

Practices, Challenges and Opportunities of Using Afan Oromo as a Medium of Instruction in Upper Primary Schools of Berbere Woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia, South East Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to investigate practices, challenges and opportunities of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berbere Woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia, and South East Ethiopia. To attain the purpose of the study, mixed research design, that put on both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed and more specifically, concurrent triangulation mixed research design was employed. The populations of the study were teachers, students, CRC supervisors, and school principals were found upper primary schools of Berbere Woreda. Of these 45 teachers and 395 sample students were selected by using simple random sampling techniques respectively. Whereas, nine CRC supervisors and nine principals were selected by purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaires for teachers and students and interviews for CRC supervisors, and principals were the instruments employed for data collection. Analysis of the data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics like frequency distribution (fd), percentage (%) mean (m) and t-test. The qualitative data was analyzed by narration and personal interpretation of the researcher. The finding of the study showed that; although there are the practices of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction, these practices are challenged by the absence of adequate reference materials and existence of negative perception of parents, students and local communities. The availability of Ethiopian Education and training policy and language policy has enormous opportunity for the use of mother tongues such as Afan Oromo as medium of instruction. So, to use Afan Oromo as medium of instruction in the upper primary school, it's better to fulfill necessary supplies and exercise every opportunity that supports this practice. Finally, based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that strong collaboration among stakeholders needs to be undertaken to ensure the real practice of using Afan Oromo as medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berbere Woreda, Bale Zone Oromia, South East Ethiopia.

Keywords: Afan Oromo, Practices, Challenges, Opportunities, Afan Oromo, Mother Tongue

DOI: 10.7176/JLLL/70-02

Publication date: July 31st 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

One way of ensuring quality education is using an appropriate medium of instruction that is familiar to both teachers and students. Studies suggest that children who learn in their first or immediate language are more competent than those children who learn in an unfamiliar language. This means that children's good skills in mother tongue facilitates learning another language. If children begin learning in a language they know and understand they can connect their learning to their experiences and knowledge that they have gained from their parents, cultures, oral narratives and local community as explicated. A language of instruction used in the classroom plays a great role in delivering concepts, knowledge or contents of the subject to be learnt. Cummins (2001:160) states that:

The root of the argument is that if a medium of instruction is a language of a child, he /she easily understand the contents of learning instructions. Evidences indicated that the child could associate what he/she has learned in the classroom with the previous knowledge and experiences that he/she accumulated from their local environment.

This clearly indicates that the use of a language that is familiar to both teachers and students plays a profound role in facilitating their learning and teaching. The use of a familiar language also enhances the use of active learning and teaching approaches in the classrooms. The endorsement of the 1994 constitution of Ethiopia supported and adopted the multilingual policy. In addition, the constitution, which was stipulated in Article 5, says: *All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition* (the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia/FDRGE/, 1994). The constitution recognizes the use of nations' and nationalities' languages in the main domains. All the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia are given self-determination and the right of self-ruling under the constitution enshrined under article 39 of the Ethiopian Constitution. The Constitution produced in the article 39 and subtitle 2, which reads "Every Nation, Nationality

and People of Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to keep its history” (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995: 5). The constitution guarantees everyone in the country to use and develop his or her language, cultures, wisdom and history. Some of the previously stigmatized local languages of the ethnic groups gained opportunities to be used as a language of learning and teaching in primary schools. This means that the constitution lays foundation for the use of various local languages in education and the public.

The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia 1994 recognized the use of children’s home languages in primary school education. The document depicted, “Cognizant of the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning in mother tongue and the rights of the nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education were given in nationality languages” (FDRGE, 1994:23). This policy created a tremendous appreciation among the previously marginalized linguistic groups. However, according to Jeyilan (2014) some elites that support the unitary government system and the ideology of Emperor Regime and groups that had influential power in the country continued to oppose and criticize the use of many languages in primary school education in Ethiopia.

In line with this, Benson and Kosonen (2010:147) the new multilingual policy were seen as a national disintegration and divisive ideology, which could lead to ethnic conflict and fragmentation of the country. Thus, linguistic competition created between the groups those who want to celebrate a linguistic revitalization on the one hand and those groups who want to reject the celebration of linguistic revival on the other hand in and around the schools. However, the researcher denies the above arguments that are against the right of the learners and their ethnic group. Because, those well-established myths and attitudes hamper the use of mother tongue such as Afan Oromo as medium of instruction.

1.2. Statements of the problem

Mother tongue instruction facilitates the integration of the schools, remote rural schools, the surroundings often the illiterate communities which contribute to teaching the indigenous knowledge, production and cultural skills. Moreover, it improves the child’s communication and interactions in the classroom which leads to a more successful learning opportunity and when pupils acquire the basic skills (reading, writing and literacy) it facilitated the acquisition of the second language and other school subjects (UNESCO, 2005).

In supporting this viable idea, Seyoum (2009), suggested that politically it is noted that governments reproduce their own classes through the medium of instruction. Economically, the need to develop multilingualism requires resources in terms of teacher training, developing grammars and orthographies, producing and translating textbooks and supplementary materials. The cost issue is one of the arguments used against development of mother tongue education. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education implemented the use of mother tongue in education for pedagogical advantages and for the rights of nationalities to self-expression that enshrined in the Constitution of Ethiopia (Cohen, 2007:63-64). According to the author, the Ministry of Education adopted mother-tongue education for both pedagogical and ideological justification for the promotion of local language use in education in primary schools.

In line with these idea, Jeyilan (2014) conducted research on challenges of mother-tongue education in primary schools; the case of Afan Oromo in the Eastern Hararge Zone. The study conducted by Jeylan (2014) in East Hararge shows that the dominance of English as a medium of instruction and an international language in Ethiopian education systems have exerted its impacts on the development of indigenous local languages in general and Afan Oromo in particular, Besides, people’s language preferences as a medium of instruction, most parents wanted the use of their language in education, but the use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education negatively affected their perceptions, educational materials like additional reading material, teachers’ guides and syllabi were acute shortages in schools. These constraints also opened the door to discourage the use of mother tongue in education.

The previous study investigated only on challenges of using Afan Oromo. However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, no research has been conducted with regards to the practices, challenges and opportunities of the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Bale Zone. Thus, this study tends to investigate this issue in the case of upper primary schools of Berbere woreda, Bale zone, Oromia.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objective of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the practices, challenges and opportunities of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berebere woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia, South East Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Indicate practices of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berebere woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia.
2. To pinpoint the opportunities of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary school

- of Berebere woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia.
3. Identify the challenges that hinder learning and teaching through Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berbere woreda, Bale Zone.

1.4. Research paradigm, methods and design used for the used

Among different paradigms used in the research, pragmatism was selected as an appropriate paradigm to investigate the problem under the study. This is because pragmatism as a paradigm helps the researcher to use both positivism and the constructivism in a single study (Dash, N.K, 2005). Pragmatism employed triangulation that strengthen the findings obtained from a qualitative inquiry by cross-checking information. In line this, mixed research method (both qualitative and quantitative research methods) were employed to undertake the study. More specifically, concurrent mixed research design used for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is take place at the same time to best understanding of the research problem. This is approach can be used to provide a holistic picture and in-depth understanding of the problem; since the design entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time, in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of associations.

1.5. Population, sample and sampling techniques of the study

45 upper primary schools found in Bale zone of Berbere woreda can be chosen as population of the study. These Primary schools organized under 9 Cluster Resource Center (CRC). So, there are nine CRC supervisors. In Berbere woreda there are 686 teachers in which 417 male and 269 female, whereas 45 principals whom 2 of them are female directors. Additionally, total of 29,106 students; in which 16,008 male and 13,098 female students are the population of this study (Bale Zone education office report, 2017). To generalize the findings to the population of the study, sample must be representative of the population in terms of number and representativeness. CRC of primary schools are the strata under category to decide the number sample taken from each school. So, all the nine (9) CRC supervisors were taken as respondent using purposive sampling. Besides, from all nine CRC, total of 395 students were selected using the kind of probability sampling known as stratified sampling. In addition, nine (9) principals were selected using purposive sampling. There are also 45 Afan Oromo (mother tongue) teachers were selected one teacher; that act as department head from each school that were respondent of the study using simple random sampling technique. According to Slovin (1960) deciding the margin of error, (as much as possible the margin of error should not be higher than 5%. Probably 3% is an ideal one).

To determine sample size of students:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

n = sample size

N = the size of the population

e = the margin of error (assuming e=0.05)

$$n = \frac{29,106}{1+ 29,106 (.05)^2}$$

$$n = 394.57 \text{ or } 395$$

Generally by using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, a total of 467 people were used as respondents; in which 9 CRC supervisors, 395 students, 9 principals, 9 PTA heads and 45 Afan Oromo teachers were used.

1.6. Instruments of data collection

The instruments of data collection utilized in this research were questionnaire, interview and document analysis.

1.7. Method of data analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed quantitative by the use of both descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, percentage) and t- test of inferential statistics). Qualitative data were analyzed by means of narration, direct quotation and paraphrasing of the views of the respondents.

1.8. Data Presentation, Analysis And Interpretation

1. Practices of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction

This section of the analysis deals with the real practice taken with respect to the use of Afan Oromo as medium of instruction; such as practices of teachers in using Afan Oromo, supportive given to students by concerned bodies, and practices performed with regard to using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction.

I. Classroom practices that promote the use of Afan Oromo as medium of instruction

Table 2–Classroom Performance of teachers in using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

S.No	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences.	3	6.7	8	17.8	7	15.6	15	33.3	12	26.7
2	Tutorial section that is given for students that have difficulty of Qubee based writing style	10	22.2	9	20.0	3	6.7	13	28.9	10	22.2
3	Students' language skills and classroom interaction was assessed by Afan Oromo teachers	6	13.3	7	15.6	5	11.1	15	33.3	12	26.7
4	MT Teachers uses efficient and innovative methods of teaching	12	26.7	11	24.4	3	6.7	8	17.8	11	24.4

Concerning practices of teachers in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences item 1 in Table 2, of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 3 (6.7%) and disagree 8(17.8%). While 27 (60%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 15 (33.3%) and 12 (26.7%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the statement that of teachers in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences. Only 7(15.6%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus it can be concluded that teacher using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences.

In item 2 Table 2, 19 (42.2%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 10(22.2%) and disagree 9(20.0%). While more than half or 23 (51.1%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 13 (28.9%) and 10 (22.2%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the statement that tutorial section that is given for students that have difficulty of 'Qubee' based writing style. Only 3(6.7%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus it can be concluded that tutorial section given for students' on the difficulty of Qubee based writing style.

In this regard the qualitative data gathered from CRC supervisors clearly shows that there was promotion of students writing and acting on local culture; especially Afan Oromo clubs that foster cultural folktales and tutorial of Qubee based writing system.

In item 3 Table 2, 13(28.9%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 6(13.3%) and disagree 7(15.6%). While 27 (60.0%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 15 (33.3%) and 12 (26.7%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the statement that students' language skills and classroom interaction was assessed by Afan Oromo teachers. Only 5(11.1%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. This shows that there was the practice of assessing students towards the basic language skills and classroom interaction.

In item 4 Table 2, 23(51.1%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 12(26.7%) and disagree 11(24.4%). While 19 (42.2%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 8 (17.8%) and 11(24.4%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with that there is no frequent Mother tongue (MT) Teachers who uses efficient and innovative methods of teaching. Thus it can be concluded that MT Teachers did not use efficient and innovative methods of teaching.

From the above analysis it's possible to conclude that there is some achievement of Afan Oromo as medium of instruction in upper primary school. However it is likely to do more by using different opportunity we have in educating and supporting our students towards using Afan Oromo as mother tongue.

Through interview the respondent responded that almost similar with the aforementioned responses. The interviewee pointed out some implementation issues regarding the use of Afan Oromo in upper primary education. The interviewee believed that the use of Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in primary school is crucial to enhance quality of education and facilitates students' learning and academic achievement. As explained by this interviewee, education through mother tongue enables children to understand concepts and content given in their learning materials.

The interviewee CRC supervisor expressed his observation that some teachers did not use real situations and teaching aids while they were teaching and instead used traditional methods of teaching. According to the interviewee, the teachers' poor methods of teaching and absence of teaching aids and learning materials affected children's understanding and achievement in their learning.

As suggested by (Teshome, 2003) shows that teachers need continuous training and awareness creation from time to-time regarding effective methods of teaching and how they can use active learning methods in the

classrooms. He also noted that some teachers who taught in the lower grades had a serious problem in teaching English as their teaching methods were unattractive. He added that poor methods of teaching might produce incompetent children who could not use the language effectively to learn other curricula through the language.

2. Opportunities of using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

I. Support given to the enhancement of education through Afan Oromo

This section assesses teachers' views regarding support given to the enhancement of learning and teaching through Afan Oromo in primary schools. It focuses on the support given to schools and parents by various stakeholders to raise parents' awareness about the use of Afan Oromo in education in the primary schools.

Table 3 - Opportunities of using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

S.No	Items	Respondent Teachers (N=45)										Respondent students (N=395)										t-value
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		
		f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Support was given from school and parents to encourage students learning through MT	9	20.0	7	15.6	8	17.8	11	24.4	10	22.2	45	11.4	49	12.4	22	5.6	124	31.4	155	39.2	.167
2	Ethnic backgrounds of students is fitting with language preferences of students as medium of instruction	3	6.7	4	8.9	2	4.4	20	44.4	16	35.6	85	21.5	111	28.1	18	4.6	96	24.3	85	21.5	3.025
3	The social backgrounds of students go along with medium of instruction	2	4.4	7	15.6	4	8.9	15	33.3	17	37.8	44	11.1	48	12.1	21	5.3	123	31.1	159	40.3	.964
4	Learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students	3	6.7	9	20.0	8	17.8	13	28.9	12	26.7	46	11.6	37	9.4	20	5.1	136	34.4	156	39.5	.561

Table value of t-test = 1.98 at 0.05 significance level

In item 1 Table 3, 16(35.6%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 9(20.0%) and disagree 7(15.6%). While of the 21 (46.6%) teacher respondents respectively responded agree 11(24.4) and 10 (22.2%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the sufficient support was given from school and parents to encourage students learning through MT. Only 8 (17.8%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided.

Correspondingly, students were also asked to indicate their views as to support were given from school and parents to encourage students learning. In line with this, 94(23.8) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 45(11.4%) and disagree 49(12.4%). While, 279(76.0%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 124(31.4%) and 155(39.2%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement support was given from school and parents to encourage students learning using mother tongue. Only 22(5.6%) of students respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus it can be concluded that the respondents' responses suggested that support given to the schools by various bodies was medium.

The calculated t-value (.167) at 0.05 significant level is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. Consequently, one can conclude that the students' and teachers' agreed on the fact that support given to the schools by various bodies was remarkably medium. In supporting with this fact (Burton, 2013) regarding educational support given to enable students to succeed in their academic advancement, various concerned bodies have their own share. So, it assesses levels of support given to students by parents, the school and other concerned bodies. It also discusses consultative support and the support of learning materials to enhance children's learning.

In item 2 Table 3, 7(15.6%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 3(6.7%) and disagree 4(8.9%). While of the 36(80.0%) teacher respondents respectively responded agree 20(44.4) and 16 (35.6%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with Ethnic backgrounds of students is fitting with language preferences of students as medium of instruction. Only 2(4.4%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided.

Students were also asked to indicate their Ethnic backgrounds of students are fitting with language preferences of students as medium of instruction. In line with this, 196(49.6) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 85(21.5%) and disagree 111(28.1%). While, 181(45.8%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 96 (24.3%) and 85(21.5%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that indicate ethnic backgrounds of students is fitting with language preferences of students as medium of instruction.

Thus, it can be concluded that the data obtained from students' responses to the questions show that the majority of the students preferred the use of Afan Oromo in education the primary schools. English was also the second preferred language as a medium of instruction in schools. It was evident that there were strong demands for English as a medium of instruction next to Afan Oromo, especially in upper primary schools (that is, grades 7

and 8).

The calculated t-value (3.025) at 0.05 significant level is greater than the table value 1.98. So, there is significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. This may be from the fact that ethnic backgrounds of students is fitting with language preferences of students as medium of instruction. This was due to the level of understanding between teachers and students.

The interviews conducted with teachers and school directors revealed that the majority of the communities needed education through their language, but they wanted English as a medium of instruction in the primary school thinking English issued as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. Accordingly, they thought that students' proficiency in English should be developed from start to prepare them for higher education through the language.

In item 3 Table 3, 9(20.0%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 2(4.4%) and disagree 7(15.6%). While of the 32 (71.1%) teacher respondents respectively responded agree 15(33.3%) and 17 (37.8%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the social backgrounds of students go along with medium of instruction, only 4(8.9%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided.

Similarly, students were also asked to indicate their views as to support were given from school and parents to encourage students learning. In line with this, 83(21.0%) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 46(11.6%) and disagree 49(12.4%). While, 292(73.9%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 136(34.4%) and 156 (39.5%) of the respondents strongly agree on the question that deals with social backgrounds of students go along with medium of instruction. But, 20(5.1%) of students respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus, it can be concluded that the respondent's responded suggested that the social backgrounds of students go along with medium of instruction.

In supporting this idea language ideologies are highly contextualized and dependent upon many factors. They are formed through historical and socio-cultural circumstances and influenced by-the experience of a particular social position (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994, p. 58).

In item 4 Table 3, 12(26.7%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 3(6.7%) and disagree 9(20%). While of the 25(55.6%) teacher respondents respectively responded agree 13(28.9) and 12 (26.7%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students. Only 8(17.8%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Students were also asked to indicate their confidence of in learning with Afan Oromo language. In line with this, 83(21.0) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 46(11.6%) and disagree 37(9.4%). While, 292(73.9%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 136(34.4%) and 156 (39.5%) of the respondents strongly agree with the convenience of learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students.

Overall, the majority of the students explicated that they had good confidence towards learning primary education through Afan Oromo. However, a few of them remarked that they had low confidence. Thus one can conclude that, learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students. The calculated t-value (.561) at 0.05 significant level is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication is both groups of respondents have the perception that learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students.

The interview held with school directors showed almost the same result. For instance, one of the school director (D1) expressed his views as: teaching through Afan Oromo was profoundly important for students, teachers and communities as it is related to their identity and social psychology. He viewed that people were happy with a medium of instruction. He believed that their language and culture could be reserved for their next generations through the record of their language. He added that people felt that their rights to educate their children through their language were respected and children could be confident in their learning. He felt that he was very happy with the use of Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in primary schools. He stressed his view that it would be realistic if the use of Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction had continuation in secondary schools.

In supporting the above idea Alexander (2005) asserted that the confidence of the students increased if they are familiar with medium of instruction before, because it helps to understand the content deeply. The interview held with directors showed that if children are taught through their home language, they can be effective and creative in their learning and maximize their potentiality. This is also supported by the Education and training policy (1994). The principal also view his children could effectively communicate their ideas and opinions without linguistic barriers. According to interviewee, if a medium of instruction is common to both teachers and students, teachers were also have no difficulty in using appropriate and relevant examples from children's cultures, oral narratives, folktales, history and experiences used to clarify some ambiguities related to concepts and ideas. Thus, according to his view, children could use their higher cognitive domains in their learning, increase their creativity and become critical thinkers. The interviewee stated that when students were taught by giving examples from their experiences and cultures, they could have strong confidence in their learning.

3. Challenges of using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

There are various constraints that inhibit the use of Afan Oromo as Mother tongue. The following are some of the challenges mentioned by respondents.

I. Inadequacy of inputs in using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

Availability and quality of mother language teachers, curriculum materials and reference books, students' background are some of the common inputs that required implementing afan Oromo as a medium of instruction. In this regard, the following Table 8 presents the data gathered from respondent teachers.

Table 4 - Shortage of inputs in using Afan Oromo as medium of instruction

S.No	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Lack of reference books written in Afan Oromo	6	13.3	7	15.6	3	6.7	11	24.4	18	40.0
2	Inadequate teachers who can teach subjects through Afan Oromo in your school	9	20.0	20	44.4	2	4.4	11	24.4	3	6.7
Total		15	33.3	27	60	5	11.1	22	48.8	21	46.7

Item 1 Table 4 above, revealed that there is shortage of inputs that helps to use Afan Oromo as medium of instruction. With regard to the availability of reference books written in Afan Oromo in the sample school, the majority 29(64.4%) of the teachers pointed out that there were no references in the subject they taught. However, 13(28.9%) of them responded that references were not available in their schools. So, one can conclude that the availability of learning and teaching materials in the schools is mandatory especially for language subjects. Hence, the shortages of students' textbooks or reference materials written in Afan Oromo in the schools could greatly hinder students' learning and hamper their academic achievements.

The interviews conducted with the school directors and teachers and school observations revealed that almost all the schools had no libraries and there were no reference books in the schools. They also explicated that absence of library and reference books written in mother tongue could affect the development of teachers' and students' reading skills and knowledge. On the other hand, it was noted that some schools bought some reference books written in Afan Oromo, but the books were no accessible to students because of unavailability of the libraries where books would be made accessible to both teachers and students. To sum up, availability of reference books and library in schools can boost students' learning and academic achievement. They enable students to build their knowledge of the subjects they study in schools and their general reading skills.

Concerning the availabilities of the reference books and /or supplementary reading materials in children's language (Benson, 2004) indicated that the reference materials can enhance their learning and children are more successful in their academic achievements. Not only the availability of the instructional materials supports children's learning, but they can also assist teachers to carry out teaching and learning processes effectively. The same author further showed that in order to train adequate teachers in mother-tongue education and to prepare culturally relevant teaching materials, it is crucial to invest resources. This investment of adequate resources, along with a commitment to collaboration between linguists, educators, politicians and community members is required particularly if the language is used in education for the first time (Benson, 2004:10).

With regard to the accessibility of teachers in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction item-2 of Table 4 shows that the majority 29(64.4%) of the teachers pointed out that there is inadequate teachers who can teach subjects using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction . However, only 11(24.4%) agree and 3 (6.7%) strongly agree but 2(4.4%) respondents responded undecided. The existence of particular problems with respect to teacher's availability in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction is really big challenge that hinders the use of Afan Oromo as medium of instruction.

In this regard Hassanzadeh and Nabifar (2011) offer the language awareness of teachers: as "the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively"

Regarding on-job training, the interviewee noted that the majority of the teachers there were not sufficient on-job training given to build their capacity of teaching through mother tongue. According to the principal Welt'ee Deresa primary school, more training was given to teachers who taught English, but those teachers who taught mother tongue as a subject or through mother tongue have less opportunity for training.

II. Attitudinal challenges of using Afan Oromo as mother tongue

The existence of negative attitudes towards the use of Afan Oromo in education identified some factors as presented and analyzed in the following table:

Table 5- Attitudinal challenges of using Afan Oromo as medium of instruction

S. No	Items	Respondent Teachers										Respondent students										t value
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Limits students' understanding and knowledge.	13	28.9	7	15.6	2	4.4	13	28.9	10	22.2	59	14.9	75	19.0	25	6.3	121	30.6	115	29.1	-3.73
2	Perceiving that might not successful in grade 10 national examination	6	13.3	10	22.2	3	6.7	12	26.7	14	31.1	55	13.9	68	22.3	23	5.8	106	26.8	123	31.1	1.510
3	Hinders students' academic performance at higher institution.	8	17.8	7	15.6	2	4.4	14	31.1	14	31.1	73	18.5	69	17.5	15	3.8	120	30.4	118	29.9	1.230
5	The students perceive that learning through Afan Oromo makes them weak in English subject	9	20.0	8	17.8	4	8.9	17	37.8	7	15.6	75	19.0	80	22.8	23	5.8	108	27.3	89	25.0	1.394
6	Negative perception of parents and local communities towards learning using Afan Oromo	10	22.2	9	20.0	4	8.9	11	24.4	11	24.4	53	13.0	55	14.1	11	2.8	101	25.0	57	14.6	1.307

In item 1 of Table 5 which deals with fear of students in acquisition of advance knowledge by using Afan Oromo in upper primary schools, 20(44.4%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 13(28.9%) and disagree 7(15.6%). While 23 (51.1%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 13(28.9%) and 10 (22.2%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the negative attitude that states using MT limits students' understanding and knowledge. Only 2(4.4%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Similarly, students were also asked to indicate their views as if there are problems of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction. In line with this, 134(33.9%) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 59(14.9%) and disagree 75(19.0%). While, 236(59.7%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 121(30.6%) and 115(29.1%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that using MT Limits students' understanding and knowledge. None of the student respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus one can conclude that there is fear of using MT Limits students' understanding and knowledge. The calculated t-value (-3.73) at 0.05 significant levels with 125 degree of freedom is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication is both groups of respondents have the perception that using MT Limits student' understanding and knowledge indicating the existence of consensus.

In item 2 Table 5, 16(35.5%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 6(13.3%) and disagree 10(22.2%). Even though 26 (57.8%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 12(26.7%) and 14 (31.1%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with that there fear of teachers for that students might not successful in grade 10 national examination while using MT in upper primary school. Only 3(6.7%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided.

By the same taken, students were also asked to indicate their views as to regarding to the impact of using MT in achieving in grade 10 national examination. In line with this, 143(36.2) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 55(13.9%) and disagree 88(22.3%). While, 229(57.9%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 106(26.8%) and 123(31.1%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that there is doubt in achieving grade 10 national exam for the reason that not using English as a medium of instruction. Thus one can conclude that there is doubt in achieving grade 10 national exam for the reason that not using English as a medium of instruction. The calculated t-value (1.510) at 0.05 significant level is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication is both groups of respondents have the perception that there are in doubt in achieving grade 10 national exam for the reason that not using English as a medium of instruction.

Concerning the issue shown in item 3 Table 5, 15(33.4%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 8(17.8%) and disagree 7(15.6%) with the statement that using MT hinders students' academic performance at higher institution. Whereas 28 (62.2%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 14 (31.1%) and 14 (31.1%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree. Only 2(4.4%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Similarly, students were also asked to indicate their views of using MT in upper primary school hinder students' academic performance at higher institution. In line with this, 238(62.6) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly agree 118 (29.9%) and agree 120 (30.4%). While, 142(36.6%) of the student respondents respectively responded disagree 69(17.1%) and 73 (18.5%) of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement that using MT in upper primary school hinder students' academic performance at higher institution. Only 15(3.8%) of students respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus it can be conclude that teachers, parents, students and local communities assumed that education through mother tongue might hinder students future learning since mother tongue might have no continuation in future academy in secondary education and beyond. The calculated t-value (1.230) at 0.05 significant levels with 125 degree of freedom is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication is both groups of respondents have the perception that using MT in upper

primary school hinders students' academic performance at higher institution.

In item 4 Table 5, 17(37.8%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 9(20.0%) and disagree 8(17.8%). While 24 (53.4%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 17(37.8%) and 7(15.6%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree with the statement that students perceive learning through Afan Oromo make them weak in English subject. Similarly, students were also asked to indicate their views as the impact of Afan Oromo in student's future. In line with this, 165(41.8) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 75(19%) and disagree 90 (22.8%). While, 207(52.3%) of the student respondents respectively responded agree 108(27.3%) and 99(25.0%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that perception of the students that learning through Afan Oromo make them weak in English subject. Thus it can be conclude that students perceive learning through Afan Oromo make them weak in English subject. The calculated t-value (1.334) at 0.05 significant level is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication is both groups of respondents have perception that students perceive learning through Afan Oromo make them weak in English subject indicating the existence of consensus.

The interviewee believed that the problem was not the use of Afan Oromo in education, but the methods used to teach Afan Oromo had methodological shortcomings. According to the interviewee, the ways Afan Oromo was taught as a subject had negative impacts on the methods used to teach English as a subject in primary schools. In English classrooms, teachers might be affected by subject area knowledge and the methods used to teach English as a foreign language. If a teacher used effective methods to teach mother tongue (in this case, Afan Oromo), effectively there is no forthcoming impact of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction.

With regard to parents' attitude towards using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction; item 5 Table 5, 22(48.8%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded strongly disagree 11(24.4%) and disagree 11(24.4%). While 19(42.2%) of the teacher respondents respectively responded agree 9(20.0%) and 10 (22.2%) of the teacher respondents strongly agree. Only 4(8.9%) of teacher respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. This shows the teacher respondents disagreed with the views negative perception of parents and local communities towards learning using Afan Oromo.

Students were also asked to indicate the views of parents and local communities towards using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction. In line with this, 198(50.2%) of the student respondents respectively responded strongly agree 97(24.6%) and agree 101(25.6%), so as to indicate there is negative perception of parents in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction. While, 178 (45.1%) of the student respondents respectively responded disagree 95(24.1%) and 83(21%) of the respondents strongly disagree 19(4.8%) the student respondents expressed their feelings as undecided. Thus, it can be conclude that both respondents disagreed with the views negative perception of parents and local communities towards learning using Afan Oromo. The calculated t-value (1.367) at 0.05 significant level is less than the table value 1.98. So, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two groups of respondents. The implication this is both groups of respondents disagreed to the fact that negative perception of parents and local communities towards learning using Afan Oromo indicating existence of consensus.

As stated by the interviewee, people aspired for the use of English as a medium of instruction in primary school at the expense of Afan Oromo. He had the view that people's aspiration for English and their preference for this language to become a medium of instruction in primary schools affected the development of Afan Oromo in education. In this regard, Mutasa (2003:301-302) also noticed, "It is generally assumed that English is inherently superior and better suited in education." In this view, the use of mother tongue in education was discouraged in most of the African countries that were under the impact of colonial power and ideology. According to the interviewee, there are peoples that have fear of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools might have negative impact on the future students' achievement some people think that students' proficiency in English could be weaker if they learned primary education through Afan Oromo (mother tongue). As a result, as stated by interviewee, students might fail in national examinations given at grades 10 and 12. With supporting this idea Tihtina Zenebe (2013) showed her doubt about the success of students on grade 8 and grade 10 national exam and the achievement of students in the higher education.

1.9. Summary of the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

1.9.1. Summary of the findings

Based on the analysis of the data, the following major findings were obtained:

- ☞ Majority of teachers, 36(80%) and majority of interviewee indicated that ethnic and language background of the teachers and students have its own impact on the implementation of certain language as medium of instruction. In this case of the respondent teachers were Oromo, for 64.4% of them Afan Oromo was their mother tongue, and preferred Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction. Similarly, students' ethnic groups the majority of them belong to the Oromo and a few of them responded that they were non-Oromo. For instance, 75.2 % of the students reported that they were the Oromo, and Afan Oromo was the first

- language for 78.2 % of the students included in the study.
- ☞ With regard to the availability of teacher in using Afan Oromo as medium of instruction, majority of respondent teachers (75.5%) of reported that Afan Oromo was a medium of instruction that they were trained in. In addition, with regard to students' proficiency in Afan Oromo, majority (69.4%) of the teachers stated that students' overall proficiency was relatively very good in all language skills such as reading ability, speaking ability, writing ability, and listening skill;
 - ☞ Majority of the students (55.6%) and the majority of the interviewee indicated that their teachers encourage dialogue and debate by their mother tongue. The overall evidence reveals that the majority of the teachers and school directors seemed to advise and encourage students to be better learners in the academy. Moreover, majority (60% of the respondent teachers) indicate that with teachers in using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences.
 - ☞ The majority of the respondent students (73.9%) indicate the convenience of learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases confidence of students. The majority of the respondent teachers (53.3%) and 33.3% respondent students indicate using MT have advantage in reducing dropout rates and repetition rate.
 - ☞ 57.9% of the student respondents fear for that they might not successful in grade 10 national examination because of using MT in upper primary school. There are many students that have fear of learning through MT for its influence in their futures education.

1.9.2. Conclusions

Every individual have the right to use his/her mother tongue as in primary school education as it's recognized by the document of UNESCO (1959). With this understanding, the present study aimed to examine the practices, challenges and opportunities of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools of Berbere Woreda, Bale Zone, Oromia.

The study further found that there are limited practices that show the presence of practice of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction education. However, these practices were challenged by many problems such as material, absence of adequate support and attitudinal problems. Hence, the major practices, challenges and opportunities that were identified in relation to using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction were presented as follows:

1. The majority of the students preferred the use of Afan Oromo in education due to the social backgrounds of students go along with medium of instruction and learning upper primary education through Afan Oromo increases the confidence of students being they are familiar with language to understand the content deeply. Similarly, the convenience of Ethiopian Education and training policy and language policy was the enormous opportunity for the use of mother tongues such as Afan Oromo as medium of instruction.
2. In supporting the practice of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction there are teachers' activities such as using authentic examples from students' cultures and experiences; and tutorial sections given for students on the difficulty of *Qubee* based writing style.
3. It's assumed that education through mother tongue might hinder students' future learning since mother tongue might have no continuation in future academy in secondary education and beyond. This were the negative attitudes of many students, their parents and local communities in having doubt in achieving grade 10 national exam for the reason that not using English as a medium of instruction. Similarly, many students perceive learning through Afan Oromo make them weak in English subject.
4. There is shortage of reference books that was written by Afan Oromo that has great impact in using Afan Oromo as medium of instruction. Besides, upper primary school teachers should not get training on the method of teaching using mother tongue as a medium of instruction, thus, most teachers did not use efficient and innovative methods of teaching and this affect the quality of education negatively.

1.9.3. Recommendations

Based on the study, the key findings and conclusions drawn above, recommendations were made below.

1. The first implication of the results was the need the practice of using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction in upper primary education should carry on using various opportunities existed. The practical issues on the ground and the fact of a linguistic situation are of paramount significance to be considered. Therefore, the practicality of the mother tongue in education on the grounds should be identified prior to its implementation. Before implementing mother-tongue education, quality educational materials in mother tongue should be prepared. For example, students' textbooks, and additional reading materials written in children's mother tongue should be made available.
2. The second implication is the quality of teachers working in mother-tongue education can affect children's academic performances and their future academic achievements. Specifically, if teachers are inefficient and use innovative and active methods of teaching, the quality of mother-tongue education can be hampered. The quality of the teachers who could teach various subjects in children's home language promotes the quality of

education through mother tongue. Thus, on-the-job training should be arranged for teachers and others to enhance the using Afan Oromo as a medium of instruction.

3. The concerned bodies should work together to enhance school improvement activities and teachers' professional development; On-job training should be given to teachers on the methods of teaching mother tongue or other subjects through mother tongue to up-grade their teaching skills, to enhance their confidence in their teaching and to build their creativities in teaching and assessing students' learning; Awareness raising activities about mother-tongue use in education should be given to teachers, students, parents and local communities; the strategies used to teach Afan Oromo should be used as a basis to teach English or other languages.

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