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THE PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF SIDAAMU-AFOO

***Zelege Arficho Ayele**

Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 5

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ABSTRACT

This research was intended to survey the practices and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction with reference to Sidaamu-afloo. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was used. To this end, a total of 144 teachers were randomly selected from 36 first cycle primary schools in Sidama Zone; the schools were also selected in like manner. The teachers were made to fill in a close-ended questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview was held with 12 teachers who were randomly selected from those who had already filled in the questionnaire. Data obtained by the questionnaire were analyzed by using different types of appropriate descriptive statistics, and data collected by the interview were analyzed qualitatively by categorizing similar responses together in themes and the results were discussed by quoting some utmost concepts directly. The results of the questionnaire and the interview were triangulated. Thus, this research employed a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed that teachers strive to effectively implement Sidaamu-afloo as a medium of instruction. However, there are factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afloo as a medium of instruction. The factors are associated with education offices (regional, zonal or woreda), schools, teachers, and students. Based on the findings, recommendations have been made.

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Language policy, since the introduction of modern education to Ethiopia around the turn of 20th century, has been changed many times on account of external influences and political interests of the leaders (McNab, 1989). That is to say, French was the medium of instruction while English, Arabic, Italian, Ge'ez, and Amharic were taught as subjects at the Ecole Emperor Menelik II School, which was the first government-operated modern school opened in the national palace compound in October 1908; teachers were employed from the then French colony, Egypt (McNab, 1989; Bowen, 1976). The nomination of Teferi Mekonnen as a regent and heir to throne in 1916 was a decisive moment in the Ethiopian education which was accelerated during his coronation as Ethiopian Emperor in 1930 (Bowen, 1976). He also encouraged the provision of education in European languages since it was believed that the languages would help Ethiopians acquire western knowledge and thus become modernized.

When Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia (1936), it changed the educational system to multilingual education (McNab, 1989; Bowen, 1976). After the Italian invading force was driven out in 1941 with the help of the British army, according to Tesfaye and Taylor (1976), the British influence in Ethiopia began to grow and thus a shift was made from French domination to English domination; English became a medium of instruction, whereas Amharic was taught as a subject in all government schools. Gradually, however, the growing number of primary schools and students which caused provision of teachers very expensive in the absence of well trained Ethiopian teachers enforced switching medium of primary education into Amharic while English was limited to secondary schools (McNab, 1989). The Derge regime's (1974-1991) language policy in education is similar with the preceding regimes' language policies in many ways, but it gave charade status to the nationality languages (Bowen and Horn, 1976). The main aim of the language policy in education during the Derge regime was creating unified nationhood by using Amharic as a national language and medium of instruction in primary schools. In 1976, the state declared the realization of equality of all nationalities to develop and promote their languages, whereas practically only Amharic became the medium of instruction in primary schools in such a large multilingual

***Corresponding author: Zelege Arficho Ayele,**
Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 5

nation (Gordan, 2005 cited in Teshome, 2007; McNab, 1989). Derg made a language reform by way of formulating and implementing Adult Literacy Program, which included 15 languages in three phases (1979, 1981 and 1982). This promoted the possibility of conducting instruction in local languages even though many problems were faced - the selected languages were all written in Ethiopic script; its application was only in non-formal education; there was linguistic gap between teachers and students; the program was highly centralized and the like. As the result, the nationality languages policy remained hypocrisy (Seyoum, 1997; McNab, 1989). The Derg Ministry of Education conducted a study in 1983; the research revealed that Amharic for children of non-Amharic background was found as barrier to learning (Woube, 2002, cited in Dereje, 2010). Moreover, Seyoum (1997) states that some Ethiopian ethnic groups refused to accept the exclusive use of Amharic for education as well as for university competition and job opportunities.

With the downfall of Derg in 1991, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has ensured the rights of nations and nationalities to fully utilize and promote their languages (FDRE, 1995, Article 39.2). The constitution further dictates that all Ethiopian languages would have equal state recognition, whereas it states Amharic as the working language of the federal government. Based on this premise, Education and Training Policy (ETP) was formulated (Ministry of Education, 1994) in which the use and status of mother tongue, including Amharic, in education has been addressed in detail in Article 3.5: 1-8. Article 3.5.1 is read as "Cognizant of pedagogical advantage of the child in learning in mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the uses of their languages, primary education will be given in nationality languages" (Ministry of Education, 1994). Amharic is taught as a language of nationwide communication, whereas English serves as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education and is taught as a subject starting from grade one. These days, a good number of Ethiopian languages are serving as medium of instruction in primary schools levels; like other Ethiopian languages, Amharic has become the medium of instruction in Amhara Regional State and in alternative schools in some big towns and cities; it is taught as a subject. However, there are exceptions - it is still serving as a medium in some non-native Amharic speaking areas due to absence of trained teachers and textbooks in the respective ethnic languages or some other (Dereje, 2010).

Sidaamu-afoo is one of the languages being used as a medium of instruction at primary schools in Sidama Zone, South Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS). The Sidama ethnic group is one among the various ethnic groups in the region and its language is called Sidaamu-afoo. Sidaamu-afoo is a Highland East Cushitic language; the Cushitic language family is divided into four groups: Central Cushitic, East Cushitic, North Cushitic, and South Cushitic; under one of the branches of the East Cushitic language group are the Highland East Cushitic languages. The Cushitic language family belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language phylum (so called since Greenberg 1966) (also called the "Hamito-Semitic phylum" in Europe), together with Omotic, Semitic, Berber, Chadic, and Ancient Egyptian. The term 'mother tongue' is used with different alternative terms, which convey similar concept, such as vernacular language, indigenous language, first language, the ethnic language where the father and mother come from the same ethnic group and live in the

environment they come from, the language one uses day-to-day, the language one thinks in, the language used at home, the language through which an intimate environment is created, the language one knows best, or the language the speaker acquires from the earliest years when learning to talk (Wanger, 1995; Poth, 1980; Pattanayak, 2003). The term 'mother tongue' is not very clear even by scholars in the area possibly because its concept is subject to changes in the course of time (Pattanayak, 2003).

The literature widely discusses that using mother tongue as a medium of instruction has pedagogical, cognitive and psychological benefits (Benson, 2004; Dakin *et al.*, 1968; Fishman, 1977; Fasold, 1984; UNESCO, 1990; Poth, 1988; Dendir, 1985; Gfeller, 1998; Ball, 2010; Water and Dekker, 2011; Emenanjo, 1990). When children learn in their mother tongue, their ability to identify, specify, and talk about new, abstract concepts and detailed subject information grows (Gfeller, 1998). Becoming literate and fluent in one's first language is important for overall language and cognitive development, as well as academic achievement (Ball, 2010). Children learn to read faster if they speak the language of instruction, for they already have a repository of vocabulary, knowledge of the linguistic construction of the language, and the ability to pronounce the sounds of the language. This prior knowledge facilitates learning to read, as well as comprehending text; being able to read and understand the language in turn facilitates learning (Walter and Dekker, 2011). Moreover, children who understand the language of instruction are more likely to enter school at age-appropriate times and attend school regularly and are less likely to drop out (Smits *et al.*, 2008; Bender *et al.*, 2005).

Using mother tongue as a medium of instruction enables a child to become rooted in his/her own culture as well as promotes self realization and human relationship (Poth, 1988; Morsey and Lamage, 1987; Canhan, 1972). When there is a correspondence between a cultural environment and a language which explains that environment, it simplifies and gives ease in the effort a child makes to understand the classroom instruction; otherwise, it creates a gap between school and home in which case a child may feel inadequate psychologically and thus disturbed and resented with teachers and schools. That is, adjustment difficulty resulting from transfer to a new environment can be softened by using mother tongue as a medium of instruction (Unchendu, 1993:53; Fishman, 1968; Emenanjo, 1990:63).

Statement of the Problem

In order to help students attain the abovementioned benefits and thus be able to succeed academically and become competent citizens who can make professional and related contribution to the overall development of a nation, mother tongue as a medium of instruction should be effectively implemented. To be precise, teachers are required to use the medium of instruction regularly inside as well as outside classroom and in preparing instructional materials/tasks, encourage students to use the medium of instruction regularly inside as well as outside classroom, etc. However, teachers' attempts to effectively implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction may face some challenges which include education offices' follow up and support-related, schools-related, teachers and students-related, and student-textbooks and class size-related challenges. Hence, the practices and

challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian context needs to be researched in order to examine whether or not the medium of instruction is implemented effectively and so as to identify factors affecting the effective implementation. There are a good number of studies, especially abroad, conducted on the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and factors affecting the teaching and learning in mother tongue effectively (Tadesse, 2011; Chapman, 2009; Chapman and Miric, 2005; Silver & Skuja-Steele, 2005; Mulkeen, Chapman and DeJaeghere, 2004; Fullan, 2003; Dessalew, 2002; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998; Getachew, 1994). Accordingly, the studies made appropriate recommendations to concerned stakeholders including teachers, students and parents and to policy makers for the betterment of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The abovementioned scholars' studies examined the practices of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and identified factors affecting the effective implementation in the context of their own country or locality. It is obvious that teaching and learning in mother tongue take place in various contexts, such as educational and related background of students, teachers and parents, commitment of education officers and schools management, economic status, political situations, cultural and traditional practices, etc of a country or locality. This is, therefore, to say that a study is needed to examine whether or not mother tongue as a medium of instruction is implemented effectively and to identify factors affecting the effective implementation with reference to Sidaamu-afoo (also called Sidama language); the Sidama ethnic group is one among the various ethnic groups in the SNNPRS of Ethiopia and its language is called Sidaamu-afoo. Accordingly, recommendations would be made to concerned education offices, schools management, teachers, and policy makers for the betterment of the medium of instruction; as a result, students would attain the aforementioned benefits and thus be able to succeed academically and become competent citizens who can make professional and related contribution to the overall development of our country. As far as the researcher's thoughtful survey of the research topic is concerned, nobody has so far conducted a study in Ethiopian context intended to study the practices and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction with particular reference to Sidaamu-afoo even though mother tongue as a medium of instruction has been acknowledged, especially in first cycle primary schools levels (Grades 1-4). Thus, this research was meant to study the practice and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction with reference to Sidaamu-afoo.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this research was to survey the practices and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction with reference to Sidaamu-afoo.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were:

- To examine whether or not teachers use Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction effectively

- To describe factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of the Study Area

The study area of this research is Sidama Zone. This zone is one of the zones of the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State of Ethiopia. The location of Sidama land is between Lake Hawassa in the North, the town of Dilla in the South, Lake Abbaya in the Southwest, River Bilate in the West, and some zones of Oromia Region State in the East and Southeast. The astronomical location of the Sidama land is between 5° 45' and 6°45' north and 38° and 39° east encompassing a land area of 7672 square kilometers (Sidama Zone Planning and Economic Development Department, 1996). It is estimated that the total population of the Sidama Zone is about 3.4 million (Sidama Zone Planning and Economic Development Department, 2011). The Sidama ethnic group is one among the various ethnic groups in the region and its language is called Sidaamu-afoo.

Study Subjects

The subjects of this research were teachers at first cycle primary schools. That is, a total of 144 teachers (4 teachers from each of the 36 first cycle primary schools, Grades 1-4, i.e., 6 schools from each of the 6 Hawassa University's Technology Village woredas) were randomly selected by drawing lots. Hawassa University's Technology Village woredas in Sidama zone include Boricha, Dalle, Hawassa, Hawassa Zuria, Hulla and Wondogenet.

Study Design

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a descriptive research design was used. *The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In social science and business research we quite often use the term Ex post facto research for descriptive research studies. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most ex post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher seeks to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. Ex post facto studies also include attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables. The methods of research utilized in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlational methods.* (Kothari, 2004, p. 2-3)

A total of one hundred and forty-four teachers from first cycle primary schools (Grades 1-4) took part in this study. To this end, first, 6 first cycle primary schools were selected randomly by drawing lots from each of the 6 Hawassa University's Technology Village woredas to give a total of 36 schools. Then, 4 teachers were selected from each school in like manner to give a total of 144 study participants. The researcher employed a simple random sampling because it allows a teacher and a school to have equal chance of being selected, and thus it can be possible to generalize the findings of this

study to the rest of schools and their teachers in this zone as well as across the nation where the teaching and learning take place in mother tongue.

Study Methodology

Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaire

The researcher prepared a questionnaire for teachers by taking ideas from the related literature and based on the objectives of this research. The questionnaire was prepared in English and translated into Sidaamu-afoo. It had two parts: items meant to obtain data on the practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and items intended to collect data on the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. The questionnaire was prepared in the form of a five-point scale where each item had five possible responses: always, usually, sometimes, rarely or never and in the form of a two-point scale where each item had two possible responses: yes or no. Moreover, it had a cover page which discusses the purpose of the questionnaire and asks the respondents to read the items carefully and respond honestly. Cronbach's alpha was computed to check the reliability of the items. What is more, in order to achieve validity, the researchers' most senior colleagues were requested to comment on the questionnaire.

Interview

The researcher prepared a semi-structured interview for the participants. The interview items were prepared in English language and translated into Sidaamu-afoo. The interview had two parts discussed earlier in the case of the questionnaire and was intended to obtain data which could not be revealed through the questionnaire items since the items were closed-ended which cannot reveal further details on participants' responses. A semi-structured form was chosen because, firstly, it has the characteristics of both structured and unstructured interview, each with its strengths. Second, data obtained through this form of interview are not difficult to categorize and interpret. Care was taken concerning language issues and sequencing of questions while constructing the interview items. Moreover, in order to achieve validity, the researchers' most senior colleagues were requested to comment on the interview items.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained ethical clearance and letter of cooperation from his university and presented these to the school principals to get permission and cooperation. Then, a teacher was selected at each school on the principal's recommendations to coordinate the data collection process; the researcher held discussions with the teacher on how to coordinate the data collection process. Then, the teacher was requested to distribute the questionnaire to the selected teachers at his/her respective school. Careful attempts were made to get the environment conducive to fill in the questionnaire and to make the non-returnable rate of the respondents' questionnaire zero. Following that, the researcher requested his assistant who is a Sidaamu-afoo speaker to hold interview with 12 teachers (1 teacher from three adjacent schools) randomly selected (by drawing lots) from those who

had already filled in the questionnaire. Careful attempts were made to get conducive environment for the interview. Moreover, the researcher reminded of the interviewer to take care of his pronunciation and pace while conducting the interview. Furthermore, the interview sessions were interactive and tape-recorded. The selected teacher at each school coordinated the interview process too. The researcher purposefully chose the aforementioned order of instruments of data collection. This is because he felt that starting with what is believed to be difficult in terms of some obvious reasons, such as number of participants, would be helpful, and thus it can have positive effect on the validity and reliability of the results of the study. The data were collected in the second semester of 2014/15.

Data Management and Analysis

Data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. That is, data obtained by the questionnaire were manually fed to the SPSS version 20 for analysis. Different types of appropriate descriptive statistics were employed to describe the practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and factors affecting the effective implementation of this language as a medium of instruction. Data collected by the interview were analyzed qualitatively. To be specific, similar responses of each item of each part were categorized together in themes and the results were discussed by quoting some utmost concepts directly. Lastly, implications were drawn according to the views of the majority of respondents. The results of the questionnaire and the interview were triangulated. "Many researchers take a pragmatic approach to research and use quantitative methods when they are looking for breadth, want to test a hypothesis or want to study something quantitative. If they are looking for depth and meaning, they will prefer to use qualitative methods" (Muijs, 2004, p. 11). Pragmatism allows a researcher to use mixed-methods approaches in collecting and analyzing data to minimize the limitation of any single approach. This is, therefore, to say that the research approach of this study was guided by the pragmatic approach.

DISCUSSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RESULTS

Discussions and Interpretations of the Results of Questionnaire

The Practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

This sub-section presents the discussions and interpretations of the results obtained by teachers' questionnaire meant to find out whether or not Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction is being implemented effectively. The items of the questionnaire are categorized into five themes, and hence the results on each of the themes are discussed and interpreted as follows.

Teachers' Use of Sidaamu-afoo in the Classroom

The results of the items intended to assess whether or not teachers are using only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom are discussed and interpreted as follows. The following table shows the results. Table 1 below shows that all the respondent teachers (144, 100%) replied that they sometimes translate concepts/expressions from Sidaamu-afoo into Amharic/English while teaching their students.

Table 1. Teachers' Responses on their Use of Sidaamu-afoo in the Classroom

| Items | Responses | | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| How often do you translate concepts/expressions from Sidaamu-afoo into Amharic/English while teaching your students? | - | - | 144 (100%) | - | - |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom to give explanations to your students on how to do their assignments or home/class works? | - | - | - | - | 144(100%) |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom to give feedback on your students' works? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |

Table 2. Teachers' Responses on their Use of Sidaamu-afoo in Preparing Instructional Materials/Tasks

| Items | Responses | | | | |
|--|-----------|--------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing or adapting/adopting teaching aids? | - | - | 140 (97.22%) | 4 (2.78%) | - |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing notes for your students? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing teaching and learning tasks for your students? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing assignments or home works for your students? | - | - | - | 86 (59.72%) | 58 (40.28%) |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing and conducting quizzes/tests to your students? | - | - | - | 80 (55.56%) | 64 (44.44%) |

Table 3. Teachers' Responses on their Use of Sidaamu-afoo outside Classroom

| Items | Responses | | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| How often do you use only Sidaamu-afoo to post notices to your students? | - | - | 34 (23.61%) | 110 (76.39%) | - |
| How often do you talk to your students only in Sidaamu-afoo when they come to your office? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you talk to your students only in Sidaamu-afoo outside classroom (in the school compound)? | - | - | - | - | 144 (100%) |

Table 4. Teachers' Responses concerning their Encouragement on Students' Use of Sidaamu-afoo

| Items | Responses | | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| How often do you encourage your students to use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you help your students develop a positive attitude towards learning in Sidaamu-afoo? | - | - | - | 92 (63.89%) | 52 (36.11%) |
| How often do you help your students like instructional materials written in Sidaamu-afoo? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you help your students be aware of the benefits of leaning in Sidaamu-afoo? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you encourage your students to use only Sidaamu-afoo while doing academic tasks outside classroom (in the school compound or at home)? | - | - | - | 144 (100%) | - |
| How often do you encourage students (e.g., by appreciating them) who demonstrate excellent skills in Sidaamu-afoo? | - | - | 80 (55.56%) | 64 (44.44%) | - |

Table 5. Teachers' Responses about their Implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

| Items | Responses | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
| How often do you feel it is burden for you to use only Sidaamu-afoo in your classroom? | 139 (96.52%) | 5 (3.48%) | - | - | - |
| How often do you face difficulty to use only Sidaamu-afoo in your classroom? | - | 99 (68.75%) | 45 (31.25%) | - | - |
| How often do you feel you are not effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction? | - | - | 144 (100%) | - | - |

Table 6. Teachers' Responses on Education Offices' Follow up and Support-related Factors

| Items | Responses | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Yes | No |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) provide your school materials written in Sidaamu-afoo so that you can refer to? | 132 (91.67%) | 12 (8.33%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) provide your school adequate student textbooks in Sidaamu-afoo? | 121 (84.03%) | 23 (15.97%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) provide your school syllabus in Sidaamu-afoo for each teacher? | 144 (100%) | - |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) provide your school teacher's guide in Sidaamu-afoo for each teacher? | 136 (94.44%) | 8 (5.56%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) organize seminars/workshops on issues related to Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction so that you can be able to attend and benefit to update your career? | 10 (6.94%) | 134 (93.06%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) organize in-service training on effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction so that you can be able to attend and benefit to update your career? | - | 144 (100%) |
| Had you received training on how to effectively implement Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction before you started to teach in this language? | 3 (2.08%) | 141 (97.92%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) provide your school facilities such as chair, table, blackboard, chalk, etc? | - | 144 (100%) |
| Do education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, woreda education offices) hold discussions with your school administrators, teachers and students on challenges faced while teaching and learning in Sidaamu-afoo so that appropriate actions would be taken accordingly? | - | 144 (100%) |

Table 7. Teachers' Responses on Schools-related Factors

| Items | Responses | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| | Yes | No |
| Do your school administrators support Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction by providing instructional materials and facilities, by solving problems faced in teaching and learning in this language, etc? | 47 (32.64%) | 97 (63.36%) |
| Does your school have a library so that you can be able to access relevant materials written in Sidaamu-afoo? | 103 (71.53%) | 41 (28.47%) |
| Does your school have offices so that you can be able to give consultation service to your students? | 144 (100%) | - |
| Does your school provide you stationery in order to prepare teaching aids/tasks for your students? | 144 (100%) | - |
| Does your school have pedagogical center? | 63 (43.75%) | 81 (56.25%) |
| Do your school administrators hold discussions with teachers and students on challenges faced while teaching and learning in Sidaamu-afoo so that appropriate actions would be taken accordingly? | - | 144 (100%) |

Table 8. Teachers' Responses on Teachers and Students-related Factors

| Items | Responses | |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| | Yes | No |
| Do you hold discussions with each other on challenges faced while teaching and learning in Sidaamu-afoo so that appropriate actions would be taken accordingly? | - | 144 (100%) |
| Do you think your students are motivated to learn in Sidaamu-afoo? | 126 (87.5%) | 18 (12.5%) |

Table 9. Teachers' Responses on Student-textbooks and Class Size-related Factors

| Items | Responses | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| | Yes | No |
| Do you think student-textbooks have included difficult Sidaamu-afoo grammar? | - | 144 (100%) |
| Do you think student-textbooks have included strange/difficult Sidaamu-afoo words/expressions? | 131 (90.97%) | 13 (9.03%) |
| Are you currently teaching large class (over 80 students in a class)? | 144 (100%) | - |

The same number of the respondents (144, 100%) also reported that they always use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom to give explanations to their students on how to do their assignments or home/class works. To the last item which was intended to examine how often the respondent teachers use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom to give feedback on their students' works, all of them (144, 100%) replied that they usually use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom to give feedback on their students' works. Thus, this shows that the

teachers are using only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom even though they sometimes translate some concepts/expressions from Sidaamu-afoo into Amharic/English.

Teachers' Use of Sidaamu-afoo in Preparing Instructional Materials/Tasks

The results of the items intended to examine how often teachers use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing instructional

materials/tasks are discussed and interpreted as follows. The results are presented in the following table. As depicted in Table 2 above, 140 (97.22%) of the respondent teachers reported that they sometimes use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing or adapting/adopting teaching aids, whereas the remaining 4 (2.78%) respondents replied that they usually do so. The table also shows that all the teachers (144, 100%) responded that they usually use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing notes as well as teaching and learning tasks for their students. The table also depicts that 86 (59.72%) of the teachers usually use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing assignments or home works to their students, whereas the remaining 58 (40.28%) teachers always do that. The last item was intended to find out whether or not the respondent teachers use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing and conducting quizzes/tests to their students. To this item, 80 (55.56%) of the respondents replied 'usually' while the remaining 64 (44.44%) respondents responded 'always'. The findings imply that the teachers usually use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing instructional materials/tasks; however, they sometimes use only this language in preparing or adapting/adopting teaching aids.

Teachers' Use of Sidaamu-afoo outside Classroom

The results obtained on how often teachers use only Sidaamu-afoo outside classroom are presented in the following table, and they are discussed and interpreted above.

Table 3 above presents the results obtained from the participant teachers on how often they use only Sidaamu-afoo in communicating with their students out of classroom. Accordingly, the table depicts that 34 (23.61%) of the respondents sometimes use only Sidaamu-afoo to post notices to their students, whereas the remaining large majority of the teachers (110, 76.39%) do this usually. Moreover, all the respondents (144, 100%) replied that they usually talk to their students only in Sidaamu-afoo when they come to their office. To the last item which asked the respondents how often they talk to their students outside classroom (in the school compound) only in Sidaamu-afoo, all of them (144, 100%) replied that they always talk to their students outside classroom only in this language. Hence, the findings show that the teachers are communicating with their students outside classroom only in Sidaamu-afoo.

Teachers' Encouragement on Students' Use of Sidaamu-afoo

Teachers' responses on how often they encourage students to use only Sidaamu-afoo are presented in the following table. The results are discussed and interpreted above.

Table 4 above depicts that all the respondents (144, 100%) reported that they usually encourage their students to use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom. To the second item which asked the respondents how often they help their students develop a positive attitude towards learning in Sidaamu-afoo, 92 (63.89%) of them responded 'usually' while the remaining 52 (36.11%) teachers replied 'always'. The table also shows that the third and the fourth items were intended to find out how often the teachers help their students like instructional materials written in Sidaamu-afoo and how often they help them be aware of the benefits of leaning in Sidaamu-afoo respectively. To these items, all the respondents (144, 100%)

reported 'usually'. The fifth item was intended to examine how often the teachers encourage their students to use only Sidaamu-afoo while doing academic tasks outside classroom (in the school compound or at home). It is depicted in the table that all the respondents (144, 100%) usually encourage their students to use only Sidaamu-afoo while doing academic tasks outside classroom (in the school compound or at home). As shown in the table, to the last item which asked the teachers how often they encourage students (e.g., by appreciating them) who demonstrate excellent skills in Sidaamu-afoo, majority of the teachers (80, 55.56%) replied 'sometimes' whereas the remaining 64 (44.44%) teachers reported 'usually'. The findings imply that the teachers are encouraging students to use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom and outside classroom although they sometimes inspire students (e.g., by appreciating them) who reveal excellent skills in Sidaamu-afoo.

Teachers' Feelings about their Implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

The results of the items intended to find out whether or not teachers feel that they are effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction are presented in the following table, and they are discussed and interpreted above.

As depicted in the above table, the vast majority of the teachers (139, 96.52%) replied that they never feel it is burden for them to use only Sidaamu-afoo in their classroom, whereas the remaining 5 (3.48%) teachers responded that they rarely feel that. The table also shows that the majority of the respondent teachers (99, 68.75%) responded 'rarely' to the second item which asked them how often they face difficulty to use only Sidaamu-afoo in their classroom, whereas the remaining 45 (31.25%) respondents replied 'sometimes' to the item. The last item asked the respondents how often they feel that they are not effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. To this item, all the respondents (144, 100%) replied 'sometimes'. The results of the items which indirectly asked the teachers whether or not they feel that they are effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction show that the teachers feel that they are effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. However, to the item which directly asked the teachers whether or not they feel that they are effectively implementing Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction, they replied 'sometimes'.

Factors Affecting the Effective Implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

This sub-section deals with the discussions and interpretations of the results obtained on the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. The results are categorized into four themes as presented in the following tables.

Education Offices' Follow up and Support-related Factors

To the items intended to reveal education offices' follow up and support-related factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction, the results which are presented in the following table are found. The results are discussed and interpreted above.

As Table 6 above shows, a large majority of the respondents (132, 91.67%) said that education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of

Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices) provide their schools materials written in Sidaanmu-afoo so that they can refer to, whereas the remaining 12 (8.33%) teachers reported the education offices do not provide their schools materials written in Sidaanmu-afoo. The great majority of respondents (121, 84.03%) also disclosed that the education offices provide their schools adequate student textbooks in Sidaanmu-afoo; however, the remaining very few teachers (23, 15.97%) reported the opposite. When it comes to the third item which was intended to find out whether or not the teachers would respond that the education offices provide syllabus in Sidaanmu-afoo for each teacher, all the teachers (144, 100%) replied 'yes'. The table also depicts that the vast majority of teachers (136, 94.44%) disclosed that the education offices provide teacher's guide in Sidaanmu-afoo for each teacher, whereas very few respondents (8, 5.56%) reported the opposite. To the item which was meant to see if the education offices organize seminars/workshops on issues related to Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction so that they can be able to attend and benefit to update their career, only 10 (6.94%) of the respondents reported that the education offices organize these for teachers whereas the vast majority of teachers (134, 93.06%) disclosed that they are not made to attend any seminar/workshop on issues related to Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction. The sixth item asked the teachers whether or not the education offices organize in-service training on effectively implementing Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction so that they can be able to attend and benefit to update their career. To this item, all of them (144, 100%) responded that they are not made to receive any in-service training on effectively implementing Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction in order to help them update their career. To the seventh item which asked the teachers if they had received training on how to effectively implement Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction before they started to teach in this language, nearly all the respondents (141, 97.92%) replied 'yes' whereas the remaining 3 (2.08%) teachers said 'no'. The last two items asked the teachers whether or not the education offices provide their schools facilities (chair, table, blackboard, chalk, etc.) and whether or not they hold discussions with their schools administrators, teachers and students on challenges they face in teaching and learning in Sidaanmu-afoo respectively; all of them (144, 100%) replied 'yes' to these items. Based on the results discussed above, it can be concluded that the education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices) strive to follow up and support the effective implementation of Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction. However, they do not organize seminars/ workshops and in-service training on effectively implementing this language as a medium of instruction, hold discussions with schools administrators, teachers and students on challenges they face in teaching and learning in Sidaanmu-afoo, and provide some facilities. The findings are consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Tadesse (2011) and Dessalew (2002); Tadesse's study was intended to assess mother tongue education policy in relation to its implementation with reference to Agnuak language, whereas Dessalew's study was meant to identify factors that affect using Awgni as a medium of instruction in the lower primary schools.

Schools-related Factors

The results obtained on schools-related factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of

instruction are presented in the following table and discussed and interpreted as follows.

Table 7 depicts that 47 (32.64%) of the teachers responded that their schools administrators support Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction by providing instructional materials and facilities, by solving problems faced in teaching and learning in this language, etc; however, the remaining large number of respondents (97, 63.36%) disclosed the opposite. The second item asked the teachers whether or not their schools have library so that they would be able to access relevant materials written in Sidaanmu-afoo. The vast majority of respondents (103, 71.53%) replied 'yes' to this item, whereas the remaining 41 (28.47%) respondents said 'no'. As can be read from Table 7 above, the third and the fourth items were intended to know if the teachers would say that their schools have offices so that they can be able to give consultation services to their students and would say that their schools provide them stationery in order to prepare teaching aids and tasks for their students respectively. All the respondents (144, 100%) replied 'yes' to these items. To the item which asked the teachers if their schools have pedagogical center, 63 (43.75%) of them responded 'yes' while the remaining 81 (56.25%) teachers replied 'no'. The last item was intended to find out if the teachers would respond their schools administrators hold discussions with them and with students on challenges faced while teaching and learning in Sidaanmu-afoo so that appropriate actions would be taken accordingly; to this item, all the teachers (144, 100%) said 'no'. Based on the results discussed above, it can be concluded that the schools strive to follow up and support the effective implementation of Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction. However, they give less attention to establish pedagogical centre for students and to hold discussions with teachers and students on challenges faced while teaching and learning in Sidaanmu-afoo in order to take appropriate actions. The findings of this study correspond with the findings of Tadesse's study (2011) which found that schools do not conduct capacity building activities, such as in-service training, to teachers using Agnuak language as a medium of instruction.

Teachers and Students-related Factors

The results obtained on teachers and students-related factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaanmu-afoo as a medium of instruction are presented in the following table and discussed and interpreted as follows.

As Table 8 above depicts, all the teachers (144, 100%) reported that they do not hold discussions with each other on challenges they face while teaching and learning in Sidaanmu-afoo in order to take appropriate actions accordingly. Nearly all the respondents (126, 87.5%) also reported that they believe that their students are motivated to learn in Sidaanmu-afoo, whereas the remaining 18 (12.5%) teachers replied the opposite. The findings show that the teachers do not discuss with each other and share ideas on challenges they face while teaching in Sidaanmu-afoo. Moreover, it is revealed that students have a positive attitude towards learning in Sidaanmu-afoo.

Student-textbooks and Class Size-related Factors

The following table presents the results obtained on student-textbooks and class-size related factors affecting the effective

implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. The results are discussed and interpreted above

As the above table depicts, all the teachers (144, 100%) responded that student-textbooks have not included difficult Sidaamu-afoo grammar. The second item asked the teachers whether or not student-textbooks have included strange/difficult Sidaamu-afoo words/expressions, and the vast majority of teachers (131, 90.97%) responded 'yes' while very few teachers (13, 9.03%) replied 'no' to this item. To the last item which asked the teachers if they are currently teaching large class (over 80 students in a class), all of them (144, 100%) replied 'yes'. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that large class is one of the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

Discussions and Interpretations of the Results of Interview

This part deals with the discussions and interpretations of the results of interview held with the selected teachers who had already filled in the questionnaire. The results of the interview are categorized into two themes - practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction - and discussed and interpreted accordingly.

The Practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

The interview results on the practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction are discussed, and interpretations are made as follows. To begin with, to the item which asked the interviewees how often they communicate with their students only in Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom and outside classroom in the school compound, all of them (12) responded that they always do that. The interviewees were also asked how often they use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing assignments, notes, quizzes/examinations, and teaching aids and tasks. All of them (12) reported that they always use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing these. The last question asked the interviewees how often they encourage students to like learning in Sidaamu-afoo, make them become aware of the benefits of learning in Sidaamu-afoo, and inspire them to practice and use only Sidaamu-afoo inside and outside classroom. To this item, half of the respondents (6) replied 'always'; 4 of the respondents replied 'sometimes'; the remaining 2 interviewees reported that they used to do that, but currently they have stopped to do so. Thus, the results show that the teachers are striving to effectively implement Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction, and the results match with the overall results of the questionnaire discussed and interpreted earlier concerning the practices of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

Factors Affecting the Effective Implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a Medium of Instruction

The interview results on the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction are discussed and interpreted as follows. Firstly, the teachers were asked to evaluate the availability of syllabus, teacher's guide, student textbooks and stationery at their respective schools in order to help them effectively implement Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. All the interviewees reported that there is no shortage of student-textbooks; however, one of

the interviewees reflected that the textbooks need to be reprinted because they are old and thus unappealing to students. When it comes to teacher's guide, the interviewees relied that they face shortage of teacher's guide. The interviewees also disclosed that their schools hardly provide them stationery to prepare teaching aids and tasks, notes, quizzes/examinations, and assignments; they receive stationery only twice a year especially for lessons preparation. To the item which asked the interviewees whether or not education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices) or their schools organize training and workshops/seminars pertaining to the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and how to effectively implement it, 10 of them responded 'no' whereas the remaining 2 teachers did not like to respond. The respondents added that their schools do not plan to establish clubs and festivals on Sidaamu-afoo, but 2 of them replied that their schools have Sidaamu-afoo Day so that students are invited to present poems in this language and the schools inspire presenters by offering them some rewards. Lastly, the interviewees were asked to discuss if there are factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. All of them disclosed that education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices) do not strive to organize training and workshops/seminars to help them update their career. Moreover, 8 of the respondents discussed that they observe that their students lack awareness on the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and thus they are not motivated to always use this language in their learning. The responses of one of the respondents are quoted as "People are in the former influence because the right language for them in schools is Amharic and it is the sign of knowledge or development in education. They prefer to speak and write in Amharic. You know, Sidaamu-afoo is only a sign for being a nation but not to be used". Thus, the respondents called on the education offices and their schools to organize awareness creation training to students on the benefits of learning in Sidaamu-afoo in order to make them enjoy learning in Sidaamu-afoo and continue using the language inside and outside classroom with a keen interest. What is more, the respondents reported that there is a shortage of reference materials in Sidaamu-afoo. Furthermore, one of the interviewees disclosed that there are very few teachers who are not good at Sidaamu-afoo.

The findings reveal the following factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. That is, teachers are hardly provided stationery to prepare teaching aids and tasks, notes, quizzes/examinations, and assignments in Sidaamu-afoo. Schools do not promote students' learning in Sidaamu-afoo by establishing clubs and festivals on this language. Moreover, the education offices and schools do not organize training and workshops/seminars on the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and how to effectively implement it, and thus teachers could not update their career. Furthermore, students' lack of awareness on the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction and a shortage of reference materials in this language are also the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. The interview results correspond with the overall results of the questionnaire discussed and interpreted earlier concerning the factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made.

- Teachers strive to effectively implement Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. That is, teachers use only Sidaamu-afoo in the classroom. They also usually use only Sidaamu-afoo in preparing instructional materials/tasks. Moreover, teachers communicate with their students outside classroom only in Sidaamu-afoo. Furthermore, they encourage students to use only Sidaamu-afoo inside and outside classroom; however, they do not give attention to inspire students (e.g., by appreciating them) who demonstrate excellent skills in Sidaamu-afoo.
- There are factors affecting the effective implementation of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. That is, education offices (SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices) do not organize seminars/workshops and in-service training to make teachers update their career. They also do not hold discussions with schools administrators, teachers and students on challenges they face in teaching and learning in Sidaamu-afoo. What is more, schools do not give attention to establish pedagogical centre and to hold discussions with teachers and students for the betterment of teaching and learning in this language. Moreover, they do not inspire students by establishing clubs and festivals on this language. Schools also face a shortage of reference materials in Sidaamu-afoo and facilities such as chairs, tables, and classrooms. Large class is also one of the factors affecting the teaching and learning. Moreover, teachers are hardly provided stationery to prepare teaching aids and tasks in Sidaamu-afoo. Furthermore, teachers do not discuss with each other for the betterment of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction. Lastly, students lack awareness concerning the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations have been made for the betterment of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.

- SNNPRS Bureau of Education, Sidama Zone Education Department, or woreda education offices should organize seminars/workshops and in-service training to make teachers update their career, hold discussions with schools administrators, teachers and students on challenges concerning Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction, publish reference materials in Sidaamu-afoo, and strive for the betterment of students' knowledge on the benefits of Sidaamu-afoo as a medium of instruction.
- Schools should give attention to establish pedagogical centre, hold discussions with teachers and students, inspire students by establishing clubs and festivals on Sidaamu-afoo, and provide teachers stationery to prepare teaching aids, tasks and notes in Sidaamu-afoo.

- Teachers should give attention to inspire students (e.g., by appreciating them) who demonstrate excellent skills in Sidaamu-afoo and to discuss with each other for the betterment of their profession.

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