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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**TRANSITIONAL PROBLEM FROM TIGRINYA TO
ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN TIGRAY:
THE CASE OF WERI-LEKE WEREDA**



BY
KIDU ATAKILTI

JUNE 2010

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at investigating the problems of transition from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction in Tigray taking Weri-leke wereda as a sample.

The study included five instruments; observation, questionnaire, interview, test, and documents analysis to collect data. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive method and percentage.

The data analyzed indicates that students in high school are highly affected by language (English) difficulty to learn other subjects. And this language difficulty causes their failure. So many problems are the reasons behind the students' lack of English proficiency in high school. These are such as class size, lack of facilities, teachers' training and others.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Prior to the reign of Menilik II, modern education was not given emphasis as a sector in Ethiopia. There was no any school for modern education in the country. "For many centuries, the Ethiopia Orthodox Church was the only regular education agency" (Tesfaye & Taylor, 1976: 371). Giiz was a medium of instruction. "Education was given in the traditional church schools established after the conversion of the Axumite empire" (Pankhurst 1976: 305).

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that Ethiopia started to introduce modern education. "Publicly supported sector education is a phenomenon of the present century" (Amanuel 1988:34). "Modern education was introduced to Ethiopia during the reign of emperor Menilik II at the beginning of the 20th century" (Ministry of Information 2004:171). "Ethiopia's the first modern government school, the Ecole Imperial Menilik II, was opened by the emperor in October 1908. In accordance with the practice in Egypt the medium of instruction was French." (Pankhurst 1976:315).

The language of instruction has been changing from time to time for different reasons such as political, religious, social, and economic relations with different countries. According to Marew (2000:8), "during the reign of Menilik II, the role of English was subordinated to that of French for religious and world political reasons although it was the dominant foreign language during the reigns of Tewodros (1855-68) and Yohannes (1872-89)."

"After 1941, Ethiopia received aid of different kinds from Britain and USA to support the reconstruction of the country in the social, political, and economic sphere. This support helped English to regain momentum. Since then it has

remained the chief language of wider communication and the language of science and technology" (Marew 2000:69). Accordingly, English was declared to be medium of instruction after grade 3.

Amharic was neither given as a subject nor used as a medium of instruction before 1958. According to Pankhurst (1976:373), "the elementary school program shifted its medium of instruction from English to Amharic in 1958-9."

Although modern education was introduced since the reign of Menilik II, there were a few schools in the country limited to some cities of the country and was not given to the common people.

There was some improvement in the education sector during the reign of Hileslassie. "In spite of the fact that Haileslassie did not explain his allusions to Ethiopia's' past, he seemed to have had very strong views on the positive role of education" (Tekeste 1990:3). "Haileslasses' attempt to establish a state education system brought the issue of language use in education to the forefront of government language policy" (Cohen 2000:81). According to Cohen (2000), "the aim of the government policy became the amharization of the entire people assuming that the use of one language as a prerequisite for the formation of national unity".

Educational policy in Ethiopia was also restructured in the Derg regime according to the ideology of the system. "After the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, Ethiopia adopted the doctrine of Marxist-Leninist as a guiding principle in the social ,economic, and agricultural sectors, consequently, the educational system was restructured to advance this ideology under the slogan: Education for production, Education for scientific research, and Education for socialist consciousness"(Marew et al.2000:8-9).

"Education and adult literacy programs in the minority languages had been introduced in the Soviet Union. And the Marxist-Leninist government in Ethiopia was concerned to follow this example" (Cohen 2000:88).

Since 1991, Ethiopia has undergone dramatic changes politically, economically, and socially, particularly in the education sector. "To alleviate the long standing social problems, the FDRE government gave priority to the education sector since 1994. The government has devised a decentralized education policy, which enables regional states to pursue educational development goals based on their own objective conditions identifying objectives and needs" (Ministry of Information, 2004). Article 39.2 of the FDRE 1994's constitution states that "every Nation, Nationality, and People in 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 preserve its history."

The issue of language as medium of instruction is more complex in multilingual settings and it is difficult to decide which language should be used as a medium of instruction and to what extent.

It is obvious that the reason behind education is literacy and developing knowledge and skills. "The importance attached to the development of literacy is based on a world wide conviction that literacy is an instrument for changing the individual's perception and organization of cognition, which leads to economic improvement, and its prerequisite for all functional education" (Blanc and Hamers. 1968: 187-8). According to them, there are two opposite claims of the choice of the medium through which literacy is effectively achieved in multicultural setting. These are (1) mother tongue (2) a language of wider communication which possesses a written culture and economic power. But these claims are two extremes which lead to different curriculums accordingly. While the former leads to a curriculum which is exclusively mother tongue education, the later leads to a monolingual curriculum in an official language.

“Between these two extreme cases, we find a variety of solutions which combine mother tongue and second language to various extents in the curriculum. Most of these programs are based on the “linguistic mismatch hypothesis’ endorsed by UNESCO (1953), according to which a mismatch between home language and school language is the major cause of poor academic achievement of minority children” (Blanc and Hamers 1968:188). This is being practiced in Ethiopia.

According to M. Yigezu (2006) cited in encyclopedia of language and linguistics second edition, “there are now about 21 vernaculars introduced into the Ethiopian school system as medium of instruction and/or as subjects to be taught in primary schools, as well as being used for regional governmental and administrative activities”. Tigrinya is used for these purposes in Tigray regional state which is located in the northern part of Ethiopia.

Tigrinya is an Ethio-Semitic language under the Afro-Asiatic phylum spoken mainly in Eritrea and Ethiopia (Tigray). According to John Stone (1993) cited in Rosa (2009) “Tigrinya is spoken by 4,150,000 people in Ethiopia, 1,900,000 in Eritrea and 10,000 in Israel”. “In terms of number of speakers, Tigrinya is the most widely spoken Semitic language after Arabic and Amharic” (Bender 1976). According to Bender (1976), “Written Tigrinya was almost exclusively confined to religious materials. Since the end of Italian occupation, it has become a relatively important literacy language in which news papers, magazines and books are produced”.

Until EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front), which is the ruling party of the current government, came to power, Tigrinya has not become of great importance because of the dominance of Amharic as a national language which was used as a medium of instruction throughout the country including Eritrea.

Since 1992, however, the regional states of the country organized on the Ethno-linguistic basis were allowed to use their languages.

So being one of the regional states of Ethiopia, Tigray started to use Tigrinya as a regional official language and medium of instruction in elementary school (1-8). And Tigrinya is a national official language and medium of instruction in Eritrea.

Languages such as Saho, Kunama, as well as Amharic, Oromo, Afar, are spoken in Tigray, but Tigrinya is used as an official language and medium of instruction because "although none of Ethiopia's regions is linguistically homogenous, they reflect, the broad linguistic divisions within the country. Most of Ethiopia's regions are each now dominated by the speakers of one language" (Cohen 2000:100).

Having learned English in elementary school (1-8) only as a subject students are expected to learn all the subjects in English in high school expecting that they have acquired adequate English proficiency to do so. However, there is a transitional problem from Tigrinya to English as medium of instructions, which is the focus of my study, because of the fact that students are not learning English as expected. That is why Tekeste (2006:32) states "the nature of decline in the quality of education that prevails at secondary schools mainly concerns the capacity of students to follow their lessons in English".

Therefore, I tried to study the transitional problem from Tigrinya to English as a medium of instruction in Tigray taking Weri-leke wereda as a sample. Weri-leke is one of the weredas of Tigray which is found in the central zone between Tenben and Adwa. The principal city of the wereda is called Edaga-Arbi located 42 kilometers east of Adwa town.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

There is no more debate about the importance of language for human beings. "Language is at the heart of human life. Without it, many of our most important activities are inconceivable" (Cook 2003: 3). According to Cook, "although language is a natural phenomenon beyond conscious control, there are aspects of language use about which we have to make decisions of which language in education is one".

Education is the only way for development especially for the underdeveloped countries like Ethiopia. That is why Kembo (200:286) states "this continent (Africa) will not reduce its deficit in economic and technical performance until the required knowledge and skills of its (future) citizens have been developed through effective formal education. So in order for education to be effective, the language through which the instruction is given should be given emphasis".

In Africa which is a linguistically diversified continent the choice of language for medium of instruction is an issue of great importance. And in different countries mother tongue languages and colonial languages like English are used as media of instruction in terms of subtractive bilingual education to different extents according to the language education policy of the different countries.

Ethiopia, currently, follows a federal system of governance taking the ethno-linguistic criteria as a major consideration. Accordingly, the educational policy is appropriate to the system of governance. "The major feature of the new educational policy that became operational in 1994 is the introduction of ethnic languages as mediums of education for primary education" (Tekeste 2006:22).

Being one of the regional states of Ethiopia, Tigray is using Tigrigna as a medium of instruction for the whole of elementary school (1-8) which is allowed by the Ministry of education.

Learners are expected to learn all the subjects in secondary education in English expecting that they have acquired adequate English proficiency because they learn English as a subject in elementary school (1-8). That means the learners need to have adequate English proficiency in elementary school to transfer from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction smoothly, without difficulty of language to understand the subject matter. However, the students face problems to understand the subject matter when they learn other subjects in high school because of lack of English proficiency. Although I knew in my preliminary study that there is a problem of language difficulty to learn other subjects, how much the problem is serious needed to be studied. Therefore, to reach the intended objective, this paper tries to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does lack of English proficiency hinder students in high school to learn other subjects effectively?
2. What are the reasons behind the problem?
3. What are the effects of the problem?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study is aimed at exploring the transitional problem from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction in Tigray with special reference to Weri-leke wereda. And specifically the objective of this study is to address the seriousness of the problem students in Tigray face when they transfer from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction, the reasons behind the problem, and the effects of the problem.

1.4. Significance of the Study

First of all, this study will add a piece of information to the study of language in education. Secondly, this research will inform the concerned bodies about the real problems of transition from Tigrinya to English so that they can take necessary measures to solve it accordingly. Third, curriculum designers can make use of it as a source of information in decision making about language in education. Fourthly, it will help those who want to further research in the same area.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

This study considers only the linguistic factors for academic lack of performance. It would also be better if the study was conducted in the regional level, but it is limited to Weri-leke wereda because of different constraints such as time and money. The study doesn't also take the differences between urban and rural areas into consideration.

1.6. Method of Data Collection and Analysis

In this study qualitative and quantitative method of data collection was used. Data was collected from education officials, students, teachers and documents. And the instruments used for data collection were tests, questionnaire, interview and observation.

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive method. And percentage was used for the quantitative data.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Language in Education

Without language no education can take place. "Experts in communication believe that it is through their use of language that students assimilate a large amount of knowledge, concepts and skills from the school subjects. They unravel the wealth of a school subject by reading, discussing and writing about it. This role of a language becomes particularly important when it also serves as a language of learning" (Marew, 2000:65). That is why "the important issue in every educational context is the choice of the right language of learning" (Atlaye 2001:9). Accordingly, some countries use mother tongue as medium of instruction while others use language of wider communication and in some countries bilingual education is used as a solution where mother tongue is used in elementary school then the language of wider communication is introduced at some stage.

2.1.1. Mother Tongue Education

According to Cummings (2000) cited in Alem (2006: 226) "if the mother tongue of the student and the language used as a medium of instruction match, it is possible to conclude that mother tongue education is being practiced. However, mother tongue of the student may be given as a subject giving the instruction in another language (using another language as a medium of instruction). This kind of educational process cannot be mother tongue education".

"Mother tongue is the language the child acquires when he/she is exposed to during early childhood. Mother Tongue is used interchangeably with native language, first language and minority languages" (Meselech 2005:11) Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) cited in Alem (2006: 223-5) defines mother tongue from different perspectives. "Concerning origin mother tongue is the language that we acquired or learned first. It is the language that we tried to

communicate for the first time. In terms of identification, mother tongue is one's symbol of identity. Internally, one can consider his/her mother tongue to be his/her symbol of personality and identity. And externally, mother tongue is the language used to group someone with a certain nationality or speakers of a language. From view point of competence mother tongue is a language that one knows best and speaks fluently. In terms of function mother tongue is a language that the speaker uses in his/her daily life".

2.1.1.1. The Need for Mother Tongue Education

Mother tongue education is important for different reasons. Most importantly, children's cognitive development can be assured through mother tongue education. There are also psychological and social advantages of mother tongue education. "It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs, and Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through unfamiliar linguistic medium" (UNESCO 1953 cited in Fasold 1984: 293 and Alem 2006: 228-9).

"The informational function of language dominates the classroom and the mother tongue is capable of performing it perfectly well. The importance of classroom instruction in the mother tongue in the early years of a child's education, has been demonstrated in a large body of research, which has proved that cognitive development is achieved faster if the mother tongue, rather than if a language of wider communication (LWC) is used as the language of instruction (LOI) in primary education" (UNESCO, 1953; Bamgbose, 1984, Akinnaso, F.N. 1993; Yates 1995 cited in Ogutu 2006: 42).

According to Ogutu (2006: 43), “children who start their formal education through mother tongue, which they already know, do not need to put extra effort on language acquisition. They can thus concentrate on grasping the content of the subject being taught, be it reading or writing skill, mathematics, science or whatever”.

“Using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in elementary grades (3-4 years) is seen to have two advantages. First, it underlines the importance of the community’s cultural heritage and seeks to instill pride in the local language. Second, it is believed that cognitively it is the most suitable medium to start learning new concepts already learned and stored in their mother tongue” (Kembo-Sure 2006: 21).

Based on research result in the field Obanya (1999), Benson (2003), and Ouane (2003) as cited in Alem (2006: 229-31) presents the importance of mother tongue education as follows:

- For children, mother tongue education is decisive in cognitive development.
- Compared to second and foreign languages mother tongue is a language which enables people to learn, know and understand quickly. So giving educational instruction through it can make the teaching learning process straightforward for both the learner and the teacher.
- Children can develop their reading and writing skills effectively and efficiently if they are taught through their mother tongue.
- Mother tongue education can pave the way for children to have improved educational understanding by improving their cognitive and academic development.
- Mother tongue provides a strong basis for second and foreign language learning.
- Neglecting the learner’s mother tongue in the school is tantamount to neglecting the learner. So to support the learner in the school context, it

is necessary to give the educational instruction through mother tongue. What is more, since providing children with their mother tongue education is their right, governments have the duty to do so.

According to Kembo-Sure (2006: 31) "individuals have the right to learn and use their mother tongue to the level that enables them to participate meaningfully in the affairs of their country. This includes the individual's right to receive critical public services in the language of his choice and preferably in his mother tongue".

'By denying children a chance to operate in their mother tongue, we are condemning them to a life of self doubt, some thing that counts educated Africans in all fields of learning and at whatever level of education" (Kembo-Sure 2006:37).

"A UNESCO committee of experts, meeting in 1951, took the point of view that the well being of individual children is the most important consideration in making this (language to use as a MOI) decision. This led them to recommend that the mother tongue of learners should be used as the language of instruction from the beginning of school and should continue to be used as long as possible" (Fasold 1984: 311).

2.1.1.2. Challenges surrounding The Implementation of Mother Tongue Education

"The use of vernacular mother tongues in education in the larger majority of the countries of the world is quite simply outside the realm of the possible. Nevertheless, some increased use of indigenous languages instead of world language is desirable in many settings" (Fasold 1984: 305).

Taking Africa (which is a continent with diversified languages) into consideration Alem (2006: 228-9) identified the following main challenges for mother tongue education to be practiced.

- In Africa there are challenges for mother tongue education since there are thousands of languages in the continent.
- Using many languages in a country's curriculum as a media of instruction disturbs a country's unity and sovereignty; it divides a country.
- Including mother tongue in a curriculum interrupts national as well as international relations.
- African languages cannot describe modern science and technology.
- Linguistically diversified African towns are not convenient for mother tongue education.
- African languages but English, French and Portuguese are not given value, and then they should not be used as media of instruction. This means more value is given to English, French, and Portuguese than the indigenous African languages in Africa.
- Since most Africans have negative attitudes towards all their languages, it is impossible to practice mother tongue education.
- Most African languages have no script; therefore, they can not be used as media of instruction.
- It is impossible to teach through a lot of national languages in the economically poor continent Africa.
- Giving more emphasis to mother tongue education may cause forgetting the other languages.

2.1.2. English: a Language of Wider Communication

It is obvious that English is used all over the world, in fact, in different levels; as a mother tongue, as a second language, and as a foreign language and accordingly in different proficiency levels. "The study of English as a school

subject goes back to the nineteenth century when Britain was seen as a symbol of nationalism and had to be established in the curriculum to replace the classical languages like Latin and Greek and to compete French” (Kembo-Sure 2006: 18).

“English is a powerful language in world politics, world economy, and global security. It is of paramount importance in state administration or machinery. Needless to say, English is ubiquitous and indispensable; switch on a computer the language it uses is English; touch a cell phone- it uses English; step into a bank-communication is in English; open most news papers and switch on a television- they use English” (Mutassa 2006: 82).

According to Gills (2002a) cited in Mutassa (2006: 81-2) English is:

- Working language of international organizations and conferences
- Scientific publications
- International banking, economic affairs and trade
- Advertising for global brands
- Audio-visual cultural products (e.g., films, TV, popular music)
- International tourism
- Tertiary education
- International safety
- As a ‘relay language’ in interpretation and translation
- International law
- Internet communication

“In the minds of many people, there is no longer an issue. They argue that English has already become a world language by virtue of the political and economic progress made by English speaking nations in the past 200 years and is likely to maintain so, gradually consolidates its position. According to conservative estimates mother tongue have now reached 300m/n; a further

300 million use English as a second language; a further 100million use it fluently as a foreign language” (Crystal 1997: 358).

Generally, communication is the purpose of language. And all languages play this role but in different scopes. The role of communication that local and national languages can play is not equal to the role that an international language can play. For example, I need to speak Kunama to communicate with the people in Kunama Wereda which is found in Tigray region. I need Tigrinya in Tigray, Amharic in Ethiopia, but I need to speak English to communicate with the world people. Accordingly, English is used as a medium of instruction in high school and taught as a subject starting from grade 1 in Ethiopia. Then, if English is used as medium of instruction starting from grade 9, it should be taught effectively in elementary school. This is the focus of my study.

2.1.2.1. The Need for English as MOI

If it is useful to use English to communicate internationally, “there is no much debate on the usefulness of English in the classroom, other than when it concerns marginalization of one’s mother tongue in lower levels of education” (Ogutu 2006: 50). But, there is debate in limiting the non-marginalization of one’s mother tongue only at the lower grades. UNESCO experts, in 1951 meeting, recommended that “Mother tongue of learners should be used as the language of instruction from the very beginning of school and should continue to be used as long as possible” (Fasold 1984:311). In Ethiopia, mother tongue education is limited to grade 8 then English is introduced as medium of instruction in grade 9.

“There are some scholars who favor the use of language of wider communication as language of learning raising different rationales to argue for its importance. The main importance that the scholars raise for the use of language of wider communication as a medium of instruction is that this kind of language has advantage for upward mobility or for worldwide

communication so that learners can be proficient in this language that makes them competent in the economic world” (Neilson and Cumming 1997 cited in Altaye, 2001). This does not mean it is not socially constructed advantage to use languages of wider communication to facilitate personal or societal development. It simply means those who are able to use languages of wider communication are more advantageous than those who are not able to do so.

“In order to make students acquire rapidly and efficiently the LWC, the methods suggested are giving it as a subject as early and switching the medium to it after the completion of basic education or after children have acquire native language literacy skills as possible” (Altaye 2001:11) because “native language literacy skills act as important support for development of second language literacy skills” (Neilson and Cumming 1997 in Altaye, 2001:11).

The continued use of imported European languages has been defended in various ways but the most salient ones are:

“They are already standardized and since most teaching materials already exist in these languages, it is more economical to continue using them.

They provide access to the existing knowledge in science and technology, which Africa needs badly if it has to develop economically and industrially.

They provide media for international communication trade, diplomacy, higher education, tourism etc” (Kembo-Sure 2006: 20).

2.1.2.2. Factors Affecting English Teaching

During transition from mother tongue to language of wider communication as medium of instruction, students are expected to have adequate proficiency of the language, English in our case. However, the effectiveness of teaching the language is affected by different factors such as shortage of desks, in sufficient space, size of class, textbooks, teachers’ training, knowledge, attitude,

motivation, experience etc and methods of teaching. Method of teaching which can also be affected by the other factors is the most important issue in affecting effectiveness of teaching English. "There are a number of methods but they can be categorized into two: the traditional and modern methods. Sometimes they are known as the teacher-centered and learner-centered respectively" (Meselech 2005: 27).

2.1.2.3. The Learner-Centered Approach

Nowadays, learner-centered approach to language teaching which focuses on communicative method is widely accepted. "If we are to teach authentic language, we want to stimulate authentic situations, or real life, as closely as possible, in order to prepare students for the situations they will encounter and use the language. The classroom is not the real world, but a learner-centered classroom, in which students are expected to interact with each other and with the materials, in which they are expected to both create and extract meaning, is closer to the real world than a teacher-centered one" (Plass, 2001: 309).

In real life situation, people have communicative purpose to use language. We speak to tell people what they do not know or to ask them what we want to know or to respond. Then to make language teaching effective we have to make the teaching learning process similar to the communicative need of language in the real life situation. We do not have simply to order the learner to speak, write, read, and listen without creating purpose to do so. We have to make the process natural.' "One more dimension of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is its learner-centered and experience based view of second language teaching" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 69). We are fairly sure that it can, if nothing else speeds of acquisition over "Natural methods" (Ellis, 1990 in Plass 2001: 311). It is likely, in fact, that many aspects of language learning can take place only through natural process, which operate when a person is involved in using the language in communication' (Littlewood, 1981: 17-8).

“Students must be made to feel secure, unthreatened and non defensive in CLT classroom, so teachers using CLT should avoid adopting a teacher-centered authoritarian posture” (Tylor 1983 cited in Yonas 2008: 146).

2.1.2.4. The Teacher-Centered Approach

The teacher-centered approach is a traditional model of classroom teaching which do not give learners opportunity to practice language skills. “The short comings of teacher centered methods have led to bring about changes and introduce the new student-centered or [sic. active learning] approach. The new method paves the way for the learner’s active participation under the guidance of the teacher” (Meselech 2005: 29).

Contrary to the student-centered approach “a teacher-centered methodology is based on the theory that the student is an empty vessel, waiting to be filled with knowledge, the teacher simply pours in the knowledge, and the process is complete, what is known as the transmission model” (Plass, 2001: 311). “This approach gives the priority role and responsibility to the teacher. The teacher is considered as source and the student as recipient. This approach includes methods like recitations and classroom lectures” (Meselech, 2005: 27).

This approach makes learners passive participants and dependent on the teacher. It does not consider the fact that one can learn to speak by speaking, to write by writing, to read by reading, and to listen by listening. “It is clear that a teacher-centered approach does not capitalize on all the opportunities for learning that a learner-centered approach does. It fails to allow for different learning styles; neither does it encourage students to develop study skills and strategies for learning, to “learn how to learn”. It does not promote opportunities for problem solving or creativity on the part of the students” (Plass 2001: 311).

2.1.3. Bilingual Education

Since the role language plays in teaching is crucial, language policy should be given special attention in education. "One of the most crucial language planning decisions that a country can make is the determination of a language to serve as the medium of instruction in schools" (Fasold 1984: 292).

A language to be used as a medium of instruction should be chosen carefully considering its advantages and disadvantages. "In actual fact, the medium of education issue is often presented as a choice between the language that is already in place, usually a world language, and one or more small group vernaculars. Perhaps a reasonable compromise would be to give special priority to national languages over small-group vernaculars, as media of instruction where an alternative to a world language is needed" (Fasold, 1984: 304).

In countries where many languages are spoken the choice of language as medium of instruction is of great importance. "In most of Africa, the preferred language policy is three language formula (3 plus or minus) where children are introduced to the school environment in their mother tongue as medium of instruction as they learn the language and an imported language as a subject" (Kembo-Sure, 2006: 21). This means mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction and at the same time taught as a subject. And the imported language is first given as a subject and then used as medium of instruction. However, these four things can not be always true; one of them can be missed. For example, mother tongue may not be given as a subject while it is used as a medium of instruction.

According to Kembo-Sure (2006:21) "the strong defense of this policy is that it is a perfect compromise between denying children the use of language of their culture completely and denying them sufficient access to an international language".

“Pedagogically, the literacy process should start from the known to the unknown that is from mother tongue to the official language. The consequence of a system that does not have a bridge from mother tongue to the second language is a deterred linguistic competence” (Nforbi 2006: 89).

Kembo-Sure (200:21) underscores the difficulty in operating the three language formula or bilingual education that entails transition from mother tongue to a second language at some stage. According to him there are so many questions to ask but very few answers are available.

- At what level should the transition to L2 as medium occur?
- Should the transition affect all subjects or should mother continue being used to teach selected subjects
- Should code switching be allowed in class even if for only the initial stages of shifting to L2?

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1. Source of Data

Teachers, students and documents were used as Source of data to pursue the objectives of the study.

3.2 Sampling Procedures

The research generally is about the transitional problem from Tigrinya to English as media of instruction In Tigray. But only one wereda i.e Weri-Leke was taken as a sample because of different constraints like money and time and three elementary schools and two secondary schools were taken as sample schools in the wereda to collect data using observation. Interview was conducted with teachers in two elementary school and questionnaire was prepared for teachers in the secondary schools/9-10/. A kind of test was conducted in one high school. However, the document, analyzed concerns the whole schools in the wereda. All the sample schools were selected randomly. In the elementary schools grades 5-8 were taken in to consideration to see how English is taught.

In grades 1-4 teachers teach all subjects and it is already assumed by the teachers in the wereda that the way English is taught is not good. Because the teachers are not English teachers. In secondary schools grades 9-10 are taken in to account. Because Grades 11-12 are not that much influenced by the transitional problem since they have experience of using English as medium of instruction and more or less developed their English proficiency in their 3 or 4 years experience.

3.3. Instruments of Data Collection

Observation, questionnaire, interview, document and test were instruments of data collection of the study. Observation was used to see how the students in

high school are using English to learn other subjects and how they are taught English in elementary school to do so i.e to transfer from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction smoothly. Interview was conducted to ask elementary school English teachers why they do not use student centered approach while teaching English. Questionnaire was prepared and distributed for high school teachers to gain information about transitional problem from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction, the reasons behind the problem and its effects. In Addition to the information gained using questionnaire and Observation a kind of test was prepared and given to grade "9" students to see how language difficulty can hinder the students to learn effectively. It was given in both Tigrinya and English to see the difference. Finally, document was analyzed to examine the over all educational activities in the wereda related to quality education.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Language difficulty to learn other subjects in high

School

It is obvious that language plays a crucial role to achieve the objective of teaching. With out having adequate knowledge and skill of the language of education no effective learning can take place. For effective learning to take place, learners are expected to listen and comprehend what is said by the teacher and take notes, to write their assignments, to read and understand their notes and their text book as well as other written materials, to ask and answer questions to make discussions with their teacher and their peers through the language of learning. To do so, students need to have adequate proficiency in the language they use to learn other subjects. However, the observation made the test Administered, the questionnaire distributed, the document analyzed indicate that the students in high schools of wereda Werileke do not have a good command of the English language to learn the subjects effectively.

I observed that students are not able to answer and ask questions in English. They say a single content word or two and most of them do not try to answer questions. This happens because of two reasons. Either they are not able to understand the question or they have no English words to express their ideas. I observed that some students were confused and were asking what some words mean. This indicates that the new words hinder them to understand the subject matter or the whole sentence or paragraph. Some students were trying to answer questions using one or two words. This implies that the students understand the subject matter but they have no English words and skill to answer the questions in an organized and complete sentence. And other students were not willing to answer questions at all. However, when the teachers force them to answer, they answer questions correctly. This also

means that the students understand the questions but they are not confident enough in using English to answer questions. The students are more interested in mass answering. This makes them feel unexposed. More over, most of the students can not understand the subject matter if only English is used while teaching.

To solve this problem the teachers must switch to Tigrinya when they ask questions. I have not observed any teachers who do not switch to mother tongue while teaching and asking questions. This highly increases students' participation. It was observed that teachers code switch to explain concepts, to paraphrase ideas, to give real and elaborated examples, and to give meanings to new words. For most of the teachers, it is difficult to relate what is in the text book to the environment using English. The teachers switch codes in word level and sentence level.

When the students are ordered to discuss in groups what they can do is either to say something in Tigrinya or to keep silent. The students use Tigrinya to interact with each other and elaborate ideas during group discussion.

In the questionnaire 50 teachers were asked about the students' interest in learning in English and their participation. Almost all of the respondents (48/50) responded that the student' interest towards learning in English and their participation is low and most of them (44/50) responded that it is because of language difficulty. This means the students are not motivated to learn subjects because they do not know the language they are learning in well.

The teachers were also asked whether or not they switch to mother tongue while teaching and all of them (50/50) answered that they switch to mother tongue and most of them (45/50) responded that their code switching is because the students can not understand the subject matter if mother tongue

is never used. (46/50) of the teachers responded that language difficulty affects the students' Academic achievement seriously.

When the teachers were asked whether the students' attitude towards the teachers' code switching is positive or negative, all of them (50/50) responded that the students' attitude towards the teachers' code switching is positive.

4.1.1 Students' result

To see to what extent the English language difficulty can affect students' learning; a test was prepared in both English and Tigrinya. A story was presented to 40 students in both languages and they were asked to write and speak what they listen as well as to read and comprehend the story in both languages. The result gained from the test given in both English and Tigrinya is presented and interpreted as follows.

The result was recorded qualitatively as Excellent, Very good, Satisfactory, Fair, And Poor.

English

items	results				
	Excellent	Very good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
writing	2	5	9	12	11
Comprehension	1	2	6	18	13
speaking	-	1	4	15	20
average	1	2.7	6.3	15	14.6

As can be seen in the above table, in average, 15 students scored fair and 14.6 students scored poor while only 1 student scored excellent and 2.7 students scored very good when they were examined in English.

Tigrinya

items	results				
	Excellent	Very good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Writing	14	8	10	6	2
Comprehension	18	12	4	2	2
speaking	13	9	7	6	5
average	15	9.6	7	4.6	3

However, when the exam was given in Tigrinya, in average, only 3 students scored poor and 4.6 students scored fair while 9.6 students scored very good and 15 students scored excellent. This implies that the students are not good in their academic achievement not because they are cognitively poor to learn but because they do not know the language they are learning in well.

When we come to the document analysis the information gained from the document indicates that students in high School are highly affected by the transition from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction without having adequate English proficiency. The following data about the students' failure and dropout rate in 2009/10 academic year was taken from the report presented in the document in the wereda i.e Weri-leke education office.

4.1.2 Students' failure

In the 1st cycle schools in (1-4), 16483 students participated in the final exam and 731 (4.34 %) of them scored below 50%. In the 2nd cycle schools (5-8), 1020 out of 14066 (7.25 %) students scored below 50%.

In the secondary school (9-10), 1999 out of 4274 (46.7%) scored below 50% and in the preparatory school (11-12), 6 students out of 834 (0.72%) scored

below 50%. This implies that language difficulty is one of the factors that highly affect high school students' academic achievement. The fact that 46.7 percent of the students in grades 9-10 and only 4.1 percent in other grades failed shows that 42.5 of the students in grades 9-10 failed because of language difficulty. It can not be because of other factors. For example, comparing to the lower grades we can say that the failure is caused by the subject matter difficulty because the more the grade level increases the more the subjects become difficult. But if this were the case, failure would increase in grades 11-12. But it is otherwise. And from the view point of introducing new subjects, the case is also quite the opposite. New subjects such as chemistry and physics are introduced in grade 7 and subjects such as economics and business are introduced in grade 9. Therefore, if introducing new subjects were the case for students' failure more students would have failed in grades 7-8 and 11-12 than in grades 9-10. The only new thing introduced in grade 9 is the language of instruction. So, it can imply that 42.5% of the students in grade 9-10 failed because of language difficulty. Teachers in high school also approved in the questionnaire that the effect of language difficulty in high school is reflected as students' failure.

4.1.3 Students' drop out rate

Out of the 16723 students enrolled in the first cycle, 240 (1.4%) of them dropped out. 345 out of 14411 (2.39%) in second cycle, 218 out of 4492(4.8%) students in secondary school and 22 out of 856 (0.50%) students in preparatory school dropped out in the first semester of the 2009/10 academic year. Just like the students failure, the language difficulty affects students' dropout rate in high school. The dropout rate of students is higher in grades 9-10 than in other grades.

Generally, the document indicates that the test result of the students in grades 9-10 is very low and the drop out rate is high compared to other grades. One of the reasons that students in grades 1-8 scored high is because they learn in

their mother tongue. And in grades 11-12, failure highly decreases. And one of the factors for the decrement of failure in these grades is that the students in these grades relatively improve their English proficiency as a result of using the language as a medium of instruction for more years. And the other reason is that those who did not fail in grades 9-10 are academically good compared to those who failed in those grades regardless of language difficulty which is common factor for both. What is more the number of student who scored below 50% .i.e the number of students who failed in grade 9 is more than 50% because they are directly affected by the transitional problem.

4.2 Factors Affecting Quality Education

According to the documents in the woreda education office in which teachers' recommendations are reported, the following are the major problems evaluated on the basis of quality education including English teaching.

- Lack of deep evaluation and criticism and lack of dedication to take necessary measures.
- Externalizing one's problem believing that every problem is made by others. According to the educational officials' recommendation reported in the document, teachers believe that educational quality is decreasing because Tigrinya is used as language of learning in grades 7-8. Therefore, the problem is problem of policy; the teachers believe. In the questionnaire distributed to the teachers in high school, the teachers responded that the reason behind the students' lack of English proficiency is that they learn all subjects in Tigrinya in the whole elementary school (1-8). The teachers do not also agree with the policy that supports teaching children by one teacher in grades 1-4. Generally, teachers in grades 9-10 argue that the reason behind the weakness of students in high school is using Tigrinya as medium of instruction in grades 7-8; criticizing the policy. Teachers in grades 5-8 also criticize the first cycle for the weakness of the students in grades 5-8. The other

problem of policy that the teachers do not accept is the belief that the students' failure is the teachers' failure. Teachers are expected to promote as many students as possible from grade to grade and to bring back or to convince students who dropped out their education to come back to school going where they are. Other wise they are evaluated and considered to be poor teachers.

- Educational officials have shortage of (wrong perception about) the educational polices and strategies.
- Lack of effective and supportive supervision.
- Lack of control of the educational activities.
- Teachers and principals are not working according/following / the rules and regulations.
- Shortage of teaching aids to give organized education.

Generally the following are teachers' attitudes towards quality education.

- Students are becoming weak because the way students are taught in elementary school is inappropriate, students in grades 1-4 should not be taught by one teacher and English as medium of instruction should start in grade 7.
- Educational quality can not be assured with out fulfilling educational facilities
- Trainings are not enough to develop teachers capacity
- Our region has no adequate budget and wealth. That is why quality education is declining in our region compared to other regions.
- The wereda educational office believes that students' failure is teachers' failure and the wereda decides the number of students to promote from Grade to Grade and teachers are evaluated accordingly. Therefore, teachers are forced to add marks for their own sake. This means students promote from grade to grade with out acquiring adequate knowledge, this is the main reason for the declining of quality education.

- The teachers' results and ranks given by individuals /principals / are not related to the realities on the ground
- The teachers salary is not enough
- There is shortage of text books in the schools.
- Teachers result should not be compared with the students' results.

Because other factors that can affect students result are not fulfilled.

We have seen earlier that language difficulty (lack of English proficiency) is one of the reasons that highly affect the students' academic achievement. And what we are dealing with here is the reason behind the students' lack of English proficiency. Then the information listed above can show the factors affecting quality education of which English language education is one. The factors can directly or indirectly affect the effectiveness of English teaching. Factors such as shortage of text books and other educational facilities like teaching aids can directly affect quality of education in general and English teaching in particular. And factors such as low teachers' salary and others can affect quality education indirectly. Because, if there is no motivated staff, quality of education can not be assured.

4.3 Other factors affecting English teaching

4.3.1 Teachers training and Experience

Generally the teachers who teach English in elementary schools have not received special training to teach English. As we have seen earlier, teachers in grade 1-4 teach all subjects including English. And even the teachers who teach in grades 5-8 are not English but language teachers. However, this does not mean that the teachers did not receive any kind of training about how to teach English. That simply means the teachers did not take major subject areas to teach a special subject in their formal training in colleges. In other words they are not specialized teachers. The teachers who teach English in the wereda are divided into three as self contain teachers, language teachers, and English teachers who teach in grades 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12 respectively. Self

contain teachers take courses about general methods of teaching, language teachers about methods of language teaching, and English teachers about methods of teaching English.

This means there is no English teacher with special training to teach English language in the whole elementary school (in grades 1-8). There are only 13 English teachers in the wereda who teach English in secondary and preparatory schools. When we see the in service trainings given to develop English teachers, there are 24 TTI teachers attending their diploma courses in summer program. Out of them, 6 are government sponsored and 18 are self sponsored trainees. And there are 12 diploma holders (language teachers) attending their degree program, 11 government sponsored and 1 self sponsored. There are also 63 other language teachers attended a special training to develop their English. According to the teachers recommendation reported in the document the trainings given to develop teachers' capacity are not enough. Comparing to the demand in the wereda, the trainings given are not enough. But, I have no data about the quality of the trainings.

In addition to their trainings their work experience can affect the teachers' effectiveness in teaching. Out of the total 841 teachers in the wereda 703 are not entitled full teachers. 240 are beginners and 363 are medium.

The following table shows the teachers title according to their work experience.

	TTI	Diploma	Degree	Total
beginner	27	158	55	240
medium	176	159	28	363
teacher	38	64	8	101
higher	8	12	9	29
associate	17	10	4	31
leading	37	34	1	68
Total	299	437	105	841

4.3.2 Class size

Since there is shortage of classrooms and other facilities, the number of students in each class ranges from 48-60. There is no class having less than 48 students. This was proved during classroom Observation. I mean I never observed a having students below 48 and above 60.

Not only is the shortage of classrooms but also shortage of teachers the reason for having large number of students in a class. There are 36482 students and 841 teachers in the wereda. This means the teacher student ratio is 1:43. When we come to English teachers in grades 5-8 the number of language teachers is totally 165 who teach three languages English, Amharic, and Tigrinya. This means every English teacher teaches 262 students a day having 30 contact hours. This in turn means every English teacher has 6 classes to teach a day. And this in turn means there are 43.7 students in each class.

The teachers' recommendation also proved that the classroom situation is not conducive to use student-centered approach while teaching. According to the teachers' recommendation reported in the document, it is impossible to bring about quality education since the classroom situation is difficult to manage.

For teaching learning process to be student-centered every student in the class should have opportunity to participate or to practice his/her language in the classroom. However it is impossible to do so in classes with large number of students. For example, if 10 minutes is given for a student 500 minutes is needed to give opportunity for every student in a class having 50 students. But, the time allotted for one period is 40 minutes.

4.4 Method of teaching English in elementary school.

It was observed that student-centered approach to teaching is not practiced. Students are passive participants. The teacher dominates the class. The

students do not use English to interact with each other. During my observation I never observed a student who uses a complete English sentence to answer and ask questions.

When students are ordered to discuss in groups, they are not willing to do so. They simply sit doing nothing. Even those who try to discuss do not use English in their discussion. The only thing the students and the teacher can do, I observed, is the teacher spends almost all the time in writing every thing in the text book on the blackboard and repeating what is written in the text book as it is and the student by copying what is written on the black board. The teachers and the students can not express ideas using their own words.

Interviews were conducted with the elementary school English teachers concerning the methods of teaching English. During the interview, the teachers were asked why they do not use student-centered approach or communicative method of teaching. Some responses are presented as follows.

- I know we are told that we have to use student centered approach in teaching English. However, the students have very negative attitude towards using student - centered approach. They want us to talk a lot and they want to simply listen what is said by the teacher./respondent1/
- I try to use student-centered approach when there is supervisor. Because we are expected by the supervisors to use student-centered approach but I always use teacher-centered approach. Because the customers /students/ are not satisfied if you do not talk a lot. The students appreciate a teacher who talks a lot in class by himself and they evaluate us accordingly. So I try to use student-centered approach only if there is supervisor. Other wise I use teacher-centered approach./respondent 2/
- The students have no any opportunity to use English out side the classroom. So when I try to make discussion about a real life situation in classroom, students are not able to communicate real

information and they feel bored. They are interested to listen what is said by the teacher and copy what is written on the board. This forces me to use teacher- centered approach./respondent 3/

- I always heard that student centered approach should be used. However, the method of teaching we are told to use and the real situation in the schools do not match. For example, there are above 50 students in my class. Then, when I order them to make groups and discuss with their peers, the noise they make disturbs the class. What is more the speech they make is not about the topic they are told to discuss and the language they use is not English but Tigrinya. They are not also disciplined and it is very difficult to control them because they are many in number./respondent 4/
- If you can see the contents in the text books do not match with the curriculum or the supposed methodology to be used. The contents invite the students to depend on the teacher./respondent 5/
- We are expected to cover the content on the text book in the given semester or academic year. Then If I try to give all the students opportunity to practice the language by speaking, Writing, Reading, and listening /I think this is student- centered approach/ I can not cover the content in the given time. /respondent 6/
- The only thing that we can use to teach is the text book. Even the instructions in the text book are not applicable in this classroom situation and by these students capacity. If you ask the students to role play a story as is put in the text book it is nothing but wasting time. No student can try to do so./respondent 7/

As can be seen from the teachers' responses listed above, different reasons can force teachers to use teacher-centered approach to teaching which is not generally acceptable in language classes, though they know what student-centered approach is and that it should be used in language teaching. The teachers' responses show that the large number of students in class, students' lack of exposure outside classroom to practice English, lack of educational facilities, students' discipline, shortage teaching materials, shortage of time, the contents in the text books, students' negative attitude towards using student-centered approach force them to use teacher-centered approach to teach English.

As is stated in chapter two, " if we are to teach authentic language , we want to stimulate authentic situations, or real life ,as closely as possible, in order to prepare students for the situations they will encounter and use the language" (Plass 2001: 311). However, for students to use authentic language there should be conducive environment. Students who have opportunity to practice language outside classroom are interested to communicate real information in classroom. But, this is not the case in the wereda. For the students to make real interaction with their peers, their teacher, and materials, they need their teachers' assistance, supervision, and control. To do so, however, there should be as small number of students as possible. But, in the wereda, the number of students in each class is large ranging from 48-60. To practice language skills, all the students in the classroom need to have opportunity to write, listen, speak, and read in the classroom and they need to receive feed back from their teacher to take corrections. But the time allotted is not enough to do so in classes in which one teacher teaches 50 and above students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary

It is true that education is the key for the development of science and technology which in turn facilitates the overall development of a given society. Every scientific innovation is a result of education. So a development of countries without modern education is inconceivable. However, it seems that modern education has been neglected in Ethiopia for far too long, though all the rulers of the country were ambitious to see developed Ethiopia. What is more, even after the introduction of modern education in Ethiopia in the 20th century, it remained at a very low level of development. The educational system had a number of problems from the very beginning till the current Ethiopian government has established a new education and training policy in 1994, which brought about a dramatic change in the country's socio-economic development. Since then so many schools have been built through out the country. However, this does not mean that the educational system is without problem currently.

There are many challenges in the educational system especially in the quality of education, most notably, because of the problem of language of instruction. The constitution of the current government (EPRDF) allows, if not force, the regional states in Ethiopia to use their local languages as media of learning the whole elementary school. And English is taught as a subject from grade 1 to 8. This is being practiced in some regions of Ethiopia including Tigray. The problem here is the transitional problem from the local language (Tigrinya in our case) to English as medium of instruction. Thus, this problem was the focus of my study.

Then to study the problem the following questions were raised:

- ❖ To what extent lack of English proficiency hinders students in high school to learn other subjects effectively?

- ❖ What are the reasons behind the problem?
- ❖ What are the effects of the problem?

To address these problems students, teachers, and educational officials were used as sources of information. And questionnaire, interview, test, observation, and document analysis were instruments used to collect data. The data was analyzed using descriptive method and percentage.

Accordingly, the following findings were obtained.

The test given in Tigrinya and English indicates that students are good in writing, understanding, and speaking in Tigrinya but not in English.

According to the document in the wereda education office 4.3% of the students in grade 1-4, 7.25% in grade 5-8, 46.7% in grade 9-10, and 0.72% in grade 11-12 failed in the first semester of the 2009/10 academic year. And 1.4% of the students in grade 1-4, 2.39% in grade 5-8, 4.8% in grade 9-10, and 0.5% in grade 11-12 dropped out in the same semester.

Concerning class size, the number of students in each class ranges from 50-60 in the elementary schools of the wereda.

When we see the teachers' training, there are no specialized English teachers in the elementary schools. 24 TTI certificate holders are attending their diploma courses in summer program while 12 diploma holders are attending their degree courses in the same program. Other 63 language teachers attended a special training about language teaching. However, this is not enough. Note that this training concerns only language teachers.

When we come to the teachers' experience, 240 teachers are beginners, 363 are medium, 38 are full teachers, 29 are higher, 31 are associate and 68 are leading. The titles are given according to their work experience.

There are different factors affecting quality of education and English teaching in the wereda such as externalizing one's problems believing that there is problem of policy that causes decrement of quality education, shortage of text books, teaching aids, as well as other educational facilities, and others.

5.2. Conclusion

Using observation, interview, questionnaire, test, and document analysis as instruments some findings were obtained about the central problem i.e the seriousness of the problem that students face in high school as a result of lack of English proficiency, the reasons behind the problem, and its effects. Therefore, based on the findings obtained the following conclusions were drawn.

Students in high school do not have well enough English command in all skills. Because of this language difficulty the students' participation in asking and answering questions in class is low. And they are demotivated to learn. Students code switch to Tigrinya while they discuss in groups and teachers do the same while teaching and asking questions.

Students' academic achievement is highly affected by language difficulty to learn subjects in grades 9 and 10. As a result, students' failure is very high in these grades. 46.7% of the students failed in grades 9-10. Dropout rate of students is also high in grades 9 and 10 compared to other grades.

Class size, teachers' lack of proficiency and skill, shortage of text books, shortage of time, disagreement between teachers and educational officials on

educational policies and strategies, students' negative attitude towards using student-centered approach to teaching are the reasons behind using teacher-centered approach and the students' lack of English proficiency that cause their failure in high school.

Moreover, teachers do not agree with the policy that manifests if self in using Tigrinya as a medium of instruction in grades 1-8. They believe that English as a medium of instruction should start in grade 7 so that students can develop their English proficiency. Teachers do not also accept that teachers in elementary school (1-4) should teach all subjects.

Other factors affecting quality of education are lack of effective supervision, evaluation and necessary measures, unsmooth relationship between the educational officials and teachers in the woreda.

5.3. Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusions drawn the following are worth recommending for bringing about quality education and effective English teaching so that transition from Tigrinya to English as medium of instruction will be smooth.

Teachers cannot be effective in teaching if there is disagreement with the administrative bodies. The officials should not simply order teachers to do something without convention.

If it is so teachers cannot teach students with full dedication and enthusiasm. And this can hurt quality education. Then the academic staff (teachers) and the administrative staff (principals and other officials should come to consensus on the educational policies and strategies as well as their implementation. Instead of blaming one another for the decreasing of quality education and trying to externalize one's problem, it is advisable that the officials and teachers should try to narrow down the gap between them and they should have smooth

relationship to work cooperatively for the sake of bringing about quality education including the English improvement. To do so all the responsible bodies should do their level best.

By motivating teachers quality of education and effective English teaching can be assured. Therefore, instead of ordering to do what they do not want and do not believe in, teachers should be motivated. The students' results should not be compared to students' results unless the facilities that can affect students result are not fulfilled.

And teachers' results and ranks given by the individual principals should not be personal and should be fair and related to the realities.

It is obviously accepted that it is impossible to reduce the socio-economic and technological problems of a country without developing its citizens through effective education. So to make education effective, the language through which it is given should be given more attention. Accordingly, mother tongue education is being practiced in Ethiopia for its own advantages. But, as long as English is used as a medium of instruction in high school for its other advantages, it is recommended that government should invest a lot to teach students English in elementary school in order to make the transition from mother tongue to English as media of instruction smooth. Additional classrooms should be built to decrease the number of students in each class so that student-centered approach to teaching can take place. Educational facilities like teaching aids, textbooks and desks and other materials should be fulfilled. Teachers' salary should be improved.

Teacher's training plays a vital role in teaching in general and language teaching in particular. Mother tongue and second language/foreign language should be taught in different ways. Therefore, only qualified English teachers should teach English. It is not advisable that one teacher should teach all

subjects in elementary school. Adequate trainings should be given to English teachers to develop their knowledge and teaching skills. This idea goes with Kembo-Sure's statement that "teacher training is has an absolutely vital role to play in the molding of teachers. In many parts of Africa, it is assumed that teachers at primary-school level can teach all subjects. This misconception is costly both to pupils and society those who involved in training primary school teachers should consider letting trainees learn to teach those subjects in which they have special interest. This kind of training is especially important when training primary school teachers as they will lay the foundations for all language development. It is imperative that only those qualify should be trained, and that, because language is crucial for the learning of other subjects, teachers of language should be given not just general training, but specific training in language teaching (Kembo-Sure 2000:309-310).

Another factor that affects effective language teaching is time. Language should be practiced. So sufficient time should be given to English classes, since the students have not opportunity to be exposed to practice English in real life, English clubs should established and there should be English day in schools to practice English outside the classroom.

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Appendix 1

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND PHILIOLOGY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

It is obvious that students in high school can face problems of different reasons that cause academic failure. However, this study focuses only on the problems related to language. This questionnaire is helpful to gain information about how language is used as medium of instruction. So to make this study successful, your participation in filling this questionnaire is of great importance. Therefore, I request you to fill the questionnaire carefully and genuinely. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Personal details

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Status: Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ MA ☐
3. Specialization: Biology ☐ Chemistry ☐
 History ☐ Geography ☐
 Other, specify _____
4. School: Maiknetal ☐ Weri ☐
1. Students interest towards learning in English (using English as a language of learning/
 High ☐ Average ☐ Low ☐

2. Students participation (asking and answering questions/ in classroom

High Average Low

3.If your answer for question number is low it is because of

- Lack of English proficiency
- Problem of teaching method
- Negative attitude towards the language of learning
- Lack of interest because of language difficulty

4. The degree of code switching to mother tongue during classroom discussion

High Average Low

5. Do you switch to mother tongue while teaching

Yes No

6. If your answer for question number 5 is yes it is because

- I have lack of English proficiency to explain some important points in English
- I am not good enough in English to give some real and elaborated examples
- The students can not understand the subject matter if mother tongue is never used
- It is important to explain to explain some concepts in mother tongue

7. Students interest towards your code switching to mother tongue while teaching

Positive Negative Moderate

8. Language difficulty of the students affects their academic achievement

Seriously To some extent Never affects

9. What do you think are the practical problems the students can face due to language difficulty when they join high school?

They fail ☐ they drop out ☐ They miss appropriate ☐
knowledge ☐ other, Specify _____

10. What do you think is the reason behind the students' lack of
English proficiency?

Explain Please _____

11. What do you suggest to over come the problem?

12. Do you allow students to use Tigrinya to ask and answer
questions?

Yes ☐

No ☐

13. If your answer for question number 12 is yes why?

14. If your answer for question number 12 is No why?

Thank you for your Cooperation!

APPENDIX 2

Classroom observation Checklist for students language use as medium of instruction in high school

Name of the school.....

Subject.....

Grade.....

Section.....

Date of observation.....

Period.....

Topic.....

Observe:

- Students participation in asking and answering questions
- Students code-switching:
 - To interact with each other during group discussion
 - To ask and answer questions
 - To give meanings to words
- Students' interest towards using English to answer:
 - Comprehension questions using their own words

- Questions which need short answers
- Mass answering
- Raising their hands to answer questions individually
- Teacher's code-switching to:
 - To explain concepts
 - To give meaning to new words
 - To paraphrase ideas
 - To give real and elaborated examples
- In word level
- In sentence level

APPENDIX 3

Classroom observation check list for English classes in elementary school

Name of the school-----

Grade-----

Section-----

Date of observation-----

Period-----

Time from -----to -----

Topic-----

Observe:

- Number of students in the class
- Availability of text books
- Availability of desks
- Pair and group works
- Number of students in each group
- Students' participation in asking and answering questions
- Time give to the students to practice language skills
- Is the class dominated by the teacher's lecturing or the students' participation?
- Students' code-switching
- Teacher's code-switching

APPENDIX 4

Number of schools

Number of students

Number of teachers

Teachers' training

Teachers' experience

Students' failure

Students' dropout rate

Factors affecting quality education

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Kidu Atakilti

Signature: _____

Place: institute of language studies, Addis Ababa University

Date of submission: June, 2010