Tigreans. *(Interview)*

Andinet: I cannot say the University is a representative of all people from all walks of life in Ethiopia. The problem is still there … but it is reflected in the College of Education. In this College, ethnic groups are represented but with a small number (population). There is still a problem. *(Interview)*

In connection with this, the other question raised regarding ethnic diversity was ethnic composition of the staff and the leadership. In contrast to the students' ethnic background, the staff and University leadership do not enjoy diversity as observation and documents show. The University diversification process bypassed these groups of the University community. In agreement with this fact, the President acknowledges the problem but with an air of optimism of change in the course of time. But focusing on the possible causes of the challenge, Fedissa, an ethnic Oromo lecturer at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, attributes the problem to the dominance of one ethnic group.

Brook: The profile of the staff is still very different from the profile of the whole students. Gradually, it is changing but currently it is lagging. We have difficulties in language studies. For example, we have difficulties in finding people who could teach Oromo literature, Tigrigna literature and so on given these are large groups. I know only one person, for example, who did his PhD in Tigrigna literature. *(Interview)*

Fedissa: In fact, even though the student composition has changed greatly, the composition of instructors has not changed very much because the ones who used to join the University were from the ruling class, a few minority ethnic groups, or mainly Amharic speakers. *(Interview)*

The data from the Personnel Department supports the argument stated above. Although it was difficult to trace the ethnic background of the academic staff from the document, it was possible to argue that the majority of the staff is Amharic speaking as their origin is either from the Amhara

region or Addis Ababa. Additionally, some employees who were born in Oromia towns could be Amhara. Moreover, most people from Addis Ababa speak Amharic as a mother tongue. There is a clear tendency to reach to this conclusion. The researcher contacted the Personnel Department on the possible way by which data regarding ethnic background of the faculty can be accessed. However, as it reported the Office ones tried to collect information through a separate form but failed to get the intended information. Some people in Ethiopia are uncomfortable to give information referring their ethnicity unless they feel that they are safe and sure the data will not be used for other purposes. The table below triangulates the facts stated by the interviewees.

Table 6.3: Regional origin of the academic staff at Sidist Kilo campus

Regional Origin/ State	Figure	Percentage
Addis Ababa	90	19.565
Oromia	98	21.304
Amhara	112	24.348
Tigray	20	4.348
SNNP	37	8.043
Other regions	16	3.478
Ethiopian born in foreign country	4	0.869
Not given	83	18.043
Total	460	100%

Source: Unpublished document from the Personnel Department

In a marked different perspective, some respondents recommended the researcher to see staff ethnic diversity across faculties and departments. Some of them went to the extent of mentioning names of departments dominated by a single ethnic group and leadership positions reserved for particular ethnic groups. It has also been noticed by the investigator that there are some rumors and observable trends in a few departments that the faculty is dominated by a given ethnicity. Some respondents tell off the difficulty for other ethnic applicants to be employed in such ethnically homogenous departments. The narrative by Andinet, one of the vice presidents, makes the suspicion more vivid.

Andinet: When you come to teachers – there is a kind of pattern observed these days. If the department head is from a certain cultural group, then the number of staff recruited from the same ethnic group (of the head) is greater than staff employed from other ethnic groups. Probably, this might have something to do with previous opportunities that favor certain cultural groups getting the chance to work at AAU for the last many years. There is a similar pattern in the ethnic composition of the leadership, especially when we talk about the top leadership positions (president and vice president). There is political interference. I don't know if it is true or not, there are some positions reserved for particular ethnic groups. *(Interview)*

Diversity perceptions: It is discussed that the student ethnic composition at AAU has significantly improved. This change is viewed differently among members of the University community. Diversity is not necessarily about ethnicity, it is also about gender, economic class, or disciplinary orientation. However, the ethnographic evidences report that ethnic diversity is the most raised and contended factor at AAU. Therefore, it is important to further analyze the perspectives of the participants regarding this matter. The results show two extreme positions. The first group of respondents asserts that diversity provides opportunities and mechanism for equity of pedagogy in higher education through multiculturalism and the second group claims that it is a threat to unity as the existing diversity is politically motivated. The community is divided along these two perspectives by which one group demonstrates displeasure with the new arrangement while the other is supportive. It was difficult to identify which ethnic groups are in ether of the positions even though respondents claim to associate the previously dominant ethnic group to the former and all others to the latter. However, members or affiliates of political parties (ruling party and oppositions) are clearly divided on this matter.

The first group of participants contends that diversity offers groups access to higher education. They say ethnic groups which were denied opportunities to education have found a promising chance to live and study in universities. AAU as a multiethnic university has been open to the admission of ethnic students and has introduced new programs (e.g. Oromo and Tigrigna languages) in College of Education and Institute of Language Studies. Cultural programs at the

Cultural Center too have become multiethnic and as a result ethnic literature and cultural programs are entertained at the Center. The attempt to accommodate the interest of a diverse group of students offered opportunities. For example, citing his own experience, the President of the University perceives this move as an opportunity to build a new face of Ethiopia. He argues that the University ought to help students learn the actual picture of the nation through contact with students from other ethnicity. With a more or less similar view, Tsiege, a fourth year ethnic Tigre student, claims that a diverse campus facilitates intercultural understanding and minimizes prejudice and stereotyping. She underlines that university admission should remain diverse and promote interethnic interaction. Their actual words are more revealing.

> *Brook:* I think diversity should pursue a sense of being an Ethiopian. I hope this could be possible by contacting people from other cultural backgrounds and so on. This happens in every generation. When I went to school, there were so many students from the South, like Gambella, Borena and Ethio-Somali. My first introduction to other cultural groups was to these students. As a result, my state of being an Ethiopian was radically altered. I hope this is what happens when students come to AAU. *(Interview)*
>
> *Tsiege:* It is better to assign students from different ethnic groups. This will help students to develop social relations and to know each other. For example, most students do not want to go to Mekele University, however, those who went there just to see it would have a different picture. When they go there and see the reality, they would understand that their previous picture was wrong. If you take a Tigre to Oromia or an Oromo to Tigray, let she/he sees the actual face of the society, she/he may change her/his negative attitudes. *(Interview)*

On the contrary, the second group of participants perceives diversity as a threat to national unity and a cause of ethnic conflict. Challachew, an ethnic Amhara lecturer, explains the fear among students regarding admitting diverse group of students to AAU. Contrary to Tsiege's notion some students believe that it is safe and comfortable to assign students in universities located in their regional states, not far from home. Challachew's classroom experience tells the pessimism and fear some students have about diversity.

Challachew: Once during *Oral Presentation* class, a student whom I consider to be intelligent made a proposition that students should be assigned to universities established in their own regions. He was giving justifications. He was academically strong with very good English. His first reason was that, when ethnic conflicts break, students coming from far away towns are always exposed to dangers of high risk. That was the first reason he gave. This implies that, when they join here (AAU), students have expectations that there might be ethnic conflicts. Look how they come widening their differences. Therefore, in order to curb this problem, you find students with an attitude that an Oromo should stay in Oromia, a Tigre in Tigray, and an Amhara in Amhara region. And you see that we are beyond this; there is no optimism that we can bridge our differences. ***(Interview)***

Most non-Amhara respondents think that the dominant Amharic speaking community considers the change as a threat to national unity. Waqo, participant of FGD 1, response is a representative of the views held by people who think that the Amharic speaking community perceives diversity as anti-Ethiopian. However, Selamneh completely rejects these generalizations and claims that he was surprised by a staff member who asked him whether he feels comfortable if children learn in their mother tongue. This ethnic Amhara participant strongly argues that diversity is inevitable but it should not go to the extent of risking the unity of the country. The excerpts from these two informants indicate the difference of the views they have in attributing the assertion to one ethnic group.

Waqo: Some people perceive that diversity endangers the unity of the country and I think this comes from family and society. They believe that the existence of other religions and ethnicities deny them something. Students from Amhara ethnic group possess such attitudes. We do not see them engaged in dialogue on diversity but they always argue about unity. I think they have a problem of appreciating others' culture and language. I think they perceive diversity as a frustrating concept. The junior staff's perception of diversity is not like the senior staff as they tend to be systematic. Some of them have accepted the fact that diversity is inevitable*. (FGD 1)*

Selamneh: I think there is a misunderstanding in trying to associate Amhara as against diversity or mother tongue education. A colleague whom I consider as liberal asked me if I am comfortable if students in Oromia attend school in their mother tongue for no other reason than I am from Amhara ethnicity. I was shocked because I think we are educated and we at least accept the declarations of UNESCO. Diversity is inevitable and we are living in a multicultural society. The only thing I oppose is the way diversity is handled. Currently, it is not properly addressed. **(FGD 2)**

In addition to seeing diversity as a threat, respondents holding skeptical views on diversity color the changes as a politically manipulated practice to divide and rule the country. This conspiracy theory is advocated by staff and students who support opposition political parties. Jebessa, boldly states that the government is not honest in its intention of making higher education a true multicultural learning environment. He strongly contends that the government widens the gap between ethnic groups by advocating ethnic politics. However, some discredit this allegation. For instance, Tesfaye fully supports the governments' attempt to diversify university campuses. This supporter of the ruling party condemns members of the opposition party for their resistance to change. In agreement with Tesfaye, the vice president of the University at the general staff meeting held on May 2009 blames supporters of opposition forces for their interference in the University and their attempts to discredit the University's success in promoting diversity. He says there are forces which conspire to portray diversity as a challenge to national unity.

Jebessa: It is difficult to consider that this government has recognized diversity at a practical level; rather, it is using diversity for its policy of divide and rule. It has not accepted diversity in any real sense, but it is using it as an ethnic card. It was an attempt to turn everyone against the Amhara elite and it has failed. It was counterproductive and practically turned all elites against the TPLF. That is the case. Using diversity as an instrument for your own end and truly recognizing diversity and making use of it to solve problems are quite different. Therefore, EPRDF did not succeed in solving problems that emanated from diversity. But it broadened it and sometimes turned it ugly. *(Interview)*

Tesfaye: The existence of Ethiopia as a state largely depends on giving equal access to higher education to all ethnic groups. When you encourage and demand diversity, you will be labeled as "racist or ethnocentric". *(Interview)*

Staff Meeting: As diversity has been dominant on the campus, there are forces that want to allegedly argue that diversity is a threat to national unity by exaggerating and counting conflict episodes. *(Minutes)*

Multiculturalism as a guiding educational policy: AAU adopts multiculturalism as a viable educational policy and institutional arrangement to promote diversity and equity of pedagogy. It is practical for the University to adopt such policy given the history of the country and the current political ideology of the nation and of course in response to the growing global attempt to internationalize higher education. The Senate legislation (AAU, 2007) concretely indicates its devotion to promoting diversity, tolerance, a sense of equality, democratic culture, multiculturalism, affirmative action and cultural exchanges. As a result, it mandates the establishment of the Cultural and Social Affairs Committee (CSAC), Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunities (ODEO) and Office of the Women's Affairs (OWA) (Article 19 & Article 157). The former is responsible for formulating and recommending policies that promote educational and cultural activities. ODEO ensures that members of the University community are not discriminated on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, disability or any other justifiable reasons. The latter identifies the challenges female students and women staff experience and works on mainstreaming gender in the curriculum. These newly structured offices were not fully organized at the time of the study even though the Gender Office is there with a limited capacity.

All participants in the ethnographic study, in principle, accept multiculturalism as a working educational policy. However, they are divided on the issues on the ground. Some of them were unhappy about their new role while others are pleased with the new system. This finding is consistent with Tanaka's (2007) report. Multiculturalism has assisted the campus in its attempt to implement diversity and equity of pedagogy through various means such as affirmative action policy and the expansion of diverse educational programs. A director for the Undergraduate

programs and lecturer cited the practice in his own department as a case in point to explain the trend. For assessment of the practice and the discontents see Chapter Seven.

> ***Sitotaw:*** There is a very high ethnic composition these days. Our department has different admission requirements. The department gives quota for regional states. The quota is based on the total population of each region. This is considered during admission. In most cases few candidates come from the disadvantaged regions, if any. However, priority is given to them. When the quota is not full, for example, we include those in the waiting list especially women from these regions irrespective of whether those in the list have a better point or not. The implication of this on the teaching and learning is being discussed, anyway. ***(Interview)***

The macro-level contexts: State and the University

Culture and communication at AAU is a reflection of what is going on in the country as most respondents agree. As a public university in Ethiopia, AAU is funded and administered by the government. Added to this, top management officials, like the president, are appointed by the Prime Minister upon the recommendations of the Minister of Education (MOE). Educational policies and programs are often designed centrally at the MOE and implemented in public universities in the country. The political ideology governing the country surfaces on campus interaction among the key players in the educational environment. For description of the political system and contending political views in the country refer Chapter Five. The history of discrimination and current ethnic-politics manifest itself on campus interaction as the research participants confirmed. Most of the respondents agree that the University and its major interactional problems are mirror images of the existing socio-political and cultural reality in the nation.

In other words, AAU echoes the political and historical reality in the country. Intercultural communication and institutional interaction are influenced by the participants' political orientation and their ethnic background as the findings reveal. As a result of the new political arrangement in the country, ethnic federalism, the University community too holds a divided view. The political

forces, leading and opposition parties, influence and divide the University community. There is a clear dividing line between people supporting the government and the opposition demonstrating fearful, suspicious and intolerant communication which adversely affectes interpersonal interaction and institutional effectiveness. Irrespective of their political ideology, political forces and institutions have not yet achieved their goal of exercising healthy and productive interparty dialogue. The problem is deep-rooted in the system. There was a consensus among respondents regarding this fact.

As Jebessa says most leadership positions are held on the campus either by members of the ruling political party or its sympathizers. However, he argues that most of the staff is against the current political party or they support the opposition political parties or they are not members. It is hardly possible to imagine members of the opposition party seizing top administrative or academic position on the campus as Belay puts it. Politics is also affecting student career opportunities and interaction on the campus. Student Meaza mentions how membership to a political party is important to secure job after graduation. The following excerpts reveal their concern on the situation.

> *Jebessa:* Most of the staff at AAU is anti-government. For example, in our department, there is probably one person who is presumed to support the government. Also, it does not exceed more in other departments. There may be other staff members who are muted. The buffer zone is more comfortable and safer. *(Interview)*
>
> *Belay*: AAU is led by cadres. It does not act as an academic institution. As long as the government is paying you the salary and puts its own appointees, it is difficult to act like an academic institution. Instead of being a university that upholds freedom to hold opinions and promote debate, it becomes an instrument to the implementation of demands from the top. One who has plagiarized and failed three or four times was allowed to defend his thesis because of the interference of the management*. (Interview)*
>
> *Meaza*: 85 percent of the University's students are members of the ruling party. They are members because they can't get a job after graduation if they are not members of the ruling party. I am also a party member. If you ask my reason, I have no answer for that. I don't want

to say anything this time, because a month ago we had a meeting to discuss participation in the party. *(Interview)*

The interference of political forces and the history of ethnic discrimination contribute to creating a divided campus community which fails to enjoy transparent, open and productive intercultural communication. A lot of evidence shows that the division sometimes results in campus unrest and institutional chaos that victimize students from different ethnic groups. Teklay, an ethnic Tigre lecturer, explains his experience of threats and discrimination with sorrow. An ethnic Oromo lecture, who gave off-record interview, characterizes the influence of the current state politics and the history of ethnic discrimination as major challenges to the campus. These are what they say about the situation.

Teklay: Sorry to mention this, when the clash occurred following the 2005 election, a gap was created between us (students). Though the conflict between us was not that serious, we discontinued to dine and spend time together. The main reason for the division is that it is assumed that the ruling party is fully supported by all members of the Tigre ethnic group. This is almost a belief of everybody. Because of that, there are people who always avoid interaction with us. On the contrary, there are also people from other ethnicity who are our friends. But, there are many students who were friends but finally ignored each other due to the outcome of the election. *(Interview)*

Kuma: It is natural that individuals from the same ethnic identity attract each other. But what is prevalent at AAU is ethnic politics and labeling. It is visible that Amhara is labeled as the previous ruling class while Tigre is labeled as the new. This has endangered social integration at AAU. Throughout history, there has never been hospitality to other ethnic groups. Therefore, conflicts have always been there as a result. Currently, there is a tendency to retrieve that old history of segregation and play ethnic and political cards. People are not able to forget the past and work on the future. As AAU is a reflection of the nation, it lacks inclusiveness. *(Off-record interview*)

The State and the University have not enjoyed a pleasant interaction despite changes over the course of time. During Haile Selassie's regime, it was the popular Ethiopian Students' Movement that facilitated the downfall of the regime. And later the Derge was also overturned after seventeen years of guerilla fighting by Tigray People Liberation Front and associates. The struggle was started by rebels including students who dropped out of this University. Later, it was public knowledge that the current government publically went against the University and fired dozens of professors. Tesfaye characterizes the current state-government relationship as improving. On the contrary, Jebessa criticizes the government as using the University as a political instrument. Kasa claims that educational institutions should be free from politics and they should be purely academic and address secular knowledge.

> *Tesfaye:* The State-AAU relationship is not like it was a few years ago. AAU had a number of confrontations with the government but now things have changed for good. There is a hot political movement at AAU: between sympathizers of the government and those opposing. I believe that the former has dominated the latter lately. I think the government is not 80% harsh on the University. People can use mass media to criticize the state. Students and teachers are members of various parties. *(Interview)*
>
> *Jebessa:* The government uses AAU as an instrument. The philosophy of the leadership is the following: any institution—educational or whatever—should be an instrument for institutional control. This so-called multiparty concept is creating problems. For instance, students tell me that the government is attempting to impose its political philosophy on the University. *(Interview)*
>
> *Kassa*: The constitution clearly states that educational institutions are free from politics and religious influences. But in practice it is a different story. For example, once a local authority posted an election campaign poster on the school notice board, and the director tore the poster down and told the local authority that his act was against the constitution. But this director was jailed allegedly charging him with the theft of a typewriter from the school. *(FGD 2)*

The micro-level context: The University

The campus climate

AAU as a divided academic community: As revealed in the data, AAU is a highly divided academic institution and its multicultural policy does not help it solve this problem. This result is in harmony with the report of Tanaka (2007) which outlines the inadequacy of such policy and it rather creates a divided campus community. Research participants strongly note that AAU is a divided academic environment that fails to enjoy the fruits of intercultural communication and effective institutional culture. Asked to characterize the campus, respondents across roles and ethnicity eloquently name the institution as a stratified community. For example, Andinet sadly explains AAU as an institution lacking healthy institutional communication. This vice president of the University characterizes the institution as a community divided across ethnic lines attributing the causes to the political reality in the nation. Teacher Ayenachew considers the division among the community based on the roles they assume. He defines the relationship between the leadership, staff and students as unpleasant and often a rocky path. Tadelech explains that the division among students is apparent when students are asked to do group assignments. Student Martha describes the division based on ethnicity and religion taking her experiences and observations in students' hostels and classroom environments. Their actual words are cited below.

> *Andinet*: AAU is being an extremely divided institute. *(Interview)*
>
> *Ayenachew*: It is possible to assume that AAU is a divided community. *(Interview)*
>
> *Tadelech***:** Yes. Even without analyzing deeply, observation shows you that AAU is very much divided. You see it when you are teaching and giving group work to students. *(Interview)*
>
> *Martha*: AAU is a divided community based on ethnicity and religion. *(Interview)*

Exercising high power distance: AAU's culture demonstrates high power distance among participants in the interactive context**.** Consistent with Hoftsede's characterization of east African cultures including Ethiopia, the power distance among the communicators is found to be high. East Africa scores high in this dimension (score of 64) which means that people accept a hierarchical

order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification, and hierarchy in an organization is seen as inequalities and the ideal leader is a kindly dictator (Hoftsede, online). Similarly, participants of the study reported that there is significantly high power distance among members of the University as the result of the position/role they hold, seniority, ethnic background and political orientations. Most of the respondents contend that individuals can be advantaged or disadvantaged as the result of these factors.

The role or position individuals hold influence their communication with others. For example, participants agree that student-staff relationship demonstrate high power distance which gives teachers the advantages to enjoy more power. Observation depicts the fact that teachers are autocratic and sometimes dictators who hardly pay attention to student problems. Even though there is variance among teachers, it is a public knowledge that teachers at AAU are characterized by these traits. In most cases, teachers lack the sensitivity to understand the perspective of their students. As a result, students are always disadvantaged because of the excessive power teachers' exercise. Most interviewees and FGD participants and off-record interviewee participants agree with this fact. The excerpts below may give a better idea.

> **Habtom:** You see these college kids are delicate by the way. The younger you are, the more afraid you will become of the world around you. The younger you are, the more powerless you feel while communicating with an older person (like teacher). **(Interview)**
>
> **Tsiege:** There are instructors who are cherished and there are also the opposite. It is not fair. The relationship should be balanced. Instructors should allow the student to speak freely in classes. Sharing ideas between instructors and students should be appreciated. **(Interview)**
>
> **Sitotaw:** There is a possibility of being privileged or disadvantaged with regard to power. This is a usual case with respect to teacher-student relations. **(Interview)**
>
> **Shumet:** There is higher power distance between teachers and students. Ethiopian professors and teachers do not allow their students to give them a call or sit next to them in a café or restaurant. They are highly autocratic and they do not listen to their students. My experience with my foreign PhD advisor changed me a lot. To give me feedback on the article we were working on, she invited me at a café in Bole for she was to fly shortly. She displayed

a collegial and friendly gesture while discussing the feedback. The professors in my university consider drinking coffee with a student as a threat to their social status. *(Off-record interview)*

In some cases, teachers go to the extent of abusing students for the fact that they are not sensitive to the situation of their students. Informal discussion with Haile, a junior lecturer, reveals an embarrassing experience of a left-handed student. It is a common tradition in Ethiopia that there is a prejudice and discrimination against left-handed people. Parents closely monitor their little kids to use their right hands when they first start writing in kindergarten or helping them in household routines. They discourage and sometimes punish kids not to use their left hands in most activities. Left-handed students find it difficult to get armchairs designed for them in most of their school life. Here is the full narrative of Mr Haile.

> *Haile*: There is power abuse and insensitivity to students' background including disabilities. For example, there is a very embarrassing experience I heard very recently. In a classroom, a handicapped student raised his left hand to answer a question. He had a deformed right hand. The teacher shouted and insulted the student claiming how the student raised his left hand to him. The teacher said he hated left-handed people. The teacher was unaware and insensitive to the disability of the student. The student was shocked and felt it so much. He reported it to the Associate Department Head and then to the Disability Center of the University. The Center was to take the case to the court. Some teachers are insensitive and do not care for the situation and background of their students since they over exercise their power. *(Off-record interview)*

High power distance is also reflected regarding the relationship between the University leadership and the staff. The leadership is perceived by the staff as more powerful and unwilling to listen and deal with the staff. The staff is afraid of those on top of the University management as a result teachers submit to a person with power. This is consistent with Hoftsede (1980) characterizations of organizational cultures in high power distance societies. It is also observed that the leadership strive to maintain the existing power distance but teachers sometimes   attempt to reject their

weaker role. As a result, the relationship between the staff and the management is not pleasant and working closely is not common. The literature on power and intercultural communication is consistent with the fact that power is prevalent in the communication process (see Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Jensen, 2006). There is observable communication gap as a net product of the *power struggle* between the leadership maintaining power and the faculty struggling for better opportunity of influence. Interviewees are in agreement with these facts. With a sense of sarcasm, teacher Fetamo recounts how power is viewed at AAU. Ayenachew describes the communication between the faculty and the leadership as unproductive and calls for reform. The excerpts below are more informative.

> *Fetamo:* Position is a big deal. If you become an official, all people bow to you with their hands behind them. But when you lose your position, you are just like any ordinary person—nobody will look back at you. Therefore, when one holds a position, he seeks respect. However, he will not get it when he loses that post. That is why position holders are much respected. *(Interview)*
>
> *Ayenachew*: Regarding the relationship between the management and the staff, what I have witnessed during my 19/20 year stay is not good. Especially these days, I do not think the management gives much thought to the staff. The staff considers the leadership as totally subordinate to the government and the students sympathetic to the government. Unless a way is found to alleviate this, it is impossible to expect a better outcome. *(Interview)*

Seniority is also another important source of power distance among the University staff. Various sources confirm the fact that factors such as age and rank or position could be sources of power (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Academic rank plays a key role in staff interaction and socialization. There is a clear and observable communication gap between the senior staff and the junior staff in various interactional environments such as the teachers' lounge. The seat taking in the teachers' tearoom projects this fact as it has been noticed by the personal observation of the researcher. The senior faculty members take the round tables opposite to the counter in the room while junior staff gathers at the center of the room occupying the plastic chairs with a clear physical distance in between. Even if the round tables are not taken, most junior staff is too shy to take the seats as if

the chairs were reserved for the senior staff. Collaborating with this observation, most respondents describe the power relation between the junior and the senior categorically as *inferior* and *superior*. The following remark by Fetamo is a representative of the reflections of the research participants.

> *Fetamo:* You do not see junior staff discussing freely with the seniors. Juniors are considered as childish. You see much power distance. The professors see themselves superior to lecturers. And when seniors hold a high position, it gets worse. They impose their power onto juniors. There is a clear power distance. The same applies to the rapport between experienced staff and juniors. *(Interview)*

Ethnicity is the other source of power distance reported by the University community. Given the ethnic based political arrangement of the macro-context, it is not surprising to notice a perceived imbalance of power among members of ethnic groups in the institution. Although students' ethnic composition has improved, some members of the community feel that some ethnic groups are more privileged than the others. Sitotaw, for instance, claims that some group of students from a particular ethnic group is more dominant and has a better voice than others. Added to this, he says it is also easy for teachers from this ethnic group to establish smooth relationship or easier communication with the University leadership. The Officer also notices that there are teachers and students from all ethnic groups who are honest in their professional integrity and avoid such advantages. In harmony with this, some participants of the FGD1 agree with this concern. For instance, Getu contends that the University is not fair to all ethnic groups although in principle it advocates equity of pedagogy and democratic culture. Let us read their words.

> *Sitotaw:* Some teachers benefit owing to the possible relationship they established with the top leadership. Such teachers benefit as officials favor them based on friendship and ethnic background. Some students possess the unreserved right to contact the top leadership. During transfers or student readmissions, some students unconditionally earn the right which they do not deserve. There is a group who benefits from this. Since this is purposely designed it might be difficult for me to name the ethnicity benefiting. *(Interview)*

Getu: People are privileged or disadvantaged as a result of their ethnic background. We see them in all departments. Sadly, even those whom we consider as educated and have reached the status of a professor have problems of accommodating diversity. *(FGD 1)*

It was necessary to further discuss this matter with the research participants. However, informants were not comfortable to be specific and give practical episodes or experiences to support their argument. But, it was possible to access examples through off-record talks with some of them to recall their experiences. Attributing the advantage to the dominant ethnic groups in the leadership and faculty, respondents narrate their dissatisfaction with the power distance demonstrated on the campus. They argue that it is unfortunate that there are many people that they can be better than, but just because they come from a particular ethnic group they are likely to be blocked. Dominants create every means to block others. To cite some examples, informal talks with an assistant dean of one of the faculties and a lecturer and head of Students' Affairs Committee of one of the colleges are more interesting to justify this argument. Here is how they narrate their experiences.

Mustefa: There are times extra treatment is given to some group of students. For example, while working on the placement of students in various departments, we assigned 120 students to […] degree but they accepted 80 students and rejected the rest. The rejected students claimed that they cannot speak Amharic and they appeared through translators. At the end of semester the dean raised the question again and other programs were forced to accept the extra number of students assigned to them. But the […] program rejected the dean's request and wrote a letter to higher authorities. Finally, students from this program were given special chance and were permitted to attend a semester in the summer program. There is such extra treatment for some groups. *(Off-record Interview)*

Hambessa: I think there are students from a single ethnic group which always apply to the Students Affairs Committee and demand a lot. This group of students has some backing from the existing system and is often observed insulting, threatening and even attempting to physically attack teachers. They feel more superior to other students and can even dominate teachers. Most of the applications for regarding and complaints in general come from these

ethnic students. I have been insulted and threatened by students from this single ethnic group. I think there is a dominant ethnic group in this University. *(Off-record Interview)*

In sum, it was evident that AAU projects high power distance among its members which of course adversely affect institutional effectiveness and intercultural communication. The major sources of power include roles/positions individuals have in the institutional structure, seniority and ethnic/cultural background. The relationship among students, teachers and University leadership has always been unfriendly and sometimes involves excessive use of power that threatens democratic culture and rather cultivates the culture of fear. Seniority was also the main source of power that disadvantaged juniors to exercise equal academic freedom and access institutional positions and facilities. Added to these, ethnicity and political orientations discriminate participants. Since the nation has adopted ethnic politics and is structured along linguistic and ethnic lines, history of discrimination and the present political reality surface at institutional and personal levels. Ethnic groups that used to dominate the academics want to keep the status quo and those disadvantaged in the previous political systems and those dominating the present political sphere compete for more power and more advantages.

Highly bureaucratic and anti-democratic: AAU is also characterized by the respondents as a highly bureaucratic institution for various causes. For instance, high power distance and the struggle for better influence in the context often disadvantages individuals in getting the service they deserve. As already discussed before, the divided community adversely affects the possible communication among the University forces and collaboration for common purposes. As the observation of the researcher shows, it is a public knowledge that the University is perceived as a highly bureaucratic institution and is often out of touch with the public or the community. Most people cite a number of examples to explain their dissatisfaction of its customer handling. Most respondents confess this characterization of the institution by the public and the government as well. With sadness, Tesfaye criticizes the University as a highly anti-democratic and lacking academic culture. Regarding this, teacher Fedissa narrates one of the many challenges he experienced at the University. Sitotaw, a director at the Office of the Vice President for Undergraduate Programs, also

narrates how bureaucracy and communication problems between departments victimize students. Below are segments of their views and experiences.

> *Tesfaye*: AAU is democratic reactionary. It is a chauvinist die-hard reactionary and an extension of the dying rotten system. It is a highly bureaucratic and anti-democratic institution. This institution lacks academic thinking and atmosphere. AAU is not progressive. It is governed by a feudal mentality. For example, the University promised to build and renovate the Cultural Center but nothing has been done so far. All our attempts were blocked by the bureaucracy, a lack of budget and anti-democratic sentiments.
>
> *Fedissa*: I had my own experience in which I tried to study for my second degree in a different program. I took the exam but was told that I didn't succeed in the exam. I wrote a formal letter of complaint so that I will have access to my exam paper and they immediately rejected my application and they told me that I cannot have access to my paper. I took the case to the assistant dean but it was in vein. Again, I took the matter a bit further and I took it to Director of Graduate Studies. He wrote a letter to the Department and the Department didn't reply and I took it further to Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and finally I went to the University President. Finally, I was denied right to access to my own paper that I had written myself. *(Interview)*
>
> *Sitotaw:* What I remember is that a girl was allowed to be admitted to a faculty but her department refused to accept the girl though the reasons she presented to us were unquestionably true. They challenged us against the evidence the office provided. They asked us to send evidence; well it was a month after. The matter is we could not send the evidence at that time but we responded that the committee is convinced and it has been almost a month. I know that this student has not been accepted yet. *(Interview)*

Disputed Academic freedom: According to Article 25 of AAU's Senate Legislation (2007, p. 51) all members of the academic community have the right to fulfill their functions of teaching, doing research, writing, learning, exchanging and disseminating information, and providing services without fear of interference or repression from the State or any other forces. Furthermore, Article 168 of the same document (AAU, 2007: 268) defines, "Academic freedom shall mean the right to

discuss and openly express views and ideas, immediate national and global problems and issues as well as other controversial matters in class...." Despite the provision of academic freedom on the document, the mood and the practice on the campus reflect the opposite. It was observed that people are fearful and afraid to speak their mind. AAU is a public university funded by the government and it reflects the current political ideology of the ruling party and lacks institutional autonomy as claimed by the research participants. The management affiliates with the government's policies while most of the staff sympathizes with the opposition parties or simply avoids involvement in politics.

Mathias, a junior lecturer, states that there is no academic freedom in the institution and recommends for practical efforts fostering important academic rights. However, Belay, a senior professor, is pessimistic that the University can be free and autonomous from government intervention as far as it is fully funded by the state. Jebessa, on the other hand, narrates the fact that the University has struggled a lot to secure its own charter by which it can exercise academic freedom and institutional autonomy. How about looking at their actual words?

> *Mathias*: What I think is that the University needs academic freedom. I don't think there is academic freedom in this University. There should be mechanisms that enable the University to exercise its academic freedom delegated to it. *(Interview)*
>
> *Belay:* The University has to be autonomous. But as long as it cannot earn its own money and keeps on depending on the government, it is difficult to make it independent. Even those of us who are educated and living here do not have our own independent thinking because we are economically dependent. *(Interview)*
>
> *Jebessa:* AAU does not allow people to exercise academic freedom. It has taken 18 years for the Charter to reach Sidist Kilo (campus). Authorities talk about charter but the charter has not yet arrived. What is the problem? Most teachers are in a buffer zone. This zone forbids them (the staff) from working with the government, for they fear being called the one who joined the government to fill up his belly.' Again, even if they want to join the opposition (which they do not hate), they are afraid of the government's actions. They are caught in limbo. *(Interview)*

Ethnicity as a stratifying factor

Based on the responses from the interviews, FGDs, documents and observations, ethnicity was found to be the most significant stratifying factor on campus interaction. Consensually, various studies have reported that ethnicity plays a key role in how students experience college (e.g. Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Tanaka, 2007; Otten, 2003; Gurin, 1999). Fueled by a history of ethnic discrimination and current ethnic politics, ethnicity influences campus climate and everyday interaction. It is a guiding principle in all levels of the government in the nation from the federal government to local administrations. Discussing the role of ethnicity on campus, it is vital to cite responses shared by most of the research informants. On the interview, Belay underlines that ethnicity has become a worldview on the campus. He reports that people make use of ethnic cards for most causes they could not justify. Similarly, Tolla concludes that ethnicity is the most important factor in interactions on the campus. Contrasting it with religion, ethnicity is more dominant and stronger cause for various campus conflicts and misunderstandings. Below is part of their opinions.

> *Belay*: Ethnicity has become a worldview; that is the whole point. Everything has taken this ideology as a standard to justify causes. The moment ethnicity becomes an ideology, political conflicts among the elite moves down to the masses. *(Interview)*
>
> *Tolla:* I think ethnicity is a stronger dividing factor than religion. It is reflected on most campus interactions and practiced continuously during students' stay in the University and perhaps beyond. *(FGD 2)*

Ethnic identification: Ethnic identification is a very difficult concept in Ethiopian context for the fact that people identify themselves on various factors. Language, culture, place of birth (region), tribe and name are among the few. People identifying themselves on one would change and identify themselves with another. As the country is multicultural and multilingual, people born from mixed families often have problems of labeling themselves to a particular ethnicity. The same is true for individuals who carry Christian names (often sounding Amharic) to be accepted as for example Oromo or other ethnic groups. People try to depend on names to identify one's ethnic

identity. However, there are various non-Amhara with Amharic full names. Surprisingly, there are also ethnic Oromo, especially in towns, with Oromo names but unable to speak Oromo language and find it difficult to identify themselves as Oromo. Likewise, there are also ethnic Amhara individuals who were born in Oromia and know the language and culture. However, they feel that they are not considered as Oromo or Amhara. In a country were ethnicity is one of the major factors in government, failure to identify ethnic identity disadvantages individuals from various opportunities.

Students join AAU with either a clear or confused picture of their ethnic identity. Some students have fully identified their ethnicity, others do not want to be asked about their ethnicity and still others have failed to name one. The same is true with the staff and the leadership as the University community is the reflection of the political reality in the country. During the ethnographic study, it was difficult and sometimes unpleasant to question the ethnicity of the research participants. On the contrary, some were comfortable talking about their ethnic roots. Thus, there are three groups of respondents regarding this matter.

The first group of respondents hates the question and clearly state that they are uncomfortable to tell their ethnicity. They prefer to be called *Ethiopian* rather than addressed by their ethnic group. In reality, there is no ethnicity named *Ethiopian* but it is actually a citizenship that everyone shares. Analysis of their profile shows that they come either from Amhara ethnic group or Amharic dominated metropolitan cities and towns in the country. Regarding their political views, most of them reject the current ethnic-based political arrangement or distance themselves from any political involvement. Telling his own feeling about this, Dagim says he does not like to ask and be asked about his ethnic identity. His own words below are more telling.

> ***Dagim***: I have never asked the ethnicity of anyone and I do not like to be asked too unless I am forced by the Kebele (local city administration) to indicate that on a form. I believe that I am more than an ethnicity and I feel that it is an imposition on people. I do not want anyone to relate to me through my ethnic background or ask me for any other purpose. I was born from Amhara and Oromo ethnic family and brought up in a border town between the two

regions. There is a sentiment that Amharas are enemies, cruel, dominating and brutal by members of other ethnic groups. As a result, I do not want to be indentified like by my ethnicity. I hate the stereotyping in this University. Defining someone by his ethnic identity and disregarding his personality is disgraceful. *(FGD 2)*

In the same vein, Ayenachew gives the same impression. Narrating his experience, he sadly tells he was asked about his ethnic identity at a local administration office which issues identity cards. He responded as *Ethiopian* because he was not interested to name one. Referring to his birthplace, the local administrator offered him an ethnic identity. In Ethiopia, local identity cards identity full names, birthplace and ethnic identity of the bearer. This is a story told by Ayenachew.

> *Ayenachew:* I went to a Kebele to get an identity card and they asked me to tell them my ethnicity. Since my belief regarding ethnicity is not good, I just told them to fill out *Ethiopian* on the space provided. Rejecting my claim, the officer denied me the identity card. Frankly speaking, it was only after a lot of quarrel and with the interference of another person that the case settled. The officer then asked me for my place of birth and he immediately identified my ethnicity based the region where I was born. Then he wrote Amhara on the card issued for me. *(Interview)*

On the contrary, the second group of respondents delightfully explains their ethnic background. These participants depended on two major factors to identify their ethnicity: the ethnic identity of their parents, their own names, speaking the language of their ethnic group and birthplace. Most of them were from regional states namely Oromia, Tigray, Somali and Gambella. Few student interviewees from Amhara are also comfortable answering the question on ethnic identity. However, higher ethnic salience is observed among participants, both teachers and students, from Tigray and Oromia regional states. Given the context of communication on the campus, most of these respondents demand more representation and more ethnic programs from the University. This is quite common among Oromo and Tigre students who demand for ethnic/cultural and literary programs.

The views of two students below are representative of the opinion ethnic Oromo and Tigre hold. Surprisingly, their views were divided as the former believe that they deserve more while the latter claims that the rights of ethnic groups are fully protected by law. This is one of the major causes of friction among students from these two ethnicities. Mohammed, an ethnic Oromo student, says students struggle for a fair playground to promote ethnic identity. Tsige, an ethnic Tigre student, argues that currently all ethnic students have equal rights to exercise their language and culture. She adds that the history of discrimination should be a lesson and by now people can enjoy their ethnic rights. However, Obang, an ethnic Anuak student, argues that students are discriminated because of their ethnic identity. Projecting a very strong ethnic identity salience, Obang explains the stereotype against ethnic Anguak students. But all these students were happy to identify their ethnic roots. Here are their actual words.

Mohammed: Oromo is a majority in Ethiopia. I really don't know what to say, what we are demanding is power. As we are majority and others are minorities, the governing power should be given to us. The globally accepted rule, which says the *majority governs the minority* is converted in this country to the minority rules the majority, which is wrong. There are many individuals in this University having bad attitude towards Afaan Oromo. They look at you differently when you communicate in Afaan Oromo. These people never stare at you if you are communicating in Amharic or English. We are demanding the University to facilitate events which are conducted in Oromo language. *(Interview)*

Tsegie: In earlier times, all people had no equal rights. For example Oromo and Tigre were discriminated. As a result, they struggled together and they have got their rights now. Nowadays, the rights of people are protected by the law; however, there are people who have not accepted this. They work to change history. History is history. Nobody can change it. Now the right of ethnic groups is guaranteed. *(Interview)*

Obang: Those of us who come from Gambella region face a number of challenges. Last year, we had a disturbing experience at the Student Service. I was registered and received a registration slip and went to students' dormitory proctor to secure a room in the students' hostel. The proctor said to me he did not have rooms for foreign students assuming I was a Sudanese. I replied I am an Ethiopian and you can read the registration slip and I can present

my travel documents too. But he refused to accept my complaint. I went to the Student Dean Office and settled the case. Color is also another big challenge. Most students seem to label us as Sudanese and feel the difference between their light black skins with my dark black color. There is a tendency to associate light black color as Ethiopian. *(Interview)*

The third group of respondents explains they cannot clearly identify their ethnicity for various reasons. Some of the respondents sadly express how they are rejected by people from their own ethnic group because of the place they were born. People from some locations are not considered as authentic members of their ethnic group for they are located far from the capital of the ethnic national state or have the history of interethnic marriage with other ethnicities. The experience of Andinet may give a better picture on this. He tells how place of birth and association with other ethnic people confuses identifying his own ethnic identity. He narrates his conflict experience when he was a university student. It was a situation that he was, for first time, to think about his ethnic identity. As students lined up along ethnic groups, it was obligatory to place him in one of the groups. Born in Amharic speaking central Ethiopia, he was not accepted by ethnic Amhara students from the North and at the same time was also rejected by other ethnic groups living in close proximity to his birth place. Here is the story told by the victim.

> *Andinet:* At that time, to tell you the truth, I assumed that I am from the Amhara ethnic group but on that day I realized that those who say that they are Amhara were those who came from central Amhara region – Gojam and Gonder. They didn't accept me (grew at the border with Oromia) as Amhara. At the same time, people from Wolega, Bale and Arsi assumed they are Oromo and they did not count people living in Shoa as Oromo. I couldn't associate myself to any of these ethnic groups. Some people, sometimes, identify me as if I were ethnic Gurage because I had a number of friends from this ethnicity. Since I do not have Gurage roots, I don't speak the language or know the culture, I cannot claim that, otherwise I prefer to call myself Gurage. *(Interview)*

Added to this, the youth from cities and multicultural towns attribute their challenge to their inability to speak the language of their ethnic group and they are unaware of their ethnic culture. They tell how it is difficult for them to label themselves to any of the ethnic groups in the nation. As it was noticed by the researcher's personal observation, students from Addis Ababa recognize the ethnicity of their parents but do not identify themselves as a member of their parents' ethnicity. It seems that they considered Addis Ababa as an identity. Three excerpts taken in the interviews, FGDs, and off-record talks indicate the shared conceptions among this group of respondents. A Lecturer and public relations officer, Tadelech, narrates the challenge of being born in a big city and unable to speak her own mother tongue in this regard. Even if she is identified as ethnic Oromo on her identity card as her families are from this ethnicity, she does not feel she is and think that she cannot be accepted by the group as Oromo. In marked similarity, Paulos tells the fact that he is not able to speak his own mother tongue and argues that is the reflection of the problem people had in urban societies. Surprisingly enough, on an off-record chat, Martha says students from Addis Ababa try to avoid being identified as a member of any ethnic group and prefer to be called *Ye addisaba lijoch*. It is an attempt to replace their ethnic identity with the name of the city where they were born and brought up. There is an observable divide as *yeadisaba lijoch* and *yekiflehager lijoch* to refer to students from the city and the regional states respectively. The following accounts of the three respondents are representative opinions held by most participants from Addis Ababa.

> ***Tadelech:*** It is very difficult. I cannot identify myself. I was born and grew up in urban areas, with my family. On my identity card it is stated that I am Oromo. Most of the time, you can identify yourself to an ethnic group if you were born and grew up in that community, and know their language and culture. Otherwise, it is difficult if there is much mix up***. (Interview)***
>
> ***Paulos:*** I was born from Oromo speaking family in Addis Ababa city. My parents speak both Amharic and Oromo languages but I often heard them speaking Oromo when my uncles came to visit us from the countryside. As my family speak Amharic equivalent to native Amharic speaking community, I could not figure out that they are from Oromo ethnic group and I used to mock at my own ethnic identity and others who were non-Amharic speaking groups. ***(FGD 1)***

Martha: We (those who were born in Addis Ababa) do not often identify ourselves as members of any of the ethnic groups rather we identify ourselves as Addis Ababa. That is our identity. Our parents could be Amhara, Tigre or Oromo. We do not count someone's ethnicity. We are always misunderstood by students from regions. We are discriminated by students from regions. We are also disadvantaged to get information, handouts and educational materials distributed through students. We live off-campus and always stay in our own groups because we do not want and are not able to identify ourselves to ethnic circles formed by students from regional states. *(Off-record interview)*

The other observed problem in ethnic identification is the confusion people hold about religious and ethnic identity. There is a tendency to wrongly associate these two identities. This confusion sometimes becomes a reason for some people to maintain inappropriate picture about their ethnic identity. The personal experience of the researcher reveals how religious identity and ethnic identity overlap in the Ethiopian context. For instance, there is a trend that a Christian Arsi-Oromo is often perceived as Amhara by some Muslims in the same village in the countryside. In support of this, a more practical example is given by teacher Selamneh during the FGD.

Selamneh: In the place where I was born Amhara is defined as contrary to Islam rather than an ethnic group. For example, when people never come to terms they often say, *kezih behwala inena ante Amhara ina Muslim nen* (from now onwards we are like Amhara and Islam) to explain how the two groups never go together. The people conceptualize Amhara in contrast to Islam associating it with Christianity. I came to the University with this perspective. It was here (AAU) that I learned Amhara is an ethnic group. Even though our country is multicultural, we are limited to the cultural and linguistic demography of our local communities. In the place where I was born Amharic was the only language used. *(FGD 2)*

Ethnicity and classroom instruction: The macro-contextual factors such as the current political ideology and the history of ethnic discrimination have influenced the communicative and academic contexts directly and indirectly. As ethnicity is found to be the most influential factor in both intercultural communication and pedagogy, it would be important to see how this factor affects

these vital practices in the classroom and beyond. The researcher heard numerous stories that explain how individuals consciously and unconsciously play ethnic cards in classroom decision making. With sadness and frustration, teachers, students and administrators expressed their concerns citing experiences and personal stories. Teachers argue that ethnicity has adversely affected their classroom instruction and communication with their students. They say some students are curious to know the ethnic identity of their teachers and tend to associate or disassociate themselves. They further state that the context excessively cultivates ethnic identity over individual identity. It is obvious that people tend to line up in their respective groups and feel more secured and protected. In other words, there is an attraction among people sharing similar ethnic identity.

As a result, people tend to use such identity as an instrument to meet some advantages. Teachers claim some students use their ethnic identity for some advantages. They state that this is the most worrisome situation that is adversely affecting classroom instruction. The following two stories may make this assertion more vivid. For example, Weyeso is always surprised how some students identify his ethnic identity and tend to speak to him in his mother tongue. He says it is unfortunate that students sometimes avoid the language of instruction and aim to build unprofessional relationship with him. Paulos also narrates a similar experience. After a student identified his ethnic background, the student wrote his full name including his grandfather's name to show to him that he is from his ethnic group. It is unusual to write the last name (grandfather's name) on exam papers or project works. However, Paulos is able to realize that some students, especially poor achievers, try to relate to their teacher through nonacademic means like ethnicity. He also notes that there are some teachers who encourage such tendencies. Below are the actual words of these informants.

> *Weyeso:* For example, you may not know how he came across the fact that you are Oromo, but a student comes to you and speaks to you in your mother tongue. This means, when they are assigned to a teacher, their first task is to identify the teacher's ethnicity. This tells you that they presume that if the teacher is Oromo, he will be helpful for him but if the teacher is Amhara he will harm me. Surprisingly, the teacher is often unaware. This emanates from the

lack of confidence on the part of the student. The fact that he is Oromo does not mean an Oromo teacher will help him. Just because you are Amhara does not make you help ethnic Amhara students as long as the teacher himself is not a victim. *(Interview)*

Paulos: I observed a similar incidence from my students when I was advising students for their senior essay project work. Some students wrote their grandfather's name but the first two names were enough. I talked to one of them since I often meet him in the church. He told me that it was difficult to survive in the University unless students try such strategies. Students tend to feel safe and they trust the teacher if he is from their own ethnic group. Sadly, there are practices among the staff that encourage this trend. Students share secrets with teachers from their ethnic group. *(FGD 1)*

To one's amazement, when the teacher is from another ethnic group, he could be considered as a threat or unhelpful. As personal observation shows, there is a tendency that some students trust teachers from their own ethnicity more than those from a different. In support of this, the remark by teacher Afeworki is indicative of this premise. While acting as a department head, he was perceived by a student from another ethnic group as partial and unhelpful. He says the department was planning to share the limited budget it has among programs to sponsor students' graduation bulletin. It has been a common tradition that students produce graduation albums with fellow ethnic students separate from others. Observation shows that students fail to produce a common multilingual graduation bulletin. To publish their own ethnic or religious bulletin, students search for sponsors and conduct various activities to raise funds. Afeworki emotionally narrates how he was shocked by a student who associated him to the current government and alleged him being supportive to students from his ethnicity. The excerpt below gives a clearer picture.

Afeworki: For instance, a student from one of the departments visited my office for sponsoring their graduation album. Since we have limited budget for more than five departments, I told him that we have to split the money among the departments. However, occupied by categorical thinking and associating me with the government, he said students from Oromo and Tigrigna departments have been sponsored by the government. He said I am concerned for Tigre students. I was shocked and could not say anything. I was planning to

be fair to all departments. But the student has already convinced himself as if I prefer the Tigrigna Department since I am ethnic Tigre. I could not imagine that but you know students have such perspectives as a result they develop hate over appreciation. *(FGD 1)*

Given this background, it is possible to expect that classroom interaction could be challenging. It is also evident that even though classrooms are multiethnic and multicultural, it is unfortunate that students hardly enjoy intercultural communication and focus on the primary purpose of classroom instruction. Participants of the empirical study and classroom observation by the researcher reflect this unpleasant fact. Teacher and student participants from all ethnic groups confirm the challenges they face in their everyday pedagogical and communicative experiences. For example, Dagim, an Amharic speaking lecturer, reported that classroom interaction projects ethnic tension. He characterizes students' intolerance towards any comment or discussion on their ethnicity. Diverse classroom and multicultural arrangements do not help these students mix and work together. He is concerned that the situation is evident on student seat taking and group assignmens.

> *Dagim:* The classroom reflects ethnic tension and students think as if they were in parliament representing their ethnic group. They do not act as individuals but rather as representatives of their ethnic groups. They do not allow any comment on ethnicity, and as visible evidence they sit next to students from their ethnic group. Whenever I give them a chance to group themselves, they always provide me with list of homogenous ethnic or religious group. I always advise them to mix with others, to believe that they are individuals and a university is for universal education. This problem challenges the very sense of multiculturalism and living together in harmony. *(FGD 2)*

In connection with this, students' seat taking and preference of group mates is primarily influenced by ethnicity as the researcher's classroom observation shows. This is in harmony with other studies on the same campus (Anteneh, 2009). This is collaborated by the teachers' reflections on the issue. Teachers underline the pattern of students' group composition when they give them a chance to group themselves for assignments and presentations. It is reported that ethnicity is the main

observable factor for grouping followed by religion in some cases. For instance, teachers confirm the fact that students consciously or unconsciously prefer to sit next to classmates from their own ethnicity, region or even zone. Although it is natural to associate with people from a common background, it becomes problematic if students stay in the same group during their stay on campus. Asked to describe their students' seat-taking, Challachew, Mathias and Andinet report that ethnicity is a grouping factor. However, Mathias adds that students further divide themselves along geographic zone even if they come from the same regional states. Andinet see a difference between senior and freshman students and notes the trend declines and is replaced by academic performance in the course of time. The actual words of these respondents are worth quoting.

> *Challachew*: Their sitting arrangement and grouping are based on ethnicity. *(Interview)*
>
> *Mathias*: The classroom sitting arrangement is ethnicized. Most classroom sitting arrangements are not hetrogenous even students from the same region, for example among those who come from Amhara region, further divide along localities. *(Interview)*
>
> *Andinet:* Definitely, but it is important to classify it in terms of their level, as freshman and senior class, because the situation differs. Surprisingly, you may also witness academically weak students being in a group with academically bright students from a different ethnic group. I have witnessed them doing assignments together. *(Interview)*

This fact is also agreed on by the students. To cite an example, student Getahun confesses on his preference of students from his ethnic group to carry out group works. The preference of this ethnic Amhara student is also shared by ethnic Tigre student who is unhappy about working with students from other ethnicity. Gidey's expresses his discomfort regarding teacher's random assignment for a group work during his attendance of Communication course offered by the researcher. Off-record interview with Martha, a student from Addis Ababa, is concerned that students from the city cannot find groups unless they sit in smaller groups among themselves.

> *Getahun*: Students of Amhara ethnic group preferred to be grouped only with members of their ethnic group. *(Interview)*
>
> *Gidey*: If you remember (reference to the researcher), you have formed groups for the class assignment on random bases. That grouping was not comfortable to me. I was grouped with

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students of Addis Ababa in which they are not comfortable working with me. We hate each other and we don't trust each other too. For that reason, we are not interested in being grouped with members of another ethnic group. *(Interview)*

*Martha***:** In classroom group assignments and presentations, students speaking the same language work together and often segregate us (reference to students from Addis Ababa city). There are times that we could not find a group. *(Off-record interview)*

Regarding the role of religion, teachers report that religious background can also play a significant role in students' seat taking and group work preferences. In harmony with this, Mathias explains how religion can also be a factor in students grouping for group tasks. He narrates his experience with a Muslim student who demanded for a new placement with Muslim students. All teachers including Mathias recommend that teachers should assign students for a group work on random basis so that students can learn from other students. That facilitates intercultural learning. Sharing this view, Kassa is surprised how his students pick topics for their undergraduate senior essay thesis. As a manifestation of the cultivated stronger collective identity salience, students prefer to work on religious manuscripts for partial fulfillment of their undegraduate thesis. He describes the attempt as fully motivated by an advocacy and contribution to their religious identity. How about looking into their actual words?

> *Mathias:* For example, very recently, a Muslim student came to me and reported that the group she was assigned to did not comprise of Muslim students. I decided to consider this but there were three Muslim students in the group already. People want to form their own groups based on their own assumed factors like religion. *(Interview)*
>
> *Kassa:* For example, Muslim students have changed from what I knew before. When we invite students to propose senior essay topics in literature focusing on literary techniques, they come up with articles from the Holy Kuran. They write a completely theological paper and we always find it difficult to relate that to literary studies. The same is true with other religions. It seems that these students want to contribute something to their religion. Religion has also evolved to be another stratifying factor in college interaction and academics. *(FGD 2)*

Ethnicity and student evaluation: It was evident that there are a lot of controversy around students' grading and attribution of their performance. Some respondents say ethnicity plays a significant role in student evaluation. They contend that students could be favored or disadvantaged because of their ethnic background. Others believe that most teachers are loyal to their professional discipline and integrity. This group of informants blames poor performing students playing ethnic cards and allegedly charge teachers for their own failure. It is also learned that such students trust and expect good grades from teachers sharing their ethnic identity but showed frustration and disbelief when they are taught by a teacher from a different ethnicity. Both arguments are shared among respondents from all categories namely ethnicity and roles on the campus.

Regarding the first argument, participants believe some teachers are racists and offer good grades for students from their own ethnic group or harm others as the result of hate. Although various stories were mentioned, it is vital to discuss the views shared by most of the participants. For example, Hordofa, an ethnic Oromo student, claims that Oromo students are disadvantaged because of their ethnic background. Teacher Afeworki too sadly narrates how he was abused for no reason than his ethnic identity. Without mentioning the ethnicity of his abuser, this ethnic Tigre informant said he almost dropped the class but managed to finish his study and now works with the teacher in the same department. Sitotaw, an officer working for the Associate Vice President, deals with students' complaints. He notes that the complaints reaching his office lack evidence or students fail to clearly present the case on paper as they speak it. But this ethnic Amhara officer tells there are such rumors but cannot provide written evidences. The following excerpts may give a complete picture of their views.

> ***Hordofa:*** Some teachers push you once they know that you are an Oromo. Of course there are some who suffer for being a member of a given ethnic group. For example, while we did our paper there were two Oromo students and they were assigned to an advisor who is ethnic Tigre. As a result they endured a lot of challenges. ***(Interview)***
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> ***Afeworki:*** I was also verbally abused because of my ethnicity when I was MA student and I almost dropped out. The teacher used to mock me and my ethnic group especially if the late

Prime Minister (who was ethnic Tigre) said something on the TV a night before the class. After a negotiation by my fellow classmate, I managed my anger and completed the course. *(FGD 1)*

Sitotaw: Some students make it public while others conceal it. Complaints come on matters related to attacks based on ethnicity. This implies there are rumors that teachers in this department are from this and that ethnic group. In my undergraduate years, there were no such accusations but there were teachers who targeted some ethnic students. Of course I have no any justification for this. *(Interview)*

The interview with Thomas, a faculty registrar, provided some evidence in favor of the argument discussed so far. He states that there were high rates of grade changes those days as compared to the previous times. He cites a study done in the faculty to explain his assertion. As grade change applications are made by teachers, approved by the dean and then are submitted to the registrar's unit, the registrar has a day to day access to the applicants and the teachers who frequently change grades. As per his observation, few teachers sympathize for students who failed and eventually change the grades they already submitted. The sympathy comes from sharing the same ethnicity. Citing a particular example, he is surprised how a teacher organizes students and writes an application letter on their behalf to demand the leadership as if the students from his ethnicity were abused. But the students were dismissed because of academic reasons. Most surprisingly, as he narrates, the registrar was told by one of the members of the top management to re-admit these students claiming that such ethnic students have always been segregated and disadvantaged. Here are the words of the registrar.

Thomas: There are high rates of grade change requests. There is a study conducted to determine the number of changes made per course and the possible causes. The result was amazing. The changes were related to ethnicity. In some cases, the staff and the leadership line up in favor of certain ethnic students. For example, a teacher wrote an application letter in English claiming that the dean and the registrar are dismissing ethnic […] students. This letter was submitted to the President's office by the students. The teacher himself is the one that abuses the system. An officer from the same ethnic group working for the management

asked me for the change of grades as she feels that students from this ethnic group are always disadvantaged. This is what you see at AAU. *(Interview)*

On the contrary to this argument, other participants of the study dismiss the allegation that students are favored or disadvantaged because of their ethnic identity. They strongly argue that the University could not be characterized as an institution which evaluates students based on ethnic background. They argue there are false allegations against the staff and leadership played by few poor performing students and people who want to play ethnic cards. Their premise is the point that highly ethnocentric poor achievers expect passing marks through nonacademic means. For example, Challachew, an ethnic Amhara lecturer, underlines his concern on how few students from his town expect good grades from him and affect his social life blaming him for grades they did not deserve. Teklay, an ethnic Tigre teacher, also explains a similar experience that demonstrated teacher's integrity and loyalty to professional commitments. Student Tsiege witnesses that she did not experience segregation or was given unfair grades because of ethnic reasons. Sharing the view held by these respondents, Weyeso denounces the rumors as baseless.

Challachew: There are some who think that they could come to you because you are from the same ethnicity. They say that you are the only one doing the right thing while others are giving good grades based on ethnicity. They tell you that you are the only one who is not helping village boys. They even write letters from the countryside. I used to receive condemnations because I do not help such students. This is also another pressure. *(Interview)*

Teklay: I have also recent experience on the same issue. An ethnic Tigre instructor gave 'C' grade for students who deserve the grade. That includes students from his village. You know what happened, the students went directly to the instructor's office and said, "We are children of your place of origin. If you don't improve the grade you offered to us we are going to be disqualified. Please help us''. The instructor responded, "You can be a child of my place of origin or a child of my mother, but you are evaluated based on your performance only''. *(Interview)*

Tsiege: Let me tell you my experience, my name is a typical Tigre name. I was told that one of the instructors does not like Tigres and because of that he would not give me high grades. However, it was the reverse. I scored a 'B' grade and I went to him to see how it was marked. Then he clearly showed me and I accepted his grading. *(Interview)*

Weyeso: If the teacher is Amhara, Tigray or Oromo, the failed student from a different ethnic identity immediately asserts that he failed because of his ethnicity. For example, one student said that I had an ill feeling towards him since the first day in class. I have never said a thing to the student in my class, but this student lodged accusations saying I have threatened him by saying to him "I will show you". I asked all my students. They assured me that I have never acted that way. This happens to Amhara or any other teacher as well. This is commonly seen among academically weak students. *(Interview)*

In support of the second argument, there is an interesting case that reached the Office of the University President. A group of students (all from regional states) accused a teacher favoring students from Addis Ababa claiming that the teacher was from the city and was grading students from regions unfairly. However, the teacher was born and brought up in a small town in the northern region. Finally, it was decided that the allegation against the teacher was baseless and it was motivated by nonacademic reasons. Below is presented the reflection of the teacher, students and officials involved in investigation of the case.

The accused teacher: I was accused this last semester of bias on student grading. I knew it was because of grades. I followed the University grading regulations. When it comes to discriminations, they said I favor students from Addis Ababa and harm those from outside Addis. I was happy that they didn't know I am from a village. I was very sorry and thought of even quitting my job but I should have my name back. I took the case to the Associate Vice President. The Department started to form a committee and investigate the case. The finding has not yet been released but what I have learned informally is that all accusations are false.

Students' Union representative: Students claimed that the teacher favors students from Addis Ababa. The teacher is very good and intelligent, but a little problem surfaced on his treatment and grading. When we (the committee) intervened to investigate the major issue,

grading which the students demanded for its revision, I learned the tendency of appreciating those responding in English and undermining those who were not good at English. But no grading mistake was observed.

A student from Addis Ababa: Our teacher was accused of offering good grades to students from Addis Ababa city. Students from regions signed petitions and took the case to the University President. The students thought that the teacher was from Addis Ababa and he had a good relationship with students from the city. However, the teacher was actually from the northern region of the country. The exam papers and the scale were reassessed but the students failed and the case was dropped. Students from Addis Ababa too signed another petition to defend the honesty of the teacher and the allegation against him.

The Assistant Dean: I will tell you a recent conflict that divided students into two groups: Addis Ababa and regions. The latter group of students accused the teacher of favoring the former students in his grading. These students signed petition and demanded investigation. With a signed petition, the students from the city claimed that the teacher is innocent and the grading is fair. The teacher was highly irritated and there was an observable tension among students. An independent committee was organized and investigated the teacher's grading and interviewed students from both groups. Finally, it was proved that there was no bias and the teacher was found innocent even though his grading was uniformly harsh. It was obvious that the teacher was not from Addis Ababa but from a rural village in the Amhara region.

Similarly, content analysis of faculty documents explains the magnitude of the problem. Among the available cases, the following better explains the seriousness of the problem. A case recorded in March 2007 at one of the faculties that demonstrates the extent to which poor performing students were blinded by ethnicity and blamed an Indian expatriate staff for ethnic hate. It is obvious that the teacher has no knowledge of the ethnic background of the students. An Ethiopian fourth year student wrote an application to the faculty Dean accusing his teacher of racism, ethnic bias and unfair grading. In the letter, the student states that his performance for the course titled *Practicum III* was graded by an Indian expatriate unfairly and irresponsibly. He argues that the teacher improved the grades of another two students from a different ethnic background. The

teacher refused to improve his grade because she has a negative impression to his ethnicity. He noted that he reported to the department but the department did not give him appropriate response to his complaints. He demanded the Dean to intervene and serve justice. The teacher responded to the allegation as follows:

The teacher: This is a letter that records the anguish and concern in response to the complaint lodged by Student […] regarding his performance and subsequent evaluation in the Practicum III course. I dismiss the personal allegations as immature and irresponsible. The candidate's marks are among the lowest in the group and I pointed out to him on a number of occasions that he has a number of problems with his language proficiency as a teacher trainer. The evaluation details were discussed with all the students on the course, as part of the course requirements. The two instances of irregularities he mentioned are regarding student […] and student […] from the same group. The former was given 'D' because I did not mark his assignment and once I did that the grade was changed to 'C' according to the university regulations. The other candidate's grade was misrepresented at the record office and therefore corrections had to be made.

Finally, the head of the department communicated the decision to the dean proving that the case filed against the teacher was baseless on the letter written the same month. The following points were outlined on the letter written by the department head.

Department Head: I have personally found the student's allegations against the instructor, an expatriate instructor, baseless and shameful. It is totally colored by ethnocentric outlooks. I think anyone who reads the student's letter of complaint he used can understand that the student appears to be aspiring to achieve what he academically failed to do so, through nonacademic means. I strongly believe that students have the right to complain on any decision. However, their complaints should be based on valid evidences.

The institutional communication

Followed by the characterization of the context of interaction and the challenges involved, it is necessary to evaluate the communication culture at AAU with particular emphasis on institutional communication. Respondents were asked to describe and characterize the communication culture on the campus both at institutional and personal levels. Almost all participants agree that AAU does not have a well established communication network that encourages effective interpersonal and academic communication at all levels on the campus. Most of them say that there is no communication at all apart from top-down written instructions using memos and notices. They contend that there is no formal and effective face to face communication between members of the University community. The respondents characterize the existing institutional communication as lacking transparency, accountability and openness. It is also cited that the communication projects mistrust and much pessimism. It is also characterized as a manipulated communicative environment. Most participants witness that there is hardly any academic debate or a forum outside the classroom. Such traditional and unsystematic communication definitely blocks the expected level of intercultural communication and institutional effectiveness.

AAU is reported to have an unstructured and ineffective organizational communication system that seldom encourages face-to-face communication. Asked to describe the communication system and the culture at AAU, various interviewees gave similar responses. A sample of responses from the leadership uncovers this fact. For example, an expert at the Public Relation Office describes the fact that there is no systematic and working organizational communication system except the usual top-don circulars and memos. She says there is no channel of communication that updates the University community about the ongoing academic matters. She also says that if such a system and channel were in place it would be possible to avoid students' demonstrations and conflicts on the campus. Andinet shares the description given by Tadelech. He criticizes the existing communication system and characterizes the communication culture at the University as demonstrating a fearful relationship between the key players. He argues that fear is on the surface because there is no direct communication among the leadership, staff and students. He believes that the major problems of the campus stream from poor communication culture. Sitotaw strongly

agrees with this characterization. He agrees with Tadelech that the communication is top-down and mostly written. He says communication among the leadership is remote and is characterized as predominately one-way. Let us read the verbatim of their descriptions.

Tadelech: There has to be a communication system that links the management with the students, the teachers with students, and the teachers with the management. Who do you complain to? A place where complaints are heard is non-existent. You do not know at which level a complaint disappears. There is a need for an updated information system that addresses students, teachers and management. A forum which allows students to voice their ideas should be established. Students do not necessarily have to demonstrate whenever they have complaints*. (Interview)*

Andinet: There is no face to face communication. The communication is poor in my evaluation. The relationship between management and staff and management and students is like – relationship one fears the other – fearful relationships. There is fear in the process because there is no communication. No meetings, no magazines through which people can reflect their views, no publication and no forums –there are even no discussions. The fundamental problem is lack of communication. *(Interview)*

Sitotaw: As far as I know the only face to face communication that exists is in the classroom. There is no communication between the University leadership and the students on regular basis. The only communication that is likely to exist is when a problem is created. The only communication tools used between the University leadership and the departments are formal letters and memos. We are working with the leadership which we may or may not meet even once a year. Our communication is far remote. *(Interview)*

Teachers too agree that the University exercises top down written communication as the only means. They characterize the institutional communication as unsystematic, unidirectional and written. The comments given by Tayu, Yimer and Tilahun are representative of the conceptions hold by most teachers. Tayu underlines that there is no face-to-face communications between administrators and instructors. Administrators never discuss problems with students unless some serious issues arise. Yimer also agrees with this reality stating there is no face-to-face

communication among the key players of the campus. In agreement with these teachers, Tilahun describes the existing communication as deficient of transparency, immediacy and feedback. He also warns such culture has adversely affected institutional effectiveness and healthy interaction among participants. The following accounts are more telling.

> *Tayu:* The University crawls on its own momentum. There is no way of getting feedback. No official meetings are held to discuss future plans or ongoing trades in a time frame. There is no chance to regulate or exchange ideas on future and current undertakings. I imagine all things happen haphazardly. *(Interview)*
>
> *Yimer:* In a nut shell instructors and the dean's office are interactive. But the remaining offices have gaps between them. Most communication takes place through memoranda. Meeting are held perhaps once in a semester. *(Interview)*
>
> *Tilahun:* We lack communication transparency at all levels. The communication between key plays in the University projects lack of transparency. Besides this, the University is a highly bureaucratic institution that does not invite dialogue and give prompt decisions to questions raised. As a result, a simple academic problem of a student can reach the Office of the President because of the inability to discuss the problem transparently at the lower level of the structure and give a decision looking at the problem from the perspective of the student and communicate the decision on time and transparently to the student. The University often fails to give prompt feedback to students' problems. *(FGD 2)*

Andinet, too, strongly criticizes the University as lacking accountability and responsibility. He argues that communication problems have had a significant impact on overall University academic practices. He believes that lack of sound and effective communication system made people act irresponsibly and execute tasks without accountability. Because of communication failures, simple problems would result in campus unrest and chaos. He also contends that communication problems create a divided University that complains about eachother rather than work cooperatively for institutional effectiveness. Below is verbatim of his argument.

Andinet: We are now in chaos….. Many people don't respect the rules. There are currently no working rules and there is no accountability in anything. People are not able to discharge responsibility properly. Students sometimes become angry and break chairs…this is due to lack of communication. Staff resigns and students' abuses are common problems. This is because of lack of transparent, open and face to face communication. The teacher complains about students' poor performance and the management's inefficiency ….. The management complains that students are performing poorly and teachers are uncooperative. Students complain that they are not getting good education and the management is not serving them properly. We have developed a culture of complaint. (***Interview***)

Moreover, the institutional communication was also characterized as demonstrating mistrust and fear among members of the academic community. Regarding this, Habtom characterizes communication among the University community as deficient of trust and he attributed the reasons to the society and schools which did not prepare students for effective communication. Responding to the same question, Tsegaye and Tayu fully agree with the view held by Habtom and recommend the University to work on improving the situation. However, Sitotaw is not optimistic about what to recommend. He stated that there is too much pessimism and dissatisfaction among the community. But they all underline the fact that there is too much fear and mistrust among the key players of the campus. Segments of their responses are included below.

Habtom: The two important sources of influence to students are the home and the school. The home has prepared them for communication of this kind---failing to communicate cross culturally. Mistrusting others is one of the main problems in this country. Communication at AAU reflects lack of trust. I think this mistrust has to be addressed. ***(Interview)***

Tsegaye: There is mistrust among the University community. There is suspicion. In my opinion, employees should trust each other to achieve the mission of the institution. ***(Interview)***

Tayu: I don't know what our leaders have in min…. perhaps there might be some element of misinterpretation. There is no sense of trust among the entire University community. So it is

difficult to hold an opinion such as yours under such a harsh condition. Hence we need a leader that promotes common values and thoughts. *(Interview)*

Sitotaw: The level of pessimism and state of dissatisfaction is very high. There is a complete loss of work moral and welfare among the workforce that we see every day. I don't exactly know `what the possible cause might be. I don't understand what to do to improve the prevailing problem of communication. *(Interview)*

Added to these inadequacies, the University is also described as lacking academic forum and public debate on issues pertinent to academics and institutional success. As a witness, Belay narrates the vibrant and rich academic and public debates organized and run by students of AAU on the main campus of the University during the Haile Selassie regime, more than two scores ago. He reflects on his personal experiences and the key speakers that presented insightful lectures and narrations. He discussed that students used to debate on social, political, economic and cultural issues that had local and international implications. He said it is unfortunate that such forums are non-existent today. Similarly, Mathias criticizes lack of public debates that could bring members of the University together. He says the politicians and leaders of present day Ethiopia had the opportunity to discuss Marxist-Leninist ideology on the campus freely. However, as he addes, the current students are not fortunate enough to enjoy such freedom and experience to air their views. He cited a number of students' publications that were popular forty years ago. To the same point, Brook, the President, also agrees with the fact that there are not enough forums or a culture of debate that invite everyone for discussions on academic and social issues of interest. On the other hand, he cited a few public lectures organized by the University and institutions working with the University to promote social dialogue. He also raised his plan for launching campus radio that updates the community with current news and views.

Belay: Sometimes, there used to be two or three lectures with different speakers in a single night. Such things do not exist now. When I joined the University in 1961 E.C (1968/9 G.C.), I remember, students used to organize many live debates. When I was first year student…. about 20 of us presented different lectures and reported back what each attended. However, I find it difficult to admit the presence of such an environment at this age. *(Interview)*

Mathias: Politicians of today used to debate while they were students. They wrote a lot on the situation of the nation. The debate was across borders, from the issues of Vietnam to Africa. For example, there was a debate on campaigning for presidency of the students' body. Do we have any element of this today? We don't have such culture of promoting debates among intellectuals. *(Interview)*

Brook: We do not have nearly enough outside classroom forums that we can discuss. Recently, we have public lecture series (this time, for example, on modernity) which could bring people from wider community to discuss issues of public concern. But a lot should be done. We are trying to establish University community radio. As it is a community radio, the people who listen to the radio are also those who carry out the programs for different cultural communities. There will be programs that address the concerns of various groups of people. *(Interview)*

As discussed above, communication at AAU is characterized as lacking a working communication system that reflects transparency, accountability and trust. What about its communication with the public? AAU is viewed by the public as bureaucratic, highly undemocratic and unable to establish effective public communication. The institution does not have open and transparent communication with the media too. Obviously, the public have a negative picture about the University. The interview with the Public Relations Officer confirms this reality. The Officer notes that there is a communication gap between the University and the public. The interview with her reveals the fact that the institution exercises top-down communication internally and pays little attention to external communication with the public. She recommends the University has to work on image building and direct communication with the public. Her views are shared by all respondents.

Tadelech: The management has to be close to the public. AAU does not publicize and communicate itself. It communicates only after the public has learned about a particular case. It moves forward to clarify. The tasks that follow are often repair works. The University has to publish its progress, and when bad things happen it has to openly communicate it to the public. The public image towards the University is that 'it is a failure'… which is to some

extent true. This image could not have been a public knowledge if the University had the culture of communicating its deeds. AAU is a very bureaucratic organization. The public needs to be addressed with information regularly. *(Interview)*

Intercultural communication perceptions and practices

The respondents perceived intercultural communication competence as the most important competence students need to acquire to engage in intercultural dialogue across cultural frontiers. It plays a central role in enhancing social integration and healthy communication among the University community. Asked about this competence, the research participants focused on different dimensions of intercultural competency required by individuals communicating in an intercultural scene. Firstly, they argued that intercultural competency demands knowledge of human and democratic rights of all human races. For example, an interview with Tesfaye, ethnic Amhara respondent, stresses on the fact that an intercultural citizen should know and believe in equality of all races. He argues that people should act in solidarity with those whose human and democratic rights are violated. This administrator further mentions that such citizens should denounce cultural supremacy even if it is promoted by individuals from their own ethnicity. In harmony with Tesfaye's description, Dagim explains the ability citizens should acquire to identify oppression and denouncing it. Stating the relevance of cultivating a culture of debate for intercultural understanding, he stated that the University curriculum should help students develop respect for humanity and universal democratic rights. Fedisa, ethnic Oromo teacher, too, agrees with the assertion that individuals need knowledge of universal human and democratic rights. He adds that people should change their attitudes and act accordingly. He challenges the fact that most people lack intercultural knowledge. But he is concerned that they do not have the attitudes that help them act appropriately in an intercultural environment. Below is the verbatim of their arguments.

> *Tesfaye:* An intercultural teacher or student should believe that all human races are equal. He should believe that all languages, cultures and religions demand respect. Moreover, even if a group from his own ethnicity claims supremacy, he should reject such motives and side

the group which is discriminated. A well cultured citizen ought to stand in solidarity with marginalized and disrespected languages, cultures or religions. He should struggle for human and democratic rights of anyone. *(Interview)*

Dagim: No one likes oppression. We should not hate oppressors but the act of oppression. In our curriculum and everyday life we should create a system that discourages oppression and repression. Change of positions of the oppressor and the oppressed is not a solution as far as oppression is there. A good intercultural communicator should denounce oppression. *(FGD 2)*

Fedissa: Intercultural communicators must really believe that human beings are born equally and have the right to share whatever resources and things they have in common. They have to understand these and be ready to live peacefully together for mutual benefits. Personally, I don't think people lack these. They learn how to deal with other people but the problem is the attitude. The attitude must change. I know that I have to respect the culture of others but I do not it. *(Interview)*

Secondly, an intercultural competent citizen should know and reflect on his own culture and other cultures. He should critically evaluate his perceptions and actions regarding his communication with culturally others. To Tayu, a competent citizen knows his own culture, language and belief system. Such individual also knows the culture of others and is able to critically reflect on the differences between the two. This individual, therefore, is able to understand the various cultural belief systems. This teacher further states that a competent person is inquisitive and is interested in living in harmony with people across cultures. Such critical thinking skills help the intercultural citizen to base his actions and attitudes on reasons rather than loyalty to cultural membership. This assists him to avoid ethnocentrism and relativize his thoughts while conversing with the culturally other. Ayenachew also mentions that an informed intercultural individual is able to see things from different perspectives in his attempt to understand the culturally other and avoid unreasonable ethnic grouping that undermine his communication and relations with other individuals. The actual words of these teacher participants are given below.

Tayu: In principle, a competent person is one who knows the value systems of the community he lives in, accommodates differences and respects the idea and culture of others. He is ready to discover new values, is free of bias and has a reasoning capacity to compare and contrast. A person can live in harmony with others as he knows global, national and local value systems. Such an individual is not submissive but inquisitive. *(Interview)*

Ayenachew: The intercultural person can see things from different perspectives. He understands ethnicity as a barrier to communication. He critically evaluates situations and avoids lining up along ethnic lines. *(Interview)*

Most respondents mention that a good intercultural citizen knows, accepts and practices the host culture he is engaged in. They also listed that such competent citizen owns a desirable level of proficiency in the host languages. In addition to these, they report that intercultural competence demands the knowledge of national politics and history in addition to cultural and linguistic competencies. They also mention that such information can assist the communicator to understand perspectives and political orientation of the culturally other. Even though participants own divided political orientations, they confess that history, for example, should be perceived as a lesson and its knowledge is crucial for intercultural understanding. Regarding this, Dagim characterize the knowledge of history as an important tool to understand historical injustice and identify issues which are sensitive to some ethnic groups.

Dagim: Our knowledge of history should be used to learn from the past and to improve our life and relationship with others today. If we always talk about historical injustice and attempt to revenge, we stuck in the same vicious circle. We should not use history as an instrument to divide communities. For example, last time there was a book fair that demonstrated a history book on which a derogatory word was written about a particular ethnic group. Angry ethnic students demonstrated on the campus and the exhibitor was told to leave the fair. There were lots of history books that carry such words. Most students demand such books to be burnt or pages to be removed. But I think books mirror a lot about the historic injustice. *(FGD 2)*

Additionally, the respondents were also asked on the interview to characterize an individual whom they perceive is an intercultural and able to communicate effectively across cultural frontiers in the University context. Similar questions were also addressed indirectly on the Focus group discussions. The participants listed various attributes such as traits (innate qualities) and characteristics (qualities developed in the course of intercultural experiences). After the attributes were listed and synonyms referring the same were grouped, the frequency of the qualities was calculated. The attributes mentioned by the respondents can be grouped and listed in descending order as follows:

1. tolerance
2. respect
3. mutual understanding and open-minded
4. acceptance,
5. positive thinking, appreciation, transparency and listening skills
6. empathy, preparedness, self-reliance, clear sense of self, concern for others, consideration, trust, motivation, communicative and expressiveness.

The following are some examples of how the intercultural is characterized by various groups of respondents during the interview. Student Tsegaye identifies *tolerance, communication, respect* and *acceptance* as the most important qualities required. Similar to Tsegaye, but very emphatically, teacher Yihune capitalizes tolerance as the most indispensable quality. He also cited *mutual respect*, *open-mind* and a*cceptance of others* as vital traits for the intercultural. The teacher summarizes that the ultimate effect of these qualities is to enhance an individual's intercultural understanding and communication. Tadelech, too, favors *tolerance* as the most important attribute. The Public Relation Officer further states that an intercultural citizen should be open-minded to accept and live with others.

> *Tsegaye:* Tolerance and communication are equally important to be competent in intercultural communication. Any individual, who newly joins a particular community, should primarily respect the culture of that group. When you join a different group, you can experience a new language and culture but you have to accept and respect them. *(Interview)*

Yihune: Tolerance, my dear! That is the most interesting trait. Tolerance is making a balance. I gave you and you take it, and I respect you and you respect me. You should also be open-minded. You just take people for what and who they are. You do not persuade them to change their identity. You have to accept and respect others' identity and culture. Then you come to understand better. When you understand people better, you enrich yourself. *(Interview)*

Tadelech: The intercultural individual needs to own tolerance and understanding to work together with others. He loses the opportunity of learning from others if he does not. He has to be open-minded to get to know other people. *(Interview)*

The nature of intercultural communication in this multicultural university context depends upon perception of communicators regarding the value of communication and the influence of contextual factors shaping perspectives of communicators and communication culture on the campus. It is observed that participants and the institution do not often make systematic and conscious decisions in their communication behavior and look less concerned about the possible consequences of miscommunication in their daily social and institutional interaction. Habtom argues how communication at any level, institutional or personal, is viewed by participants in the interactive context. He says such an important element of social interaction is taken for granted. He notes that participants lack communication skills which are vital for institutional and personal success. His opinion is shared by most of the participants. Here is a segment of his argument.

Habtom: One problem in our institution is that communication is taken for granted. It is not taken seriously as a skill that is able to make or break this country. It can make or break our institutions unless we are able to effectively cross culturally boundaries. We have to come together…..That is why communication skills are important especially at cross-cultural level. *(Interview)*

Given the contextual concerns acknowledged in the previous sections, intercultural communication among the University community reflects an unpleasant trend. Most participants of the study characterized the communication behavior of the academic community as one that reflects the

discourse in the nation and the communication culture deep rooted in the history of the campus. They report that the current institutional arrangement and contextual factors do not encourage intercultural communication between individuals from various cultural groups. Some respondents go to the extent of saying there is no productive intercultural communication in the context. Hassen highly doubts the prevalence of sound intercultural communication in the University context mentioning students' classroom seat taking as a case in point. He says the communication behavior lacks cultural awareness.

> *Hassen:* I doubt that there is intercultural communication at AAU. If you look at students sitting in small groups, they are in homogenous ethnic groups. They discuss and share things among themselves. For example, even if they speak Amharic their accents tell you that they are from a similar region. But you do not see mixed groups. I think there is a problem of not knowing the culture of others. I do not think both staff and students have willingness to interact cross-culturally.   There is lack of intercultural awareness. Such efforts are not encouraged institutionally. *(FGD 1)*

However, it is evident that there is intercultural communication among participants but with different levels of productivity and prevalence. But with respect to preference, it is observed by the researcher and reported by the research participants that intimate and open communication is often within cultural groups. Participants from all categories (teachers, students and leadership) agree with this fact. Most people prefer communication within ethnic or religious groups. Asked to describe the nature of interpersonal communication on the campus, Sitotaw, student Tsegaye and student Meaza reported the same reality but with different experiences. Intra-ethnic communication is the most dominant form of communication as witnessed by most of the informants. Written below are the actual words of the interviewees.

> *Sitotaw:* What I witness is students' relationship is totally along ethnic lines, especially when they exchange instructional material. Of course, there is a possibility that the material that is available in one group may be absent in another. *(Interview)*

Tsegaye: The issue is clear. Students mostly prefer to interact with students of their place of origin. If you group them with people from the same culture, they are happy to establish relationships. I also observe that communication is also within religious groups. *(Interview)*

Meaza: If you need to borrow anything from your neighboring students, you have to go through the person whom you know and speak their language. Otherwise, it is impossible to go directly and get instructional materials. *(Interview)*

Consistent with this, participants of the FGD also agree that students' interpersonal communication is highly intra-ethnic. Selamneh, for instance, compares the difference between student-student communication during the time he studied at the University and how students are interacting currently. Below is part of his observation.

Selamneh: When I was a student, there was also the trend of identifying and making relationships with students from own communities or cultures during the freshman year but later situations change dramatically. It is actually a comfort zone for freshman students to identify students who speak their own language for honest reasons of understanding and supporting each other in their studies. During my time, we used to associate with students based on location such as administrative zone of origin (Gojjam, Bale, Arsi, etc) rather than ethnicity. In principle, through time, it is expected that students will unburden their ethnic baggage and try to socialize themselves with students from other cultures and they act as an individual. However, what I have observed recently at AAU is that people especially students are stratified along ethnic lines. The situation is very frustrating and embarrassing. *(FGD 2)*

In a marked contrast, despite its rampant challenge some participants report that they are enjoying productive interethnic communication with individuals within the campus. For example, an Amharic speaking student from Amhara State narrates his experience of friendship with students from SPNN State and Oromia. Another example could be student Gidey who says he has best friends from Somali and SPNN states. Student Obang from Gambella also reports an interesting intercultural communication experience on the campus. There are similar stories that reflect how

some participants are able to cross ethnic and religious lines and build productive intercultural relationships even though their figure is not significant enough.

> **Getahun**: I have good communication with students from SPNN and Oromia like with students from my ethnic group. *(Interview)*
>
> **Gidey**: My best friends are from Somali and SPNN states. They are from Somali and Wolayta. They are my classmates and they have good personality. *(Interview)*
>
> *Obang*: I think I am practicing intercultural communication. I ask for different vocabularies: What do you call this or that in Amharic or Tigrigna. I am teaching them some vocabularies. There are two major reasons for this interest. I am an extrovert. My classmates are curious of Gambella culture and family of languages. I was born in an intercultural environment where Sudanese, British, Swedish and others trade. Some students say to me that they will take me to Gonder and will make me marry an Amhara girl. There are few female students who are my friends. But most of my friends are boys. *(Interview)*

As the empirical material reveals a number of factors including ethnicity emerged as challenges to intercultural communication. First of all, respondents mention that higher ethnic identity salience is used as a political tool. They are cited saying it has significantly affected intercultural communication among key participants in the University context. Tayu attributes the possible consequences of cultivating ethnic identity at the expense of personal identity. He notes that the existing social arrangement creates a gap between people across ethnic lines. With a more or less similar view, Tamirat quotes the often heard pronouns that demonstrate division among people. He further explains how individuals are viewed more as a member of a particular ethnic group than as individuals who are responsible for their deeds. On the contrary, Brook claims that identity is politicized but the problem is when it goes to the extent that it denies accommodation of pluralism and multiculturalism. The excerpts below are more telling.

> *Tayu:* Ethnic identity is highly cultivated at the expense of personal identity. Students from different regions are identified by the name of their regions but not by their personal names. The implication is that we are pushing hard to cultivate ethnicity. The institution cultivates

ethnicity but it has done nothing on common goals. As a result, ethnic grouping widens the gap between students. *(Interview)*

Tamirat: The concepts of *we* and *they* have often been used on the campus. For example, if an Oromo student does something, he should have been asked for that personally but the trend is people associate with his ethnic background and they say 'they' do this or that. 'We' and 'they' demarcation is classical and has been common to the University discourse for long. The demarcation and the associated fear have created tension and negative impacts on intercultural communication. *(FGD 1)*

Brook: One of the challenges here is that identity is politicized which is natural but the more politicized it is, the more difficult it is to accommodate pluralism. As a result, people from a given cultural background tend to hang out with people like them. There is no sufficient interplay among groups. This is true. I think that is on ethnic and religious lines. *(Interview)*

Secondly, the national political context is also mentioned as a challenge to intercultural communication. As Jirata notes the University is not an island but rather the reflection of the political reality in this Horn of African nation. The challenges at national, regional and community level are mirrored on the campus. Historically, the country has experienced discontents regarding the treatment of various cultures and ethnicities even though there has been great deal of changes. Some participants considered the current political arrangement as one of the major factor that divided the University community. Some other respondents criticized this notion considering the trend as an attempt to disregard the political progress the country has gained so far. Paulos, for example, thought that some group of the University community wants to discredit the changes and attribute the problem to ethnic federalism to gain some political purposes. He underlines that resistance to change and fear of difference held by some members of the community as possible challenges to intercultural communication. Below are their views.

Jirata: Currently, all ethnic groups have been developing and exercising their ethnic and cultural identities. This is the new change the country has been exercising. This has created a noticeable gap among people and it actually takes a long time to come up with the dynamism and the disbelief prevailing among ethnic groups in the nation. This historical reality has

been there for long time and therefore needs time to develop mutual understanding and respect among people from diverse ethnic groups. I think there are still groups that bear suspicion of other ethnicities and at the same time there is a superiority and inferiority sentiment among ethnic groups. This tendency is reflected in educational institutions such as AAU. *(FGD 1)*

Paulos: There are groups that oppose the current ruling party and the federal arrangement. These groups are interested in justifying that ethnic federalism does not work and blame the system as the main reason of conflicts among students. These groups contend that the country's structure along linguistic and cultural boundaries is backward and not working. There is a tendency to attribute students' conflict to current political arrangement. They want to prove that the federal arrangement does not contribute to social cohesion in the country. There is a misunderstanding that if people speak different languages (other than Amharic) it would lead to conflicts and threaten unity and social cohesion. I know there is resistance among the faculty in an attempt to reverse the previous political status quo which is characterized by one language. *(FGD 1)*

Thirdly, higher power distance among the key players on the campus could also be cited as another challenge. As discussed in the previous section, high power distance between teachers and students seldom encourages transparent, open and democratic communication between them as do teachers with the leadership. It is reported that there is a greater power distance between teachers and students. A notice at the main gate of the teachers' lounge, which states that students are not allowed to dine in the room, is self explanatory. The power distance between senior and junior staff also reflects a gap between the faculties. Frequent participant observation of the seat taking pattern at the teachers' lounge confirms this fact. Mixed with other factors such as ethnicity and political orientation, the senior and junior staffs are divided and seldom build transparent, open and democratic communication. Therefore, such experiences impact intercultural interactions among the Unniversity community.

Fourthly, disparity in students' proficiency of the host languages is also considered as a challenge. As Tolla says, this emanates from students' significance difference in Amharic language proficiency. Students do not speak Amharic with a similar command. Some of the students speak it as a mother tongue, some others speak it fluently and others are not good enough or unable to communicate in Amharic. He argues that the major challenge is the decline in students' proficiency in Amharic and English languages. However, some are skeptical about students' language inability and attribute the problem to students' intention of avoiding use of the official language. This creates a lot of misunderstanding between the staff and the students who are not proficient enough to communicate in Amharic. Habtom eloquently narrates his experience in the classroom. Initially he was not able to believe that students from certain regions are unable to express themselves in Amharic language. Later, he understood that students significantly differ in their command of the official language of the country. He adds that these students experience a lot of problems as they work with dominantly Amharic speaking staff.

> **Tolla:** I witness that there were students in my department who come to my office with translators. They cannot communicate in Amharic and English. It has always been difficult to find a common language with students who are not able to express themselves in either of these languages. As some students make fun of them, they tend to avoid using Amharic and prefer to communicate in their mother tongue. That means, such students avoid others not because they do not want to mix themselves with students from other cultures but because they are not able to communicate in the host languages. *(FGD 2)*
>
> **Habtom:** I have had many students who don't speak Amharic. The first time they told me they were not able to speak Amharic I could not believe them because I thought this language was offered in primary and secondary schools. As a result, they will have a working knowledge of the language. There were students from Somali region who said to me they don't speak Amharic and cannot be involved in translation assignments. They were students from Oromo region and many of them told me they don't understand Amharic. And I have started to worry about it. The campus is basically an Amharic language speaking institution. To that section of Oromo students, by the way, I had to speak to them only in English. They assumed that I am a foreigner who cannot speak Ethiopian languages. *(Interview)*

Fifthly, the other challenges emerged in the study are lack of intercultural communication skills and cultural sensitivity. Participants of the focus group discussions are in consensus with this argument. Reflecting on the communication culture prevalent in the nation, Jirata questions how far the most important qualities such as transparency, tolerance and expressiveness are important cultural values in the national cultures. As a nation, we have not developed effective cultural communication skills, he says. He underlines on lack of intercultural qualities. Obviously, poor communication skills damage intercultural interaction. Admitting this assertion, Waqo summarizes the challenges as the result of lack of intercultural qualities such as tolerance, consideration about others interest, appreciation and respect. He says the inability to understand the perspective of others and lack of cultural sensitivity are possible challenges to intercultural communication based on his own on campus and in class experiences. The actual words of these two participants are presented below.

Jirata: It is important to question how far transparency, tolerance and expressiveness are central cultural values that are exercised in our communications. I wonder whether we have a working and effective communication culture. Generally, we lack these important cultural values and a communication culture in our indigenous cultures. We have not yet developed the most important values of intercultural communication and our communication is often characterized by lack of tolerance, weak expressive skills, poor listening skills and lack of transparency when we are engaged in conversations. I think these deficiencies play a significant role in our intercultural communication. *(FGD 2)*

Waqo: The major challenge stems from not being considerate about others' interest and desire. There is a problem of appreciation and respect. The other challenges are prejudice, hatred and biases. Inability to understand the culture and ethnicity of others and insensitivity to others' culture are prevalent. These result in intolerance and misunderstandings. These problems are common especially in students' dormitories, classrooms and football fields. For example, as ethnically diverse students are assigned in a single students' dormitory there are always disagreements, disrespect and conflict among students. These have been observable when students are given group assignments and oral presentation tasks. *(FGD 1)*

Lastly, the communicative context is unsupportive for intercultural learning and dialogue. Most interviews with students confirm that students joined the University straight from completing high school studies. Most of them report that the University is their first intercultural environment. The students are puzzled by the diversity of the campus and the perception they come with when they enroll. AAU context as a multicultural environment offers them new challenges to school graduates. Tilahun claims that the change from a relatively homogenous community to a diverse study environment by itself demands adjustment and full integration into the new academic community. He says the change of setting by itself can be a challenge to adapt to the academic culture and to communicate effectively across cultures.

In some cases, multiculturalism is not reflected as thought. It is observed that the diversity observed among the student community is not mirrored in the staff. This has to some extent created communication gap between these key players of the academic community. For example, almost all secretaries and facility service providers are monolingual and unable to meet the demand of the multiethnic and multilingual students' community. Even employees of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature (DELL) that offer various Ethiopian languages program shy away to demonstrate a multilingual approach in communication and service giving, as noted by Fedissa. He also explains the problems students experience at the Registrar's Office. Verbatim may give us a better understanding of these two views.

> **Tilahun**: The change of the setting, from homogenous community life to multicultural and heterogeneous educational setting, by itself creates lots of challenges to students when they are engaged in interactions. The new environment engages students with intercultural communication for which students might not have developed adequate skills. *(FGD 2)*
>
> **Fedissa:** If you look at the notices that are put on the notice board, you don't see notices in other Ethiopian languages other than Amharic. Even if someone tries to put up a notice in Tigregna or in Afaan Oromo, it will immediately be removed within five minutes. You don't find it there. If they go to the registrar, they speak only one language. *(Interview)*

Intercultural conflicts and campus unrest

The other major challenge of this African multiethnic University is the recurrent campus unrest and conflicts that often invite the intervention of the police and interruption of the academic calendar. The main campus is often associated with student boycotting and demonstration. The role of students and staff in Ethiopian political dynamism and its proximity to government headquarters at the capital of the nation obviously had their own role to play in sensitivity of the campus to gain the attention of the media and the public. See Chapter Five for full description of the University's history, location and its role in Ethiopian history and politics. Most of the conflicts that broke out at this campus spread over other universities, colleges and high schools in the country and immediately caught the attention of the political forces. The conflicts are always understood and interpreted differently. Unrest of diverse nature and causes were recorded since early the 1970s, however, people were divided in explaining the nature of the conflicts that occurred in the last two decades or so.

Most people believe that the recent unrests and conflicts were different from the former ones. In their defense, they argued that students had solidarity and used to demonstrate against the previous regimes in one voice but the current student demonstrations were divided alone ethnic or religious lines. Various publications (such as Tilahun, 2007; Demoz, 1997) also share this fact and pointed out that in previous times conflicts were largely associated with national questions. They also added that there were no ethnic conflicts among students themselves. They defend that the current students lacked a common agenda. The response of Sitotaw to explain the nature of campus unrest and conflicts solidifies this argument. He contends, that decades ago, students used to question academic causes that mattered to all of the students. However, the current students are highly engaged in questioning issues that matter to their own ethnic or religious identity. He attributes the change to the current political arrangement of the nation. His words are worth citing.

> *Sitotaw*: In the past, students used to demand purely academic issues collectively. But today you don't see any common agenda except football. A question of a single ethnic group is

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raised and becomes the subject of dispute. It sometimes becomes a question of a single religious group. The difference is mainly due to the current political system in which students perceive that a particular ethnic group is more advantaged at the expense of the other one. *(Interview)*

Contrary to this view, the other groups of respondents believe that conflicts among students, based on ethnic difference, were also prevalent in the previous regimes as well. Some of the interview participants cited their own personal experiences of ethnic conflict. They said that the conflict among ethnic students today is not a new experience at all. But they remind us that such conflicts were not as recurrent as is seen these days. For example, Tesfaye underlines that some people want to deny the fact that there were similar ethnic conflicts among former students and a desire to exaggerate what is happening now. Citing his personal experience, the director narrates the fact that there were fights among ethnic Amhara, Oromo and Tigre students when he was attending a teacher education program. He said the question for ethnic and cultural rights were there since the early 1970 AAU Students' Movement. Jebessa is also in agreement with this motion. He cites two personal experiences that explain conflict cases. The following excerpts indicate their shared views.

> *Tesfaye:* Sometimes, there is a hyperbole about history. People say that students in the past were strong and were not involved in ethnic conflicts. However, I remember, there was a fight between ethnic Amhara, Oromo and Tigre when I was studying for a teacher education degree. There were also clashes between students inspired by Marxsist-Leninist ideology at the main campus of the University. I remember there was also a time that Protestant Christians were beaten. The issue of nationality has been in the discourse since long time. (*Interview)*
>
> *Jebessa:* For example, there was ethnic fight among students. We fought when we were freshman students. Oromo students and Tigray students fought in Wingate. Again, when I was a freshman student, St. George FC and a team from Asmara had a football match. The Eritrean team defeated St. George. Then, an Eritrean student who was residing with us was extremely happy, started to dance and said, emotionally, "Eritrea defeated Ethiopia." Two

students from Bale province threatened to kill him for this and we spent the whole night trying to make peace. That was the time when nationalism was promoted from different angles. *(Interview)*

Despite differences in their explanation of the past, most of the interviews consent that there is frequent campus unrest and ethnic conflict among the students in the current decade. They agree that most student demonstrations were organized by ethnic or religious students that raise issues that reflect their own. Moreover, there were frequent interethnic conflicts among students from the most dominant ethnic groups. During the ethnographic data collection period (2009-2010), interethnic conflicts among students on the University campus was observed. The conflicts resulted in intervention of the police force, death of ethnic students, property damage and the closure of the University for a short time. To cite the most recent tragic incidents, there were two fatal conflicts between ethnic Oromo and Tigre students in May 2009. At the general staff meeting held on the 20th of May, the Academic Vice President briefed how the conflict started, how it escalated to interethnic conflict. However, he shies away from calling it ethnic conflict even though he does not explain it further or give it a different name. Here is the segment of his speech.

The Academic Vice President: There were two conflicts among ethnic Oromo and ethnic Tigre students on the main campus on 23 and 26 Miazia [*This is the 8th month of the Ethiopian calendar. It corresponds to the European month of April*]. There was loss of life and property damage. As there is a high police presence on the campus, I kindly requested the staff to cooperate with the police at checkpoints. The presence of the police force is for peace and security of all of us. This conflict was used by forces interested to create ethnic conflict on the campus. In principle, there is no ethnic conflict in AAU. *(General Staff Meeting, Minutes)*

Asked to explain the possible cause of interethnic conflicts and unrest on campus, the research participants across various categories give diverse responses. However, the major reasons of the conflicts included political causes, history of unpleasant ethnic relations, high level of

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ethnocentrism, ethnicization of personal conflicts and academic failures. The arguments of the participants with respect to these causes are discussed below.

Political causes: Most research participants and the ethnographic observation of the conflicts proved that the interethnic conflicts are mirror images of the political reality in the nation. Respondents believe that the problem at AAU is the reflection of the divided political discourse in the nation. The political climate in the nation shapes the nature of the conflict on the campus. Brook, the President, attributes the causes of the conflict between ethnic students to the same reason. He associates the causes to the obvious trend to politicize ethnic and religious identities. Habtom, ethnic Tigre lecturer, also shares the premise that interethnic conflicts between ethnic students reflect the political reality in the country. He argues that various political forces are involved in the process. Citing the newly introduced ethnic federalism, he says that the conflicts are inevitable. However, he is optimistic that in the course of time the feeling of repression and posttraumatic effects of ethnic discrimination would die and such conflicts would vanish. Their actual words are cited below.

> **Brook:** The causes here are not different from the causes elsewhere. It is clear that cultural identities, ethnic identity and religious identity, are highly politicized. The more politicized they are, the more they become the basis for group identification and also for relations with other groups. I think certain culture groups feel undervalued and that is reflected in the University. *(Interview)*
>
> **Habtom:** The way I look at this problem is that they generally reflect what is going on in the country. So there are several parties involved and the campus is the mirror and the students hold the mirror but the picture is somewhere in the society, in the political forces, and in the elders. The last 17 years were a continuation of posttraumatic effect of the past. The trauma comes every moment. *(Interview)*

However, Jebessa, an ethnic Oromo lecturer and department head, blames the government, as intentionally cultivating such conflicts. He strongly argues that the current political arrangement is designed to divide and rule the nation and the University environment is a victim of this attempt. Verbatim may give us better picture.

> ***Jebessa:*** Politics affects a lot of thing…. The University is not an island. The political system and forces have a big role. Also, relationships among students are affected by politics. The conflict is created by the government for divide and rule. The government creates conflicts among different ethnicities. It is all about destabilizing them (ethnic groups) so that they will not unite against the government. ***(Interview)***

As noticed by the researcher, whenever there is campus unrest or interethnic conflict between students, there always comes finger pointing between the political forces. The government and its supporters blame the opposition parties in trying to use students to destabilize the country and overturn the government in unconstitutional way. The opposition also blames the ruling party in interfering in the academic freedom of the institution and using its power to silence peaceful student protestors. Losses of life, property damage and sudden closure of the campus have become the net products that paralyze the academic environment. As an ethnic Anuak student, Obang, puts it, students are used by the politician as instruments to keep the status quo or revolt to a revolution. Below is part of his response.

> ***Obang:*** The other problem comes from the authorities, not from students, because there are some people who say that they are politicians – and in order to enforce propaganda they use students to start revolutions. In this case, students are not the source of the problem. For instance, there are lots of authorities in the city that may write something that influences students to raise questions. ***(Interview)***

Interethnic conflicts often break out between the major ethnic groups namely Oromo and Tigre. Most people perceive ethnic Tigre students as supporters of the ruling party and students from other ethnic groups as sympathizing with the oppositions. This categorical thinking significantly

divided the University community even though the category is found to be highly perceptual. Ethnic students join the University with this preoccupation and there is an observable power struggle to keep the status quo on one hand, to reject it and build new power relations on the other. Because of this imagined imbalance of power relations, ethnic students from other ethnicities such as Oromo often avoid ethnic Tigre students and prefer to socialize with students from their own ethnic group. Asked about this situation, Seid (an ethnic Oromo student) and Teklay (an ethnic Tigre student) reflect their frustration as follows.

> *Seid:* The major problems are: what we learn in our villages. We are told that Tigre students, since the current government is theirs, they don't like Oromo. On the street, you see the feeling of grievance on their face but that is not so much as I heard at my home town from my seniors. What I was told is not a reality. *(Interview)*
>
> *Teklay:* Until the election time or one or two months before the election, I had no idea about election and ethnic grouping. But, after the election, most of students start to consider that all members of Tigre ethnic group are agents and supporter of the government. Other students were avoiding and insulting us. This kind of approach influences our attitude towards members of other ethnic groups. *(Interview)*

To give an example of conflict experiences, there was an interethnic conflict experience that better explains how a simple problem engages students in a bloody fight on campus. Once there was an argument that the food in students' cafeteria was poisoned. For this issue, students were divided into two groups. One group was arguing that the food was poisoned and students should not go to the café to eat the food. On the other hand, ethnic Tigre students wanted to dine. The conflict happened when these students tried to go to the café. That time, students who banned the caferia service, threw stones against their opponents. Following this, those students who banned the caferia service, and raised conflicts were punished by the police force. In fact, the next day, the group punished by the police force also attacked who dinned in the cafeteria (ethnic Tigre students). The experience witnesses the fact that such simple problems can escalate to interethnic conflict dimensions and destroy the conduciveness of the academic context.

Historical causes: The other macro-level contextual factor that heavily influences interethnic relationship is the history of ethnic discrimination and the posttraumatic experience associated with it. It is known that the history of the country projects recurrent war and struggle for ethnic dominance. Those battles and conflicts might have contributed to ethnic hostility and interethnic conflicts that surface in communities or institutions. As a response, the new Ethiopian constitution grants ethnic groups to exercise political and cultural rights which include the right to use and develop ethnic cultures and languages. However, the discontent is still there in communities and among students who are sensitive to culture, identity and language issues. Habtom, an ethnic Tigre lecturer, mentions historical causes that have present posttraumatic experiences. Citing his words may make his assertion more vivid.

> *Habtom:* After the illness the symptoms continue by the way. The memory is there. At the ethnic level, there is posttraumatic stress. That is why people are linguistically conscious. They may want to isolate themselves. For example, students prefer to their own ethnic magazine during graduation. This was totally unknown during my time. This is a reaction to the past. It is obvious that this dies away in the course of time. *(Interview)*

As the current political arrangement is an antithesis to the previous dominance of ethnic Amhara culture and language, all other ethnic groups aspire to win new power relations. This is predominately observed among ethnic Oromo and Tigre students on the campus. The discontent of ethnic Amhara community with the new role and the competition between ethnic Oromo and Tigre students for dominance is observable in various demonstrations and campus unrests. In agreement with Habtom, Hordofa narrates the posttraumatic stress of the past legacy. This ethnic Oromo student strongly underlines that Oromo has not yet enjoyed the authentic political rights they deserve. He criticizes the current system as not being fair to this ethnic group. His view is shared among most ethnic Oromo respondents who claim that they are the majority in the nation and demand representative power in the current system.

Hordofa: Historically, Oromo has been disfavored politically, economically, socially and culturally. The scar of such long time repression is still fresh in the memory of every one of us. If you take the Tigreans, they are now in power and behave forcefully. This is mainly because they believe that the political power has been already seized by them. There are many workers from their group on the campus. There are also other reasons which have contributed to the hegemony they have just created. This fact is reflected in the University. *(Interview)*

There were few conflict examples that reflected posttraumatic stress. For example, ethnic Oromo students demonstrated at the April 2010 bookfair held on the main campus of the University. The demonstration was against a book that used a derogatory word against their ethnic group. They were offended, demonstrated in front of the Office of the President, and finally the book was removed from the fair. In 2006, a teacher in one of the departments of social sciences was beaten in the classroom for bringing a text from a history book for classroom instruction. It is obvious that some Ethiopian history books have bias and carry derogatory words against Oromo and other ethnic groups. Failure to understand and be sensitive to such posttraumatic stress results in various conflicts and demonstration on the campus as observation and interviews uncovers.

Ethnocentrism: Given the above contextual realities, there is a higher degree of ethnocentrism. This is in consistent with other works (e.g. Demoz, 1997; Yemajiwork, 2008). When two or more people experience intercultural encounter, they tend to think that their own culture and language is the only and the right yardstick for all. In other words, ethnocentrism is the most challenging view people hold when interacting with others. There is the sentiment that one's language, culture and needs are absolute and one expects others to know and accept them. As a result, people are always suspicious of cultural, linguistic and ethnicity issues. The central cause is because people do not know each other and they do not understand each others' cultural perspectives. Perceived cultural supremacy leads to the assumption that other cultural values are inferior. In line with this, Paulos say that there was such a situation among members of the University community. He characterizes the community as lacking fundamental intercultural understanding. More specifically, Fedissa describes the level of ethnocentrism among the community as a possible cause

for intercultural conflicts. He also tells the extent of ethnic and linguistic ethnocentrism that could harm intercultural dialogue among students. Their actual words may be more telling.

> **Paulos:** The other challenge is that there is a feeling that you love mine and I do not love yours. There is a tendency that you speak my language and love my identity but I do not speak your language and love your identity. *(FGD 1)*
>
> **Fedissa**: Students think that their language and culture are as valid and as important as any other. They enjoy equal rights and privileges with other members who have different cultures and languages. But there are some ethnic groups who still think that their culture and language is superior to others. They think that it is a language of the entire nation. It is the culture of the entire nation. Others have to accept it. On the other side, others come with the idea of exercising equal rights. But when they come here, they see people laughing at them and looking down at them. This gets its way as conflict at the end. *(Interview)*

Ethnicizing personal causes: Most respondents contend that personal conflicts between two individuals from different ethnic groups eventually assume ethnic color. As ethnic identity is cultivated at the expense of personal identity, most students perceive themselves as a member of a cultural group rather than a person who has his or her own personal identity. It is observed that members of the University community and students in particular, seldom recognize the dialectics of social and personal identity. Most participants, across ethnicity and roles, comment that personal conflict between two students suddenly becomes an interethnic conflict if the students are from different ethnic groups. For example, Jebsessa explains how a personal conflict, whose immediate cause would be love affairs, suddenly changes its nature and becomes ethnic conflict. He narrates his own personal experience to explain his point. In harmony with this, while briefing the causes of the 2010 interethnic conflict between ethnic Oromo and Tigre students at the general staff meeting held in May, the Academic Vice President cites similar reason. These remarks are representative of the view shared by most informants.

> **Jebessa:** The immediate cause for a fight could be for a girlfriend, but it may quickly change its direction and becomes ethnicised. We fought with students from Tigray when I was a

student. The cause was for a girlfriend, but it quickly escalated to ethnic conflict. There are primordial reactions to events. *(Interview)*

Vice President: The observable cause of the current conflict was a particular student lost his property and argued that another student stole the property. It was a conflict between two individuals who happened to be from different ethnic groups. Then this conflict changed its form and became a conflict between ethnic Tigre students on one side and ethnic Oromo students on the other. *(General Staff Meeting, Minutes)*

To mention further conflict experience, there is a disturbing conflict experience that frustrated an ethnic Wolaita student. In an informal off-record interview, the student angrily tells how a simple personal conflict between him and another student escalated to ethnic conflict. He narrates how he was worried when other ethnic students circled him and were about to attack him without knowing the cause of the conflict. He says if he did not systematically escape the conflict, he might be attacked by a mass of ethnic students. This is the story told by the victim.

Demelash: I had a disagreement with one of the students at the café when I took water reserved for students with disability. We had an unpleasant conversation because of this but surprisingly enough he waited for me outside the café to physically confront me. I was to fight with him but all of a sudden six students speaking his language circled me in support of him without knowing the reason for our conflict. They were going to kick me down. I was alone and scared. Then I immediately asked for apology. The students were all from the same ethnic group and of course from the same dorm. I was afraid that these students would also attack me in case conflicts break out on the campus. I was frustrated and begged for forgiveness repeatedly without even doing anything wrong. *(Off-record interview)*

Academic causes: It is also reported that academically dismissed students stay on campus for an unknown reasons. They can also enter the compound and organize campus unrest. Some interviewees report that such students attempt to create chaos on the campus life of students. For example, Andinet comments that there are times that some academically dismissed students live on campus and are often seen organizing demonstrations and campus unrest. Dawit, the President

of the Students Union, too agrees with the fact that some students with academic deficiencies are seen engaged in such unrest.

> ***Andine***t: The other one is there are some students who stay in the University for more than ten years, and the University doesn't take any action. In some case they are source of conflicts. ***(Interview)***
>
> ***Dawit***: Conflicts surface due to academic issues. Dismissed students are often involved in conflicts. ***(Interview)***

CHAPTER SEVEN: PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The current chapter recommends a possible educational policy and institutional changes necessary to promote intercultural communication in Ethiopian higher education based on the ethnographic materials. The new policy aims at promoting intercultural learning and encouraging intercultural dialogue and social integration in higher educational context. The chapter outlines the major educational, curricular and institutional changes vital to effect intercultural dialogue in such context based on the empirical results. It highlights the discontents of multiculturalism as experienced in the Ethiopian higher education context. Following this, the chapter explains interculturalism as a working educational policy and institutional arrangement. With respect to changes in institutional arrangement, the chapter characterizes an intercultural campus with new institutional policies, strategies, roles and facilities. The following section describes the roles and the responsibilities teachers and leadership should assume. It also outlines the relevance of establishing a support system and facilities to promote healthy intercultural dialogue. Lastly, the chapter addresses the role of partnership among state, community and university with particular reference to the Ethiopian context.

Discontents with multiculturalism

Despite the promises of multiculturalism and the commitment of the Ethiopian university in expanding educational programs and its intake capacity, there are lots of discontents with the policy and the practice. Multiculturalism as a policy and institutional arrangement has not helped AAU encourage intercultural communication and institutional effectiveness even though the policy significantly contributed to student diversity and addressing the needs of various groups of students. The policy was not of course the sole responsible factor for the lack of intercultural communication and team spirit; however, it did not help the University in addressing the desired success and interpersonal communication among members of the community.

Firstly, multiculturalism has not been effective to address the grievance consequences of the divided AAU educational community.   Let alone solving the problems, the policy directly or indirectly contributed to the problem of creating a stratified university campus. As discussed in the previous chapter, the University community was divided based on ethnic and religious orientations. The ethnically divided student population is also divided along religious lines. In some cases, the religiously divided student community crosses ethnic lines. It was also learned that most ethnic Tigre and Oromo students attempt to maximize their demands for more cultural, ethnic and linguistic rights on the campus. On the other hand, students from Amhara ethnic group and cities demonstrated discontent and displeasure with the new arrangement. As a result, the University environment projected a context that hardly encourages intercultural dialogue and cooperative learning. As Pettigrew and Tropp (2000) cautioned, simply bringing different racial and cultural groups into contact may generate more heat than light.   In principle, multiculturalism was supposed to address the needs of all cultural and ethnic groups (Tanaka, 2007). Some respondents agree that the existing educational policy did not target this inadequacy. Sitotaw, for instance, explains this as:

> *Sitotaw:* There is no attention given to this issue. There is a total loss of agreement among the students. Instead, there is a sense of division that is much stronger than the sense of unity. I sometimes feel that we are not in the same nation. This signals that the future is so frustrating. The University must create a condition and culture that gear towards a more unified and global thinking. This is mainly because students seize what they experience on the campus. This implies that they are likely to practice it on the job world. *(Interview)*

Secondly**,** multiculturalism as a prevalent institutional arrangement does not address the growing need for shared values and common sprit in the academic environment. Cultural identities were cultivated at the expense of personal identities. Students were more conscious of their membership to a given cultural group rather than being individuals who own personal qualities that make them different from members of their own cultural groups. At the same time, they do not equally value the similarities they have with students from other ethnicities. Most participants attributed this sentiment to the educational background of the students. They claimed that the

current decentralized school curriculum emphasizes on local and regional cultural values at the expense of national cultural values. As a result, students join AAU with the knowledge of what make them different from others instead of common values that bond them together. They do not know how to deal with differences and work together for a common purpose. Asserting this, Tayu attributed the causes to school curriculum and he argued that the problem is still unanswered at AAU. The multicultural university was not able to systematically address the missing element.

> *Tayu:* I think schools have taken extreme positions to localize curriculum. This is perceived wrongly as self-sufficient. But national curriculum must include some common values. It should address skills necessary for living in this multicultural country. Students must learn to communicate with anyone at any time. They need to learn the skills essential for communication across cultural and national frontiers. These skills are missing because they are not nurtured. *(Interview)*

Participants of the FGD too agree with Tayu's assertion of students' educational background and campus inability to engage them in intercultural dialogue. Appreciating mother tongue education, Getu was concerned how far intercultural issues are represented in the school curriculum. He attributed students' failure to communicate in second languages to the fact that they are not provided with curricular contents and experiences necessary to communicate with culturally other students in a diverse academic context like AAU. The lecturer reflected on the difficulties students face to express themselves either in Amharic or English. Here is a verbatim of his argument.

> *Getu:* Truly speaking, the current educational policy has created a barrier to communication among students from different regions. Children learn in their ethnic languages and develop their own ethnic identity. That is good but how far is the curriculum open to let children learn the culture of the nation. For instance, in Oromia and Tigray regions children attend lessons in their mother tongue by texts prepared by their respective regions. The contents of the textbooks and the examples, including personal names used, are in their local languages. When they come to the University, we see the challenges. For example, when students come to our department, they find it difficult to communicate in Amharic with the head of the department and thus they switch to local languages. When we group them together to do

tasks, they complain that they cannot work with students from other cultures. This does not mean they do not like to work with others but the problem is their background did not prepare them for this kind of communication. *(FGD 1)*

Thirdly, the University curriculum and its institutional arrangement have failed to address intercultural communication and cultural learning despite its success in statistical diversity of student admission. Analysis of three samples of undergraduate curricular and course contents showed that intercultural dialogue or intercultural communication was not addressed and there was no even a word that refers to these concepts. There is one course that teaches students about human and political rights. The objectives and contents of this general course, *Civics and Ethical Education (3 credit hours),* outlines universal human and democratic rights of citizens. It teaches students about the current Ethiopian political system and constitution. Most of the contents are related to constitutional articles and universal human right declarations. However, intercultural issues are not addressed in this general educational course. Moreover, the undergraduate programs in languages and social sciences too do not represent intercultural communication in their contents. As another example, an analysis of a course entitled *Communication Theories* (*3 credit hours)*, an undergraduate degree program in English, addresses various theories of communication but there is no content which is related to intercultural communication.

In general, most of the courses at these faculties are not related to the daily university experiences of the students. The contents are highly conceptual and at the same time intercultural needs of the students are not represented at all. All in all, intercultural communication and intercultural dialogue are not mainstreamed in the undergraduate programs of the University. At the same time, the school curriculum has not equipped students with the necessary intercultural abilities and experiences. Also, multiculturalism as institutional arrangement is not doing well to engage students in intercultural dialogue. As discussed in Chapter Six, most respondents agreed that interethnic interaction at AAU is poor and the campus community lacks the competence necessary to communicate across cultural boundaries. It was also learned that neither the curricular nor the extra-curricular activities directly address intercultural communication as part of the training and campus experience. It was also reported that cultural programs are mono-cultural. The programs

at the Cultural Center are divided among ethnic students. In attempt to encourage ethnic programs, the University failed to capitalize on intercultural programs. The interview with Hagos is consistent with the ethnographic observations and the field-notes.

> ***Hagos:*** There are clubs monitored by a party or organized under ethnicity or development association of a region. The Cultural Center hosts different programs in Amharic, Tigrigna and Afaan Oromo separately. There are no clubs that work in collaboration. Most of the time, they are segregated. I do not think we have a productive intercultural communication. ***(Interview)***

Finally, multiculturalism sometimes creates conflict between cultural groups at AAU. This is in consistency with Tanaka (2007). As discussed in the previous chapter, the University has experienced interethnic conflicts and campus unrest between ethnic students. Diversity under multicultural arrangement brought many challenges as it hardly focuses on dialogue between cultural groups in a given diverse working environment. In sum, it is noticeable that the existing educational practice and organizational behavior did not facilitate intercultural communication and social integration in the academic environment added to the demand for such motives. Most respondents irrespective of their ethnic group or gender agreed that a new system and organizational culture that accommodate various cultures and value systems should be in place.

Interculturalism: As a guiding educational policy and institutional arrangement

In response to the challenges of multicultural practices, the research participants suggested possible strategies to enhance a healthy interaction and an effective social integration in the academic context. Intercultural communication is suggested to be the key element to address the discontents of multiculturalism and the challenges. The ethnographic material proves the need for a paradigm shift in the academic culture and communication practice to affect the inadequacies uncovered in the course of the study. Given the theoretical inadequacies and practical limitations of multiculturalism in Ethiopian higher educational context, interculturalism as institutional policy

and institutional arrangement is recommended as it is in harmony with *an integrative model to intercultural communication in context (IMICC)* discovered in the course of this study.

Interculturalism is considered as an alternative approach to multiculturalism as a framework for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. It is an institutional policy by which cultural diversity and intercultural communication are promoted to enhance institutional effectiveness and personal growth through cultural learning and communication. Theoretically, it integrates intercultural learning and intercultural communication. The central assumption of interculturalism is that diversity in and of itself is of insignificant value if not communication among diverse individuals and groups is encouraged. It involves learning and sharing where no one culture dominates. It is the idea of sharing and learning across cultures with the aim of promoting understanding, equity, harmony, and justice in a diverse society (Intercultural Framework, 2008). This arrangement passes the idea of multiculturalism, which simply refers to the respectful coexistence of different cultures (Kymalicka, 2003).

Interculturalism as institutional policy takes communication at the heart of institutional arrangement and educational experiences. Education plays a central role in building an intercultural campus that trains individuals to positively value cultural diversity and enjoy intercultural experiences. Such institutions benefit from the fortune of diversity, cultivate democratic culture and encourage intercultural dialogue among cultural groups. Communication is at the heart of interculturalism. Regarding the experience at AAU, informants recommend that the institution has to work on encouraging communication as part of its move to be an effective intercultural academic context. Based on the challenges discussed in the previous chapter, it is possible to conclude that the University has serious problems regarding institutional communication and intercultural dialogue among cultural groups. For example, Habtom characterize the problem as a manifestation of the misconceptions people have about the role of communication. The teacher argues that institutions have to value the vital role of intercultural communication for institutional success and personal growth.

Habtom: I think this field of communication should be emphasized in this country. One of our big problems is communication. We are not good communicators. As a result, we need to be trained. We need not to assume communication as a God given skill that does not demand any training. We need cross cultural awareness so that we can lead a quality life with more satisfaction. *(Interview)*

Interculturalism assumes cultural diversity as an opportunity and it incorporates diversity as an important concern in institutional structure and educational policy. Balancing cultural diversity with academic competence, intercultural institutions promote equity of pedagogy and staff recruitment. Interculturalism treats themes of intercultural communication in dialectics. For instance, in its attempt to promote cultural identity it also capitalizes on national identity shared by individuals residing in the same nation. It also cultivates both personal and social identities of various forms. Interculturalism bypasses divisions by negotiating collective and personal needs of individuals. Intercultural campuses fight discriminations and racist positions. They also minimize power distance among participants and encourage transparent institutional communication network. They also attempt to recognize the possible impacts of macro-level contexts while promoting a productive academic context. Lastly, the success of interculturalism as institutional policy depends on its adoption of intercultural education as a central strategy. Members of the University community should acquire adequate level of intercultural communication competence and appropriate communication skills. By capitalizing on intercultural communication as part of students' university study, campuses can prepare students for on-campus interaction and future job, especially working in a multicultural workplace.

The intercultural curriculum: mainstreaming intercultural communication

As discussed above, interculturalism is recommended as a viable educational policy in higher education. The findings reveal that it ought to mainstream intercultural communication as part of college education. As a result, higher educational policies and practices should modify themselves to meet the new demands by incorporating the necessary intercultural values and experiences in their curriculum. Various values were suggested, by the participants of the study, to equip students

with the appropriate level of intercultural competence and communication skills as part of their study. For example, it was suggested that undergraduate programs should teach critical thinking skills that help students assess and reflect on their own actions when they interact cross culturally. The programs should assist students to critically review cultural, political, historical and educational implications of their practices. To cite an exemplary recommendation, Afeworki recommends critical thinking skills to be included in the curriculum as a part of the move to address the major challenges of academics and intercultural dialogue at AAU. He argues that students' attempt to play ethnic cards is the result of lack of such important values.

> *Afeworki:* I observe that people reach generalizations which are baseless because they lack critical thinking skills. When someone says something, most people simply accept what is said as a fact without checking its validity. The point is we need to be critical thinkers and able to cross-check what information or knowledge we come across. I think this is related to academic competence. We need to do a lot on this. *(FGD 1)*

Additionally, it is also suggested that college curriculum should help students view diversity and cultural differences positively. It was reported that the current school curriculum capitalizes on cultural differences than similarities. On the contrary, the previous school curriculum failed to consider cultural differences at the expense of national unity. However, it is important to recognize the potential value of representing diverse cultural values in college curriculum. The intercultural curriculum has to balance cultural differences and cross cultural commonalities. Participants mention that curriculum should truly produce citizens who believe in unity within diversity. Educational programs and experiences in the University ought to present these issues dialectically, argues Jirata. In agreement with Jirata, Tolla advises curriculum experts to balance inclusion of cultural differences and similarities in the curriculum but he further suggests that there should be a means by which cultural groups learn the cultural values of others. Through such intercultural learning, cultural groups aquire intercultural understanding which is a key to social cohesion and healthy intergroup interaction.

Jirata: Education should help citizens appreciate and value differences. The curriculum, the teaching methods and the materials should address unity in diversity. The educational policy and curriculum of higher education should aim at critical thinking skills and valuing peaceful coexistence of multicultural societies. Graduates should be appreciative of their ethnic identity and at the same time acquire national patriotic values. *(Interview)*

Tolla: Curriculum designers should recognize cultural differences and commonalities while designing various programs. There should be a means or system by which cultural groups learn other cultural values and priorities. Intercultural understanding plays a significant role in building social cohesion. *(FGD 2)*

Moreover, it is also recommended that the curriculum should comprise intercultural awareness and communication skills. To be effective intercultural communicators, students should demonstrate various but important qualities including: positive thinking, respect for human and democratic rights, avoid hostility, tolerate differences, and develop sense of trust. The University curriculum should teach these important intercultural qualities. They can do this through intercultural education and experiences. Reminding the relevance of addressing critical thinking skills in University syllabus, Paulos stress on the significance of including communication skills in the curriculum. It is vital to read the verbatim of his argument.

Paulos: With regards to curriculum, I think students need to take effective communication skills to be assertive, good listeners and emphatic to others feelings and perspectives. These skills help them to be non-judgmental and critical thinkers. The curriculum should also assist students to be objective and critical thinkers. Our students do not have the culture of questioning. Everything written is correct for them. We should produce a generation that objectively questions. I think this is how the problems of diversity and intercultural communication can be solved. *(FGD 1)*

Furthermore, it is recommended that undergraduate programs should include a course in intercultural communication. The course should be offered to students across faculties as a general course. The course must assist students to acquire intercultural competence and communication

skills to cope up with life in a diverse university context. At the same time, it should assist them to enjoy working in this multiethnic national state and build productive intercultural relations with people across cultures. Respondents from all categories recommend the need for such an introductory course to aware students with intercultural communication. For example, student Tsegaye recommends the inclusion of such a course in the curriculum to create awareness about diversity and promote intercultural dialogue. Similarly, Andinet, a vice president, mentions that students should learn the existing diversity in the nation and communication skills necessary to interact across cultures. Lecturer Fedissa, too, agrees with the inclusion of such a course in the curriculum. But he wonders by whom and how the course can be delivered given the divided political position people hold.

> **Tsegaye**: I believe that it is very useful to offer students a course which addresses diversity in Ethiopian. If this kind of course is offered as part of awareness creation, it supports students to withstand those obstacles of communication and enjoy life on a diverse campus. *(Interview)*
>
> **Andinet**: There should be a kind of awareness raising program at least as an introductory course that student should take when they join the University. Students have to learn appreciating differences and they should also use their differences to strengthen their unity. They should also learn to debate on what is right and what is wrong. I think the training at AAU must change and must focus on cultural awareness. *(Interview)*
>
> **Fedissa**: I don't have any opposition to offering this kind of course but my worry is who is going to handle? Is it going to be handled the same way like Civics *and Ethical Education* is being handled? Does it really commit itself to the objectives it is established for? That is my worry. *(Interview)*

In sum, the ethnographic results clearly demonstrate the need for a new approach to higher education to promote institutional effectiveness and healthy social integration and dialogue among the diverse cultural groups on the campus. In line with the practical problems of the campus in Addis Ababa, and to affect a working intercultural educational policy the suggested curricular changes are important to consider. In addition to the recommended changes on the

existing undergraduate curriculum, participants also recommended changes on the current language and social sciences undergraduate programs and of course on some language courses offered to students across the University. More specifically, the recommendation is the inclusion of intercultural communication contents in second or foreign language courses which are currently offered to freshman students across the faculties. These courses include: Sophomore English and Communication skills I and II. Such courses can play a pivotal role if they include contents and learning experience which can enhance social integration and intercultural dialogue in a higher education.

Furthermore, participants explained the key role of language learning in fostering intercultural communication. They commented on the necessity of second language training as part of professional training to equip students with the necessary linguistic and cultural competence that help them work in a multiethnic working environment. Most participants of the study claim that second/foreign language learning enhances intercultural communication and social integration. For example, Habtom emphasize the fact that language is an instrument of conceptualization and expression of the value system of a given linguistic community. He adds that learning this important element assists to bridge intercultural barriers, and makes intercultural journey smooth and cultural integration faster. A personal intercultural learning experience of Shumet confirms the argument given by Habtom. With no previous linguistic competence, this native Amhara lecturer was able to fully integrate in a different cultural environment and enjoy the merits of intercultural learning. He says the experience has enabled him to teach religious programs using the new language, establish a joyous intercultural marriage and a lifelong intercultural experience. Yihune, too, argues with the same premise that language learning enhances intercultural communication. All respondents from all the categories agree on this assertion.

> *Habtom:* When you learn another language you learn the cultural values also. Language is an instrument of conceptualization. You think in your language. I think language is an excellent facility to bridge intercultural barriers and misunderstandings. Learning a second language makes us more comfortable and more received. You will be more appreciative of the other culture when you learn the host language *(Interview)*

Shumet: As part of my first intercultural experience, I was employed in a village where the community speaks Tigirigna language. I think my commitment to the Orthodox Church and personal interest in learning a second language helped me mix with the community easily and quickly. In short time, I learned their language and was able to organize Sunday Church programs and run various church activities. I was married to a Tigre girl from the same place and I enjoyed the hospitality and cooperativeness of the people. I learned to respect the cultural values of others and accommodate differences. It is very important to learn the language of the host culture to understand the perspective of the people and enjoy everyday life. I see second language learning from a pragmatic perspective. ***(Off-record interview)***

Yihune: Second language learning facilitates intercultural communication. In the case of certain people who moved from North to South Ethiopia and who speak Oromo ….. You don't find the conservative character of the north in them. They are totally changed. Why? Because they learned to speak the language and they also understand the culture. Language influences your mental structure and the way you think. This shapes your character. Speaking the host language is very helful. It may even go to the extent of becoming one of those people whose language you speak. ***(Interview)***

Given the current federal structure in the country and the regional states using different official languages, second language learning becomes a question of employment opportunity in addition to its role as a tool for intercultural dialogue and social integration. Employment at the federal government demands fluency in Amharic which is often a second language to most university graduates in Ethiopia. Therefore, to students' own personal advantage, knowledge of the official language of the Federal Government of Ethiopia is important. Since regional governments such as Oromia, Tigray, Somali and Afar use their own official languages, it is practically vital to learn the language of the regional states if students plan to work in these regional states. Offline discussion with an advanced-standing student from SPNN regional state, confirms the pragmatic advantage of second language learning for job opportunities and successful intercultural life.

Abera: Second language learning is a key to intercultural communication and social integration. When I was a primary school English language teacher, I became successful in teaching and interaction with the kids after I immediately mastered their native language. Language is an instrument of intimacy. I was accepted, appreciated, respected and encouraged by the parents of these kids for I was able to integrate with the community. That assisted me to be happy in my day to day job and life there. *(Off-record interview)*

Based on the findings, it is feasible to argue that a foreign/second language curriculum should incorporate contents and experiences necessary for intercultural learning and communication. English language courses offered to all students across faculties is suggested to incorporate intercultural communication skills and cultural awareness. Courses listed under undergraduate degree program in English, Teacher Education, Journalism, Literature and related disciplines should also address the growing demand for intercultural communication and cultural learning as part of their professional training. In the same way, Amharic or other local language programs offered as second language ought to sensitize their curriculum and classroom teaching with intercultural concepts and experiences. Availability of optional courses in second language on the curriculum can also widen opportunities for students to acquire intercultural competence in addition to extra-curricular provisions for intercultural dialogue and language learning.

The intercultural campus

An intercultural campus ought to mirror a new institutional arrangement to improve the intended intercultural interactions among participants. Clear policies, legislations and institutional bodies should be in place. Intercultural education plays a pivotal role in enhancing intercultural communication and cultural dialogue. As mentioned time and again, universities can facilitate intercultural learning and dialogue. The curriculum should reflect diverse cultural values and encourage critical thinking skills that equip students to deny ethnocentrism and grasp democratic culture. It should dialectically cultivate cultural differences and commonalities, and it ought to prepare students to act in local, national and international contexts. Classroom instructions and teachers behavior have to denounce discriminatory trends and facilitate working together across

cultural frontiers for mutual interest. The curriculum should also be relevant to the daily life of students and incorporate contents and experiences that enhance communication skills and conflict resolution strategies. Extra-curricular activities and programs should address cultural and intercultural programs simultaneously.

Institutional policies and strategies

In addition to curricular reform, a multicultural higher education institution has to modify its policies and practices. AAU, as a case in point, should formulate new institutional policies which address the problems explained in Chapter Six. An intercultural institution is characterized by promoting cultural diversity, tolerance, communication and sharing and working together. In line with the arguments discussed so far, the following strategies are outlined to establish a context friendly and working intercultural campus in Addis Ababa.

Promoting cultural diversity and equity of pedagogy: As discussed in the previous chapter and of course confirmed in the next chapter, the statistical diversity of students has significantly improved. The diversity should go beyond statistical representation and embrace institutional multilingualism and multiculturalism. To be a true intercultural campus, the institution should keep on diversifying the student population with an attempt to further open its door for cultural pluralism including gender and students with disabilities. This should go hand in hand with diversifying the staff and the leadership. Staff recruitment and leadership position appointments ought to negotiate cultural diversity and individual's merit/academic competence. Most research participants criticized the current appointment of the University leadership arguing that appointment is based on political loyalty to the ruling party. The respondents are divided on whether to diversify the posts or base appointments on personal academic competence. For example, Afeworki claims that there ought to be a merit based appointment of authorities but Fedisa stresses that staff and leadership positions should be diversified. The latter strongly argues that the ethnic composition of the faculty and the management has to change. It is important to cite the words of these teachers.

Afeworki: The institutional culture at AAU should change. There should be a merit based justifiable appointment of university authorities, a system of accountability and increased student participation. *(FGD 1)*

Fedissa: Well, for me, I think the ethnic composition of the entire University management and the faculty including the administrative staff must change. I know that this is not a simple thing but some work must start. Those people especially with outdated ethnocentric attitudes must leave their place for the young. The University must be restructured. *(Interview)*

On the other hand, student respondents stress on the fact that various bodies of the University should encourage diversity to help them experience intercultural dialogue. The most commented issue was students' dormitory assignment. Most respondents believed that admission to AAU and students' assignment in dormitories should be based on diversity as a policy. Almost all students from diverse ethnic groups agree on this fact. For example, ethnic Amhara student, Getahun, criticizes the current trend in student hostels and recommends a mixed dormitory assignment. Student Hordofa, ethnic Oromo, suggests the same and so does Tsiege from ethnic Tigre background.

Getahun: Primarily, the dorm assignment system of the University should be on a random basis. The current system allows students to live in a hostel with students from their own ethnic group. *(Interview)*

Hordofa: I urge dormitory assignments to be done randomly**.** This may create a mixed group whereby a student from Tigray shares a room with a student from Oromia or a student from the South. This improves intercultural communication among students and it gives rise to a sense of mutual respect in the whole campus. *(Interview)*

Tsiege: It is better if students from different ethnic groups were assigned together in every dormitory instead of placing them in homogenous group. *(Interview)*

As indicated in Chapter Six, Article 157 of the University Senate Legislation (2007) mandates the establishment of *The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity* to promote diversity and multiculturalism. It advises the University on matters pertinent to affirmative action, diversity, staff employment and promotion. This Office should be active and well strengthen to address cultural, gender, linguistic, economic and religious diversity. To be a proper intercultural campus, the University ought to have clear anti-discrimination and anti-racist policies. There should be a system that develops the culture of respect for humanity. As there were reported ethnic discrimination and complaints against this, there should be a popular grievance management procedure translated into various languages. For example, Yihune insists that there must be a policy to serve justice to students who are discriminated for non-academic reasons.

> *Yihune:* Sometimes you know there are cases where students get abused. We should not be allowed to discriminate students. There should be a mechanism by which the University should control and stop this. *(Interview)*

Promoting intercultural dialogue and communication: The principal characteristic of an intercultural campus is its commitment to intercultural dialogue and its action in engaging participants from various cultural backgrounds in a meaningful communication. It has to encourage the campus community to experience intercultural communication in various scenes and at different levels. At a personal level, members of the academic community must demonstrate appropriate level of intercultural understanding. For example, classrooms and other facilities should engage participants in interpersonal dialogue that assist them to understand the perspective of people from other cultures. Intercultural dialogue is a key to understanding others. The institution should build culture of open discussion and debate on issues that matter. The University ought to be a platform by which diverse perspectives are entertained and intercultural knowledge is cultivated.

Debates are important to facilitate intercultural communication, tolerance and unity in diversity. For instance, the University has to encourage the culture of open discussions through social forums. The University needs to develop an academic culture characterized by healthy intercultural

dialogue, academic excellence and tolerance to cultural differences. In such environment, misconceptions and misunderstandings that students have about differences could be clarified openly. On intercultural campuses, students can debate on national and global issues. Most participants of the study emphasized on these important exercises. For example, Yimer claims that such activities help the community avoid conflicts though intercultural dialogues that can boost better understanding. Reflecting on student conflicts, Yimer says that simple interpersonal conflicts escalate to the level of intercultural conflicts if they are not openly discussed between participants.

> *Yimer:* If we make students discuss problems, we can avoid conflicts. For example, once a teacher ordered students to read a chapter from a history book which often upsets a particular ethnicity. The problem escalated to a conflict situation and eventually students physically harassed their teacher. Had the issue been discussed and the concern of the students been understood, the conflict would have been avoided. Therefore, at the University level, discussions should take the upper hand to sort out any predicaments. Discussions can minimize conflicts. *(Interview)*

Establishing effective communication system: An intercultural campus should design an effective institutional communication network. It should project transparency, accountability and provide up-to-date information to its community. There has to be a concrete communication policy which is clearly understood by the community and it should often be audited by the campus. Using printed and soft media, the community should be informed constantly and on time. Such institution ought to employ face-to-face, virtual and all forms of business communication tools to enhance effectivenes. It must also encourage a two-way communication, top-down and down-top. The campus ought to invite the University community on issues that require collective decisions. As described in the previous chapter, the institutional communication at AAU is highly bureaucratic, unsystematic and often one-way that solely depends on memos and circulars. As most respondents criticized, the existing arrangement ought to change. It has to adapt the above mentioned qualities to function effectively as an intercultural campus that promote dialogue, intercultural learning and organizational effectiveness.

The University can use various business communication channels to communicate with the campus community and the society at large. For example, Habtom suggests electronic communications and use of billboards while Ali recommends use of suggestion boxes. On the other hand, Mathias recommends student publications. However, the most important point is the fact that the campus must identify relevant channels to reach its community transparently, effectively and timely. Here is the word for word summary of their recommendations.

> **Habtom**: The basic principles of university education and beautiful values of higher education and the mission of AAU should be openly communicated electronically and using big billboard so that everybody is constantly reminded. ***(Interview)***
>
> **Ali**: I think the University should collect information from students through various means such as suggestion boxes. It should also conduct conferences and meetings. ***(Off-record interview)***
>
> **Mathias**: This calls for the availability of student journals that publish on students' views and opinions. Intercultural dialogue can be promoted through publications such as journals, newspapers and mass media such as radios. ***(Interview)***

Promoting intercultural learning: Intercultural campuses recognize the background of their newly admitted students and as a result design appropriate intercultural awareness package and orientation programs. They have to train their staff and leadership the basics of intercultural communication. These institutions provide structured, semi-structure or unstructured intercultural learning programs as part of students' university stay. The campuses design the necessary facilities and support by which the community enjoys learning other cultures and languages to better interact. Cultural centers often play significant roles in promoting intercultural learning and literary/cultural programs. Based on the ethnographic study uncovered, the University did not establish intercultural learning facilities. However, most students come to the University with diverse presuppositions about each other. As a result, they face uncountable challenges to adapt to the academic environment. As most respondents agree on this, it is vital to cite a representative argument. For example, Habtom suggests the relevance of intercultural learning opportunity for newly coming students.

Habtom: In the University, we need a system that trains every coming student cross cultural survival skills. If not, the problem escalates and later we will have communication problems. *(Interview)*

Encourage cultural associations/ clubs: Students should be encouraged to organize themselves across cultural associations and voice their concerns on campuses. They must be appreciated to exercise their political, cultural, linguistic and academic rights, and work cooperatively and in solidarity with other cultural equivalents. In the process, students can develop cultural values and intercultural skills necessary to interact with students from other groups. Representatives of a given cultural group can deal and negotiate with representatives of other cultural groups and be of support to the University administration and teachers when conflicts break out. Intercultural campuses cultivate cultural and intercultural identities through various mono-cultural and intercultural programs and activities. AAU ought to provide the stage on which students take part in both ethnic and intercultural programs so as to address the challenges of intercultural communication identified in the previous chapter. Even though disputed by some respondents, Ferdissa recommends the establishment of ethnic associations to help ethnic students demand their rights collectively and deal with others in times of conflicts.

Fedissa: By the way, I support the idea of having associations based on ethnicities in this University which so many people oppose to. I, for example, don't have any problem if ethnic Tigre, Oromo and Amhara students have their own association. It is a forum by which they can negotiate and deal with the University authorities and the government. It is also good to maintain peace and security. They learn to respect the cultures and languages of others. *(Interview)*

Set up a policy for conflict management and resolution: Conflicts are unavoidable human experiences especially in intercultural environments. Even though conflicts are challenges to individuals and institutions, they can also provide an opportunity by which unmonitored and unnoticed problems can surface. As a result, appropriate resolution strategies can be devised to avoid similar problems that may pop up in the course of time. Intercultural campuses view conflicts

as opportunities but they respond to them cautiously, timely and transparently. These institutions should design appropriate conflict prevention strategies and communicate them to their community so that possible intercultural conflicts can be denied or solved before they destabilize the smooth flow of academic practice. Intercultural campuses should clearly differentiate interpersonal conflicts from intercultural or interethnic. They must respond to complaints and questions on time and transparently. In their attempt to keep organizational peace and security of their community, they have to work cooperatively with the campus forces including students and teachers. Such institutions must consistently aware their community with effective intercultural conflict resolution styles to help the community manage conflicts at personal and organizational levels.

As narrated in the previous chapter, AAU has experienced a number of interethnic conflicts and on campus unrest that resulted in loss of life and property damage. Various remarks were given by the research participants. For example, student Mohammed warns the University to protect itself from conflicts by being impartial to all students. Teacher Habtom, on the other hand, mentions that the University should guarantee the community that they are not discriminated because of their cultural background. These two suggestions hint the necessarily of sound anti-discrimination policy and to put peace and security in place in addition to designing appropriate conflict management strategy.

> **Mohammed**: The University has to protect itself from being a corner of conflicts. One means of protecting itself is providing equal treatment to each student. Services of the University should be given to all students at the same standard. *(Interview)*
>
> **Habtom**: This University should make sure that all staff feel sense of security and that nobody feels left out because of being different. There should be guarantees provided in this University and that people are not unfairly treated because of being different. The University should provide guarantee at all levels. I want the University to be truly a multicultural environment with guarantees that everyone is not abused and misjudged for any reason. *(Interview)*

The intercultural university teacher

Classrooms are the most significant contexts which should transform to meet policies and standards of intercultural campuses. Lecturers are one of the most significant others to help students engaged in intercultural communication. Intercultural university teachers are expected to understand the contextual factors shaping intercultural interaction on the campus and of course in the classroom. Pre-service teacher education programs ought to equip student teachers to grasp appropriate level of intercultural competence. This competence helps them be successful in their professional practices while working with multiethnic and multicultural student community. Teachers should be careful and transparent in their evaluation of their students. Teachers should also be aware of their students' ethnic/cultural background but act in non-discriminatory manner. They should rather demonstrate qualities of good intercultural communicators and be models of cross cultural communication to their students. As part of their professional commitment, effective intercultural lecturers demonstrate critical cultural awareness skills necessary to understand cultural perspectives of a diverse group of students. Additionally, they should constantly reflect on their perceptions and actions in dealing with students from diverse cultural perspectives.

Intercultural teachers understand their students. They are sensitive to cultural differences and perceive cultural plurality positively. On the top of these, they attempt to see the academic and communicative problems of students from different perspectives. Added to these, teachers must be aware of the possible impacts of macro-level contexts such as politics, history and economy. They have to be sensitive to micro-level contexts such as the academic context and the institutional culture. They ought to recognize the existing power distance between them and their fellow students and attempt to build a working communication culture. Regarding teachers' understanding of perspectives of their students, Tilahun advises university teachers to be culturally aware and conscious of contents of instruction they bring to the classroom. He further recommends that teachers should also understand their students' command of the language of instruction in addition to the cultural implications of the contents and examples they bring to the classroom. The experience of Dagim is in harmony with the understanding teachers demand to affect effective intercultural understanding with their students. An intercultural teacher can be a

lot of help for students to adjust to the academic environment. Below are quotes from Tilahun and Dagim.

> *Tilahun:* Teachers should be culturally sensitive and they must monitor possible consequences of some of contents and examples they bring to classrooms. They should also understand problems students experience including language problems and recognize diversity of their classroom. It is advisable to know cultural background of their students. These help teachers make sound decisions in the classrooms. *(FGD 2)*
>
> *Dagim:* Few years ago, a student was assigned for an undergrduate degree in Amharic minoring Afaan Oromo. The student did not speak Amharic and English except his mother tongue, Afaan Oromo. He visited my office. He could not explain his problem to me in Amharic and then through a translator I came to learn that he came from a poor family in the western Oromia and was unable to communicate in Amharic and English. No staff was able to understand him. Then, I went to the Dean and other important offices to transfer this student to another program. At the time, I really felt his frustration and imagined how his poor family expects help from him after graduation. I experience such honest problems every day. *(FGD 2)*

University lecturers ought to act as facilitators of intercultural communication in their classrooms. Their actions should promote students' intercultural learning. To facilitate intercultural learning, they can adapt contents and examples of classroom instructions to create cultural awareness. For example, selection of texts from various cultures for a reading course in language learning classrooms can enhance students' intercultural learning while working on the target language skill. Subject area programs can also incorporate intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness if teachers consciously plan to address diverse perspectives in their lesson plans. For instance, lessons in social sciences such as history and political science could present diverse cultural perspectives to sensitize students' appreciation of different viewpoints. Active learning methods and procedures can also be of great help to engage students in intercultural dialogue. Engaging students in group works, seminars, mini-project, action research, etc can assist them to

discover the perspective of other cultural groups and appreciate diversity of understanding and interpretation of a given social phenomenon.

Added to these, intercultural teachers should design appropriate strategies to encourage intercultural dialogue and communication. In addition to their academic relationship with the content and the teaching process, they can do a miracle in encouraging diversity and intercultural communication if they are vigilant in understanding the nature of their students' classroom interactions. They ought to reflect on trends of their students' seat taking behavior and group compositions. Being aware of the cultural background of their students, lecturers can intervene if the seat taking behavior of their students reflects homogeneity (Anteneh, 2009). In various classroom activities, students should work with a diverse group of students for better academic experience and practical intercultural learning. In the same way, teachers should analyze the nature of group composition when they offer voluntary grouping to work on a given project. They, therefore, consciously, work on keeping diversity of groups assigned to work on a given project or assignment. They can also aware students the benefits of working in a multicultural group to gain a better academic and intercultural experience. On the interview, many teachers witnessed the merits of such classroom arrangement but let us cite the experience of Mathias as a case in point.

> *Mathias:* After assessing trends students take during seat-taking and group assignments, I intentionally mix students from a diverse cultural background when giving assignment. Students used to group themselves along ethnic and religious line. Even if a few of them complained on my intervention, I succeeded in my attempt to diversify groups and encouraged communication between students from diverse groups. *(Interview)*

The intercultural university leadership

Given the experience at AAU, leaders in multicultural higher education environments encounter lots of challenges to address the growing demands of diverse cultural groups studying and residing on University campuses. In institutions that adapt interculturalism as a guiding educational policy ought to be administered by competent managers that demonstrate excellences in leadership,

diversity management and intercultural understanding. In intercultural campuses, university administrators should demonstrate appropriate intercultural competence, appreciation of diversity and effective conflict management skills in addition to managerial competences the job demands. In the first place, higher education managers and authorities should be models of intercultural awareness and dialogue. They must seize leadership positions based on their demonstration of these qualities in addition to required level of managerial competence. Most respondents agree with this assertion. These qualities would help managers secure trust with university community and execute responsibilities effectively. Here is an example of the views shared by most of the respondents.

> **Selamneh:** I think authorities should seize position based on merits, ability to reason out and experiences. They should demonstrate qualities of an intercultural communicator such as accommodating and appreciating diversity. I want to suggest that university leaders should be assigned based on their merits, professional competence, leadership qualities and related abilities to transform and manage higher education institutions. *(FGD 2)*

Additionally, intercultural university leadership promotes a working institutional communication and dialogue among its community. The intercultural leaders value the significance of communication at institutional and personal levels in facilitating cooperative work, minimizing conflicts and maximizing institutional effectiveness. They encourage public debate, intercultural dialogue and face-to-face interpersonal communication. Given the diversity of the context, they perceive the inevitable nature of conflicts as they deal with diverse cultural groups. Based on the challenges of AAU's environment, participants outlined their perceptions of qualities of effective managers who can transform the University in their attempt to secure institutional effectiveness, peace and security and of course intercultural dialogue. Most of the respondents underline on the significance of institutional change. For example, Tamirat emphasizes on the demand for social forums and intercultural debate. He suggested the establishment of an accommodative management system. He argues that the management should be appreciative of diverse views. He also mentions that managers must demonstrate transparency of communication and accountability of their actions.

Tamirat: I think there should be a social forum. The problems can be solved when there is an accommodative management system. If assignment of leaders is based on political affiliation to the ruling party, there is a little chance of accommodating other's view. Added to this, the administration should be accountable and there should be transparency at all levels. We need a charismatic, understanding and mobilizing leader. *(FGD 1)*

Participants of the interview, Ayenachew, Mathias and Woyesso, also suggest institutional change that encourages public debate, intercultural dialogue and participatory decisions. Ayenachew focuses on encouraging the University managers to organize meetings to discuss issues with different categories of the University community. Mathias, on the other hand, advises the management to build culture of self-reflection on their actions. He added that the management should take initiatives to solve the current challenges. He also argues that the managers should facilitate intercultural dialogue among students and the academic community at large. In harmony with these, Weyeso comments the significance of intercultural understanding that the management should acquire focusing on the importance of recognizing historical and political implications of some cases that they manage. In general, the respondents characterize the ideal intercultural leadership as culturally sensitive, accommodative, self-reflective and accountable. Below are the verbatim of the three interviewees.

Ayenachew: I think there should be a management wing which organizes meetings and listens to the concerns of students. At the University level, there has to be a platform (at least at a faculty level) for discussions. *(Interview)*

Mathias: The University administration must take the initiative to change this scenario. It must design a mechanism to change the current situation. The University must aid students to interact and express themselves. *(Interview)*

Weyesso: Those who are concerned should sit down and find solutions. For example, there is a need to know which part of history often provokes a given ethnic group because most conflicts are related to history. Administrators need to identify the controversial issues and address them with care. *(Interview)*

Intercultural support and facilities

As discussed previously, interculturalism as an educational policy and institutional arrangement demands curricular change, and teachers and administrators ought to demonstrate an appropriate level of intercultural competence. Campus interaction at AAU should focus on intercultural learning and communication. In addition to these changes, the campus should also extend its hand to provide further support and facilities to assist the community to view diversity positively, develop democratic culture and enjoy productive intercultural communication. As part of extra-curricular provisions, the campus must organize and fund various cultural and intercultural facilities to support classroom activities that endeavor to provide intercultural knowledge and skills. In line with the policies and strategies, various centers and clubs can be organized to encourage such efforts. These facilities should address needs of diverse cultural groups without discrimination. The establishment of these facilities could vary in accordance with how a university is structured. The following facilities are recommended for universities like AAU.

Center for intercultural dialogue and learning (CIDL): A center for promoting intercultural communication and cultural learning in a higher educational context should be committed to providing intercultural training, act as a platform for cultural dialogue and offer intercultural experience to its community. Framed on the assumption that intercultural communication plays a pivotal role in social integration and personal growth, the Center aims at enriching intercultural competence of its community through theoretical and practical trainings in various dimensions of intercultural communication. The service at the Center should focus on creating awareness on central themes such as intercultural competency, communication styles, identity salience and conflict styles. It should also contribute to improvement of power relations on campus and betterment of context of interaction. Targeting on these themes, diverse intervention programs, trainings, experience sharing and assessment strategies can me designed.

Regarding the approach, the programs have to be addressed in non- binary constructions of culture and diversity and they should be perceived as a social field in which members of all cultural groups including those of formerly dominant groups is accommodated and all are treated equally.

For example, in an intended intercultural dialogue on power relations (advantaged-disadvantaged groups) no one should be made into target but should be encouraged to a forum. The forum should present the argument that excessive power advantage is not initially personal but structural and that participants (irrespective of advantaged-disadvantaged positions) ought to create a liberating practice for others. The assumption is that both groups should be aware of consequences of unfair privilege. Privilege, for example, is contextual and dynamic and it is a challenge to healthy communication. With respect to activities, the following action plan is proposed to structure activities of the CIDL.

Forum for intercultural dialogue: Engaging a university community into a dialogue on diverse issues pertinent to understanding and practicing intercultural communication is important for many reasons. First of all, bringing people from diverse background, perceptions and experiences help everyone understand various perspectives people hold. Open discussions and debates can create cultural awareness, minimize ethnocentric views and erode possible misunderstandings and conflicts. Planned and structured themes for discussion cultivate culture of debate and public speaking skills necessary for the academic community. It also offers the opportunity for the community to argue on concerns that matter to members of the campus. It also renders chance for participants to develop appreciation of rival point of view. Forums should be open to all members of the campus irrespective of roles and cultural backgrounds so that they can also enhance participants' intellectual and communication skills. Strengthening this assertion, Mathias strongly argues that such facility can aid students to learn intellectual skills from their teachers and fellow students. He adds that such opportunities can contribute to the effort of preventing possible conflicts.

> **Mathias:** Students can learn intellectual skills from their teachers. Students can also learn from their peer groups. Funds should be raised to back students who conduct intellectual debates to let them discuss on issues that matter to them. This allows them to think logically and avoid possible conflicts. It is also important to organize cultural festivities for same to enrich their understanding. *(Interview)*

Intercultural experiences and activities: The Center can facilitate various opportunities that aid the University community to experience intercultural dialogue. It can organize on campus intercultural events such as movie nights that present films with subtitles in other languages. CIDL can also organize Karaoke which is a form of interactive entertainment in which students can sing along recorded music using a microphone and a public address system. This attracts students from various cultural groups and allows them to play national or international music. Multilingual musical festivals and dance nights can also play a major role in bringing students from various ethnic groups to a single stage. In addition to this, general knowledge quizzes focusing on local and international topics can do a remarkable job in promoting intercultural learning. Added to these, ethnic food nights organized and served by ethnic students can also provide a great intercultural experience.

CIDL can promote intercultural dialogue in coordination with various programs and centers. For example, in coordination with the Cultural Center of the University (which is often designated to promote ethnic cultural and literary programs), CIDL can conduct intercultural literary and theatrical programs in which students from all cultural programs can take part. Added to this, as sports play vital roles in intercultural dialogue, CIDL can organize such events in collaboration with Sports and Physical Education Department of the University to engage students in intercultural dialogue through sports. As far as the ethnographic results are concerned, some participants recommend organizing an intercultural day at the University level parallel to *Nations and Nationalities and Peoples Day* which is celebrated at the national level on the eighth of December every year. Habtom's statements are representative of participants who hold this view.

> **Habtom:** There is one interesting day included in the official holidays. That is the day of *nations* and *nationalities* in this country. That is a day of commitment to one another. It is a day of interethnic solidarity in spite of the difference. We can have similar events in this University where we can have music, sports and various cultural festivals. Cultural events allow ethnic groups to show events, and such practice aids students to appreciate cultural diversity. *(Interview)*

The other possible way by which CIDL can provide intercultural experience to students is by organizing visits to cultural communities outside the University compound. The trips can be arranged in collaboration with regional authorities and local travel agencies to expose students with cultures in rural communities. Such firsthand exposure to indigenous cultures facilitates intercultural understanding and appreciation of diverse way of life. Lastly, in addition to face-to-face intercultural experiences, CIDL can use virtual communication system to enrich students' intercultural communication and learning. Through the internet, students can experience intercultural dialogue with fellow students in other universities or other cultural communities residing out of the campus. The Center can also encourage the use of campus intranet to assist Tandem learning which is pivotal to learning other languages and cultures.

Intercultural training programs: Intercultural training package should be prepared for the major actors of the University (teachers, students and administrative staff). Short term and a yearlong certification programs in intercultural communication can be organized for these functions of the University. Intercultural competency is one of the major contents of the program. This creates awareness on intercultural issues, diversity, democratic culture and universal declarations of human and cultural rights. This dimension of the program should provide insights on macro-level contexts such as historical, political and cultural realities and the micro-level context namely academic culture at the higher education. Participants can also be assisted to understand qualities that characterize a good intercultural communicator, and identify the significance of communicating and collaborating in various intercultural areas. The other target content is accustoming course participants with diverse communication styles important to consider while interacting with people from other cultures. Identity perception (both ethnic and cultural) is the third theme to be included in the program for self-reflections. Productive intercultural conflict resolution styles are also the other major contents to be included in the course. This certificate program should employ active learning methods such as group work, seminars, self-reflection of personal experiences and discussions based on samples of intercultural episodes.

For staff and management, diverse sessions can be created to teach intercultural awareness and help them act as agents of intercultural dialogue. It is also vital to engage outside consultants from discrete disciplines to work with the faculty on intercultural issues. It is advised to bring international and local consultants to teach and share experiences on how to deal with intercultural communication challenges. Members of the management should also learn from the consultants but the contents and cases presented should be geared towards the challenges they face on their job. The staff and the management can voluntarily participate in face-to-face and/or online intercultural learning programs to enhance their own competence to deal with culturally diverse group of students. In coordination with the University management, teachers or members of the leadership who successfully complete the program can be encouraged and competed with each other by nominating model candidates they find on their own.

Voluntarily, students can also take part in the certificate programs whose contents and learning experiences are made to reflect on their daily life. A number of short term certification programs can be designed based on the experiences of the students. Given their background, students can be provided with awareness on how to adjust to academic culture and enjoy intercultural communication on campus. Brief on-arrival awareness workshops can also be offered to all students joining the University for the first time. The workshop should focus on diversity, intercultural communication, campus life and academic culture. This initial workshop should be supported by continuous on campus intercultural awareness programs that students can voluntarily take part in. It is also vital to consider that schools can also play a supportive role in preparing students for interaction in a diverse academic environment.

Testing, research and communication: Beyond its teaching commitments, CIDL should function as a testing and certification center for intercultural communication competence. It must also carryout all forms of research to enhance understanding of the status of intercultural communication in the nation in general and higher educational environments in particular. It ought to act as a bridge between the state of the art in intercultural communication (and learning) and the practice in Ethiopian higher education. It is expected to assist policy makers and practitioners in their decisions that demand intercultural understanding. CIDL should function as a research and

information center for intercultural dialogue and learning in higher education in Ethiopia through its publications. Through blogs and online media, CIDL can update the University community with current trends and ongoing intercultural concerns on the campus.

Language Learning Center (LLC): It was discussed that language learning positively contributes to promoting intercultural dialogue and learning. In the University context where students demonstrate a weaker command of the languages of instruction and communication, it is obligatory to establish a language learning center that provides students with opportunities to upgrade their commands of the host languages. More importantly, the language programs should incorporate intercultural communication to encourage effective communication among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the establishment of LLC can respond to both linguistic and intercultural competences students desperately need.

Most respondents agree that students' command of the languages of instruction has declined significantly. It was observed that students from all regions especially from rural part of the country hold weaker command of English language. In its attempt to address the growing concern on students' proficiency in English language, AAU has launched a program called English Language Improvement Program (ELIP) under the College of Education. Although the concern was real and profound, the facility was limited to a single college and of course with restricted funding and manpower. However, it is evident that such program should address the whole University student population. Very recently, the government has launched ELIP across universities in the country. This effort should be encouraged. ELIP should be upgraded and its facilities should be in place and accessible to all students. The University has to organize language tutorial classes for students in need.

In addition, CLL can also act as a facility center for learning Ethiopian languages. Students can learn and practice local languages based on their interests. Most respondents recommend the necessity of providing opportunity for students to learn other Ethiopian languages in response to the growing college linguistic diversity. Related to this, participants claim that AAU should facilitate situations by which students practice other local languages. This practically assists them to know,

appreciate and respect other languages. Additionally, it gives them an opportunity to prepare themselves for employment in regional states where local languages are used as official languages and languages of instructions. The Center can facilitate the provision of such a facility in coordination with regional states. To cite some of the responses from the ethnographic material, student Tsiege and student Teklay recommends the provision such an important facility.

> **Tsiege**: It would be better if the University establishes a center which runs Ethiopian languages teaching program in which students learn the language they want. This makes intercultural communication easier. *(Interview)*
>
> **Teklay**: If second language courses are offered to all students as non-credit courses, it facilitates language learning and intercultural communication skills. *(Interview)*

Center for promotion of cultural and literary programs (CPCLP): Unlike the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Learning (CIDL), CPCLP should commit itself to the promotion of ethnic culture and literacy programs. In principle, an intercultural campus ought to promote both mono-cultural and intercultural programs side by side to encourage dialectics of cultural identity. As a result, it is recommended that ethnic cultural programs and intercultural programs should be valued equally and can be integrated to enhance intercultural dialogue. Awareness of own cultural identity is a prerequisite to better intercultural understanding. Therefore, intercultural campuses should promote cultural and literary programs organized by ethnic students or association representing ethnic groups. Observation of the author proves the provision of ethnic literary and cultural programs at the Cultural Center of the University. Consistent with this, Brook, the president was cited appreciating the opportunity students have to enjoy literary and cultural activities in their own languages.

> **Brook:** If it happens to see literary clubs in many languages belonging to many cultural communities, you do not necessarily need to write poetry in Amharic but you can write in Oromo or other Ethiopian languages. I think cultural enrichment would make a difference. You know their values and you know their films in languages other than Amharic. The richer the overall culture is, the more knowledge we have about one another. *(Interview)*

However, it is important to recommend that activities at the Cultural Center should be expanded to include several units such as musical, cultural shows, theatrical arts and drama. There should be entertainment mechanisms to enhance students' mental and moral growth. There should also be ethnic games and competitions. As observation of the programs and interview with the authority at the Center depict, the current Center severely suffers from budgetary and infrastructural problems. As the Center is therefore equally important to meet the demand of producing cultured graduates, it deserves appropriate attention to contribute to the efforts towards intercultural dialogue and learning. Teaching tolerance intercultural skills in four years stay through formal education is insufficient unless students are engaged in clubs, unions, festivals, other extracurricular activities with the mission of encouraging diversity and interculturalism.

The new partnership: State, community and higher education

Contemporary multicultural higher educational institutions are stretched between the process of internationalization and promoting diversity. They are also sandwiched between their commitment to render universal education and satisfy local demands of societies they are situated in. Some of the institutions fail to address the demands of cultural communities they are made to serve in their attempt to meet global demand for international education. As a result, they are detached from practical problems of national states and are often characterized as theoretical and irrelevant to the community they are supposed to serve. On the other hand, institutions which are committed to local demands fail to meet international standards in preparing graduates for international market. Therefore, balancing these two demands is one of the major assignments of contemporary intercultural universities. In their effort to contextualize themselves to local cultural values, intercultural universities should examine their relationship with the state and the cultural communities whose values are addressed in the curriculum. As these institutions reflect macro-level contextual realities, their relationship with the community and the state is vital to attain institutional excellence and healthy interaction, especially if they are fully funded and their institutional culture is influenced by the state.

Addis Ababa University, for example, is a public university fully funded by the state. Its policies and institutional culture is influenced by the Ministry of Education which is mandated with admission, curriculum design and recruitment of faculty and appointment of University presidents. Therefore, this direct involvement of the state in most policy and management matters calls for a smooth relationship between the University and the nation. As discussed in the previous chapter, the University had unpleasant relationships with state politics and is often perceived as in opposition to the current political ideology governing the country. However, the University and the state need each other to promote Ethiopian cultural values and economic development of the country. The institution needs the state for financing its programs. In its attempt to qualify as an intercultural institution, it should build productive interaction with the state through dialogue and it must work together for mutual purpose. The state should also assess its perceptions of the institution and build productive relationships with the institution based on mutual respect and national commitment.

Asked about the relationships between the University and the state, the research participants were very pessimistic. For example, some of the respondents strongly argue that the national political discourse should change. Otherwise, it could be unlikely for the University to encourage intercultural communication claiming that politics is the sole responsible reason for the divided University community. This pessimistic view is shared by various groups of respondents. These respondents criticize the state as promoting diversity at the expense of shared cultural identity. For instance, Belay and Jebessa firmly believe that the political discourse in the country should change first. Yihune further mentions that the University should be autonomous and fully detached from the state political influences. In practice, however, it is difficult to assume a complete detachment of a public university from state influences. Regarding collaboration with the government, it is easy to visualize a lot of pessimism on the part of the staff as the state officials publicly express hostility towards the staff. Authorities often consider the staff as resistant and in opposition to the current political ideology governing the nation. Verbatim of the three respondents is worth citing.

> **Belay**: As a basic ideology, the discourse in the country has become ethnicity. The discourse at the national level needs to change. *(Interview)*

Jebessa: If you cannot get your politics right, you cannot get all other things right. *(Interview)*

Yihune: The first thing that comes to my mind is the University should be left alone. If you try to promote political interest in the academic environment, you cause a lot of damage. *(Interview)*

There should rather be a new partnership between the state and the institution to promote diversity, intercultural communication and institutional effectiveness. After assessing the major challenges of communication and collaboration, both parties should build a new partnership that appreciate diversity of thought, respect for rival point of view, collaborate for mutual goals, tolerate ambiguities and develop democratic culture. The political system and the institution must entertain differences and discourage oppression of a particular ideology by another. There should be a will on both sides to change and work together to exercise responsibilities with full commitment and accountability.

The intercultural university should also build a two-way interactive system with cultural communities and publicize itself to the community it intends to serve. Multicultural universities should collaborate with cultural communities and communities of faith. Thus, they gain from bringing these forward to be a richer academic community. The more inclusive they are to cultural reach; they contribute a lot to the preservation of each cultural community. In addition, as one of the primary missions of a university is to respond to the cultural demands of communities, it has to build a transparent communication network to update the communities with its progress. The University should be involved in community development activities. As students come from communities, working in collaboration with cultural communities assists to understand the problems of students and to work cooperatively with communities to reach at a working solution. An intercultural campus that attempts to promote intercultural communication should work closely with schools as intercultural learning is a lifelong process that demands collective efforts among schools, communities and higher education institutions.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative component of the study. It analyzes and discusses students' perceptions, competence and practices of intercultural communication based on the comprehensive Survey Form administered to the sample of respondents. The chapter begins with a description of socio-demographic profiles of the research participants and assessment of the level of diversity projected in the student population on the main campus of the University. Following this, the central themes of intercultural communication, as discovered in the ethnographic part of the study, are described quantitatively and discussed in line with the literature in intercultural communication, language pedagogy, intercultural learning and other related disciplines.

More specifically, the chapter provides a comprehensive assessment of students' intercultural competence which includes intercultural competency and an evaluation of their intercultural qualities. It also discusses students' practices of intercultural relationships and intercultural collaborations on the campus. Students' perception of their command of the host languages and their preference of intercultural communication styles are described preceding their rating of identity salience (ethnic and cultural). Then, evaluation of theit intercultural conflict styles is explained with further analysis of preferred conflict styles. In all sections, the reliability of the measuring instruments is presented to confirm the dependability of the findings. In addition, the socio-demographic variables are used to explain if there are differences among the students with respect to the variables addressed in the study.

Descriptive statistics: Socio-demographic profiles and campus diversity

Gender and age: As shown in the table below (Table 8.1) more than two thirds of the respondents (N= 232) whose questionnaires were used are male college students. On the other hand, a little less than a third of the informants (N= 67) are female students. That is more or less indicative of the overall proportion of undergraduate students at AAU in terms of gender. Age–wise, not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents (80.6%) are in the age brackets between 18 and 23;

about 47% of them aged 18-20. Respondents who are in their mid-twenties account for nearly 8% while those aged 27 and above comprise nearly 11% of the total percentages of the respondents. As a whole, as in the case of undergraduate students' age profile, the great majority of the student population in undergraduate programs is either in their late teens or early twenties. Moreover, the mean age of the 299 respondents whose ages range from 17 to 46 was 22.60. On average male students were older (M=22.89, SD=4.79) than female students (M=21.60, SD=3.81) and the difference was statistically significant (t [297] = 2.035, p=0.043).

Regional origin: The majority of the respondents (34.8%) was born and attended school in Oromia region, the largest regional state in the country. A significant number of the participants were from Addis Ababa city (22%) followed by Amhara regional state (17.2%). Amhara is the second largest state in Ethiopia; nevertheless, this fact was not reflected in the University, rather students from Addis Ababa were overrepresented at AAU. Southern People Nations and Nationalities State (SPNN), which is the home for more than 40 ethnic groups, was represented by only 11.5% of students followed by 9.5% of students from Tigray. Students from six other regions (which are usually considered as deprived regions) and foreign countries accounted for only 5% of the students' population. Asked if the respondents lived in places other than their place of birth, more than half of them (57.4%, N: 171) reported that they lived in other cities or villages with people who speak other languages. However, 42.6% (N: 127) of them reported that they joined AAU straight from where their home town. To the latter, AAU is the first intercultural experience where they meet people who speak languages other than their native tongue.

Table 8.1: Socio-demographic variables: Gender, age and regional origin

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (N: 299)		
Female	67	22.4
Male	232	77.6
Age (N: 299)		
18-20	100	33.4
21-23	141	47.2
24-26	26	8.7
27 and above	32	10.7
Regional origin (N: 296)		
Tigray	28	9.4
Amhara	51	17.2
Oromia	103	34.7
SPNN	34	11.9
Addis Ababa City	65	21.9
Other regional states and foreign land	15	5.4

Ethnic diversity: An assessment of ethnic background of the respondents was important to see its role in various intercultural variables and of course triangulate the ethnographic findings on ethnic diversity. It was impossible to access data regarding the ethnicity of the respondents from any office of the University except through students' response to the item on the questionnaire. Requested to provide their ethnicity on the Survey Form in writing, majority of the respondents answered the item and the responses were analyzed in line with the ethnic diversity of the major ethnic groups at the national level. Despite significant variation in figures, the students came from 24 ethnic groups. For simplicity of analysis and reporting, those ethnic groups which count for less than 3% of the total sample of respondents were grouped as *Others* and they account for 13.5% of the total percentage of the respondents.

The Central Statistical Authority (2008) reports there are more than eighty ethnic groups which were listed in the 2007 census. Out of these, 10 ethnic groups have a population of one million and above. Oromo (34.5%) and Amhara (26.5%) are the most populous ethnic groups followed by Somali (6.2%) and Tigre (6.1%). However, as is shown in Table 8. 2, students' ethnic composition at AAU was not proportional to the figures indicated on the census. The largest proportion of the youth, 35.6%, was ethnic Amhara, the second largest ethnic group in the country. At the same time, the participation of Oromo students, belonging to the largest ethnic group in the country was limited to 30.2%. Students from Tigre (9%) and Gurage ethnicity (6.8%) were better represented at the University. It is also a fact that that there was an improvement in the student ethnic diversity at AAU over the last few decades.

In harmony with this, Balsvik (2005: 48) reported that in early 1960 and 1970 students who joined AAU was mostly male, predominately Christian and largely from Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups. It is important to note that Balsvik is the most prominent and well cited scholar who studied and published books on AAU students from early 1952 upto recent times. She reported that Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups were overrepresented on campus whereas Oromo and other ethnic groups were underrepresented. It was also reported that vast majority of ethnic groups (except Gurage) were not present at all at the University. She attributed the reason to the dominance of Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups in Ethiopian politics and history. Post 1991 Ethiopian politics transformed the political discourse and as a result efforts were exerted to diversify ethnic composition in higher educational institutions through multicultural educational orientations. However, as Getnet (2009) reported there was still the dominance of Amhara ethnic group at AAU.

Table 8.2: Socio-demographic variables: ethnicity, mother tongue and religion

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity (N: 278)		
Amhara	99	35.6
Gurage	19	6.8
Mixed	10	3.6
Oromo	84	30.2
Others	41	13.5
Tigre	25	9.0
Mother Tongue (N: 294)		
Amharic	161	54.8
Afan Oromo	65	22.1
Tigrigna	31	10.5
Other languages	37	12.6
Religion (N: 287)		
Orthodox Christian	173	60.3
Protestant Christians	72	25.1
Muslim/Islam	33	11.5
Others	9	3.1

On the other hand, about 7.02% (N= 21) of the research participants failed to label themselves to a particular ethnicity in Ethiopia. Out of this figure, very few students (2.2%) considered themselves as *Ethiopian*. However, those who confused national identity with ethnic identity by labeling themselves as *Ethiopian* did not give explanations for such identification. These respondents come to confuse national and ethnic identity intentionally or by ignorance as explained in the ethnographic study. Even though some of them did not justify why they are not able to do so, the majority of the respondents attributed their failure to various reasons. Arranged from more frequent to less frequent responses, the causes could be summarized as: (1)born from multiethnic parents, (2) preferring national identity, (3) fear of ethnic discrimination, (4) inability to speak one's own ethnic language, (5) born in a multiethnic cosmopolitan city, (6) uneasy feeling about ethnicity and (7) brought up in other culture. However, a very few number of students labeled themselves as a mixed ethnic group (3.6%) claiming that they are from a multiethnic family.

Linguistic diversity: The most recent linguistically relevant information about the number of Ethiopian languages is found in Hudson (2003) in which Hudson listed 75 languages. As indicated in Table 8.2 above, more than half of the respondents (54.8%) speak Amharic as their mother tongue

or first language. Less than a quarter of the respondents (to be precise, 22.1%) speak Afaan Oromo, the language of the most populous ethnic group in the country and the national language of Oromia regional state. Above 10% of the respondents spoke Tigregna (the language of Tigre ethnic group and Tigray regional state) as their mother tongue while the result 12.6% represents all other native languages. These figures reflect the census report (CSA, 1994) and Hudson (2003) which list Amharic, Afaan Oromo and Tigregna as the first three popular languages in Ethiopia.

It is important to explain why more than half of the youth speak Amharic as a native or first language. A large number of non ethnic Amhara students speak Amharic as a mother tongue even though their ethnic languages are spoken in their regions as official languages. The major reason for this could be the fact that Amharic is spoken in most cities and towns across the country and it is the language of the federal government. The other possible cause could be the historical dominance of Amhara in Ethiopian history. During the imperial regime, Amhara dominance led to the adoption of Amharic as the language of government, commerce, and education. Other forms of Amhara dominance occurred in local government, where the Amhara served as representatives of the central government or became landholders. On the contrary, almost all ethnic Tigre students who accounted for 9.0% of the research participants spoke Tigregna as their first language. The cause could be attributed to the fact that these students come from a homogenous Tigregna speaking northern Ethiopian state.

Religious diversity: Regarding religious composition at the national level, data obtained from the 2007 census are classified under six categories of religious affiliation. According to the data given, 43.5 percent of the total population was Orthodox Christian and 33.9 percent was Muslim. Protestant Christians and traditional religion followers accounted for 18.6 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. Most Orthodox Christians are Amhara and Tigray, two groups that together constitute more than 40 percent of the population. To compare, summarized in Table 8.2 are data about the religious composition of the research participants. The majority of the respondents (60.3%, N= 173) were Orthodox Christians whereas a quarter of them (25.1%, N=72) were Protestant Christians. However, 11.5% (N: 33) of the respondents were Muslim.

Compared to the figures on the national census which estimates 43.5 percent of the total population is Orthodox Christian and 33.9 percent Muslim, the number of students whose religion was Muslim was low on campus whereas Protestant Christians was higher. This was possibly because the number of Muslim students attending university education in the Ethiopian context was low. This is consistent with other findings (e.g Getnet, 2009; Balsvik, 2005). The number of Protestant Christians at the University was higher than the percentage on the national census map. In Protestant churches, the young account for the highest percentage of age composition. On the other hand, other religions (Catholic Christians, Jehovah and traditional) which account for 3.0% (N= 11) of the research participants' religious composition were almost proportional to the figure on the national census map.

Assessment of the dependent variables

The major dependent variables which were investigated in this study include intercultural competency, personal qualities/chracterstics, SL/FL proficiency, intercultural relationships, intercultural collaboration, communication styles, ethnic/cultural identity salience and intercultural conflict resolution styles. This section describes and disusses the assessment of these variables.

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competency: Intercultural competency as a key element of intercultural communication competence is made up of four major components: knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness. Before discussing the findings, it is important to give information on the reliability of the instrument prepared to measure competency. Cronbach alpha level was employed to test the reliability of inter-item consistency of individual items. The scores are reported in Table 8.3 below. As it is indicated, the reliability of the measuring instrument for intercultural competency (alpha level= 0.938) was highly reliable. Moreover, the reliability estimates of the components (for knowledge, alpha= 0.832; for attitude, alpha=0.882; for skills, alpha=0.791; and for awareness, alpha= 0.856) were found to be highly reliable. The reliability estimates of the scale slightly

improved as compared to the coefficient reported for the pilot (M: 0.931, N= 50). A reliability measure above 0.5 alpha levels is often statistically acceptable.

Table 8.3: Reliability analysis of intercultural competency scale and components

Intercultural competency components	Cronbach Alpha
Knowledge	0.832
Attitude	0.882
Skills	0.791
Awareness	0.856
Intercultural competency	0.938

In addition to calculating the reliability of the scale and the components of intercultural competency, inter-component correlation analysis was made to see the relationships among the components of intercultural competency in representing the construct.   This means the components representing intercultural competency should be positively correlated if they measure the same construct. As shown in Table 8.4 below, Pearson Product Moment Correlation reports the fact that the components of the ability were significantly correlated at 0.001 levels. Therefore, based on the reliability measures and correlations calculated, the instrument and its items were reliable to measure intercultural competency.

Table 8.4: Correlation among components of intercultural competency

Components	1	2	3	4
1. Knowledge	1	.500**	.434**	.470**
2. Attitude	.500*	1	.645**	.550**
3. Skills	.434**	.645**	1	.586**
4. Awareness	.470**	.550**	.586**	1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)*

Descriptive statistics: Descriptive statistics of intercultural competency and its components are presented in Table 8.5 below. As shown in the table, the overall calculated mean value for intercultural competency was 3.32 (N= 290; SD=0.786). This means that the respondents perceived

their intercultural competency as satisfactory on a five points Likert scale. The aggregate value depicts that intercultural abilities of the youth at AAU is fairly satisfactory. The same satisfactory results were reported for all components of the competency (the mean values were: for knowledge 3.34 (N=94, SD= 0.675), attitudes 3.50 (N= 295, SD=0.709), skills 3.54 (N= 289, SD= 0.71) and for awareness 3.31 (N= 290, SD= 0.776)). This does not necessarily mean that the youth were actually engaged in successful intercultural communication. This result is inconsistent with the ethnographic study in which participants rated students' intercultural competency as poor.

Table 8.5: Descriptive statistics for intercultural competency and components

Variable and components	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intercultural Competency	290	.62	5.00	3.3204	.78621
Knowledge	294	.77	5.00	3.3388	.67486
Attitude	295	.67	5.00	3.5069	.70897
Skills	289	1.11	5.00	3.5360	.71021
Awareness	290	.62	5.00	3.3091	.77605

Further analysis of the contribution of demographic variables on differences in students' perception of their competency was calculated, nevertheless, there was no statistically significant difference observed. Therefore, it is possible to report that students rated their intercultural abilities as satisfactory irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, regional origin, linguistic background and religion.

Personal qualities/characteristics: Major personal qualities/characteristics recommended in the ethnographic study and in the literature (e.g Fantini, 2005) were included on the scale so that the youth can rate the attributes with the number that best represents how they perceive themselves in their own ethnic culture and how people from other ethnicities perceive them during their stay in the University. Among the fifteen attributes listed, the aggregate mean values show that nine of them were rated as *highly moderate* and *high* on the five points Likert scale. The youth perceives that they highly demonstrate four of the attributes, namely, respectful (M= 4.2799), open-minded (M= 4.0344), polite (M= 4.0210) and self-reliant (M= 4.0208) in their home culture. They

moderately characterized themselves as one who tolerate differences (M= 3.8557), is motivated (M=3.8552), is cooperative (M=3.8522), have a sense of self (M=3.8153) and is communicative (M=3.7687) in their own ethnic culture. On the other hand, they think that people from other ethnic group characterize them with these nine attribute as *moderate*. As clearly indicated in Table 8.6 below, the mean values for each of these attributes regarding how the youth is perceived by other people at AAU is lower for each attribute than his/her perception of the same attributes in his/her culture.

Paired sample T-test reported mixed results regarding the differences between the mean values for self-perception in own culture and as perceived by others at AAU. For example, the youth feel that they are more respectful in their home culture than as perceived by others at AAU (t [280] = 5.060, p=0.000). They also think that they are more polite in their own ethnic culture than as perceived by others in the University environment (t [272] = 4.620, p=0.000) and the same is true for self-reliance (t [276] = 3.760, p=0.000). There is also a statistically significant difference between how students perceived themselves in their home culture and the host culture in Addis Ababa with respect to tolerating differences (t [272] = 3.179, p=0.002), being open-minded (t [279] = 3.073, p=0.002) and motivated (t [278] = 2.851, p=0.005). However, no statistical difference was observed for communicative and cooperative attributes in the youth characterization of themselves in their ethnic culture and how others perceive them at AAU with respect to these two attributes. It is possible to conclude that there is clear perceptual incompatibility between self-perceptions and other's perceptions regarding the attributes. The youth seems pessimistic about how they are perceived by members of other ethnic groups. This perceptual incompatibility becomes a key factor in creating intercultural conflicts (Neulip, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Table 8.6: Mean values for self-reported personal attributes in home and host culture

Attributes	Self-perception in own culture	As perceived by others at AAU
Respectful	4.2799	3.9362
Open-minded	4.0344	3.8050
Polite	4.0210	3.5857
Self reliance	4.0208	3.7651
Tolerate difference	3.8557	3.5543
Motivated	3.8552	3.6537
Cooperative	3.8522	3.7086
Sense of self	3.8153	3.6777
Communicative	3.7687	3.7214

Perceived proficiency in the host languages: *English as a foreign language*: Assessment of participants' perceived proficiency in the host languages (English in this case) was made to see how students perceive their ability in English as a foreign language. The aggregate mean value (M= 3.7852 , SD=0.913) shows that students were able to satisfy basic survival needs but seldom communicated in some concrete topics or satisfied most work needs that demand competence in the target language. The quantitative report is consistent with the ethnographic component of this study that revealed students have not develop the expected level of proficiency in English language for both academic and communicative purposes. Among the demographic variables, it was only students' regional origin (birthplace) that significantly contributed to the difference in students' proficiency in English language. The report uncovered the fact that students from city and country were clearly divided in their proficiency of the language of communication on the campus. Students from Addis Ababa city reported the highest proficiency level (M= 4.2293). Analysis of One-way ANOVA revealed a significant statistical difference among the youth in perceptions of their English language abilities (F [5,275] =4.562, p=0.001) with respect to their demographic origin. Various studies reported a substantial English language proficiency difference between urban and rural students (Talif & Edwin, 1990; Stephen, Welman & Jordaan, 2004).

Amharic language: As reported in the previous chapters, there is a controversy around students' proficiency in the official language of the federal government. Descriptive statistics of students response to the item on the scale was calculated and the aggregated mean (M=4.90, SD= 1.08382) reported that undergraduate students at AAU main campus were generally able to speak Amharic language fluently and accurately on all levels despite a significant variation among them. It is important to remember that Amharic is a native language to 54.8% of the research participants. Most of the demographic variables, namely ethnicity, linguistic background, regional origin and religion, were the most important factors responsible for disparity in Amharic language proficiency.

Regarding ethnicity, ethnic Amhara students reported the highest proficiency level (M= 5.3696, SD= 0.58774) and ethnic Oromo students rated the least (M= 4.2892, SD=1.33919). As it could be expected, native Amhara respondents said they are fluent and accurate speakers of Amharic at all levels. Followed by Amhara respondents, those classified as Others, with a slight difference in the aggregate mean (M=5.0119, SD=0.9631), reported the same. Most respondents in this category claimed mixed ethnicity, unable to classify themselves to any ethnic group and of course belonged to other ethnicities too. But most of them speak Amharic as a primary langauage. The second question was to ask whether these differences in Amharic proficiency perceptions were statistically acceptable. For this, analysis of One-Way ANOVA was calculated and it was learned that the differences in Amharic proficiency perceptions were statistically significant and acceptable (F [3,263] =17.051, p=0.000). This means that there was a noteworthy variation in Amharic proficiency among the youth ranging from *no ability at all* to *proficiency equivalent to educated native speaker* across ethnic groups.

The other demographic variable responsible for the difference is students' mother tongue or first language. Analysis of One-way ANOVA revealed a significant statistical difference among the youth in perceptions of their Amharic language ability (F [3,277] =35.336, p=0.000) with respect to their demographic origin. As students come from different language backgrounds, some of them as native speakers and others as second speakers, there was difference in proficiency which would affect the participants' intercultural interactions. Again, native Afaan Oromo speakers rated the least in the proficiency measuring scale (M=3.3844, SD= 1.35098) claiming that they are limited to

speaking the language to satisfy basic survival needs. This finding is consistent with the results of the FGDs, interviews and participant observation.

Students' regional origin was also a significant factor in their proficiency in the federal language of the country. Concerning origin, students' perception of their Amharic proficiency can be presented in descending order as: Addis Ababa (M=5.4918, SD=0.56636.), Amhara (M=5.3043, SD=0.69505), Tigray (M=4.9231, SD=0.93480), SPNN (M=4.8065, SD=0.87252), *Other* states (M=4.4000, SD=1.29835) and Oromia (M= 4.4902, SD= 1.28776). It is interesting to note that ethnic Amhara students from Amhara state rated their proficiency second to students from Addis Ababa city. This could be attributed to the fact that Addis Ababa students, whose mother tongue is often Amharic, claimed that they speak standard Amharic unlike most ethnic Amhara students who come from rural villages of the state. Consistent with the other demographic variables, ethnic Oromo students, from Oromia state, scored the least on the scale. The mean differences was tested using One-way ANOVA and the results confirmed that there was a significant difference among students in this regard (*F* [3,277] =30.446, p=0.000).

Finally, students' religious background became an important factor with respect to proficiency in Amharic. Orthodox Christian students rated the highest (M= 5.1180, SD= 0.92452) but Muslim students reported the least (M= 4.5455, SD= 1.12057). The difference among the religious groups was statistically acceptable (*F* [3,270] =6.135, p=0.000). This significant difference explains the ethnic and linguistic background of the respondents. It is obvious that most ethnic Amhara students and students from Addis Ababa are Christians, and on contrary ethnic Oromo students (who account for a significant portion of the students' body) and students from southern and eastern regional states are predominately Muslims. In sum, the analysis with the demographic variables clearly explains proficiency disparity among college students, and which significantly affects students' intercultural communication on campus and beyond.

Intercultural areas: In addition to assessing students' intercultural competency and host language proficiency, it was also vital to evaluate their actual engagement in intercultural communication. As discussed in the conceptual chapters, intercultural area refers to the person individuals

communicate with, form relationships with and with whom they collaborate to work on tasks of mutual interest. With whom intercultural communicators interact is a very significant factor in explaining how they bring their abilities into action (Fantini, 2005). With whom they communicate and what language they prefer to communicate with are also vital predictors of intercultural interactions. A question of with whom participants collaborate to execute tasks of mutual interest can tell us about the actual performance of the participants in the context of interaction. To assess these issues a five option Likert scale (see Chapter Four for details) was administered. The instrument measuring intercultural areas was calculated using Cronbach alpha level and it was found highly reliable (alpha level= 0.901, N = 24).

Intercultural relationships: In response to the first area, the descriptive statistics reported (see Table 8.7 below) that participants have built a *satisfactory* relationship with fellow students from their own ethnicity (M=3.0035, SD=1.76306) or other ethnicity (M=3.4007, SD= 1.29514). They failed to establish good relationships with teachers from neither their own ethnic group (M=1.9268, SD= 1.84870) nor with other ethnic group (M=2.4685, SD= 1.72007). Participants reported *very poor* or *limited relationships* with the University administration (with administrators from their own ethnic group, M=1.7378, SD= 1.80965; and from other ethnic group, M= 2.0986, SD= 1.79047). In all these, it is evident that AAU presents a higher degree of power distance among its key players. This finding is in harmony with the ethnographic study that clearly reflected an observable power distance among students, teachers and administrators. It was learned that social role or position plays a significant role in stratifying relationships among individuals on campus. It was is obvious that power is prevalent in any form of intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2007; Jensen, 2006).

If students' intercultural relations are limited to fellow students, further investigation into this communication should focus on the nature of relationships exhibited among students. The most important question in this regard was to see whether intra-ethnic or interethnic relationships are favored among students. The observable aggregate mean values for intra-ethnic relationship (M= 3.0035) was on the same range but smaller than the value for interethnic relationship (M= 3.4007) as indicated in the same table. Paired samples T-test was conducted to test the observable mean

difference. It was learned that the difference was statistically significant (t [286] = -3,659, p=0.000). This means that the youth claimed their relationship was interethnic rather than intra-ethnic. This result is inconsistent with the findings of the FGDs and interviews that reported the fact that most student-student relations and communication are within ethnic groups.

Table 8.7: Assessing intercultural relationships, language preference and task collaboration

Intercultural areas	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Relationships			
With students from my ethnic group.	287	3.0035	1.76306
With students from other ethnic groups.	292	3.4007	1.29514
With Teachers from my own ethnic groups.	287	1.9268	1.84870
With teachers from other ethnic groups.	286	2.4685	1.72007
Medium of communication			
Communicate in Amharic with teachers	290	3.7345	1.52324
Communicate in Amharic with students	291	4.1615	1.17357
Communicate in English with teachers	291	3.4570	1.17475
Communicate in English with students	291	3.2990	1.30647
Task collaboration			
Among homogenous ethnic students	288	3.6458	1.52319
Among heterogeneous ethnic students	289	3.6228	1.26641
Students with own ethnic teachers	286	2.9056	1.80102
Students with other ethnic teacher	287	2.9756	1.66497

Further analysis of intra-ethnic relations among students found two demographic variables as significant factors contributing to the issue under investigation. Concerning gender, it appeared that gender difference brought significant difference among students in their decisions of relationships. Male students (M= 3.1607, SD= 1.68376) favor intra-ethnic relations more than female students (M= 2.4444, SD= 1.93255). Independent Samples Test confirms this reality (t [285] = -2.885, p=0.004). With regards to ethnicity, ethnic Oromo students (M= 3.4337, SD= 1.571) rated a higher level of intra-ethnic relationship. Then comes ethnic Amhara (M= 3.0825, SD=1.75991), *Others* (M= 2.5625, SD= 1.98306) and Tigre (M= 2.4800, SD= 1.50333) in descending order. To

check whether the differences are statistically acceptable, One-Way ANOVA was calculated and the result reported a noteworthy difference in students' intra-ethnic relations along ethnic lines (F [3,265] =3.884, p=0.01). This means that ethnic groups with higher mean value (ethnic Oromo students) valued intra-ethnic relationships higher than students from other ethnicity. One of the possible reasons for ethnic Oromo students' preference of this form of relationship could be their weaker command of the language of communication on the campus or the conflicts they experienced as narrated in the ethnographic part of this study. On the other hand, no significant difference among student interethnic relationships was reported as a result of the demographic variables addressed in the current study.

Medium of communication: On a five point Likert scale (with options from *not at all*, *very limited*, *satisfactory*, *well* to *extremely well*), students evaluated their preference of the languages of communication while conversing with their teachers. Even though more than half of the students speak Amharic as a native language and others as a second, they shy away from evaluating their actions as doing well if not extremely well. As shown in Table 8.7, students evaluated their communication with their teachers using Amharic and English languages as *satisfactory* but with different values (Amharic, M= 3.7345, SD= 1.52324; English, M=3.4570, SD=1.17475). Paired Samples Test (*t* [288] = 2,782, *p*=0.006) reported a statistically acceptable level of difference between students' rating of their use of the host languages in their communication with their teacher. Even though the students' use of these languages was rated at observably equal levels, there is a significant difference between the figures. It is not surprising that Amharic, as a dominant language in the country, is more preferred to English in daily conversations on the campus.

In harmony with the assessment of students' proficiency in the host languages, the same demographic factors contribute to the difference among students in their use of Amharic in communicating with their teachers. For example, ethnic Amhara students (M= 4.0104, SD= 1.38788) rated their use of Amharic at a more *satisfactory* level than ethnic Oromo students (M=3.3133, SD= 1.66695) who already rated their proficiency lower than all other groups. The variation among the ethnic students in their use of this language is statistically significant as

ANOVA results show ((F [3,269] =4.411, p=0.005). On the other hand, students reported a *satisfactory* level of communication in English language with their teachers. Ethnicity or any other demographic variable did not appear to create a difference among students in their use of English to converse with their teachers. In sum, students' evaluation of their use of the host languages in communication with their teachers matches their assessment of their proficiency in these languages and is also consistent with the qualitative section of this study.

Task collaboration: As discussed earlier, students made limited or no relationship with their teachers or University administrators in their out of class interactions. Similarly, higher power distance among key participants of the University was also reflected in tasks that demand collaboration. The youth reported that they seldom collaborate with teachers (from own ethnicity, M= 2.9056, SD= 1.80102; other ethnicity, M= 2.9756, SD= 1.66497) and University leadership (from own ethnicity, M= 2.8451, SD= 1.85059; other ethnicity=2.8636, SD= 1.72869) to execute tasks of mutual interest. Irrespective of the ethnic background of their teachers or University administrators, students were seldom engaged in a task that involved all these key players. This clearly shows that students' communication and collaboration in the University was limited to their fellow classmates or dorm-mates. It is also possible to argue that position or social role is the most dominant factor in creating social distance among the key players in the academic environment that demands communication and collaboration.

In an attempt to figure out which form of collaboration is dominant in the context of the study, a *satisfactory* level (M=3.6458, SD=1.52319) of intra-ethnic collaboration among students was reported. Students confessed that they do satisfactorily in collaboration with students from their own ethnic group when asked to do tasks that require collaboration. Also, they reported their experience in tasks that demand collaboration with students from other ethnicity as *satisfactory* too (M=3.6228, SD=1.26641). The mean values depicted that students demonstrated relatively similar degree of intra-ethnic collaboration and interethnic collaboration. Paired Samples Test confirmed that the two mean values were not statistically different which means that students moderately enjoy working with both forms of collaboration to execute tasks of mutual interest. This finding is in contrast to the ethnographic material.

Among the demographic variable, ethnicity, linguistic background and regional origin demonstrated significant differences among students in their comfort with intra-ethnic collaboration. Concerning the role of ethnicity, as the mean values depict, Oromo respondents (M=3.9756, SD=1.27633) and Amhara respondents (M=3.778, SD=1.38776) reported higher attraction to students from their own ethnic groups. Tigre respondents (M= 3.4800, SD= 1.41774) followed them. This difference was proved to be statistically significant (F [3,266] =3.079, p=0.028). Similarly, students speaking Afaan Oromo as a native tongue reported more preference (M=4.1719, SD=1. 03210) to intra-ethnic task collaboration than speakers of other languages do. One-Way ANOVA results (F [3,281] =3.446, p=0.017) confirm this fact. In related demographic variable, students from Oromia regional state (M= 3.9804, SD=1.32740) followed by students from SPNN (M= 3.7576, SD= 1.32359) tend to be attracted to intra-ethnic collaborative tasks over inter-ethnic tasks more than students from other regional states and city administrations. Analysis of variance insures the results with statistically significant value (F [5,280] =2.781, p=0.018). On the other hand, no significant difference in students' attraction towards interethnic task collaboration was found as the result of the demographic variables.

Associations between intercultural competence variables: It was important to investigate the association between the variables discussed in the separate sections above to have a complete understanding of the variables under investigation. To this end, bivariate correlation was calculated to see the relationships between the variables, and multiple regressions were held to see the predictability of some of the variables on actual intercultural communication practice of the youth. Most of the the variables were significantly correlated with each other (see Table 8.8 below). As indicated in the table, intercultural competency was significantly correlated with intercultural relations (*r* = .369, *p* < .01), communicating in the host languages (English (*r* = .302, *p* < .01) and Amharic (*r* = .219, *p* < .01), intercultural collaboration (*r* = .299, *p* < .01). This means that the higher the level of intercultural competency, the more people can be engaged in intercultural relations, uses the host language and collaborate across cultural frontier (Byram, 1997; Bennett, 1993; Risager, 2007; Fantini, 2001, 2005) . It is also positively correlated with intra-cultural relations (*r* = .199, *p* < .01) and intra-cultural collaboration (*r* = .234, *p* < .01). Similarily, they can effectively form relationships and collaborate with individuals from their own culture.

Communicating in the host languages was also highly related to several of these variables in addition to intercultural competency. For example, communicating in Amharic was strongly associated with intercultural relationship (r = .190, p < .01), communicating in English (r = .175, p < .01) and intercultural collaboration (r = .187, p < .01) and it demonstrated a weaker positive correlation with intra-cultural collaboration (r = .119, p < .05). Communicating in English, on the other hand, was strongly correlated with intercultural relationships (r = .212, p < .01), intra-cultural collaboration (r = .235, p < .01) and intercultural collaboration (r = .379, p < .01) in addition to its positive association with intercultural competency and using Amharic in communication. Consistent with the literature (e.g. Fantini, 2005; Kim, 1977); and the ethnographic study, using the host languages in communication can positively enhance intercultural competence and better acculturation. In addition, students with higher intercultural competency can build better intercultural or intra-cultural relationships with fellow students. The result also implies that such students can effectively collaborate with individuals from other cultures to do tasks of mutual interest.

Intercultural relationships was highly and significantly associated with intercultural collaboration (r = .350, p < .01) in addition to its strong correlation with intercultural competency and communicating in the host languages. However, it demonstrated insignificant association with intra-cultural collaboration. It could mean that individuals who have built good intercultural relationships tend to prefer collaborating with individuals across cultural frontiers. Lastly, intercultural collaboration was found to be associated with all variables including intra-cultural collaboration (r = .511, p < .01). This could mean that individuals who tend to collaborate within an intercultural environment demonstrate better language command and competence that help them communicate effectively within and across cultures.

Table 8.8: Correlations between intercultural competence variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Intercultural competency	1	.199**	.369**	.219**	.302**	.234**	.299**
2. Intracultural relationship	.199**	1	.171**	.037	.016	.547**	.207**
3. Intercultural relationship	,369**	.171**	1	.190**	.214**	,083	.350**
4. Communication in host language A	.219**	.037	.190**	1	.175**	.119*	.187**
5. Communication in host language B	.302**	.016	.214**	.175**	1	.235**	.379**
6. Intracultural collaboration	.234**	.547**	.083	.119*	.235**	1	.511**
7. Intercultural collaboration	.299**	.207**	.350**	.187**	.379**	.511**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: 'A' refers to Amharic language and 'B' stands for English language

Predicting engagement in intercultural relations and collaborations: To further explore the findings of the correlation analyses reported above, multiple hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Accordingly, first, intercultural competency was regressed on intercultural relationships and intercultural collaboration. Following that, communicating in the host languages was regressed on these same variables. Finally, one of these dependent variables was regressed on the other. The results are reported below.

Intercultural relationships: Intercultural relationship, the first dependent variable, was regressed on the other intercultural variables. Intercultural competency that was entered first in the regression equation explained 12.7% of the variance of intercultural relationship. The addition of communicating in the host languages in step 2 accounted for 2.5% of the variability. Intercultural collaboration, variable entered next, accounted for 4.6% of the variability. In line with the theory of intercultural competence, respondents with higher intercultural competency could successfully build intercultural relations ($β$ = .357), t (284) = 41.383, p = .000); respondents who perceived greater use of Amharic in their communication had a stronger intent to form intercultural relationships ($β$ = .106), $t(282)$ = 16.686, p = .039); and English demonstrated a higher intention of building intercultural relationships($β$ = .107), $t(282)$ = 16.686, p = .039). Other than the three

variables, intercultural collaboration was found to be a significant predictor of intercultural relations (β = .237), t (281) = 17.199, p = .000).

Table 8.9: Intercultural relations regressed on intercultural competence variables

Step	Variables Entered	R2	ΔF	d.f.	sig	β	Sig. of β
1	Intercultural competency	.127	41.383	(1, 284)	.000	.357	.000
2		.151	16.686	(3,282)	.000		
	Communicate in host language A					.106	.038
	Communicate in host language B					.107	.039
3	Intercultural collaboration	.197	17.199	(4, 281)	.000	.237	.000

Intercultural collaboration: As can be shown in Table 8.10, 7.9% of the variance in intercultural collaboration was accounted for intercultural competency. The inclusion of communicating in the host languages in the second equation accounted for a greater figure, 9.2%, of the variance. The addition of intercultural relationships in step 3, accounted for 4.5% of the variability. As shown in the same table, the regression analysis conducted revealed that intercultural competency (β = .281) and communicating in host language, English (β = .309) were found to be significant predictors of intercultural collaboration implying that college students having a higher intercultural competency and who communicate in English were likely to be engaged in intercultural collaboration to accomplish tasks. Communicating in Amharic was not a significant predictor of intercultural collaboration. Intercultural relationships (β =.228) was found to be a significant predictor of engaging in intercultural collaboration suggesting that the higher a student scores on enjoying intercultural relationships, the more likely for him or her to work collaboratively to carry out classroom tasks that demand working together.

Table 8.10: Intercultural collaboration regressed on intercultural competence variables

Step	Variables Entered	R2	ΔF	d.f.	sig	β	Sig. of β
1	Intercultural competency	.079	24.326	(1, 284)	.000	.281	.000
2		.181	20.832	(3, 282)	.000		
	Communicating in host language A					.096	.084
	Communicating in host language B					.309	.000
3	Intercultural relationship	.226	20.475	(4,281)	.000	.228	.000

Communication styles

Descriptive statistics: The other variable considered in the current study was intercultural communication style (in short communication style). As discussed in Chapter Four, four communication styles (namely *directness*, *indirectness*, *elaborated* and *understated*) were represented on a three option scale (*yes*, *no* and *not sure*) with 19 similar items to assess students preferences of the communication styles both in their ethnic culture and in a multicultural context (AAU). During the analysis, the scale was reduced to 13 items based on inter-item correlation outputs. Reliability analysis of the scale revealed that the measuring instrument was reliable (alpha= 0.743) and the communication styles represented on the scale were also reliable (P≤ 0.05).

Directness-Indirectness: Directness was the first communication style considered for analysis. It is the extent to which individuals reveal their messages using overt verbal code and clearly address their intentions in a given situation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005; Samovar & Porter, 2001). Asked the manner in which they engage themselves in dealing with issues in conflict situations, the majority of the youth reported that they prefer to discuss issues directly whether they are communicating with people in their own culture (70%, N=202) or in multicultural contexts (69.6%, N= 201). Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test proved that there was no significant difference between these two percentiles. Similarly, the frequency distribution also revealed that more than two thirds of the respondents prefer to discuss issues, especially in difficult situations, in the hope of solving it. More specifically, 78.7% (N=226) of them employ such communication styles in intra-cultural

communication and at the same time 77.7% (N= 226) of them use the same style in intercultural communication in multiethnic educational environment.

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used in an attempt to determine if the respondents use the style in intra-cultural and intercultural contexts differently; however, the results revealed that the difference was statistically insignificant. This implies that students prefer to discuss issues in the hope of solving them when they were engaged in intra-cultural and intercultural communication in a similar way. The youth use similar communication styles both at home and in the University. In addition, an assessment of results of the cross-tabulation showed that none of the demographic variables (gender, ethnicity, and religion) demonstrated some meaningful relations with the items used to assess direct communication style.

Indirectness was the second style represented on the scale. This style is characterized by the communicator's primary aim of keeping harmony in relationship at the expense of clarity and direct engagement. The four items representing this style reported that students tend to prefer indirect communication styles as compared to direct communication styles even though items representing both styles were rated higher. For example, 81.5% (N=238) of the subjects reported that they try to adjust themselves to others' feelings when they are communicating with people in their communities. Similarly, 85.1% (N= 246) proved that they do the same when communicating with people from various cultures on the campus. A significant number of students (80.1%, N=226) witnessed that they maintain harmony in their communication with others in their culture and reported a similar communication style in communicating with people in a multiethnic interactive environment like AAU (78.2%, N= 222). Despite mixed results, it was evident that the youth tend to demonstrate indirect communication over a direct one.

Elaborated-Understated: Elaborated as a communication style means the extent to which the communicator uses language and non-verbal clues to explicitly communicate his message to the audience and make himself clear (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, 2008). Expressiveness, which includes a rich use of expressive verbal and non-verbal language, is important in this regard. Self-disclosure, an attempt to reveal personal details during interaction, is also vital to provide an

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explicit and elaborated message to the audience. Therefore, expressiveness and self-disclosure were represented on the section of the scale to describe the extent of students' preference of elaborated communication style. Four items were considered to measure how students use elaborated styles. In response to the item on self-disclosure, subjects claimed that less than a half of them were ready to reveal personal things about themselves (in intra-cultural, 49.6%, N= 140; intercultural, 45.3%, N= 129) in interactions and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed a similar use of communication style in both forms of communication. Similarly, the respondents claimed expressive communication styles (in their ethnic culture, 75%, N= 216; multicultural context, 73.5%, N= 214) in their response to making use of both verbal and non verbal communication modes. Therefore, elaborated communication styles are not preferred among the youth.

On the other hand, regarding the use of understated communication style the frequency distribution reported significant use of the style. As silence is one of the vital manifestations of understated style, the subjects employ this communication style in their communication in their own culture (46.4%, N= 187) less often than in their interaction in multicultural context like AAU (60.1%, N= 175) and the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test confirms a significant difference (Z= -4.385, p=0.000). This means that the youth use silence as a communication style more often in the University context than when they are at home interacting with people from their own culture. At the same time, less than half of the respondents claimed that they avoid clear cut expressions of feelings when they communicate with others in their own culture (43.8%, N= 126) and in the University (42.8%, N= 122).

Ethnic/cultural identity salience

The other variable considered during the study was students' ethnic and cultural identity salience. The importance students gave to these two identities in their course of interaction plays a significant role in shaping their communication with students from other cultures. As ethnicity was found to be the most stratifying factor on campus interaction in Addis Ababa, assessing students' salience to their ethnic and cultural identities was important. As far as the review of literature is concerned, different number of items and scales were used by different scholars to measure ethnic/cultural identity salience. For the contents of the scale prepared to measure these variables,

see Chapter Four. The reliability of the scale measuring ethnic identity and cultural identity was calculated using Chronbach's alpha level and was found to be quite high(alpha= 0.764). The reliability coefficient cited in most ethnic identity and cultural identity studies range widely (from 0.35 to 0.90) and many of them were quite low (Phinney, 1990).

Descriptive statistics: The descriptive statistics of identity saliencies is presented in Table 8.11 below. The aggregate mean value of ethnic identity salience (EIS) was less than 3.0 (which stands for *agree* on the scale) while the mean value for cultural identity salience (CIS) was more than 3.0. Item wise, all items on the ethnic identity subscale were rated as either *strong disagreement* or *disagreement*. For example, students disagreed (M=2.2964, SD=1.02373) with the item *I have spent time finding out more about my ethnic roots and history.* They also *disagreed* (M=2.98, SD= 1.02296) with the item *I feel a sense of loyalty and pride about my own ethnic group*. On the other hand, the items under cultural identity were all rated with agreement. For instance, the item, *it is important to be accepted by my ethnic group and overall Ethiopian culture* was rated the highest (M=3.4928, SD= 0.75879) followed by *I have close friends from both my ethnic group and other ethnicities* (M=3.4079, SD= 0.81850). As a whole, as indicated in the table, the youth reported higher degree of cultural identity salience (M= 3.1349, SD=0.60207) than ethnic identity salience (M=2.7795, SD=056641.). The difference between the two scores was calculated using Paired Sample T-test and the difference was found to be statistically significant (*t* [279] = -14.403, p= .000). This means that the youth attached more importance to their Ethiopian cultural identity than own ethnic identity. Contrary to the ethnographic study, the youth at AAU possess a higher degree of cultural identity salience and attached a higher degree of belongingness to the larger Ethiopian culture.

Table 8.11: Descriptive statistics for ethnic and cultural identity salience

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ethnic identity salience	280	1	4	2.6536	0.70491
Cultural identity salience	280	1	4	3.2561	0.53335

Research in the area of identity has always been associated with identifying socio-demographic variables that contribute to identity formation and maintenance. The current study explored the major socio-demographic variables that contributed to the difference in EIS and CIS among the research participants. Concerning cultural identity salience, the youth demonstrated a higher degree of salience irrespective of their demographic profiles such as gender, age, ethnicity and religion. That means students rated their CIS with a similar manner. However, there was a significant variation in their perception of ethnic identity importance or attraction to their ethnic roots.

Regarding gender, for instance, there was an observable difference between male and female respondents in their perception of their ethnic and cultural identity salience. Boys (M= 2.7528, SD=0.68525) rated their EIS higher than their female (M: 2.3188, SD=0.67115) counterparts. This means that the male respondents perceived their ethnic identity as more important and stronger than the female respondents did. An Independent T-test was carried out to determine if there were significant differences among respondents because of gender and it was found that the difference was statistically significant (t [278] = 4.471, p= .000).

To assess the contribution of ethnicity, analysis of respondents' ethnic background with respect to ethnic and cultural identity was also made. The data was analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Bartlett's test of sphericity (55.844, df 2, P=0.000) indicated that multivariate analysis of variance was warranted. The independent variable was ethnic background and the dependent variables were ethnic and cultural identity salience. The multivariate main effect for ethnicity was significant (Wilks' Lambda= 0.899, F [6, 514] =4.689, p=0.000) which means that ethnic background has a noteworthy effect on students identity salience. However, Univariate ANOVA test on the dependent variables revealed significance for only ethnic identity salience (F [3,258] =9.127, p= 0.000). The mean values revealed ethnic Oromo respondents perceived their ethnic identity with the highest degree as compared to all other ethnicities. The post hoc comparisons of the means using Turkey tests (P=0.000) revealed that they owned a higher ethnic identity salience than the other ethnic groups.

Table 8.12: Descriptive statistics for ethnic and cultural identity across ethnicities

Identity salience	ethnicity	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Ethnic identity salience	Tigre	2.5521	0.62092	24
	Others	2.4788	0.67266	66
	Amhara	2.5311	0.68902	90
	Oromo	2.9835	0.68023	82
	Total	2.6615	0.70720	262
Cultural identity salience	Tigre	3.3083	0.51745	24
	Others	3.2394	0.58095	66
	Amhara	3.1911	0.54151	90
	Oromo	3.3305	0.45323	82
	Total	3.2576	0.52431	262

As far as the political history of Ethiopia is concerned, Oromo elites claim that they were deprived of their ethnic identity, history and political power. It was observed that ethnic Oromo students in various universities nationwide are conscious of their ethnic identity and are active in seeking for fair representation and equal opportunities. In response to the history of discrimination, currently there are so many ethnic based political parties both in the government (Oromo Peoples Democratic Party) and in the opposition (e.g. Oromo National Congress and Oromo Federalist Movement) and Oromo Liberation Front, a secessionist rebel group that fight for the liberation of ethnic Oromo people and an independent Oromia. These factors could have possibly fueled stronger ethnic identity salience among ethnic Oromo students.

Religion is also responsible for ethnic identity salience difference among the youth in Addis Ababa. The mean values with respect to religious affiliation can be ordered from the lowest to the highest degree as follow: Orthodox (M=2.5640, SD=0.65233), Others (M=2.5778, SD= 1.00222), Protestants (M= 2.7201, SD=0.77670) and Muslim (M= 2.9469, SD=0.64657). Respondents who identified themselves as believers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church rated the items on ethnic identity scale low whereas Muslim respondents valued their ethnic identity to the highest. Most ethnic Amhara, Tigre and Gurage respondents rated their religion as Ethiopian Orthodox even if the Oromo respondents demonstrated a meaningful difference in their identification of their religion (ranging

from Ethiopian Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim to Others).To test if there is a statistically justifiable difference among religious groups with respect to their ethnic identity salience , one-way ANOVA for the mean values was calculated and the result revealed that there is a statistically significant difference (F [3,265] =3.007, p= 0.031). This means that Muslim respondents had a stronger ethnic identity perception than other believers. Stronger ethnic identity perception was reported by Muslim students whose ethnic group could be Oromo (with significant numbers) and other ethnicities (such as Somali, Afar and Harari).

Intercultural conflict resolution styles

Descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis: The other purpose of the study was to identify the major intercultural conflict resolution styles (in short conflict styles) employed by the youth in Addis Ababa. A reliability estimate of the scale proved that the measuring instrument was reliable (alpha level = 0.761). The analysis performed for conflict styles was limited to five styles: integrating, compromising, obliging, dominating and avoiding. To begin with, the means and standard deviations of these conflict styles are discussed below. As indicated in Table 8.13, the most dominant conflict styles preferred by respondents were integrating (M= 3.278, SD= 0.48993) and compromising (M= 2.9894, SD= 0.47223). The least used were dominating (M= 2.5703, SD= 0.58104) and avoiding (M= 2.5470, SD= 0.54094).

Table 8.13: Descriptive statistics for intercultural conflict resolution styles

Conflict styles	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Integrating	275	1.50	4.00	3.2758	.48993
Compromising	274	1.25	4.00	2.9894	.47223
Dominating	274	1.00	4.00	2.5703	.58104
Obliging	275	1.00	4.00	2.7855	.52669
Avoiding	275	1.00	4.00	2.5470	.54094

To ascertain the fact that the observed mean differences among these variables could be warranted, repeated measure ANOVA was calculated. The result revealed that there was a statistically significant difference among the styles employed [*F* (4, 273) = 94.43, p = .0001].

Furthermore, to find out which mean contributed to the significance of the overall *F*, a further statistical analysis using Tukey Honesty significance test was employed. The result revealed that all the differences among the mean values were significant at $P < 0.0001$. Therefore, the most preferred conflict styles were integrating and compromising followed by obliging, dominating and avoiding in that order. This finding is consistent with Dawit and Yalew (2007). Their quantitative study reported integrating and compromising as the most preferred conflict styles among adolescents in Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia.

Demographic variables and conflict styles: Among the demographic variables investigated in the study, it was only age and religion that contributed significantly in students' preference of dominating conflict style. All demographic variables did not contribute significantly to students' use of other conflict styles contrary to the findings of Dawit and Yalew (2007)*.* Regarding age, to see if there was a difference among age-groups with respect to their preferred conflict styles, one-way ANOVA was conducted and the results uncover the fact that there was a significant difference among the groups in the use of dominating as conflict resolution styles (F [3,273] =3.593, P< 0.05). Those within the age-bracket 24-26 (M= 2.822, SD= 0.58548) tend to prefer dominating conflict resolution style more than all other age groups, followed by those older (27 and above). With respect to religion, One-Way ANOVA proved that there was a significant difference among the religious groups (Orthodox Christians, Protestant Christians, Muslims and Others) in their preference and use of this conflict style (F [3,282] = 3.091 P< 0.05). Christians (Protestant, M= 2.7109, SD=0.55097; Orthodox, M= 2.5501, SD=0.5876) tend to prefer dominating conflict styles as compared to Muslim and other believers.

Identity salience and conflict styles: To assess the effect of identity salience, analysis of respondents' conflict styles with respect to ethnic and cultural identity was also made. The data was analyzed using Multivariate analysis of variance. The independent variables were ethnic identity and cultural identity and the dependent variables were the conflict styles. The results revealed effects of the independent variables on dominating and integrating conflict styles. More specifically, the effect of ethnic identity on dominating conflict style was significant (F [19,273] =2.128, p=0.006) which means that strong ethnic identity salience has a noteworthy effect on the

students choice of dominating conflict style. However, the same analysis on the dependent variables revealed a significant difference for the effect of cultural identity salience on integrating conflict styles (F [18,273] =3.380, p= 0.000). Students with a stronger ethnic identity salience preferred dominating conflict styles but those with a stronger cultural identity were attracted to integrating conflict styles. The finding is partially consistent with Ting-Toomey et.al (2000) which reported that individuals with strong cultural identity use integrating, compromising and third party conflict styles; however, it is contraty to the report that individuals with strong ethnic identity use integrating style more.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the current study was two fold. First, it aimed to understand intercultural communication perceptions, competences and practices in higher educational context in an effort to contribute to the efforts of creating productive institutional environment through intercultural communication and learning. Second, based on the comprehensive ethnographic material, the project attempted to investigate a model of intercultural communication in such context by identifying central themes of intercultural communication relevant appropriate for multicultural higher education context. Taking a holistic and pragmatic perspective to research, the study employed an exploratory sequencial mixed-methods research design, to grasp a comprehensive understanding of the practice and discover the major challenges and opportunities of intercultural communication in an Ethiopian university. The research approach, methods and its process model aided the study to induce, deduce and abduct data, and discover a model that was tested in the course of the investigation through multiple data sources used to explain and triangulate the findings.

The major assumption held in the course of the study was that universities, as multicultural institutions, are authentic intercultural environments provided that appropriate policies, strategies and facilities are in place to encourage dialogue, democratic culture and social integration. It was also learned that multiculturalism, as a guiding educational policy and institutional arrangement, has been unable to address the growing demand for intercultural communication even though it has significantly contributed to campus diversity and equity of pedagogy. Its inadequacy has left institutions with major challenges such as creating a divided academic community and conflicts that demonstrate power struggle and hostility often between individuals from minority and dominant cultural groups. Therefore, the study assumed that there is a desperate need for a new institutional arrangement, past multiculturalism, to address the ever increasing campus diversity and necessity for intercultural communication competence and communication skills.

In line with these assumptions, the project adopted a pragmatic philosophical position regarding ontological and epistemological assumptions of reality and knowledge. The selected research methodology is in a complete harmony with this philosophical orientation as it assisted to mix both qualitative and quantitative methods systematically. Since the study of intercultural communication is a complex process, it was important to take such rigorous approach to come up with valid, reliable and comprehensive results. As a result, the project was designed on two phases: the qualitative and the quantitative. The qualitative data were generated before the quantitative data. The findings of the former aided the discovery of the model and design of the instrument for the latter. Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia was selected to be the source of data for both components of the study. The main campus of the University was chosen to be the research site. The researcher, as ethnographer and social scientist, has had a profound knowledge of the study campus as he has been a teacher there. His emic perspective helped the project in building rapport with the study campus, hiring respondents and making sense of the contextual issues both at national and institutional levels. His reflections on the process and findings of the study took a secondary position in the work to avoid possible subjectivity.

The ethnography phase of the project employed multitude of data gathering tools to access quality and in-depth data that could explain intercultural communication perceptions, practices and challenges that might influence the intended level of communication across cultural frontiers. The primary means of data collection was ethnographic interviews with participants in the intercultural communication scene. With regards to recruiting interview participants, the strategy adapted to access data was purposive sampling which is called snowball sampling. A total of thirty informants (10 students, 11 teachers and 9 administrators) were interviewed and considered for the study. In addition to individual interviewing, two focus group discussions (FGDs), six or seven participants in each, were held with professionals who are engaged in teaching and research on language teaching, communication, multicultural education, curriculum studies and anthropology. The other data gathering technique was ethnographic observations with field-notes and documents. Various documents such as university publications, notices, minutes and curricular guides were collected to enrich understanding of the issue under investigation.

Following this, the quantitative component of the project was designed based on the ethnographic findings, the literature on intercultural communication and the reflections of the author on both. After the themes were identified in the course of the qualitative phase and specific research questions were formulated, the quantitative component was planned based on DeVillis' (2003) guideline in scale development. Grounded on the findings and taking interdisciplinary approach to culture and communication, a comprehensive Survey Form was prepared, pilot tested and revised to meet standards and comprehension level of the respondents. Apart from the introductory and general instruction sections, the Survey Form was made up of open-ended socio-demographic items and seven scales assessing intercultural communication variables. Three hundred fifty university students were randomly selected applying stratified random sampling technique based on their field of study/ program. The main purpose of this phase was to answer the following specific research questions.

1. What is the level of intercultural competency (that is, knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) demonstrated by the youth?

2. How do the youth perceive their personal qualities/characterstics in their own ethnic culture and how do others perceive them in a multicultural environment?

3. What is the level of students' proficiency in the working languages?

4. With whom do the youth communicate, form relationships with and collaborate with to accomplish tasks of mutual interest?

5. What are the most preferred intercultural communication styles among the youth?

6. What is the level of ethnic and cultural identity salience demonstrated by the youth?

7. What are the major intercultural conflict styles preferred by the youth?

8. Are there statistically significant differences among the youth regarding intercultural variables as a result of socio-demographic variables?

9. What are the relationships between intercultural communication variables?

Conclusions

In response to the research questions various data analysis techniques were used to arrive at the results. The following major findings were discovered in the course of explaining intercultural communication perceptions, competence and practices in the multiethnic higher education environment in Ethiopia.

Context of communication: With respect to the context of communication, the ethnographic and the quantitative study revealed consistent findings. It was learned that Addis Ababa University has been engaged in increasing its student intake capacity in the last decade. There is also a strong commitment to diversify student population with respect to gender and ethnicity, however, the staff diversity has not been attempted in similar manner. Gender-wise, the campus is still male dominated. The quantitative findings are in harmony with these results. Regarding gender diversity, out of the total number of full time teaching staff on the main campus, females account only 10%. Ethnic diversity of the student population has also significantly improved. Consistent with observations, participants of the interviews and FGDs strongly agree that there is a significant increase in student ethnic composition as compared to the figures a couple of decades ago.

The quantitative reports also confirmed that there is a significant ethnic diversity even though the figures are not proportional to the ethnic composition at the national level. In general, there is an observable change in ethnic composition of the student population; however, the same reality was not reflected in the faculty and leadership positions. With respect to the communicative context, as revealed in the ethnographic data, AAU is a highly divided academic institution and its multicultural policy did not assist it to solve this problem. This is in harmony with the report of Tanaka (2007) which outlines the discontents of multiculturalism in creating cohesive campus environment. Moreover, based on the interviews, FGDs, documents and observations, ethnicity was found to be the most significant stratifying factor on campus interaction. Fueled by a history of ethnic discrimination and current ethnic politics, ethnicity significantly influenced the campus climate and everyday interaction.

Power relations: The participants reported that there is a high power distance between members of the University as the result of: position/role, seniority, ethnic background and political orientations. This is in consistency with Hoftsede' (1980) description of East African cultures as one which project high power distance between communicators in an interactive environment. There is a clear trend that the campus community accepts inequalities and the ideal leader is as a kindly dictator especially with respect to positions and seniority. For instance, it was reported that teachers exercise excessive power than students, and at the same time University administrators enjoy more power than the teaching staff. It is also evident that the senior teaching staff is more advantaged than the juniors with respect to power and authority. On the other hand, there is also a tendency of power struggle between ethnic students who challenge the status quo and demand for more representation and benefit from the promises of multiculturalism. Based on ethnicity or political orientations, these students often organize campus demonstrations that often result in conflicts and the intervention of the police force.

In harmony with these, the quantitative findings reveal that high power distance determined the nature of intercultural and intra-cultural communication. For example, students failed to establish good relationships with teachers. They also reported very poor relationships with the University administration. Added to these, higher power distance among key participants of the University was also reflected in tasks that demand collaboration. The youth reported that they hardly collaborate with the teachers and the leadership to execute tasks of mutual interest. Irrespective of ethnicity, students seldom collaborate with people with authority. It is possible to say that position is the most significant source of power as compared to other factors at institutional level.

Intercultural competence: During the ethnographic study period, the participants listed attributes that characterize an intercultural communicator. The attributes, in order of importance, were: (1) tolerance, (2) respect, (3) mutual understanding and open-minded, (5)acceptance, (6) positive thinking, appreciation, transparency and listening skills, and (7) empathy, preparedness, self-reliance, clear sense of self, concern for others, consideration, trust, motivation, communicative and expressiveness. Additionally, it was reported that intercultural competency demands knowledge of human and democratic rights of all human races. It was also mentioned that an

intercultural person should critically evaluate his/her perceptions and actions regarding his/her communication with culturally others. Competent citizens own a desirable level of proficiency in other languages. Intercultural competence demands knowledge of national and international politics. As a result, communicators can understand perspectives of the culturally other. However, it was agreed that the youth at AAU lacks adequate level of intercultural competence and proficiency in English and Amharic as a second and foreign language. Most interactions were characterized as intra-cultural.

Contrary to the ethnographic results, assessment of students' intercultural competency reported that the youth perceived their intercultural competency as *satisfactory*. This does not necessarily mean they were actually engaged in successful intercultural communication. Regarding student proficiency in English, the quantitative report is consistent with the ethnographic material that revealed students did not develop the expected level of proficiency in English language. Among the demographic variables, it was only student regional origin that significantly contributed to the difference in student proficiency in English language. Urban students reported higher degree of English language proficiency than rural students. The results proved statistically significant difference among the youth in their proficiency in Amharic language. Again and in contrary to the ethnographic findings, the youth claimed that their relationship with students was more of interethnic rather than intra-ethnic. Concerning demographic variables, it appeared that gender difference brought a significant difference among students in their decisions of relationships. Male students favor intra-ethnic relations more than female students. With regards to ethnicity, ethnic Oromo students rated a higher level of intra-ethnic relationship.

The quantitative results reported the association between components of intercultural competence. For example, intercultural competency was significantly correlated with intercultural relations, communicating in English and Amharic, and intercultural collaboration. It is also positively correlated with intra-cultural relations and intra-cultural collaboration. Intercultural relationships were highly and significantly associated with intercultural collaboration in addition to its strong correlation with intercultural competency and communicating in the host languages. Finally, intercultural collaboration was found to be associated with all the variables including intra-cultural collaboration. This could mean that individuals who tend to collaborate within an

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intercultural environment demonstrate better language command and competence that help them communicate effectively within and across cultures.

In line with the theory of intercultural competence, respondents with higher intercultural competency could successfully build intercultural relations; respondents who perceived greater use of the host languages in their communication had a stronger intent to form intercultural relationships. Intercultural collaboration was found to be a significant predictor of intercultural relations. Additionally, intercultural competency and communicating in host language were found to be significant predictors of intercultural collaboration implying that college students having a higher intercultural competency and who communicate in English were likely to be engaged in intercultural collaboration. Intercultural relationship was also found to be a significant predictor of engaging in intercultural collaboration suggesting that the higher a student scores on intercultural relationship, the more likely for him/her to work collaboratively to carry out classroom tasks that demand working together.

Communication: Almost all participants agree that AAU does not have a well established communication network that encourages effective interpersonal and institutional communication at all levels. Most of them said that there is no communication at all apart from top-down written instructions using memos and notices. They contended that there is no formal and effective face to face communication between members of the University community. The respondents characterized the existing institutional communication as lacking transparency, accountability and openness. It is also cited that the communication projects mistrust and much pessimism. Most participants witness that there is seldom any academic debate or a forum outside the classroom.

In relation to this, participants also reflected on the major challenges of intercultural communication on the campus. Respondents mentioned use of ethnic identity as a political tool was one of the challenges. The national political culture is also mentioned as a challenge to intercultural communication. Historically, the country has experienced discontents regarding the treatment of various cultures and ethnicities. Higher power distance among the key players on the campus was also cited as another challenge. The power relation between teachers and students

seldom encouraged transparent, open and democratic communication between them. Disparity in students' proficiency of the host languages is also considered as a challenge. The other challenges which emerged in the study were lack of intercultural communication skills and weaker cultural sensitivity. Finally, the communicative context was characterized as unsupportive for intercultural learning and dialogue as most participants confessed.

In addition to the challenges of communication at the institutional level, the quantitative phase further investigated intercultural communication styles preferred by the youth. Asked the manner in which they engage themselves in dealing with issues in conflict situations, the majority of the youth reported that they prefer to discuss issues directly whether they are communicating with people in their own culture or in the multicultural context. More than two third of the subjects reported that they try to adjust themselves to others' feelings when they are communicating with people in their communities and with people from various cultures on the campus. In response to the item on self-disclosure, subjects claimed that less than half of them were ready to reveal personal matters (in intra-cultural and intercultural) in interactions. The subjects employ silence in their communication in their own culture less often than in their interaction in multicultural context like. This means that the youth use silence as a communication style more often in the University context than when they are at home interacting with people from their own culture. Apart from this, the youth employ similar communication styles both in their own ethnic culture and in a multicultural context.

Ethnic/cultural identity salience: Contrary to the ethnographic study, the youth reported higher degree of cultural identity salience than ethnic identity salience. This means that the youth attached more importance to their cultural identity (in this case Ethiopian national cultural identity) than their own ethnic identity. Ethnicity has a noteworthy effect on students' identity salience. It was also found that there is significant difference among ethnic groups in their perception of their ethnic identity salience. Ethnic Oromo respondents perceived their ethnic identity with the highest degree as compared to all other ethnic students. However, no significant difference was found regarding students' perception of their cultural identity.

Intercultural conflicts: It was learned that most student demonstrations were organized by ethnic or religious students. There were frequent interethnic conflicts among students from the most dominant ethnic groups. Regarding the causes of the conflicts, most research participants and the ethnographic observations proved that the conflicts are mirror images of the political reality in the nation. The problem at AAU is the reflection of the divided political discourse in the nation. Even though the Ethiopian constitution grants ethnic groups to exercise political and cultural rights, the discontent is still there in communities and among students. Given the contextual realities, there is a higher degree of ethnocentrism. Most respondents contend that personal conflicts between two individuals eventually assume ethnic color. The quantitative section further investigated the conflict styles dominant among students. As a result, the most preferred conflict styles were integrating and compromising followed by obliging, dominating and avoiding in that order. Students with a stronger ethnic identity salience preferred dominating conflict styles but those with stronger cultural identity were attracted to integrating conflict styles.

Interculturalism: Based on the findings, interculturalism as a new educational policy and institutional arrangement is recommended. Interculturalism is considered as an alternative approach to multiculturalism as a framework for cultural diversity and intercultural communication. The central assumption is that diversity in and of itself is of insignificant value if communication among diverse individuals and groups is not encouraged. It is the idea of sharing and learning across cultures with the aim of promoting understanding, equity, harmony, and justice in a diverse society (Intercultural Framework, 2008). Interculturalism ought to mainstream intercultural communication and cultural learning as part of students' college education. The intercultural curriculum ought to teach critical thinking skills that help students assess and reflect on their own actions when they interact cross cultures. The program should assist students to critically review cultural, political, historical and educational implications of their practices. The curriculum should also help students to view diversity and cultural differences positively. It should produce citizens that believe in unity within diversity. University curriculum should teach important intercultural qualities and productive conflict resolution styles.

In addition to the suggested curricular reform, an intercultural campus ought to mirror a new institutional arrangement to improve intercultural interactions, excel academic excellence and create social integration in the academic context. Clear policies, legislations and institutional bodies should be in place. Based on the ethnographic material, the following strategies are outlined to establish a working intercultural campus in Addis Ababa: (1) commit to cultural diversity and equity of pedagogy, (2) promote intercultural dialogue and communication, (3) establish a transparent communication system, (4) facilitate intercultural learning, (5) facilitate second/foreign language learning, (6) encourage cultural associations/ clubs, (7) set a clear policy of conflict management and resolution and (8) establish a productive partnership with the community and the state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the discussions of the preceding chapters, the following recommendations are listed to promote intercultural communication in higher education and suggest further investigation in the area.

1. Theoretically, the study of intercultural communication demands a fully fledged comprehensive, interdisciplinary and integrative approach to theory and research methods. Given the complexity of intercultural experiences, scholars in the area should cross disciplinary frontiers and attempt to grasp an interdisciplinary approach. For example, the conceptual rift between intercultural communication researchers and intercultural educators (often from competence research perspective) has seldom provided a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication perceptions and experiences. Intercultural scientists should contextualize their studies to come up with a working model that would have both practical and theoretical implications.

2. Researchers should rethink about the assessment methods they use to describe intercultural variables. Here it is recommended that a mixed-methods research can contribute significantly in generating a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication perceptions and practices. Even though little researches have employed

such methodology, considering its merit would certainly enrich understanding intercultural communication in various contexts. The use of multiple methods often provides researchers with reliable and dependable research outputs.

3. Intercultural competence is a key element in intercultural communication. Competence and communication are the two side of a coin in intercultural interaction. Therefore, it is essential to integrate these two major factors while researching intercultural communication in various contexts. Researchers and practitioners need to recognize the inseparable nature of these two core elements of intercultural communication.

4. Researchers and educators should understand the significance of various contextual issues in their effort to provide effective professional outputs. As macro-level contextual factors such as socio-politics, history and economy play vital roles, professionals should recognize the impact of these factors on their communications in a multicultural context. University administrators and classroom teachers should be aware of the cultural background of their students and reflect on their daily intercultural experiences. They should attempt to understand the cultural implications of their actions both in the classroom and on the campus. Therefore, researchers, administrators and classroom teachers should be sensitive to the cultural background of students and understand the multilayered nature of the context of communication and its impacts on intercultural understanding.

5. It is necessary to recognize the role of power relations in intercultural communication. In some cases, communication becomes a power struggle which is often described as an attempt by minorities to reject the status quo while the majority struggles to keep it. Even though there is a variation along cultural dimensions as described by Hoftsede (1980), people in mostly cited collective cultures are challenging the status quo in various levels these days. It is highly recommended to evaluate the reliability of high- power distance dimension in various collective cultures like Ethiopia where people are rejecting the established power distance. The conflicts in Ethiopian higher education are a case in point to explain the inadequacy of Hoftsede's characterization of high power distance in *Eastern African* cultures. This is an important area for further research.

6. As identity plays a central role in communication, intercultural communicators and researchers ought to recognize the dynamism of identity and its possible impact to

intercultural interaction. As stronger ethnic identity salience limit people to intra-cultural communication, it is important to encourage a balanced perspective between ethnic and cultural identity salience. It is also vital to see personal and social/cultural identity dialectically than cultivating one at the expense of the other. Therefore, educational policies, societies and institutions should attempt to encourage a balanced salience between these two identities in their attempt to promote unity in diversity.

7. There is also a significant need to promote effective intercultural communication skills. Citizens in multicultural environment need appropriate level of communication skills. They should also know the implications of the style they employ in their interaction with others. Intercultural communication and competence researchers should explore communication styles in various cultures as the styles vary along cultural dimensions. Universities should help their students and staffs acquire productive level of intercultural communication skills.

8. In a conflict situation, it is critically significant to respond appropriately and on time. Intercultural conflicts are inevitable. However, institutions or individuals should clearly understand the causes of the problem and equip themselves with productive intercultural conflict resolution styles. Research into intercultural conflict styles from intercultural research perspective is still green. Therefore, intercultural competence researchers, educators and practitioners are highly recommended to incorporate this important factor in their studies and practices.

9. It is important to mainstream intercultural communication in a multicultural higher education curriculum as a response to the discontents of multiculturalism. Interculturalism, as an educational policy and institutional arrangement, can promote healthy intercultural dialogue and social cohesion in such an environment. Researchers should further work on the practicality of interculturalism in various educational contexts. Institutions like Addis Ababa University should also transform themselves to meet the demands for intercultural dialogue and learning through relevant institutional arrangement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 4.1: Interview guidelines

Items

1. Please introduce yourself?

   Personal details asked: Age, place of birth, other places the interviewee lived so far, ethnicity, languages (mother tongue and other tongues), teaching experience and qualification (only for teachers), class/batch, field of study (only for students), post in the University, administrative experience (only for member of the management).

2. What abilities do you think are important for intercultural success? How do you define intercultural communication? How do you evaluate students' intercultural abilities at AAU?

3. Can you identify some qualities or aspect of people whom you think are competent in intercultural communication?

4. What is the role of second/foreign language learning in acquiring intercultural competence? How do you evaluate AAU students' proficiency in Amharic and English languages?

5. As a teacher/student/administrator, you might have some intercultural experiences. Would you cite some of the experiences that you like to share? How would these influence your interaction and teaching here at AAU?

6. How do you evaluate the conduciveness of AAU as a context of intercultural communication? How do you describe the power relations among participants at AAU?

7. How far is AAU multicultural and multilingual?

8. As far as conflicts in the University are concerned, what are the major causes of conflicts among students? What should be done to avoid on campus interethnic conflicts?

9. What should be done to secure productive intercultural communication in the University context and enhance social integration in the same?

10. Anything you would like to add?

Appendix 4.2: Focus group discussion themes

Template of the invitation distributed to participants of the FGD

INVITATION FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Dear _____

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to take part in a focus group discussion that will be held in ILS Conference Room on the _____ of _____ 2009 at _____.

Themes of the discussion are:

1. Challenges of intercultural communication in Addis Ababa University context.

2. How to improve and promote healthy intercultural communication in the same context.

I am certain that your active participation and reflections on the themes will benefit the PhD research work I am undertaking and possible improvement of intercultural communication in your university.

Thank you

Appendix 4.3: The Survey Form

About the Survey: This questionnaire form is part of a PhD research project being undertaken at Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany. The project aims at understanding intercultural communication as perceived and practiced by participants at Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia. This particular survey seeks to explore and assess intercultural perceptions, competences, practices, attributions and conflicts as viewed by participants in the university context. Besides its contribution to the completion of a PhD project, the outcome of the survey will provide information on how to enhance intercultural communication among participants from varied ethnicities residing in the University.

Completing and Returning this Form: This Questionnaire Form is made up of eight major parts. Fill out all parts of this Form to the best of your ability and experience. You may fill out the parts in any order and at different moments.

Statements of Data Confidentiality: The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used for this research purpose ONLY. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications that result from this study. Individual data will be stored securely and will be available to people involved in this research. No reference will be made in the written reports that could link you to the study. Therefore, you are not required to give your name.

If you have questions, suggestions or concerns at any time about the study or procedure, you may contact the researcher (Tel. +251 911426489) or email: antishtsegi@yahoo.com.

Thank you very much for your participation

PART ONE: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (10 ITEMS)

Please complete all questions below.

1. Gender : _____

2. Age: _____

3. Place of Birth(town/ village) _____ Regional State _____

4. Have you lived in places other than your place of birth? Yes_____ No_____

5. Your Ethnicity (Ethnic group): _____

6. Do you find it difficult to label yourself to a particular ethnicity in Ethiopia? Yes_____ No_____

7. If your response for Item Number 7 is "yes", why?

8. What is your mother tongue or native language?_____

9. Your religion: _____

10. What subjects are you studying at AAU? Major _____

PART TWO: PERSONAL QUALILITIES/ CHARACTERSTICS (30 ITEMS)

Please answer the following questions. Using scales 0 (not at all), 1(very low),2 (low), 3(moderate),4 (high) to 5 (very high), rate yourself on each qualities or characteristics listed below by marking (X) below the number that best represents how you perceive yourself in your own culture. Then rate yourself how you are perceived by others here at AAU.

How you perceive yourself in Your Own Culture

	Personal qualities/ characteristics	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	intolerant						
2	flexible						
3	cooperative						
4	lacks sense of humor						
5	tolerates differences						
6	impolite						
7	adaptable						
8	communicative						
9	open-minded						
10	motivated						
11	self-reliant						
12	empathetic						
13	Clear sense of self						
14	respectful						
15	tolerates ambiguity						

How you are perceived by others at AAU

	Personal Qualities	0	1	2	3	4	5
16	intolerant						
17	flexible						
18	cooperative						
19	lacks sense of humor						
20	tolerates differences						
21	impolite						
22	adaptable						
23	communicative						
24	open-minded						
25	motivated						
26	self-reliant						
27	empathetic						
28	Clear sense of self						
29	respectful						
30	tolerates ambiguity						

PART THREE: COMMUNICATION STYLES (39 ITEMS)

What have you learned about communication styles in your own culture as contrasted with those in the University while studying with people from varied ethnicities in Ethiopia? Show your <u>agreement</u> or <u>disagreement</u> against the items provided.

In my own culture,	Yes	No	Not sure
I communicate in an indirect fashion.			
When involved in group task, I like to know everyone involved in the task.			
I engage in discussion, I try to cover all possible issues.			
When in a conflict situation, I prefer to discuss the issue directly.			
As a rule, I openly express my feelings and emotions.			
I try to adjust myself to others' feelings when we are communicating.			
While studying or working, I always prefer to work cooperatively.			
I use silence to avoid upsetting others when we communicate.			
I make use of both verbal and non verbal communication modes.			
In difficult situation, I prefer to discuss the issues in hopes or resolving it.			
I readily reveal personal things about myself.			
I avoid clear-cut expressions of feelings when I communicate with others.			
I maintain harmony in my communication with others.			
I tell jokes, anecdotes, and stories when I communicate.			
I listen to what my "heart" says when interacting with others.			
I am very expressive nonverbally in social situations.			
I trust my feelings to guide my behavior.			
I generally avoid issues that create disagreement.			
When speaking to superiors about a concern, I prefer to speak directly on my behalf.			
Here in Addis Ababa University,	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
I communicate in an indirect fashion.			
When involved in group task, I like to know everyone involved in the task.			
I engage in discussion, I try to cover all possible issues.			
When in a conflict situation, I prefer to discuss the issue directly.			
As a rule, I openly express my feelings and emotions.			
I try to adjust myself to others' feelings when we are communicating.			
While studying or working, I always prefer to work cooperatively.			
I use silence to avoid upsetting others when we communicate.			
I make use of both verbal and non verbal communication modes.			
In difficult situation, I prefer to discuss the issues in hopes or resolving it.			
I readily reveal personal things about myself.			
I avoid clear-cut expressions of feelings when I communicate with others.			
I maintain harmony in my communication with others.			
I tell jokes, anecdotes, and stories when I communicate.			
I listen to what my "heart" says when interacting with others.			
I am very expressive nonverbally in social situations.			
I trust my feelings to guide my behavior.			
I generally avoid issues that create disagreement.			
When speaking to superiors about a concern, I prefer to speak directly on my behalf.			

PART FOUR: INTERCULTURAL AREAS (24 ITEMS)

Check the number below (from 0= **not at all**; 1= **very limited**; 2= **limited**; 3= **satisfactory**; 4= **well**; to 5= **extremely well**) that best describes your situation. Mark (X) in the space provided.

Areas	0	1	2	3	4	5
In the University, I have established good relationships with:						
1. Students from my own ethnic group						
2. Students from other ethnic groups						
3. Teachers from my own ethnic group						
4. Teachers from other ethnic groups						
5. Administrators from my own ethnic group						
6. Administrators from other ethnic groups						
I am able to communicate in Amharic with						
7. Teachers						
8. Students						
9. Administrators						
I can communicate in English with						
10. Teachers						
11. Students						
12. Administrators						
I can communicate in my own language with						
13. Students from my ethnic group						
14. Students from other ethnic groups						
15. Teachers from my own ethnic group						
16. Teachers from other ethnic groups						
17. Administrators from my own ethnic group						
18. Administrators from other ethnic group						
I collaborate with others, as needed, to accomplish tasks of mutual interest with						
19. Students from my own ethnic group						
20. Students from other ethnic groups						
21. Teachers from my own ethnic group						
22. Teachers from other ethnic groups						
23. Administrators from my own ethnic group						
24. Administrators from other ethnic group						

Please respond to the questions in each of the four categories below, using the scale from **0 (= not at all), 1 (=very poor, 2(=poor), 3(=satisfactory), 4(=high) to 5 (= Very high)**. Grade yourself against the items and <u>mark X</u> in the space provided.

Knowledge

S/N	Items	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	I could cite a definition of culture and describe its components and complexities.						
2	I know essential norms in the University (e.g., greetings, dress, behaviors, etc.)						
3	I can contrast important aspects of my culture with popular Ethiopian culture.						
4	I recognize signs of culture stress and some strategies for overcoming it.						
5	I know some techniques to aid my learning of second or foreign language and culture.						
6	I can contrast my own behaviors with people from other ethnicities in the University in important areas (e.g., social interactions, basic routines, communication behavior, etc.)						
7	I can cite important historical and socio-political factors that shape my own culture and popular Ethiopian culture.						
8	I can describe cross-cultural adjustment stages.						
9	I can cite various learning processes and strategies for learning and living at AAU.						
10	I could describe interactional behaviors common among Ethiopians in social and professional areas (e.g., family roles, team work, problem solving, etc.)						
11	I can discuss and contrast various behavioral patterns of my own culture with popular Ethiopian culture,						
12	I know verbal and non-verbal behaviors vary across cultures and all forms of behavior are worthy of respect.						
13	I recognize that people from other cultures do not necessarily have same values and goals as people from my own culture.						

Attitudes
While in the University, I demonstrate willingness to:

S/N	Items	0	1	2	3	4	5
14	interact with people from other ethnicities.						
15	learn from others, their language, and their culture						
16	try to communicate in Amharic or English and behave in appropriate ways.						
17	deal with my emotions and frustrations with AAU culture						
18	take on various roles appropriate to different situations (e.g. in the classroom)						
19	show interest in new cultural aspects (e.g., to understand the values, history, etc).						
20	try to understand differences in the behaviors, values, attitudes, and styles of members of the University.						
21	adapt my behavior to communicate appropriately in the University with people from varied background (e.g., in non-verbal and other behavioral areas, as needed for different situations).						
22	reflect on the impact and consequences of my decisions and choices on students, teachers and administrators.						
23	deal with different ways of perceiving, expressing, interacting, and behaving.						
24	interact in alternative ways, even when quite different from those to which I was accustomed and preferred.						
25	deal with ethical implications of my choices (in terms of decisions, consequences, etc.)						
26	suspend judgment & appreciate the complexities of communicating and interacting						

S/N		0	1	2	3	4	5
	interculturally.						
27	listen and communicate effectively with people from other ethnicities.						
28	learn other languages and cultures and interact with them .						

Skills

S/N	Items	0	1	2	3	4	5
29	I demonstrate flexibility when interacting with persons from other cultures.						
30	I demonstrate a capacity to interact appropriately in variety of different social and academic situations in the University.						
31	I use appropriate strategies for adapting to university life and reducing stress that result from intercultural encounters.						
32	I monitor my behavior and its impact on my learning and communication with others.						
33	I use culture specific information to improve my style and interaction with members of the University community.						
34	I adjust my behavior and speech as appropriate to avoid offending others when involved in intercultural encounter.						
35	I engage in meaningful dialogue with people from other cultures as people with my own.						
36	I help to resolve cross cultural conflicts and misunderstandings when they arose.						
37	I have two or more cultural frames of references and thus I feel positive about cultural differences.						

Awareness

While studying in the University, I realized the importance of:

S/N	Items	0	1	2	3	4	5
38	differences and similarities across my own and other languages and cultures.						
39	my negative reactions to these differences (e.g., fear, ridicule, superiority, etc).						
40	how members of other cultures viewed me and why.						
41	myself as "culturally conditioned" person with personal habits and preferences.						
42	responses by others to my own ethnic identity						
43	dangers of generalizing individual behaviors as representative of the whole culture/ethnic group.						
44	my choices and their consequences (which make me more or less acceptable by members of other cultures).						
45	my personal values and ethics that affect my approach to ethical dilemmas and resolutions.						
46	how my values and ethics are reflected in specific situations.						
47	Varying cultural styles and language use and their effect in their social and study situations.						
48	how I perceived myself as communicator in an intercultural context.						
49	How others perceived me as communicator in intercultural context.						
50	Self-evaluation and personal reflection on interaction.						

Read the options provided and <u>circle the number</u> that best describes your proficiency in Amharic and English languages at the moment.

A. Your Amharic language ability:
   1. no ability at all
   2. able to communicate only in a very limited capacity
   3. able to satisfy basic survival needs
   4. able to communicate on some concrete topics and to satisfy most work needs
   5. able to speak fluently and accurately on all levels
   6. proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker

B. Your English language ability:
   1. no ability at all
   2. able to communicate only in a very limited capacity
   3. able to satisfy basic survival needs
   4. able to communicate on some concrete topics and to satisfy most work needs
   5. able to speak fluently and accurately on all levels
   6. proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker

PART SEVEN: ETHNIC/CULTURAL IDENTITY SALIENCE (10 ITEMS)

How do you generally feel and act in various situations in the University? <u>Tick (X)</u> in the box in the scale (from 1= **strongly disagree**; 2= **disagree;** 3=**agree** to 4= **strongly agree**) that best reflects your impression.

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4
1	I have spent time to find out more about my ethnic roots and history.				
2	I subscribe to both sets of values: my ethnic values and the larger Ethiopian cultural values.				
3	I have close friends from both my ethnic group and other ethnicities.				
4	My family practices distinctive ethnic traditions and customs.				
5	My family really emphasizes where our ancestors came from.				
6	The values of my ethnic group are very compatible with the larger Ethiopian cultural values.				
7	I feel a sense of loyalty and pride about my own ethnic group.				
8	It is important to be accepted by both my ethnic group and overall Ethiopian culture.				
9	The ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.				
10	I feel comfortable identifying with both with my ethnic heritage and overall Ethiopian culture.				

PART EIGHT: INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES (20 ITEMS)

Recall how you generally communicate in various intercultural conflict situations in the University. <u>Mark (X)</u> in the box in the scale that best reflects your conflict style tendency. The following scale is used for each item: 1= **strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree;   3= moderately agree;   4= strongly agree**

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4
1	I often tolerate when the other person does something I do not like.				
2	I "give and take" so that a compromise can be reached.				
3	I use my influence to get my ideas accepted in solving the problem.				
4	I am open to the person's suggestions involving the problem.				
5	I generally give it to the wishes of the other person in a conflict.				
6	I usually avoid open discussions of the conflict with the person.				
7	I try to find a middle course to break an impasse.				
8	I argue the case with the other person to show the advantages of my position.				
9	I integrate my viewpoints with the other person to achieve a joint resolution.				
10	I usually try to satisfy the expectations of the other person.				
11	I try not to avoid into the other person whenever possible.				
12	I try to play down our differences to reach a compromise.				
13	I am generally firm in persuading my side of the issue.				
14	I encourage the other person to try to see things from a creative angle.				
15	I often go along with the suggestion of the other person.				
16	I usually bear my sentiments in silence.				
17	I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.				
18	I am emotionally expressive in the conflict situation.				
19	I dialogue with the other person with close attention to her or his needs.				
20	I do my best to accommodate the wishes of the other person in a conflict.				