Investigating Challenges that Teachers Face when Teaching Local Languages in Selected Secondary Schools of Wolaita Zone in SNNPR, Ethiopia

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Abstract- The main objective of the study was to investigate challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in two selected secondary schools of Wolaita zone. The research subjects were purposively selected ten Wolaita language teachers from both secondary schools. Besides, six education experts from Humbo wereda and Sodo town education bureau were involved. Two instruments were used to collect the data: questionnaire and interview. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were employed to obtain the results. Hence, the findings of the study proved that shortage of text books and teacher guides, lack of using syllabus and curriculum as a guideline when teaching were some of the challenges teacher were facing in classroom. The study also indicated that significant efforts were not made by concerned bodies like wereda and town education office and the schools to provide sufficient text books and teacher's guides. The study clearly proved that un like other teachers Wolaita language teachers had no access to different social media like internet which is prepared in Wolaita language. The findings also approved that the efforts made by the concerned bodies of both schools were not effective and did not bring relevant change on challenges that teachers were facing.

Keywords: challenge, effort, local language, teaching material, textbook.

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I. Introduction

The Education and Training Policy (1994) promotes the use of regional and local languages for two stated reasons. The first reason is the claim that learning in the mother tongue has clear pedagogical advantages for the child, who feels comfortable and reassured by their ability to understand and analyze information in their own language. The second reason is the claim that the use of local languages in education accords with the rights of nationalities to self-expression that are enshrined in the Constitution of Ethiopia. The Ministry of Education, therefore, presents both pedagogical and ideological justifications for promoting the use of local languages for primary education (Cohen, 2000; 2006).

A mother tongue or a local language is the language the child can speak fluently before going to school. It is the language in which the child can operate confidently in all domains relevant to the child's life. It may or may not be the language spoken by both parents. In this sense the bilingual child has two mother tongue. Thus, learning in local language and developing it is the right of the society enacted by law. It has also pedagogical advantages for the child to understand subject matter easily. However, there are challenges that impede the successful implementation of local language instruction in classroom particularly in Ligaba and Humbo Tebela Middle Secondary Schools of Wolaita Zone. In this way, the study emphasizes on challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in above selected research places. The main rationale for studying this issue was that most of the time teachers were not happy to teach Wolaita language and directly or indirectly they were raising challenges of teaching it. Thus, the researcher took this in to consideration and initiated to conduct the study to dig out the challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages and to recommend possible problem solving mechanisms.

Meaningful learning will only take place if the language of instruction brings meaningful and authentic communication between teachers and learners. The language used matters most especially in dealing with situations which detail learners' familiarity with the medium of instruction that is being used. According to Gacheche (2010) researches have shown that mother tongue-based schooling significantly improves learning. The use of a familiar language to teach children literacy is more effective than a submersion system as learners "can employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies" to learn how to read and write.

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Therefore, since the pedagogical advantages of local language are obvious, all stake holders should play their own roles to overcome challenges faced by teachers when teaching local languages. In many schools of Wolaita Zone particularly in Humbo Tebela and Ligaba secondary schools there were numerous challenges that hamper the delivery of mother tongue teaching in classroom. Thus, lack of sufficient resources like textbooks, teacher guides, updated syllabus and curriculum, lack of using technology like plasma, radio, audiovisual and the like are concrete challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages. Hence, for the teachers to deliver quality mother tongue instruction, it is essential to fulfill necessary teaching materials; otherwise, it is difficult to for the teachers to implement effective teaching in classroom. According to Hall (2010) as cited by Dekker, *et al*., (2008) no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials. Thus, teaching can only be effective when adequate and relevant instructional materials are used, Afolabi*, et al*., (2006) as cited by Sunday & Joshua (2010).

Teachers' relevant role is also expected to overcome challenges they face in classroom. As much as possible teachers should implement reflective teaching strategies that may solve some classroom learning problems. For example, based on students learning feedback and based on their performance, teachers might use alternative teaching and assessment mechanism to improve learners, performance and to solve the problems. Thus, teachers should always evaluate his/her teaching method and come up with something new. It is also important to work on inappropriate attitude of learners because it might also be a challenge that affect the teaching of local language .It is very rare to find students with positive attitude towards local language instruction in middle and upper secondary schools of Wolaita zone in general and specifically in Humbo Tebela and Ligaba Middle Secondary Schools. In many schools even students disgrace teachers who teach local languages. Rwambiwa's (1993) as cited by Gamuchirai Tsitsi Ndamba ((2008) in his general findings in African languages confirmed that pupils often humiliated teachers of by expressing their (pupils) negative attitudes towards learning indigenous languages. Thus, since it is difficult to implement effective teaching on students who do not accept their mother tongue instruction, all stake holders should play their own role to improve learners' attitude.

The investigators who conducted research in challenges of teachers regarding local language teaching are very rare and so that this study emphasizes on those challenges specially by giving due emphasize to Wolaita language instruction. In relation to this, the study attempted to answer the following research questions.

1. What are challenges teachers face when teaching local languages in Wolaita language classroom?
2. What are the supports done by stake holders to tackle the challenges teachers face when teaching local languages?
3. How effective are the efforts done by stake holders to resolve classroom challenges?

a) Objectives of the Study

The study emphasized on examining challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in two selected secondary schools of Wolaita Zone Hence, the main objective of the study was to investigate challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in two selected secondary schools of Wolaita zone. The study also focuses on the following specific objectives:

1. To explore challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in Wolaita language classroom.
2. To examine the supports done by stake holders to tackle the challenges teachers face when teaching local languages.
3. To investigate the effectiveness of efforts done by stake holders to resolve classroom challenges.

II. Research Methodology

This chapter highlighted the various sections as how to carry out the research and the ways of analyzing the data.

a) Research Design

In order to get relevant result the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research design. The reason for using qualitative research design was that it is important to analyze qualitative data so as to examine challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages in two selected secondary schools. Quantitative research design was also selected to analyze quantitative data collected from the research participants.

b) Research Setting

The research was conducted in Wolaita Zone which is one of thirteen zones found in SNNPR, Ethiopia. It has twelve weredas and three administrative towns. Among these, one weredas and one town administration were purposively selected. The reason for selecting these two settings was the researchers' belief to obtain ample information from the areas as he had a good past experience in these areas.

c) Research Subjects

The main emphasize of the study was exploring difficulties that teachers face when teaching local languages in two schools. The research subjects for this study were grade 9 and 10 mother tongue teachers from Humbo Tebela and Sodo town secondary schools as

well as district and town administration education experts from both settings. The researcher totally selected 10 teachers from two schools and 6 language experts from two settings. Thus, totally 10 mother tongue teachers and 6 education experts were participated in study. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select all research subjects because it was important to select well informed research subjects that were able to give relevant information to the researcher. Therefore, the total populations of the study was 16.

d) Sample size and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study was decided based on the objective of study. The total size of the research subjects were 16. In order to get this population size, the researcher used purposive sampling techniques because it was important to select well informed research subject that could give pertinent information to the researcher. The researcher participated teachers who were teaching grades 9 and 10 students of both schools and the Wereda and town education experts of two settings to get appropriate data for the study. The researcher used questionnaire(both open ended and close ended) to collect data from teachers of Humbo Tebela secondary school and wereda education experts and interview to collect data from teachers of Sodo secondary schools and Sodo town administration education experts.

e) Instruments for Data Collection

The researcher used two instruments to collect the data. These were questionnaire (close ended and open ended) and semi structure interview.

f) Data Analysis

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were employed. This was because the data were gathered by using both the questionnaire and interview. Thus, the interview data were analyzed qualitatively and the data gathered by using a questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. Thus, during analysis priority were given to a quantitative data i.e. questionnaire. The data of questionnaires were analyzed first and then an interview data were analyzed qualitatively and the data were triangulated with the result of the questionnaire. The quantitative data were analyzed in tables which were categorized under various titles in their relationship. The qualitative data were analyzed through discussion which was often termed as textual analysis.

III. Results and Discussion

This chapter dealt with the data gathered by using the two tools were presented, discussed and analyzed in the form of a text.

Table 1: Challenges teachers face when teaching local languages (Wolaita language)

No	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.1	Lack of sufficient text books and teacher guide	-	-
1.2	Lack of using updated syllabus and curriculum	-	-
1.3	Lack of using technologies like plasma and social medias for additional	-	-
1.4	Lack of teachers professional commitment	1	10%
1.5	In appropriate attitude of learners, parents'& the society	1	10%
1.6	In appropriate class room situations	-	-
1.7	Lack of short term training for teachers	2	20%
1.8	Not using indigenous language at home or using mixed language at home	-	-
1.9	All	6	60%

As can be seen from table-1 no one responded items 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. On the other hand, in item 1.4 few respondents i.e.10% of the respondents replied that lack of teachers professional commitment as one of the challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages i.e. Wolaita language and in item 1.5,10% of them also answered that inappropriate attitude of learners, parents and the society as challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages. From the above data item 1.6, we can also see that a few respondents about 20% replied that lack of short term training for teachers was one of the challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages. Again in item 1.7, about 20% of the participants said that lack of short term training for teachers was one of the

challenges teachers were facing when teaching local languages. Again no response was given for item 1.8. However, in table 1 item 1.9 the majority of the respondents about 60% replied that lack of sufficient text book and teacher guides, lack of using updated syllabus and curriculum, lack of using technologies like plasma and social medias for additional materials, lack of teachers' professional commitment, inappropriate attitude of students, parents and society and lack of short term training for teachers and the like were some of the challenges teachers face when teaching local languages.

The interview data which was found from research participants of Humbo Tebela secondary

Schools and education experts from Humbo wereda also supported the above data. For example, almost all of them said the following:

We have a shortage of text books and teacher guides. Besides, there is no syllabus and curriculum to use it as a guideline to use text books and teachers (P1, P2 & P3). Wolaita language lessons are also not delivered using social media like plasma. All English language teachers and other subjects in English media can access information from internet and other social media, but we local language teachers do not get it which is written in Wolaita language(P4&P5). Students and parents also have immaterial attitude regarding Wolaita language instruction; they do not give equal value for it as that of Amharic and English. There is less number of trained teachers in Wolaita language; many teachers are teaching in experience without qualification. Many teachers need short trainings as almost all of them have not been qualified in Wolaita language. Some of them are qualified in Amharic and English and some are qualified in Geography and History and not in Wolaita language. The classroom was too crowded to participate students in different activities during teaching learning process (P6).

From the above data it is possible to understand five points. The first one is that teachers have shortage of teaching materials like Wolaita language text books and teacher guides as well as they do not use syllabus and curriculum as a base and guide line to teach Wolaita language. The second is that unlike other subject teachers, Wolaita language teachers do not get different information from social medias like internet; this is because all information in social media are not written in Wolaita language rather they are written in English language. The third one is that due to irrelevant attitude students and parents do not give equal credit for Wolaita language like Amharic and English language. The fourth one is that there is shortage of qualified teachers in Wolaita language. Finally, because of the classroom crowdness it is very difficult to participate students in different activities. Over crowdedness of the classroom is also one of the challenges that teachers were facing in teaching Wolaita language. According to Strevens (1978), overcrowded classes reduce teachers' attention per pupil and produce real physical discomfort and distraction. Apart from other things to teach effectively necessary materials should be provided to teachers. According to Hall (2010) as cited by Dekker, *et al*., (2008) no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials.

Therefore, based on the above data found from interview and questionnaire, one can assume that shortage of text books and teacher guides, lack of using syllabus and curriculum as a guide line when teaching, lack of media access in Wolaita language, lack of providing training for teachers, learners' irrelevant attitude and less number of qualified man power in Wolaita language and so on were some of the challenges that teachers were facing when teaching local languages, particularly Wolaita language.

Table 2: Efforts done by concerned bodies like wereda education office to supply sufficient text books and teacher guide to teachers

No.	Items	Frequency	Percentage
2.1	Asking zonal and regional education office to bring sufficient text books to school on time	1	10%
2.2	Asking zonal and regional government to publish adequate text books on time	1	10%
2.3	Duplicating the existing text books as provisional solution.	2	20%
2.4	Encouraging teachers to produce teaching materials themselves.	2	20%
2.5	Requesting NGO'S like WODA and WV, Ethiopia to support in publishing books	1	10%
2.6	Using books that are normally distributed to schools in quota by the government rather than other options.	3	30%
2.7	Providing short term training for the teachers to improve their skills.	1	10%

From the above table 2 item 2.1. few students about 10% responded that asking zonal and regional education office to bring sufficient text books to school on time was an effort done by concerned bodies and again the same number in item 2.2. i.e. about 10% of the respondents replied that asking zonal and regional government to publish adequate text books on time was one of the efforts by the schools and the two districts' education bureau. In item 2.3, 20% of the research participants said that duplicating the existing text books as provisional solution that schools and education offices were doing and in item 2.4, 20% replied that encouraging teachers to produce teaching materials themselves was efforts done by the concerned bodies. In item 2.5 about 10 % of the respondents said that requesting NGO'S like WODA and WV, Ethiopia to support in publishing books was the effort that concerned bodies like education bureau were doing. However, majority of the respondents about 30% responded as concerned bodies did not do any things except using books that are normally distributed to schools in quota by the government. This indicates that

schools and educations office of the city administration were almost emphasized on books distributed in quota by government rather than searching other options.

The data found from interview indicated mixed result. For example, some of them said the following: *school leaders and town and wereda education offices are doing their own efforts as much as possible to fulfill books and teacher guide. The town administration education bureau together with the school directors report the book needs of the school to zone education department and then to the regional education bureau to provide books and teacher guides; but even after reporting it is difficult to get the books and teachers guides (P1&P3). Schools and education bureau do not do something relevant rather than distributing the existing books to students in a large group i.e. a single books to many students (P5&P6). As much as I know the schools and education bureau did not do anything which can mitigate serious shortage of books and teacher guides; thus, there is still shortage of books in our school (P4).*

This interview data clearly shows that problem solving and effective efforts were not made by all stake holders to mitigate challenges teachers were facing with regard to text books and teacher guide except few efforts.

The data found from the open ended questionnaire also indicated that many teachers were complaining due to lack of using technologies in Wolaita language. They said that because of lack of various technologies which were written in Wolaita language, it became difficult to get reference materials from different social medias. But, except local language (Wolaita language) many languages including English has access to different technologies like plasma teaching, using internet and so that they can easily down load contemporary materials and use it as a reference materials. The participants also told that learners and parents did not focus on Wolaita language. Even parents need their children to learn in English language and Amharic rather than local languages like Wolaita language. Thus, it needs more work on attitude of the parents and students. Students were using mixed language in Wolaita language classroom this was because they speak Amharic in their home and this interferes Wolaita language when they were learning in classroom. There was some evidence that language attitudes may influence how teachers deal with pupils; and other evidences suggest that attitudes about language affect second language learning (Fasold, 1984: 348).

On the other hand, some teachers did not effectively contribute what was expected from them although there were such factors. Some teachers could not play more to shape students attitude and discipline by advising them. They also did not contribute their role by properly managing the classroom. The research subjects also replied that the classroom situation was not appropriate for teachers and students. According to them the class size was large and crowded.

From this open ended questions we can understand four general points. firstly, teachers wanted to use Wolaita language in internet and other media to get additional teaching materials, but they did not get that opportunity still now. Secondly, Parents and students had no appropriate attitude towards Wolaita languages as they emphasized on other languages like English. Thirdly, students were not using homogenous language in classroom, rather the used mixed language in Wolaita language classroom. Fourthly, teachers did not effectively perform what was expected from them.

Therefore, the data found from interview and its analysis one can guess that significant effort were not made by concerned bodies like wereda and town administration education office and the schools to provide sufficient text books and teacher's guides to the teachers and it is possible to say that there were shortage of these teaching materials in schools. In line with this, one can also assume that parents and students have inappropriate attitude towards Wolaita language, the classroom atmosphere was not suitable for teachers and students as well as it was very crowded. teachers were also not properly managing the classroom. Classroom management is important to build positive classroom for effective teaching- learning process. Classroom management is activities of classroom teachers that create positive classroom with in which effective teaching and learning can occur (Martin and Sugar man, 1993). There was also no opportunity for the teacher to use various technologies in Wolaita language.

Table 3: The effectiveness of efforts done by stake holders to solve the challenges that teachers face when teaching local languages

No.	Items	Frequency	Percentage
3.1	It does not resolve challenges because the problem is still there.	2	20%
3.2	Yes, it solved because a lot of challenges like teaching materials were mitigated.	3	30%
3.3	It is difficult to decide because relevant solution is not seen.	3	30%
3.4	There were some indications but it was not consistent.	2	20%

In table 3, item 3.1 above few students i.e., about 20% responded that the efforts done by stakeholders does no resolve challenges teachers face when teaching local language (Wolaita language)

because the problem is still there. Again in item 3.2 30% of the research subjects answered that efforts made by teachers and other stake holders effectively solve the challenges teachers face when teaching local languages. They said that it solved the problem because a lot of challenges like teaching materials were mitigated. Similarly, for the same question in item 3.3 30% of the participants responded that it is difficult to decide because relevant solution is not seen due to efforts made by teachers and other stake holders. Finally, for the same question in item 3.4 20% of the respondents answered that there were some indications but it was not consistent to solve challenges teachers are facing.

The interview data assured that efforts made by teachers and other stake holders were not effective. Let us see some of the responses. *Of course Wereda education bureau and the schools tried their best even if it is not as much as expected; but it is not effective and it actually bring no change on challenges we are facing when teaching local languages. In our school we have still serious shortage of Wolaita language text books and teacher guides. No short training are given to all teachers in how to teach Wolaita language; teachers should be given training because many teachers were not specialized in Wolaita language. Some of them were specialized in Amharic and English and some were specialized in social science fields like Civics, History. Still students did not improve their perception towards Wolaita language (AP). School and wereda education and town administration education bureau blame each other rather than searching ways to solve the problems teacher encounter when teaching. Their communication with other stake holders like Wolaita Zone education bureau and others is simply a slogan and this is why the challenges is still not solved. The challenge of class size and classroom atmospheres are still not solved (P1, P2 & P4).*

From the above interview data we can understand four key points: the first one is that some efforts made by the school and wereda and town administration education offices were not effective and it bring no substantial change on challenges teachers face when teaching. The second one is that many teachers were not specialized on Wolaita language and due to this they need short term training. Students have still attitudinal problems regarding Wolaita language. The next is that schools, wereda and town administration education office blame each other rather than working for solution and their communication with other stake holders is simply a slogan. The final one is that the problem related to class size classroom situation is not solved.

The data found from close ended questions also indicated that the appropriate efforts were not made to solve the challenges that teachers are facing. Challenges that we were facing formerly are still there.

Some efforts are made but are not effective and they bring no tangible improvement on attitude of parents and students, on classroom situation, on class size, in language mixing, in technology use etc.

Therefore, based on the results of the above interview and questionnaire, we can conclude that the efforts made by the concerned bodies of both schools were not effective and did not bring relevant change on challenges that teachers are facing when teaching Wolaita languages.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion of the study, the following conclusions were made.

❖ The study disclosed that shortage of text books and teacher guides, lack of using syllabus and curriculum as a guide line when teaching, lack of media access in Wolaita language, lack of providing training for teachers, learners' irrelevant attitude and less number of qualified man power in Wolaita language and so on were some of the challenges that teachers were facing when teaching local languages. The study also assured that because of the classroom crowdedness it was very difficult to participate students in different activities in classroom.

❖ The finding also indicated that some teachers did not effectively perform what was expected from them. They did not effectively handle classroom atmosphere and the classroom management was too less.

❖ The study also indicated that significant efforts were not made by concerned bodies like wereda and town administration education office and the schools to provide sufficient text books and teacher's guides to the teachers. It also approved that there was still shortage of these teaching materials in both schools.

❖ The study clearly proved that unlike other teachers Wolaita language teachers had no access to different social media like internet which is prepared in Wolaita language. But, other teachers whose media of instruction is English can easily access different reference materials from it.

❖ The findings also approved that the efforts made by the concerned bodies of both schools were not effective and did not bring relevant change on challenges that teachers were facing when teaching Wolaita language. It also assured that schools, wereda and town administration education office blame each other rather than working for solution and their communication with other stake holders was simply a slogan not with relevant dedication.

b) Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and discussions made above, the following recommendations were made.

➢ The concerned bodies Wereda and town administration education bureau in collaboration with other stake holders should provide sufficient text books to teachers and students. Adequate teacher's guides should also be supplied to teachers because all teachers said that we have no teacher's guides to direct students based on it.

➢ In order to effectively resolve the challenges related to teaching materials the schools and wereda as well as town administration education office should work in collaboration with various stake holders like zone education department and regional education bureau and should report on time to them before the problems encounter them.

➢ The concerned bodies like zone education department and regional education bureau in collaboration with Ethiopian Ministry of Education should give due attention for training local language teachers both in quality and quantity to solve the problem of qualified local language teachers particularly, Wolaita language teachers. Short term training should also be provided to teachers to solve the problem provisionally.

➢ More efforts should also be made to establish local language (Wolaita language) in internet Google. Besides to this better mechanisms should be proposed to improve the attitude of learners and parents as well as the attitude of the whole community regarding local languages (Wolaita language).

➢ Teachers should perform what is expected from them on time. As much as possible teachers should implement reflective teaching strategies that may solve some classroom problems. For example, based on students learning feedback and based on their performance, teachers should use alternative teaching and assessment mechanism to improve learners, performance and to solve the problems. They should also effectively manage every activities of classroom.

➢ Students should be advised by their teachers and parents to use their mother tongue language both at home and at school to reduce the interference of other languages in classroom.

➢ Further research should be conducted regarding challenges local teachers are facing so as to come up with consistent solution.

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Abbreviations

P1 - Participant 1
P2 - Participant 2
P3 - Participant 3
P4 - Participant 4
P5 - Participant 5
P6 - Participant 6