

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

A Study on English as a Medium of Instruction at the Second
Cycle Primary Schools of Cheha Woreda in Gurage Zone:
Reflections by Grade 5 Students and Teachers

By Yilkal Chalachew

June 2007

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By Yilkal Chalachew

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Approved by Examination Board:

Advisor

Signature

Date

Examiner

Examiner

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Abstract

“... Without language in one form or other, there can be no intellectual development (Langeveld, 1957:437).

Following the downfall of the Dergue regime in 1991, Regions and Zones have been adopting their respective nationality languages as media of instruction in primary schools. This has been grounded by the New 1994 Education and Training Policy that decrees ‘primary education(Grades 1-8) will be given in nationality languages,’ and ‘English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education.’ However, since 2004 the Gurage Zone has adopted English medium of instruction starting from Grade 5 that is two to four years earlier than many other Regions and Zones of the Country do. All first cycle primary schools (Grades 1 to 4) of the Zone employ Amharic as a medium of instruction.

This research paper, therefore, attempts to assess both students’ and teachers’ perceptions, assumptions and attitudes as regards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. In order to do so, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis have been used as data collection tools. Randomly selected students and teachers of three primary schools as well as two Cheha Woreda education officials took part in the present research.

The findings show that the current level of both students’ and teachers’ English proficiency is perceived to be inadequate to use English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level. Besides, there is also a widespread perception by both students and teachers that using English as medium of instruction helps students to improve their standard of English and to join higher learning institutions.

And finally a set of recommendations have been made based on the major findings of the present Study.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AMOI.....	Amharic Medium of Instruction
BICS.....	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP.....	Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency
CUP.....	Common Underlying Proficiency
EMOI.....	English Medium of Instruction
FL.....	Foreign Language
FLES.....	Foreign Language in Elementary School
GOE.....	Government of Ethiopia
L1.....	First Language
L2.....	Second Language
MOE.....	Ministry of Education
MOI.....	Medium of Instruction
MT.....	Mother Tongue
MTE.....	Mother Tongue Education
TGE.....	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TV.....	Television
SUP.....	Separate Underlying Proficiency
UIE.....	UNESCO Institute for Education
UNESCO.....	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization

Appendix A : Students' Questionnaire (Amharic)

መጠይቅ /ለተማሪዎች/

ውድ ተማሪዎች፤

ይህ መጠይቅ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ክፍል ለድህረ ምረቃ ት/ት ማሟያ ለሚሆን ጥናት የሚውል ሲሆን አላማውም በጉራጌ ዞን በቸሀ ወረዳ ት/ቤቶች ውስጥ የሚማሩ የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች እንግሊዘ ኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀማቸው ያላቸውን አስተያየት ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

በዚህ መጠይቅ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በሙሉ ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውልና በሚስጥር የሚያዝ በመሆኑ የተሟላና ትክክለኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ዓላማ መላካት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋጽኦ እንደምታደርጉ እምነቴ ነው። ለዚህም በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይልቃል ቻላቸው

<p>የት/ት ቤቱ ስም -----</p> <p>ፆታ -----</p> <p>የአፍ መፍቻ ቋንቋ -----</p>
--

መመሪያ: የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች በጥንቃቄ ካነበብክ/ሽ በኋላ መልስህን/ሽን በተቀመጠው ሳጥን ውስጥ « ✓ » በማድረግ መልስ/ሽ::

1. አሁን ያለህ/ያለሽ የእንግሊዘኛ የአማርኛ እና የጉራጊኛ ቋንቋዎች ችሎታ ምን ይመስላል?

	በጣም ጥሩ	ጥሩ	መጠነኛ	በጣም ዝቅተኛ	ምንም አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. እቤት ውስጥ ሲነገር የምትሰማው/የምትሰሚው ቋንቋ

	ሁልጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	አንዳንዴ	አልፎ አልፎ	ሰምቼ አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. ሰፈር አካባቢ ሲነገር የምትሰማው/የምትሰሚው ቋንቋ

	ሁልጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	አንዳንዴ	አልፎ አልፎ	ሰምቼ አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. በት/ቤት ቅጥር ግቢ ውስጥ/ከክፍል ውጭ/ ሲነገር የምትሰማው/የምትሰሚው ቋንቋ

	ሁል ጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	አንዳንዴ	አልፎ አልፎ	ሰምቼ አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. በክፍል ውስጥ ሲነገር የምትሰማው/የምትሰማው ቋንቋ

	ሁል ጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	አንዳንዴ	አልፎ አልፎ	ሰምቼ አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. አስተማሪዎችህ/አስተማሪዎችሽ ክፍል ውስጥ ለማስተማር ከሚጠቀሙባቸው ቋንቋዎች ለመረዳት የሚያስችግርህ/የሚያስችግርሽ?

	ሁል ጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	አንዳንዴ	አልፎ አልፎ	ፈጽሞ አያስችግረኝም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. እንደአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪ በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ የመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ እንዲሆን የምትመርጠው/የምትመርጭው?

- የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ
- የአማርኛ ቋንቋ
- የጉራጊኛ ቋንቋ
- እንግሊዘኛ በአማርኛ እየታገዘ
- እንግሊዘኛ በጉራጊኛ እየታገዘ

ሌላ ካለ ግለፅ/ጭ _____

8. እንደ አምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪ እንግሊዘኛን እንደመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀም/በመጠቀምሽ ሊኖሩት ከሚችሉት ጥቅሞች ጋር ምን ያህል ትስማማለህ/ትስማሚያለሽ?

	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስ ማምም	በጣም አልስማማም
▪ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታዬን እንዳሻሽል ይረዳኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ከቀረው አለም ጋር ለመተዋወቅ ያግዘኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ በአማርኛ ለመረዳት አስቸጋሪ የሆኑ ሀሳቦችን ለመረዳት ያግዘኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ወደ ከፍተኛ የት/ት ተቋም ለመግባት ያግዘኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ለወደፊቱ የተሻለ ሥራ ለመያዝ ይረዳኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ተጨማሪ የማጣቀሻ መጽሐፍት አንብቦ ለመረዳት ያግዘኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ሌሎች ጥቅሞች ካሉ ግለፅ/ጭ ----- ----- -----					

9. እንደ አምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪ እንግሊዘኛን እንደመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ መጠቀም ሊኖሩት ከሚችሉት ጉዳዮች ጋር ምን ያህል ትስማማለህ/ትስማሚያለሽ?

	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስ ማምም	በጣም አልስማማም
▪ በክፍል ውስጥ ንቁ ተሳትፎ እንዳላደርግ እንቅፋት ይሆንብኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ የአንድን ት/ት ይዘት በአግባቡ ለመረዳት ያዳግተኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ እራሴን እንዳልገልፅ እንቅፋት ይሆንብኛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ በተማሪውና በአስተማሪው መካከል ሊኖር የሚችልን ንቁ ውይይት ይቀንሳል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ተማሪው ከክፍል ቀሪ እንዲሆን ይጋብዛል -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• ሌሎች ጉዳዮች ካሉ ግለፅ/ጭ ----- ----- -----					

Appendix B: Teachers' Questionnaire (Amharic)

መጠይቅ (በመምህራን የሚሞላ)

ውድ መምህራን

ይህ መጠይቅ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ክፍል ለድህረ ምረቃ ት/ት ማሟያ ለሚሆን ጥናት የሚውል ሲሆን አላማውም በጉራጌ ዞን በቸሀ ወረዳ ት/ቤቶች ውስጥ የሚማሩ የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች እንግሊዘኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀማቸው መምህራን ያላቸውን አስተያየት ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

በዚህ መጠይቅ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በሙሉ ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውልና በሚስጥር የሚያዝ በመሆኑ የተሟላና ትክክለኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ዓላማ መሳካት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋጽኦ እንደምታደርጉ እምነቴ ነው። ለዚህም በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይልቃል ቻላቸው

የት/ቤቱ ስም _____

የታ _____

የሚያስተምሯቸው የት/ት ዓይነቶች: _____

የት/ት ደረጃ _____

አሁን ያለዎት የእንግሊዘኛ የአማርኛ እና የጉራጊኛ ቋንቋዎች ችሎታ ምን ይመስላል?

	በጣም ጥሩ	ጥሩ	መጠነኛ	በጣም ዝቅተኛ	ምንም አላውቅም
እንግሊዘኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
አማርኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ጉራጊኛ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

መመሪያ: የሚከተሉትን ሀተታዎች በጥንቃቄ እያነበቡ መልስዎን ከእያንዳንዱ ሀተታ ጎን ስር ተቀመጥተው ሳጥኖች መካከል በአንዱ ውስጥ « ✓ » በማድረግ ይመልሱ።

ተ.ቁ	ሀተታዎች	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
1	በአማርኛ መማር በእንግሊዘኛ ከመማር ይልቅ የተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ፍላጎት ይጨምራል ።					
2	በአማርኛ መማር በእንግሊዘኛ ከመማር በተሻለ ፍጥነት ለተማሪዎቹ የትምህርቱን ይዘት እንዲረዱ ያግዛችዋል ።					
3	በአማርኛ ማስተማር በእንግሊዘኛ ከማስተማር የተሻለ መምህሩ/ሯ የሚያስተምረውን/የምታስተምረውን ትምህርት ለተማሪዎቹ በጥልቀት ለማስረዳት ያግዘዋል/ያግዛታል ።					
4	በአማርኛ ማስተማር ዋናው ችግሩ አንዳንድ ቃላትን መተርጎም አስቸጋሪ ስለሆነ ነው ።					
5	በት/ቤታችን ያሉ የመማሪያ እና ዋቢ መጽሀፍት ከአማርኛ ይልቅ በእንግሊዘኛ በብዛት ይገኛሉ ።					
6	በአማርኛ ማስተማር ተማሪዎችን ያለገደብ እንዲያወሩ ስለሚረዳ የክፍል ውስጥ ስነስርዓትን ያውካል					
7	በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንግሊዘኛን እንደ ማስተማሪያ/መማሪያ ቋንቋ ለመጠቀም የሚያስችል በቂ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ አለኝ ።					
8	የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን እንደመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ ለመጠቀም የሚያስችል በቂ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ አላቸው።					
9	በአማርኛ ማስተማር በትምህርታቸው አነስተኛ ውጤት ለሚያስመዘገቡ ተማሪዎች ጭምር ያለው ዕዝገባ ውስን ነው ።					
10	በትምህርታቸው የላቀ ውጤት የሚያስመዘገቡ ተማሪዎች ሁሉንም የት/ት ዓይነቶች በእንግሊዘኛ ቢማሩ ይበልጥ ይጠቀማሉ ።					
11	በዚህ ት/ቤት በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ መጠቀም የተማሪዎችን ትምህርት የመቀበል አቅም ይገድባል ።					
12	ቋንቋ ነክ ያልሆኑ የት/ት ዓይነቶችን /ሒሳብ መሰረታዊ ሳይንስ፣ የህበረተሰብ ሳይንስ/ በአማርኛ ማስተማር የተማሪዎችን የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ መሻሻል ይገድባል ።					
13	ቋንቋ ነክ ያልሆኑ የት/ት ዓይነቶችን/ ሒሳብ ፣መሰረታዊ ሳይንስ፣ የህብረተሰብ ሳይንስ/ ከአማርኛ ይልቅ በእንግሊዘኛ ማስተማር ይቀላል።					
14	ቋንቋ ነክ ያልሆኑ የት/ት ዓይነቶችን የሚያስተምሩ መምህራን ለተማሪዎቻቸው የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ መሻሻል አገዛ ማድረግ ይችላሉ ።					
15	የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ ከአምስተኛ ክፍል መጀመራቸው ለወደፊቱ ስራ የማግኘት እድላቸውን ይጨምራል።					
16	የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ የመጠቀሙ ሁኔታ ጥራት ያለው ትምህርት ከማዳረስ አንጻር ውጤታማ ነው።					

Appendix C: Students' Interview (Amharic)

ቃለ መጠይቅ (ለተማሪዎች)

ውድ ተማሪዎች፤

ይህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ክፍል ለድህረ ምረቃ ት/ት ማሟያ ለሚሆን ጥናት የሚውል ሲሆን አላማውም በጉራጌ ዞን በቸሀ ወረዳ ት/ቤቶች ውስጥ የሚማሩ የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች እንግሊዘኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀማቸው ያላቸውን አስተያየት ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

በዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በሙሉ ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውልና በሚስጥር የሚያዝ በመሆኑ የተሟላና ትክክለኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ዓላማ መሳካት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋጽኦ እንደምታደርጉ እምነቴ ነው። ለዚህም በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይልቃል ቻላቸው

1. እንደ አምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪ እንግሊዘኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀምህ/ሽ ያጋጠሙህ/ሽ ችግሮች አሉን? ካሉ ዘርዘር/ሪ/።
2. ለጥያቄ አንድ መልስህ/ሽ «የለኝም» ከሆነ የሚሰጡትን ትምህርቶች እንዴት ለመረዳት እንደምትሞክር/ሪ ግለጽ/ጭ/።
3. ክፍል ውስጥ መምህራን ትምህርቶቻቸውን ሲያስተምሩ ከእንግሊዘኛ አማርኛ እና ጉራጊኛ ቋንቋዎች መካከል በተደጋጋሚ የሚጠቀሙባቸውን ቋንቋዎች በቅደም ተከተል አስቀምጥ/ጭ/።
4. በት/ቤታችሁ አምስተኛ ክፍል ውስጥ የሚያስተምሩ መምህራን የሚያስተምሩትን ት/ት ለማስተማር የሚያስችል በቂ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ አላቸውን?
5. በት/ቤታችሁ ውስጥ የተማሪዎችን የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ ለማሻሻል የሚረዱ ጥረቶች ካሉ በዘርዘር አስረዳ /ጂ/።
6. እንደ አምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪ እንግሊዘኛ እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀምህ/መጠቀምሽ ያገኘሃቸውን/ያገኘሻቸውን ጥቅሞች ዘርዘር/ሪ/።

Appendix D: Teachers' Interview (Amharic)

ቃለ - መጠይቅ/□□□□□□/

ውድ መምህራን፣

ይህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ክፍል ለድህረ ምረቃ ት/ት ማሟያ ለሚሆን ጥናት የሚውል ሲሆን አላማውም በጉራጌ ዞን በቸሀ ወረዳ ት/ቤቶች ውስጥ የሚማሩ የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች እንግሊዘ ኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀማቸው መምህራን ያላቸውን አስተያየት ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

በዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በሙሉ ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውልና በሚስጥር የሚያዝ በመሆኑ የተሟላና ትክክለኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ዓላማ መሳካት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋጽኦ እንደምታደርጉ እምነቴ ነው። ለዚህም በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይልቃል ቻላቸው

1. የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች የሚማሯቸውን የት/ት ዓይነቶች መረዳት የሚያስችል በቂ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ አላቸው ብለው ያምናሉን?
2. እንደ አምስተኛ ክፍል አስተማሪ እንግሊዘኛ □ እንደመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ □□□□□□ኛ □□□ □□□ መጠቀም ለተማሪዎች ያስገኘላቸውን ጥቅሞች ይዘርዘሩ?
3. በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንግሊዘኛን እንደመማሪያ /ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀም ያጋጠሙዎት ችግር/ችግሮች አሉን? ካሉ ይዘርዘሩ/።
4. አሁን በመተግበር ላይ ያለውን በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንግሊዘኛን እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ የመጠቀሙ ሁኔታ ላይ ተወያይታችሁ ታውቃላችሁን?
5. ክፍል ውስጥ ሲያስተምሩ ከእንግሊዘኛ አማርኛ እና ጉራጊኛ ቋንቋዎች መካከል በተደጋጋሚ የሚጠቀሙባቸውን ቋንቋዎች በቅደም ተከተል ያስቀምጡ?

Appendix E: Education Officials Interview (Amharic)

ቃለ - መጠይቅ /የቸህ ወረዳ ትምህርት ባለሙያዎች/

ውድ የቸህ ወረዳ የትምህርት ባለሙያዎች፣

ይህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ በአ/አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ክፍል ለድህረ ምረቃ ት/ት ማሟያ ለሚሆን ጥናት የሚውል ሲሆን አላማውም በጉራጌ ዞን በቸህ ወረዳ ት/ቤቶች ውስጥ የሚማሩ የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች እንግሊዘኛ እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀማቸው የቸህ ወረዳ ትምህርት ባለሙያዎች ያላቸውን አስተያየት ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

በዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በሙሉ ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውልና በሚስጥር የሚያዝ በመሆኑ የተሟላና ትክክለኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ዓላማ መሳካት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋጽኦ እንደምታደርጉ እምነቴ ነው። ለዚህም በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይልቃል ቻላቸው

1. ከዚህ ቀደም አሁን በመተግበር ላይ ያለውን የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ እንደ መማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ ከመጠቀም ጋር በተያያዘ የተካሄደ ጥናት ካለ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
2. የአምስተኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን እንደመማሪያ/ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ ለመጠቀም የሚያስችል በቂ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታ አላቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?
3. በአምስተኛ ክፍል ደረጃ የቸህ ወረዳ እንግሊዘኛን እንደመማሪያ /ማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ በመጠቀሙ በወረዳው የትምህርት ጥራት ላይ ያሳደራቸው አሉታዊ ጎኖች ካሉ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
4. እስካሁን ያጋጠሙ ችግሮችን ለመፍታት የተደረጉ ጥረቶች ካሉ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
5. ለወደፊቱ ወረዳው ሊያካሂደው ያሰበው ጥናት ካለ ቢያብራሩልኝ?

Appendix F: Students' Questionnaire (English)

Students' Questionnaire on English Medium of Instruction in Second Cycle Primary Schools of Cheha Woreda (Gurage Zone)

Dear students,

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore both students' and teachers' views towards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. The study will be used as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Addis Ababa University.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will see the completed forms. So I kindly request you to provide complete and accurate information to the questionnaire items.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Yilkal Chalachew (the Researcher)

Respondent's Data

Name of the School: _____

Sex: _____

Mother tongue language: _____

Instruction

Please indicate your opinion by marking “✓” against your response to each item.

1	What do you think your current level of proficiency in the following languages is?	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Extremely low
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
2	How often do you hear the following languages at home?	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
3	How often do you hear the following languages in the neighborhood (outside home)?	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
4	How often do you hear the following languages in the school compound (outside classrooms)?	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
5	How often do you hear the following languages in the classroom?	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
6	How often do you have difficulties in understanding the following languages when used in the teaching/learning process	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
a	English					
b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
7	What language do you think should be a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level?					
a	English					

b	Amharic					
c	Gurage					
d	English supported with Amharic					
e	English supported with Gurage					
f	Other(if any)					
8	Being a Grade 5 student, to what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is an advantage of English medium of instruction?	Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a	Helps to improve my standard of English					
b	Gives more exposure to the international culture					
c	Helps to understand course content and concepts difficult to express in Amharic					
d	Helps to join higher learning institutions					
e	To get better job opportunities					
f	Helps to understand reference materials in English					
	Others(if any)					
9	Being a Grade 5 student, to what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is a disadvantage of English medium of instruction?	Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a	Discourages active participation in class					
b	Makes it difficult to understand the course content					
c	Stops me from expressing myself in Class					
d	Discourages discussion and interaction between students and teachers					
e	Urges students to dropout					
	Others(if any)					

Appendix G: Teachers' Questionnaire (English)

Teachers' Questionnaire on English Medium of Instruction in Second Cycle Primary Schools of Cheha Woreda (Gurage Zone)

Dear teachers,

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore both students' and teachers' views towards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. The study will be used as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Addis Ababa University.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will see the completed forms. So I kindly request you to provide complete and accurate information to the questionnaire items.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Yilkal Chalachew (the Researcher)

Respondent's Data

Name of the School: _____

Sex: _____

Subjects teaching: _____

Educational Qualification; _____

What do you think your current level of proficiency in the following languages?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Extremely low
English	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Amharic	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Gurage	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Instruction

Please indicate your opinion by marking “✓” against the appropriate option for each question.

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	I don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Lecturing in Amharic can bolster students' interest in learning more than lecturing in English.					
2	Lecturing in Amharic allows the lesson to progress faster than lecturing in English.					
3	Lecturing in Amharic allows a teacher to go deeper into the content of the lesson than lecturing in English.					
4	The greatest problem in using Amharic as the medium of instruction is the need to translate a lot of special terms.					
5	Resources for teaching, e.g., textbooks and reference books, are more plentiful in English than in Amharic.					
6	Teaching a class in Amharic encourages students to speak uninhibitedly, thereby disrupting the order of the class.					
7	I feel I have good level of English proficiency that enables me to teach my subjects in English comfortably at Grade 5.					
8	I feel that the English proficiency of Grade 5 students is adequate for them to study non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies and Mathematics) in English					
9	Even studying every subject in Amharic will not help students with poor academic performance.					
10	Students with good academic performance should study all subjects in English.					
11	English as the medium of instruction will certainly lead to poorer student intake.					
12	Using Amharic to study non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies and Mathematics) will negatively affect students' English proficiency					
13	It is easier to teach non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics) in English than in Amharic.					
14	I think non-language teachers could help students improve their level of English proficiency					
15	I feel that the adoption of English- medium instruction at Grade 5 level helps to create better career opportunities later in students' lives.					
16	I feel that English-medium instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda is successful in terms of the provision of quality education to school children.					

Appendix H: Students' Interview (English)

Students' Interview

Dear student,

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore both students' and teachers' views towards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. The study will be used as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Addis Ababa University.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. So I kindly request you to provide complete and accurate responses to the following questions.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

- 1) Do you have any difficulties in understanding lessons in English? If 'Yes', please mention the major ones?
- 2) How are you then trying to cope with your lessons?
- 3) Which languages do your teachers use more frequently in class while teaching?
- 4) Do you think that teachers who teach in Grade 5 have adequate level of English proficiency to use it as a medium of instruction?
- 5) Does your school make additional efforts to improve students' level of English proficiency?
- 6) Do you think that you are benefiting out of the current English medium of instructions policy at Grade 5?

Appendix I: Teachers' Interview (English)

Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore both students' and teachers' views towards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. The study will be used as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Addis Ababa University.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. So I kindly request you to provide complete and accurate responses to the following questions.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

- 1) Do you think the current level of Grade 5 students' English proficiency is adequate to use English as a medium of instruction?
- 2) Do you think the current English MOI is benefiting students in Grade 5?
- 3) Being a Grade 5 teacher, what difficulties are you facing due to the adoption of English as a medium of instruction?
- 4) Have you ever had any discussion(s) with other teachers on the current English MOI policy?
- 5) Which language do you prefer as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level?

Appendix J: Educational Officials' Interview (English)

Interview with Cheha Woreda Education Officials

Dear Education officials,

This is to request your participation in a research study to explore both students' and teachers' views towards the adoption of English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in the Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone. The study will be used as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Addis Ababa University.

The information you provide will be kept confidential. So I kindly request you to provide complete and accurate responses to the following questions.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

- 1) Is there any study or research conducted so far (by the Office or any other institution or independent researcher) to assess the impact of English medium of instruction on students' academic performance?
- 2) Do you think the current level of Grade 5 students' English proficiency is adequate to use English as a medium of instruction?
- 3) What major and common difficulties has the Cheha Woreda Education office experienced due to English medium of instruction in relation to the provision of quality education to Grade 5 students?
- 4) Are there any remedial efforts that the Cheha Woreda Education Office has made to improve students' English language proficiencies?
- 5) Does the Cheha Woreda Education Office have any plan to conduct a study on its English medium of instruction practice in the future?

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

It is true that these days educational systems worldwide have shown interest in the adoption of English as a medium of instruction (Marsha, 2006:16). Similarly, Ethiopia is also using English as a medium of instruction particularly in secondary and tertiary education system. This is clearly stipulated in the 1994 Education and Training Policy. According to the New Education and Training Policy (1994), the medium of instruction at the primary level (grades 1 to 8) has become the local language(s) that regional/zonal council approves.

Nevertheless, in Gurage Zone, native Gurage-speaking children of primary schools are taught in Amharic from Grades 1-4. These children, unlike most other government school children, are taught all non-language subjects through English starting from Grade 5 which is two to four years earlier than many other schools do in the country. This has led the researcher to raise questions whether these children could really benefit from using English as a medium of instruction at this stage or grade level.

According to Marsha (2006:12), teaching in English, without adoption of appropriate language-sensitive curricula and methodologies, inevitably leads to confusion, despair and high drop-out rates. Not only this, but successful language learning/ acquisition usually depend on the amount, quality and richness of input.

Do these students, having learnt English as a subject with only 5 periods¹ of instruction per week for 4 years (Grades 1-4); enter Grade 5 classes with a proficiency level that would enable them to use English as a medium instruction? Learners' ability to participate meaningfully in school learning activities is intimately linked to their proficiency in the language of learning at school (Cummins, 1984; Ortiz, 1997). This implies that limited English proficiency learners who enter classes where English is the language of learning encounter serious problems in coping with their academic work.

¹ One period takes 45 minutes

This was what initiated the researcher to work on this particular area. Accordingly, attempts have been made to assess views of Grade 5 students and teachers with regard to using English as a medium of instruction. The study also tried to investigate some of the major problems faced by 5th graders and their teachers in relation to English medium of instruction at Grade 5.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) – the two most recent United Nations conference declarations focusing on education – recognize quality as a prime condition for achieving ‘Education for All’ (UNESCO, 2003). The Dakar Framework affirms that quality is ‘at the heart of education’. Goal 2 commits ‘nations to providing primary education ‘of good quality’. Goal 6 includes commitments to improving ‘all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills’ (UNESCO, 2003).

How can this quality issue be ensured in education? The researcher believes that whether the instruction is conveyed through a familiar language (for both the students and teachers) can, among other things, be considered as a major factor. According to the New 1994 Education and Training Policy, ‘primary education will be given in nationality languages.’ Following this New Education and Training Policy, like many other Regions and Zones of the country, the Gurage Zone of the SNNPRS has registered some changes with regard to medium of instruction in its primary schools. Before August 2004, the Zone had been using Amharic from Grades 1 to 6 and English from Grade 7 onwards respectively as media of instruction.

Later, however, since September 2004(1997EC), the Zone has adopted English medium of instruction starting from Grade 5. Students from Grades 1-4 learn English as a subject with 5 periods of instruction a week. The researcher also feels, from personal experience and observations, that these schools are not really well-resourced ones particularly in terms of English language teaching/learning endeavours. Cognizant of these and other real existing contexts of many primary schools in the Cheha Woreda, ‘can English MOI be a successful educational model at Grade 5?’ was the question that came into the head of the researcher.

This is because the researcher believes that children are likely to learn new concepts when they can readily understand the language the message is conveyed through.

Gravelle (1996:2) claims that almost all learning involves language, whether in written or spoken form. For learners it is the language used in the classroom that will be most demanding. It is thus imperative for learners to obtain a level of English language skills that will lead to the achievements of their academic goals. A child who faces difficulties to understand a given new concept may also gradually develop negative attitude towards that language of instruction.

Hence, in this paper attempts have been made to address the following research questions;

- What are Grade 5 students' perceptions, assumptions and attitudes regarding teaching and learning through English medium of instruction?
- What are teachers' perceptions, assumptions and attitudes regarding teaching and learning through English medium of instruction at Grade 5?
- What difficulties do Grade 5 students face in learning through English medium of instruction?
- What difficulties do teachers face in teaching through English medium of instruction?

1.3 Significance of the Study

English has been introduced in Ethiopia as a medium of instruction partly to offset the problem of children arriving in school with different first languages (Marsha, 2006:31). This may be true in schools like the Gurage Zone or Cheha Woreda ones which opted for Amharic from Grades 1-4 and English from Grade 5 onwards respectively as media of instruction. Grade 5 students of the Zone are the first group of students who enter to English medium of instruction after a four years instruction through Amharic in the earlier four grades.

Hence, it was essential to assess whether these students were benefiting out of this change and what their perceptions looked like. Accordingly, the findings of the present Study would be significant in igniting a further discussion among concerned bodies on the theme under discussion. Further, English medium of instruction at Grade 5 level is practiced not only in

Gurage Zone but in other Zones of the same Region as well as other Regions of the country. So the study could also serve as a starting point for further studies.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

Questionnaires and interviews were the major data collection instruments used to collect data for the present study. A total of 169 students and 25 teachers participated in the students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire respectively while 34 students and 15 teachers attended their respective interviews. However, the study did not involve parents which could have been helpful to the comprehensiveness of the study due to time constraint.

And secondly, the number of primary schools targeted for this Study was only three out of the thirteen ones in the Woreda; Emdibir, Aba Fransua and Gassore. So the findings of this Study could have some limitations to make generalizations beyond the scope of Cheha Woreda. Furthermore, it could have been very helpful if there had been an analysis on students' results of the grade 8 national examinations; this did not happen so because it is by the coming 2008 that the first group of students who entered English MOI will sit for this examination.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Ethiopia's Linguistic Situation

According to the World Bank (2006), the population of Ethiopia is 74,777,981 as of July 2006, making the country the second populous in Sub-Saharan Africa. And different sources show that the country is composed of no fewer than 80 ethnic groups with distinct languages and/or dialects and cultural features (GOE 1998). According to the latest census data of the country, conducted in 1994, speakers of the three major Ethiopian languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna) constitute 70% of the entire population. The table below also provides the major languages, in this case with more than half a million speakers, as per the 1994 census data.

Table 1: Ethiopian Major Languages, 1994 Census Data

No	Language	Mother Tongue Speakers	Ethnic Group Members
1	Afan Oromo	16,777,975	17,088,136
2	Amharic	17,372,913	16,010,894
3	Somali	3,187,053	3,139,421
4	Tigrigna	3,224,875	3,284,443
5	Gurage	1,881,574	2,290,332
6	Sidama	1,231,674	1,842,444
7	Wolayta	1,231,674	1,268,445
8	Afar	965,462	972,766
9	Hadiya	923,957	927,747
10	Gamo	690,069	719,862
11	Gedeo	637,082	639,879
12	Kaffa	569,626	599,146

(Adapted from Hudson 1999:89 – 108, cited in MOE (2007))

The federal language, Amharic, is introduced as a subject at Grade 3 in most non-Amharic Zones or Regions while English is taught as a subject starting from Grade 1. Amharic also serves as a lingua franca throughout the country whereas the functional use of English

language is limited in civil society. It is used for very high-level functions, e.g. legislation, higher education learning, and international affairs. The present Study refers to Second Cycle Primary School students of Cheha Woreda where most of them are members of the 5th ethnic groups of the nation, Gurage (see Table 1).

2.2 Background of the Current Ethiopian Education System

Following the downfall of the Dergue regime in 1991, Ethiopia has entered into the process of transformation towards a more civil society (Walter, 1999:37). This transformational process has led to numerous socioeconomic and political policy reforms. Central to reforms in the education sector, according to Walter (1999:37), are *'changes in the school curriculum, the decentralization of education, the use of regional languages for instruction (as opposed to the former use of the national language, Amharic), and multiple perspectives in addressing diversity issues in education.'*

These recent reforms in education began with the Ministry of Education (MOE) document, *Education and Training Policy* (MOE,. 1994). This document begins by describing major problems of the educational system. These include: problems of relevance, quality, accessibility, equity, mode of delivery, inadequate facilities, insufficiently trained teachers, and shortages of books and other teaching materials. In response to these challenges, this document recommends changes in the school curriculum, language of instruction, teacher education programs and the examination system.

These reforms were deemed necessary strategies for making education more responsive to educational reform objectives which included: 'greater emphasis upon problem solving at all levels, increasing the numbers of teachers needed for greatly increasing demands, wiser use of resources, increasing democratic culture, more efficient dissemination of science and technology, and making education more responsive to societal needs'(Walter, 1999:24-26). The reform policy priorities require a change in the school curriculum, improvement in the professional development of teachers, the use of regional languages for primary education, and specialized training of kindergarten and primary education teachers. The policy further

proposes conducting a national examination at grade eight in order to certify the completion of primary education.

The new 1994 Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia has placed considerable emphasis on languages in education, with changes affecting the roles of Amharic and English and, for the first time, incorporating other indigenous languages in the school curriculum. Amharic retained its official status as national language but not its role as medium of education at primary level (except, of course, in regions where Amharic is the designated 'nationality language'). **The new 1994 Education and Training Policy** decreed that:

- Cognizant of the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education will be given in nationality languages.
- Making the necessary preparation, nations and nationalities can either learn in their own language or can choose from among those selected on the basis of national and country wide distribution.
- The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area.
- Amharic shall be taught as a language of country wide communication.
- English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education.
- Students can choose and learn at least one nationality language and one foreign language for cultural and international relations.
- English will be taught as a subject starting from Grade one.
- The necessary steps will be taken to strengthen language teaching at all levels.

(The 1994 Education and Training Policy)

Following this new Education and Training Policy, regional languages are currently used as mediums of instruction at the primary level (Grades 1 - 8)². Primary education is divided into two cycles. The first cycle ranges from Grades 1-4, while the second cycle extends from

² The use of nationality languages, however, is not uniform across primary schools of the nation. Some Zones/Regions use their nationality languages throughout primary schools while others only in the first cycle primary school levels. And few others such as the Gurage Zone preferred to use non-nationality languages; Amharic in the first cycle and English in the second cycle of primary schools mainly due to the presence of high level of multilingualism in the region.

Grade 5-8. According to the Education Sector Development Program Action Plan (1999:8), those who teach at the second cycle should be trained in two-year teacher education colleges. In light of this requirement, Teacher-Training Institutes (TTIs) that used to provide a one-year certificate program have been changed to two-year colleges for the education of second cycle primary teachers. Yet though some were able to change the medium of instruction from English to their nationality languages, there are some Colleges which still use English language as the medium of instruction. In some regions, this is so partly because they have a lot of first languages in their regions. As a result, ‘there are still many primary schools where graduates of the colleges who have been educated in English, however, teach in primary schools in the vernacular languages of the various regions of the country’ (MOE, August 1999 Annual Report).

This incompatibility between languages of instruction and language in which graduates will actually teach is becoming a major issue as it was also debated during the Ninth Annual Education Conference organized by the Ministry of Education(August 1999). At this event a number of Regional Education Bureau officials expressed concern that graduates of Teacher Training Colleges are less capable of teaching in the vernaculars.

2.3 Definitions of some Important Terms

The terms mother tongue language, second language, foreign language, bilingual/multilingual education and medium of instruction have been used in various ways in the literature. In this paper, these terms are used as follows.

Mother tongue language (L1) and mother tongue education (MTE)

“The mother tongue is typically the first language of the child and the language of the home. Mother tongue education is education via the mother tongue. Mother tongue education implies a linguistically homogeneous community, a teacher who speaks this language, and curriculum materials in the mother tongue.” (Walter, 1999:15).

Mother tongue instruction generally refers to the use of the learners’ mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Additionally, it can refer to the mother tongue as a subject of

instruction. It is considered to be an important component of quality education, particularly in the early years. UNESCO (2003:11) also points out that ‘the expert view is that mother tongue instruction should cover both the teaching of and the teaching through this language.

Second language (L2)

The MOE (2007:28) Study Report defines ‘second language’ as follows;

“In most part of the world, people learn a second language which is widely used in local, regional or national contexts. This L2 is used for several purposes in society and often functions as a lingua franca to bridge communication gaps between different linguistic communities, and is used regularly in places or contexts like local government offices, hospitals, shops, radio, TV etc. This language can be used as the language of learning and teaching or medium of instruction (MOI), especially when it follows on from sound MTE. Under certain circumstances, where there are high levels of multilingualism, it is possible for students to attend school in a second language which is closest to the language or one which the learner already knows well.”

Foreign language (FL)

The MOE (2007:28) Study Report defines ‘foreign language’ as follows:

“Languages which are considered to be significant for international communication are often highly prized in African countries. In Ethiopia, for example, the preferred international language, English, is known by so few people that it remains a foreign language. The functional use of a foreign language is limited in civil society. It may be used for very high-level functions, e.g. legislation, university education, and international affairs. However, the foreign language does not function as a viable lingua franca in the everyday lives of people (e.g. in: hospitals, clinics, police stations, other local government offices, shops: on radio and TV).”

Bilingual/Multilingual Education

Bilingual and multilingual educations refer to the use of two or more languages as mediums of instruction. In much of the specialized literature, the two types are subsumed under the term bilingual education. However, UNESCO (2003) adopted the term ‘multilingual education’ in 1999 in the General Conference Resolution 12 to refer to ‘the use of at least

three languages, the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education.’ *“In regions where the language of the learner is not the official or national language of the country, bilingual and multilingual education can make mother tongue instruction possible while providing at the same time the acquisition of languages used in larger areas of the country and the world,”*(ibid: 6-8).

Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction in or out of school refers to the language used for teaching the basic curriculum of the educational system. The choice of the language or the languages of instruction is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education. While some countries opt for one language of instruction, often the official or majority language, others (e.g. Ethiopia) have chosen to use educational strategies that give national or local languages an important place in schooling. *“Speakers of mother tongues, which are not the same as the national or local languages, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system similar to the disadvantage in receiving instruction in a foreign official language,”* (UNESCO, 2003:16). Please also note that the terms ‘medium of instruction’ and ‘language of instruction’ are used interchangeably in this paper.

2.4 Research on Mother Tongue Education

The role of bilingual education involving the major mother tongue-medium of instruction has been subject to thorough investigation by several studies. For example, a pilot study conducted by Srivastava and Khatoon(1980), cited in McLaughlin(1985), in the schools of Mysore city with Grade eight students showed that the English medium students scored significantly better than those in Kannada medium on the measures of non-verbal intelligence and the three dimensions of verbal creativity, namely, fluency, flexibility, and originality. However, when the school related measures were controlled, there was hardly any difference between two streams.

African languages as media of instruction have generally been limited to the lower classes of primary education. An extension to upper primary classes in order to provide for a full medium is rare (Bamgbose, 1989). I think this is also quite true in Ethiopia. Bamgbose (ibid)

further provides details of a Six Year Project, which is designed to compare the traditional system of mixed medium with a new system in which Yoruba, the mother tongue of the pupils, is used for learning and teaching for the full duration of primary education.

Begun in 1970, the project originally consisted of an experimental group taught in Yoruba throughout the six years of primary education and a control group taught in Yoruba for the first three years followed by the last three years of instruction in English. The main feature of the experimental group, according to Bamgbose (ibid), is that it had an enriched curriculum, new English materials and a specialist teacher of English teaching English as subject for the entire duration of the primary school. In order to reduce variables in the project, the enriched curriculum and new materials were later extended to both groups, while the new groups were added: a new experimental group without a specialist teacher of English, a new control group without new English materials and a traditional control group with neither enriched curriculum nor new English materials. Between 1976 and 1978, the project was subjected to detailed evaluations covering the subject areas-Yoruba, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Intelligence tests as well as psychological tests of affective outcomes were also administered. The results show consistently that the best group in all subjects is the original experimental group followed closely by the new experimental group. The worst group in all cases is the traditional control group. Thus, the language of instruction is shown to be a significant variable in the performance of the different groups. The project has now been generalised to more schools, but still on an experimental basis (ibid)

Obanya (2004:23 – 28)) also sums up the disadvantages of not learning in the first language as follows:

- learning is hampered because teaching is done in a language in which neither the teacher nor the learner has an appropriate level of mastery
- the practiced curriculum differs widely from the official curriculum, as teachers constantly resort to code-switching to get linguistically and psychologically closer to learners.
- linguistic failures (i.e. language problems) are mistaken for academic failure (i.e. real inability to learn), as language becomes the main barrier to learning.

Obanya (ibid) further argues that we are more concerned with the advantages of using the first language for instruction (i.e. for teaching and learning). This is a situation in which classroom activities are carried on in the first language, the teaching-learning materials (books, audio-visuals, etc) are in the language that teacher and learners know best, and the language of the school is that of the immediate environment.

The major advantages of such an educational environment are, according to Obanya (ibid), that

- transition from home to school is easier, since both home and school operate in the same language
- collaboration between the wider community and the school is also made easier, as there is no linguistic distance between them
- the cultural resources of the language and those of the environment are more easily harnessed to enrich teaching and learning, and education is not limited to bookish learning
- teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions in the classroom are not likely to be characterized by psychological inhibitions, and as a result, classrooms activities are most likely to be participatory
- deep learning (understanding at higher cognitive levels) is more likely to be promoted, as against mere memorization and regurgitation that characterize situations in which language constitutes a barrier to teaching and learning

In summary, using the first language as medium of instruction is a qualitative education tool, in that it is more likely to inculcate the higher order comprehension and communication skills that are evidence of deep learning (ibid).

The results of the empirical investigations as to the impact of the mother tongue medium of instruction vis-à-vis the use of English or a non-mother tongue language as a medium of instruction are still mixed, and somewhat confusing (Ramasamy, 2001:5-6). Ramasamy (ibid) further argues that 'but the balance is certainly in favour of the mother tongue as the medium

of instruction as a pragmatic approach.’ It certainly, Ramasamy (ibid) further adds, is the best for those who belong to the lower socio-economic levels because enriched contexts in the use of the English language are not easily available to these groups of learners. The researcher also believes that this factor has to be seriously considered in deciding the medium of instruction particularly in countries with low economical powers like ours, Ethiopia where most governmental schools seem less-resourced.

2.5 Current Research on Bilingual/Multilingual Education

The recent UIE-ADEA stocktaking study, which was prepared ahead of the meeting of African Ministers of Education during the ADEA Biennial in Libreville, Gabon, March 2006, offers, according to a *Report on Medium of Instructions in Primary Schools in Ethiopia*(MOE, 2007), the most up-to-date analysis of current language education policy, models and programs. As summarized by same Report (MOE, 2007), the UIE-ADEA study found out that:

- Students in initial mother tongue and early bilingual programmes followed by a transition to French, Portuguese, or English by Grade 2 or 3, show positive achievement over Grades 1 to 3(e.g. Benson 2000; Hovens 2002). This early success has been (mis)understood by some researchers and many other education stakeholders to suggest that early transition to the international language is a viable option in Africa. There are countless evaluations of such programmes which show the early success e.g. In Mali (Traore 2001), Niger (Halaoui 2003) and Zambia (Sampa 2003). This achievement, however, starts to slow down in Grades 4 and 5. By Grade 6, any positive effect of the early mother tongue programme seems to wear off and learner’s achievements starts to decline as found, for example, in Mali (Traore 2001), Niger(Halaoui 2003) and Zambia(Allsop et al 2005).
- More than 50% of learners never get to secondary school in African countries. Low enrolment, high repetition, dropout rates contribute to this. Although so few students remain in the system to the end of secondary, there has been no systematic study which has examined the extent to which the use of medium of instruction, which neither students nor teachers can understand well, impacts on attrition vs., retention in the system.

- The Six Year Project in Ife, Nigeria(1970 – 1976) shows that 6 years of MTE accompanied by very well trained teachers, specialized teaching of English as subject, and new effective textbooks(learning materials) is sufficient to ensure that students can succeed in 6 year MTE programmes in well-resourced, optimal conditions(e.g. Bamgbose 2000,2004).
- In countries where there is a high throughput rate in secondary, like South Africa, there have been studies which do show the correlation between high levels of achievement and mother tongue education, and low levels of achievement and premature use of a second language as medium of instruction. For example, from 1955 – 1975 when African language speaking students had 8 years of MTE followed by transition to mainly English medium the overall percent in 1976, and pass rate in English as subject reached 78% in 1978. However, the number of years of MTE decreased from 8 to 4 years from 1977, and this was followed by a serious drop in achievement in English as a subject fell to 38.5% by 1984, and by 1992 the average overall pass rate for the African student at the end of Grade 12 flopped to 44% in 1992(Heugh 2003).
- Earlier research on bilingual education in South Africa in the 1930s and 1940s shows that students who have MTE throughout primary school plus bilingual (MT plus a second language as two mediums of instruction/ dual medium in secondary school) can outperform students in MTE only programs. In other words, students gain academic and cognitive benefits from such programs (Malherbe, 1943). Additional research demonstrated that there were benefits in regard to social cohesion associated with these bilingual models. After 1948 the South African Government phased out dual medium education and there were noticeable signs of social fragmentation after this.
- The early research on dual medium education in South Africa has been followed by longitudinal studies of Ramirez et al. (1991) and Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002) in North America. These later studies confirmed the findings of the Malherbe study more than fifty years earlier. Students in two way immersion/dual medium bilingual models of education can benefit from dual medium education. Where there are learners who speak both languages in the same classroom, dual

medium education can facilitate higher levels of achievement of students than would normally expect in MTE classrooms.

2.6 Research on Foreign Language in Elementary School(FLES) and Academic Achievement

Research on FLES and academic achievement conducted in recent decades maintains a less restricted scope than that of the 1960s since it examines facets of elementary foreign language teaching and learning as well as student achievement in other subject areas (Taylor-Ward (2003:61). Di Pietro (1980) investigated the impact of foreign language study on student achievement among Arlington, Virginia children taking part in content based foreign language programs in grades one through six. Student data was collected with regard to attendance, report card grades, and ratings of academic performance by regular classroom teachers, and scores on standardized reading and Mathematics tests both before and after participation in the fourteen week foreign language study program. The foreign language instruction reinforced concepts students were learning in Mathematics and Social Studies classes. Moreover, weekly lessons helped the students explore the customs, history and artistic backdrop of the target cultures of the languages studied. Results showed that children's reading ability exhibited marked improvement upon completion of the fourteen weeks of foreign language exposure.

Garfinkel and Tabor (1991) conducted a study comparing the English reading scores of children who were exposed to a third or fourth grade introduction to Spanish and who did and did not continue their study of Spanish a full one to two years in the fifth and sixth grades. In addition to looking at English achievement of foreign language students, Garfinkel and Tabor also investigated the role of intelligence in student achievement. Findings show that with regard to the low ability group, a significant difference in sixth grade reading achievement existed between those who did and those who did not continue their study of Spanish. The high ability group did exhibit a difference, although it was not significant. Of considerable importance regarding children of average intelligence is that a significant correlation exists between improved reading scores and taking a full year or two of foreign language

Oller and Nagato (1974) looked at the long-term effects of foreign language study between seventh, ninth and eleventh graders who did and those who did not follow a sequence of FLES study. According to this study, FLES did not have a lasting impact on student achievement. The student participants were girls educated in private elementary and secondary schools in Japan. A control group (students not previously exposed to FLES) and a treatment group (students previously exposed to FLES) at each of the three grade-levels (seven, nine, eleven) were established. In order to examine the impact of foreign language study on English proficiency, students took a cloze test tailored to their grade level. The results show that non-FLES participants outperformed their FLES counterparts on the cloze measure by the time they reached the eleventh grade. Therefore, Oller and Nagato claim that FLES study did not have a lasting positive effect and that FLES students will not progress more rapidly than non-FLES students when participating in secondary and postsecondary foreign language study.

It is, however, also good to remember here two things. One is that all the above studies are limited in the examination of FLES study on students' verbal and mathematic skills. And secondly, they all were conducted in a quite different environment in relation to our Ethiopian contexts.

2.7 The Relationship between Languages of Instruction and Cognition Development (Academic Performance)

“The purpose of education is not to teach any particular language. It is to facilitate the ‘optimum cognitive development of learners’ and to provide access to a broad curriculum which includes, at the very least: literacy/language and mathematics,” (UNESCO, 2003:19). So in order for students to succeed in formal education, they need to develop strong academic literacy in order to comprehend and grapple with the entire curriculum.

First and second language acquisition research shows a continuum in the relationship between language and cognition (thinking skills) from informal and social uses of language to increasingly more complex academic uses of language in order that high levels of

academic achievement can be reached (Cummins 1992, Thomas & Collier 1997, Gottlieb 2003). The following two subsections will discuss the relationship between language of instructions and cognitive development/academic performances.

2.7.1. SUP, CUP and the Interdependence Principle

There are two well-known models on bilingualism and cognition. Cummins, cited in Baker (1993:132–133), describes these two models as the **Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP)** model and the **Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)** model. The SUP model says that a bilingual's proficiency in L1 and L2 develop separately, having as a consequence that a bilingual can only think in one language at a time, i.e. L1 or L2. The CUP model is described by Cummins (1991:166–167) as follows...although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc.) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency which is common across languages. This 'common underlying proficiency' makes possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related skills across languages.

In other words, in order for a learner to use a second language as a language medium in the classroom successfully, the learner must have developed the first language, *as well as the second language* to a level where cognitive and linguistic skills can be transferred across languages effortlessly (Cummins, *ibid*). This level of development in both languages can only be reached once the learner has progressed past 'surface fluency' to 'cognitive fluency' (i.e. an appropriate level of literacy for schooling) in those languages.

The CUP model has been developed further and is stated in recent literature as the Interdependence principle: The interdependence principle has been stated formally as follows (Cummins, 1991:166): 'To the extent that instruction in L_x is effective in promoting proficiency in L_x, transfer of this proficiency to L_y will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L_y (either in schools or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L_y.

Previously the interdependence principle was concerned mainly with the transfer of meta-linguistic skills from L1 to L2. Studies done in the mid-1980s have shown that bilingualism may also lead to an increase in general cognitive ability (Cummins 1991:165). To clarify our understanding of academic and linguistic transfer, I will quote, at length, a summary by Baker (1993:135) in which he explains how this model operates, and describes the possible consequences for the bilingual learner if this facility remains undeveloped or underdeveloped:

- i. Irrespective of the language in which a person is operating, the thoughts that accompany talking, reading, writing and listening come from the same central engine. When a person owns two or more languages, there is one integrated source of thought.
- ii. Bilingualism and multilingualism are possible because people have the capacity to store easily two or more languages. People can also function in two or more languages with relative ease.
- iii. Information processing skills and educational attainment may be developed through two languages as well as through one language. Cognitive functioning and school achievement may be fed through one monolingual channel, or equally successfully through two well developed language channels. Both channels feed the same central processor.
- iv. The language the child is using in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to be able to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom.
- v. Speaking, listening, reading or writing in the first or the second language helps the whole cognitive system to develop. However, if children are made to operate in an insufficiently developed second language (e.g. in a 'submersion' classroom), the system will not function at its best.
- vi. If children are made to operate in the classroom in a poorly developed second language, the quality and quantity of what they learn from complex curriculum materials and produce in oral and written form may be relatively weak and impoverished.
- vii. When one or both languages are not functioning fully (e.g. because of unfavourable attitude to learning through the second language, pressure to replace the home language with the majority language) cognitive functioning and academic performance may be negatively affected.

There are also two other models dealing with same issue i.e. the relationship between languages of instruction and cognitive development. Below are the details.

2.7.2 BICS and CALP

Here it seems important to first raise the term what ‘language proficiency’ means. And when is one proficient enough to use a language for academic purposes? How proficient must one be in a language before (linguistic and cognitive) transfer to another language can take place? Cummins (1991:169) draws a distinction between two levels of language proficiency: Surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc), and Underlying cognitive/academic proficiency.

These two interrelated levels are formally known as **Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)** and **Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)** (Cummins, 1991:169–170). The distinction was made in order to conceptualize ‘language proficiency’ in such a way that the developmental interrelationships between academic performance and language proficiency in both L1 and L2 can be considered (Cummins and Swain, 1986:152). For Cummins, in order for a bilingual to achieve CALP status in L2, s/he must first achieve CALP status in L1. The consensus is that CALP level can be reached in L2 after \pm 5–7 years of adequate exposure to L2 (i.e. once an adequate level of proficiency for schooling has been reached in L2), and only once CALP level in L1 has been reached (Cummins, 1991:169).

An alternative view is presented by MacSwan and Rolstad(2001) in their article, they maintain that literacy (roughly reading, interpreting and writing) is an academic construct rather than a component of language ability. Literacy is taught and learnt at school, and thus, levels of literacy do not reflect a learner’s language ability, but the ability of that learner to write a test. Therefore, in second language proficiency development, ‘... ability differences in an L2 will very likely be perceived as a component of success in the academic environment quite generally’ (MacSwan and Rolstad, 2001:13) and as a result ‘... L2 learning is subject to considerable variation in rate and ultimate attainment.

Essentially, where Cummins (1991) defines CALP (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency) as part of a speaker's language proficiency, MacSwan and Rolstad(2001) see CALP/literacy as an academic construct which does not improve the speaker's language, but equips him/her with technical tools for academic use. MacSwan and Rolstad (ibid: 6) describe proficiency development in the MT as follows: Native language growth is inwardly driven and all normal children achieve linguistically.

In his MA thesis, Michele October (2002: 25-27) also argues that it is logical that language proficiency (as defined by MacSwan and Rolstad, 2001) must precede language literacy (what Cummins calls CALP). This is so in all languages – regardless of whether it is a mother-tongue or not. What is important, however, is that in normal children, the level of proficiency needed to begin learning adequate literacy skills for schooling in the mother-tongue is acquired without much effort, and by the time s/he starts primary school (October, ibid). In L2 learners, this level of proficiency must also first be reached before the same level of literacy skills can develop in that language.

The level of proficiency in a language *can* lead to the same level of literacy skill in that language, though this is not automatic. In other words, excellent proficiency can exist without excellent literacy skills, but excellent literacy skills cannot exist without excellent proficiency (October, 2002:27). Thus, a mother tongue speaker who naturally develops (oral) proficiency – what Cummins(1991) calls BICS – does not automatically develop literacy (reading, interpreting and writing) – what Cummins(1991) calls CALP – because literacy is 'taught' in schools. It is therefore possible to distinguish between proficiency and literacy in the mother-tongue without attacking the ability of its native speakers.

2.7.3 Critiques of the Cummins Theory

A number of authors have argued that the lack of success of minority language children in learning second languages in the school and their poor academic performance can be explained by social variables without recourse to considerations of linguistic competence (MacLaughlin, 1985:196). In fact, Boen cited in McLaughlin (ibid) rejected the thesis that the choice of language to be used as a medium of instruction is the determining factor of

pedagogical success. He and other authors (Brent-Palmer,, 1979; MacNab, 1979; Paulson, 1980) have all argued that the fundamental casual role determining school success should be assigned to social, rather than linguistic factors.

Troike(1981), cited in McLaughlin(1985), argued that the linguistic competencies thought by Cummins's to be necessary for success in literacy related school tasks do not reflect any underlying general ability, but rather degree of acculturation to culture-specific set of norms, the culture being that of the dominant middle class as reflected in the school. Troike (ibid) maintained;

“... that reading and text-processing skills play a major role in determining school achievement and that the development of these skills is affected in little-understood ways by home background, including SES³, but may be interactionally stimulated or retarded both by pedagogical practices and by sociolinguistic/cultural attitudes, expectations and behaviours manifested by the teacher and others in the school setting.”

A similar argument was also made by Carole Edelsky (1983) and her colleagues (Hudelson, Flores, Bakrin, Altwerger, & Jilbert, 1983). These authors pointed out that Cummins accepted current school definitions of reading skill as the ability to perform well on a standardized reading achievement test. Rather than measuring general linguistic competencies, these authors argued, the data on which the theory is based measure the ability to do well artificial and cultural biased test.

Edelsky(1983) went to argue that two of the prime reasons for the failure of many minority-language children in school are that they do not share the interactional norms of the school, and that they have a sense that the school is not working in their interests.

Another consideration was also proposed by MacNab (1979), who suggested that three factors determine school achievement:

³ SES refers to Socio-Economic Status

- a) ability, or the general and specific learning aptitudes of the child, which are thought to be innate sources of individual variation in the leaning;
- b) opportunity(or access), which refers to the exposure the child has to the material to be learned; and
- c) social reward structures, or the child’s expectation of the “payoff” for learning.

To sum up, it seems true to the researcher that students’ school work or academic performance could be affected by different variables such as rewards, exposure to the learning material and his/her learning aptitude apart from his/her linguistic competence.

2.8. The Medium of Instruction Factor

The language of instruction in school is the medium of communication for the transmission of knowledge. Gravelle (1996) claims that almost all learning involves language, whether in written or spoken form. For learners, it is the language used in the classroom that will be most demanding. Learners’ ability to participate meaningfully in school learning activities is intimately linked to their proficiency in the language of instruction at school. Those who lack this proficiency, stand out as low achievers (Pluddermann, 1997). It is thus imperative for low English proficiency learners to obtain a level of English language skills that will lead to the achievement of their academic goals.

Similarly, Tharp (1997), cited in Pluddermann(1997), also argues that inadequate language skills in English are a fundamental retarding factor for low English proficiency learners in the subject classroom, because of the difficulty these learners experience in comprehending subjects associated concepts. Tharp (ibid) states that low English proficiency learners therefore have to acquire English language skills to succeed academically.

Some additional studies and experiences on how medium of instruction can affect (both positively and negatively) the quality of teaching and learning processes are presented below.

2.8.1 Teaching Experiences versus Medium of Instruction

Alidou and Brock-Utne(2006) present classroom observation studies conducted on teachers' experiences in employing medium of instruction in several countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, South Africa, Togo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Botswana). They reveal that:

“...the use of unfamiliar languages forces teachers to use traditional and teacher-centred teaching methods which undermine teachers' effort to teach and students' effort to learn. Teachers do most of the talking while children remain silent or passive participants during most of the classroom interactions. Because children do not speak the languages of instruction, teachers are also forced to use traditional teaching techniques such as chorus teaching, repetition, memorization, recall, code-switching and safe talk. In this context, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place. Such situation accounts largely for the school ineffectiveness and low academic achievement experienced by students in Africa.”

In countries and schools where languages familiar to children are used as languages of instruction, the studies indicate that teachers and students communicate better (Alidou and Brock-Utne, 2006). Such communication leads to better teaching on the part of the teachers and better learning for students. Few countries have developed or revitalized the use of mother tongues within a bi/multilingual educational framework. Studies related to bi/multilingual education in Africa (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Tanzania Zambia) indicate that the use of mother tongues in basic education produces positive outcomes if carefully implemented (ibid). The primary beneficial aspects discussed in the literature are: the improvement of communication and interactions in the classroom and the integration of African cultures and indigenous knowledge systems into formal school curricula.

Effective communication leads to more successful learning opportunities in classrooms where languages familiar to both children and teachers are used as language of instruction at least in the first three years of education (Alidou, 1997; Alidou and Mallam, 2003; Bamgbose, 2005;

Brock-Utne, 2000; Brock-Utne, Desai, Qorro 2004; Chekaraou, 2004; Heugh, 2000; IDRC 1997; Traoré, 2001; Ouédraogo, 2003). Moreover, when teachers teach effectively reading, writing and literacy in the mother tongues, students can develop adequate literacy skills that they can use in learning the official languages (Alidou and Brock-Utne, 2006).

Recent evaluations also indicate that there is a correlation between students' literacy skills and their academic achievements (Sampa, 2003: 25) as cited in Alidou and Brock-Utne (2006). One of the major problems highlighted in all the reviewed studies is the inadequacy of the existing teacher training programs. In an assessment conducted by Ngu (2004) of teacher training institutions in Africa, he concluded that current dominant teacher-training programs were developed before most African countries got their political independence. This implies that student teachers are being prepared as hitherto to teach in languages that are unfamiliar to children (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese). This largely accounts for the recurrent educational problems faced by African children and the ineffectiveness of formal basic education (Ngu, 2004), cited in Alidou and Brock-Utne (2006). This seemed partly true here in Ethiopia too as reflected in the August 1999 MOE Annual Conference. According to this report, representatives of some Regional Education Bureaus complained that graduates of some Colleges were not good at teaching in local languages as they were trained in old English medium programs. Currently, however, due to MOE's and REBs' efforts to address the problem, significant improvements have been registered in regard to improving the quality of the curriculum and to avoid the medium mismatch though it is not fully addressed yet.

All the studies mentioned above concluded with a set of common recommendations. These recommendations include (Alidou and Brock-Utne, 2006): the adoption of an adequate language education policy; the reform of the teacher training programs to account for the new education language policies; the integration of innovative teaching methods, taking teachers sociolinguistic profiles into account for their placement into schools and the development of culturally relevant curricula.

To sum up, teaching practice is negatively impacted by the overall socio-political contexts which are not always in favour of the expansion of the use of African languages as language

of instruction in formal education. Teaching in mother tongues, according to Alidou and Brock-Utne (2006), is still viewed by many Africans as a second class occupation compared to teaching in international foreign language. This attitude affects both teachers and students' morale.

2.8.2 Active Students versus Medium of Instruction

Instruction in MT or a familiar language contributes far more to the cultural, affective, cognitive and socio-psychological development of the child than instruction in the official/foreign language (Akinnaso (1993), Alidou (1997), Bergmann et al (2002), and UNESCO (2003), cited in Brock-Utne and Alidou (2006). Brock-Utne and Alidou (2006:16-17) analyze the many advantages of an education given in the mother tongue or in a familiar language of the student:

- i. A very first advantage for the student is that his/her learning progression goes from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the known to the unknown hence, respecting a basic sound pedagogical principal.
- ii. Studies indicate that in MTE, teachers and students communicate better. Such communication leads to better teaching on the part of the teachers and better learning for students. Teachers are more likely to use effective and student-centred teaching methods that enhance their effort to teach and students' effort to learn. Bergman and et al. (2002: 66) who studied the effect of using local languages as languages of instruction in so-called experimental schools in Niger noted that: "Teachers of experimental schools...create an atmosphere of trust between the pupils and themselves Pupils in experimental schools, who are not intimidated by their teachers, are more alert, take responsibility, ... participate more actively in classes and contribute to helping the weaker ones."
- iii. Using the students MT or a familiar language (for both students and teachers) as language of instruction facilitates the integration of African culture into the school curriculum, thus creating a culturally sensitive curriculum and developing a positive perception of the culture. In addition to that, integrating the children's

culture and language into curricular activities ensures the involvement of parents into school activities, therefore making schools part of the community.

The integration of children's culture and languages into curricular activities has facilitated parental involvement in rural schools. It also promotes a favourable attitude toward schools among parents and pupils (Cornbleth, 2003). Parents appreciate bilingual education when they see that the overall school performance of their children improves.

The studies reported in this sub-section show that active learning takes place in programs where instruction is done in first languages known to both teachers and children. The use of familiar languages alone does, however, not guarantee success. Other factors like the availability of trained teachers and having quality educational materials built on the culture of the pupils are also important.

2.9 Local Studies on MOI

The local literature on medium of instruction seems very scarce. The one that has been conducted recently by the MOE in 2006, however, is the most relevant one amongst the available local studies. *“The purpose of this study was to explore the existing models of language acquisition and learning in Ethiopia and determine which are more effective, in order to make evidence-based recommendations for language education policy”* (MOE Study Report, 2007). And some of the major findings that have stronger relevance to the present Study have been reviewed and presented below⁴;

i. ‘The MOE policy recommending 8 years of MT is sound educational practice.’

‘The Ethiopian policy recommending 8 years of mother tongue schooling should be considered sound educational practice,’ (MOE, 2007). The Study noted that ‘especially in the cases of Oromiya, Somali and Tigray, the positive effects were generally apparent in terms of access and quality of primary education, including high teacher and student language proficiency, improved classroom interaction and better student performance. The question remaining in those regions, the Study report pointed out, is whether the mother tongue could

⁴ The findings, however, are not presented in full as they appear in the Report

be extended into higher levels of education to take advantage of its effectiveness and efficiency.’

ii. ‘*There is a widespread assumption that English medium of instruction will help people learn English.*’

According to the Study Report, ‘*people at nearly all levels of the education system as well as the general public expressed to the researchers their belief that English MOI helps students learn English and further, that the earlier English becomes MOI, the more successful students will be in school, in examinations and in life.*’ However, according to the Report, ‘*no one was able to offer any concrete evidence that this is so, or even that it has been researched. The assumption that if students learn all subjects in English, their English language ability would increase is simply a hypothesis,*’ the Report argued. The Report further points out that the hypothesis, that in order to learn a second language successfully it should be used as a medium of instruction is not peculiar to Ethiopia.

However, the Report adds, ‘we do know from studies conducted on African soil, that students can become proficient in English as a second language under specific conditions, and that these include the teaching of English by highly trained teachers with advanced levels of proficiency in English within six years of formal education’ (as in the Nigerian Six Year Primary Project). We also know that where English is a foreign language to most students, and in under less ideal conditions (such as in South Africa, between 1955 -1975), students can become highly proficient in English. During this time English was not widely known and used amongst the majority of speakers of African languages who lived mainly in rural areas. Over the last 30 years, however, there has been a dramatic urbanization of people or as a subject with 8 years of MTE and can change to English medium in Grade 9, achieving educational success at the end of Grade 12.

The Report further argues that ‘the context of English in Ethiopia is in any case very different from those found in Canada or the USA. In Ethiopia, English is a second language only for the educated elite and a foreign language for most others since it is rarely or never heard or

used in their homes or communities.’ The Report further states ‘to our knowledge here is no evidence that demonstrates that use of a foreign language as medium of instruction improves the learning or use of that language, particularly not on a countrywide level. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence to the contrary: that use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction impedes both learning of content subjects and learning of the language itself.’

iii. *‘Decentralization favours the adoption of appropriate models and practices.’*

The Report argues that ‘regions to develop their own languages, models and materials based on sound educational policy directives, and providing them with the financial and technical resources they need to implement them, is an effective way to promote appropriate educational services for all.’ A clear example, according to the Report, is ‘the recent change to the implementation of 8 years of MTE where English has been reintroduced earlier as MOI at Grades 7 and 8, either for the natural sciences and / or mathematics (e.g. in Harari) or for most subjects (e.g. in Addis Ababa). Such changes, which have been called ‘reverse planning’ elsewhere, have come about because of the perceived benefits of preparing students for secondary schooling through English. The national assessment data for Grade 8 students, however, show that those students who have 8 years of MTE perform better across the curriculum and especially in mathematics and natural sciences in the Grade 8 tests than do those with fewer years of MTE.’

iv. *‘Implementation decisions about English have had negative ‘wash back’ for mother tongue education.’*

According to the Report, ‘*there is an extraordinary incidence of aspiration towards high-level proficiency in English, even though it is a foreign language and used in few functional domains in Ethiopia.*’ The Report states that ‘there are similar trends in other parts of Africa where proficiency in French, English and Portuguese are similarly highly prized commodities. Yet in each of these cases, French, Portuguese and English have a long history of colonial use. The Report further adds, ‘this is not the case for Ethiopia and yet the aspiration towards English appears to be even more acute here than in those countries where the language has

had a longer functional presence for administration, legislation, higher education and the economy.’

The review of various related studies and principles included in this chapter would, I think, have some added value to the quality of the current Study in terms of addressing its objectives. The present Study mainly aimed at exploring the perceptions, assumptions and attitudes of both Grade 5 students and teachers of Cheha Woreda in the Gurage Zone regarding the adoption of English medium of instruction. So the review of the related literatures in this chapter would contribute in reinforcing findings of this Study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTS

3.1 Subjects and Sampling Technique

The sources of data for this study included Grade 5 students, teachers (both language and non-language teachers) and semester results of Grade 5 students of three selected primary schools in Cheha Woreda of the Gurage Zone; Emdibir, Aba Fransua and Gassore Primary Schools.

Among the 824 students of Grade 5 classes in those three primary schools, 169 were randomly selected to fill in the students' questionnaire and a fifth of them (34 students) were interviewed. They too were also randomly selected. Besides, 25 teachers who teach at Grade 5 participated in filling in the teachers' questionnaire, out of which 15 teachers were also randomly selected and interviewed. A discussion was also held with two Cheha Woreda Education Officials. And all the interviews were audio-recorded.

Further, a semester results of four randomly selected classes were used as an additional source of data for the current Study. In these reports of students' results, students' English scores were analyzed against non-English subjects.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

The study has used three data collection tools; questionnaire, semi-structured interview and document analysis.

Questionnaires

This study has used two different questionnaires; students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire. The students' questionnaire was adapted from P.A. Duminy (1972: 119-122). The students' questionnaire consists of a total of 30 items (with 9 categories) that were designed in Amharic (see Appendix A). The items were rated using Likert-type scale but with different number of degree/scale options depending on the nature of the items. All the items of this questionnaire focused on exploring students' current perceptions, assumptions and attitudes about the current English MOI practice. A total of 169 randomly selected students participated in completing the questionnaire.

And the teachers' questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire used by Tong, Lam, and Tsang (1997). The questionnaire, consisting of 16 items (see Appendix B), was designed in Amharic. All the items required teacher participants to rate against items of the questionnaire according to a specified Liker-type scale: '*Strongly Agree*' /'*Agree*'/'*Don't Know*'/'*Disagree*'/'*Strongly Disagree*'. This teachers' questionnaire was administered to 25 teachers teaching at Grade 5 including three school directors.

Semi-structured Interviews

There were three different semi-structured interviews designed in Amharic; one for the students, the second for the teachers and the third for the Cheha Woreda Education officials. The students' semi-structured interview was attended by 34 students that also participated in the students' questionnaire while the teachers' was attended by 15 teachers which also took part in the teachers' questionnaire. Besides, two Cheha Woreda education officials were also interviewed. All the interview questions were guided by the main objectives of the present research. They all were conducted individually by the researcher and with the assistance of a tape recorder.

Document Analysis

Document analysis has also been part of this study. The researcher believes whether Grade 5 students have difficulties in understanding contents of their subjects could somehow be reflected through their records of academic performances. As the focus of the study lies on English medium of instruction, the English subject records of four randomly selected classes (out of the 14 Grade 5 classes) were analyzed against records of the other subjects.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

As stated in the preceding chapter, students' and teachers' questionnaires, and students', teachers' and education officials' interviews as well as document analysis of students' results were used as sources of data to achieve the objectives of the current study. Hence, details of the results of the collected data have been presented in this chapter as follows.

4.1 Background of the Sample Schools Contexts

The researcher feels that the data presented in this chapter would be better understood if readers of this thesis are first familiarized with some background facts about the current situations of those three primary schools that have been taken as sites of the Study; Emdibir, Aba Fransua and Gassore Primary Schools:

- Amharic starting from Grade 1 through 4 and English from Grade 5 onwards are used as mediums of instruction in all primary schools of the Gurage Zone.
- Grades 1-3 employ self-contained classroom approach supported by automatic promotion of students. This was in fact claimed by many of the interviewed teachers as one of the major causes for students' low level of proficiency in English at Grade 5.
- The student-classroom ratio in 2006/2007 is 74:1 in Emdibir, 82:1 in Aba Fransua and 63:1 in Gassore primary schools. And the maximum student-classroom ratio is 91:1 and the minimum 56:1.
- Two of the selected schools, Emdibir and Aba Fransua Primary Schools, have relatively less-resourced libraries while the Gassore primary school has no library at all but instead uses a small store with very few reference materials where students can borrow.
- Among the interviewed 15 teachers who teach in Grade 5, only 33.33 % (5 teachers) are diploma graduates while the remaining 66.67% are Certificate (TTI) graduates. In fact, this contradicts with what is stated in the New Education and Training Policy (1994) that states subjects of second cycle classes of primary schools would be offered by Teachers' Training College's Diploma graduates.

- 86.31% of the students' respondents reported that their mother tongue language is Gurage while 11.90% reported Amharic. Below are the details.

Table 2: Grade 5 Students' Mother Tongue Languages

Mother Tongue Language	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Gurage	59	58	28	145	86.31
Amharic	8	9	3	20	11.90
Afan Oromo	0	1	0	1	0.60
Tigrigna	0	2	0	2	1.19
Others:	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	67	70	31	168	100.00

4.2 Results of Students' Questionnaire

The thirty-item questionnaire was administered to 169 Grade 5 students and the data collected are presented in nine sets of tables (Tables 3 -11) as follows;

Table 3: Current level of Students' Proficiency in English, Amharic and Gurage

1a. What do you think your current level of English proficiency is?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Very good	6	7	3	16	9.70
Good	15	21	9	45	27.27
Fair	38	36	18	92	55.76
Poor	5	5	0	10	6.06
Extremely low	1	1	0	2	1.21
Total	65	70	30	165	100.00
1b. What do you think your					

current level of Amharic proficiency is?					
Very good	52	47	26	125	74.85
Good	13	21	5	39	23.35
Fair	1	2	0	3	1.80
Poor	0	0	0	0	0.00
Extremely low	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00
1c. What do you think your current level of Gurage proficiency is?					
Very good	62	67	30	159	95.21
Good	1	1	0	2	1.20
Fair	3	2	1	6	3.59
Poor	0	0	0	0	0.00
Extremely low	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00

As shown in the above table, the level of students' proficiency is very good (95.21%) in Gurage, the same (74.85%) in Amharic and only fair (55.76%) in English. When 'very good' answers are taken together with the 'good' answers, 36.97% report that they think their level of English proficiency is good enough to use EMOI. It is no surprise that most of these students have very good level of proficiency in Amharic and Gurage languages. Gurage is a mother tongue language for about 86.31% of the respondents (Table 2) while Amharic is the language which these students used as MOI for the earlier four grades i.e. from Grades 1 through 4.

What strikes immediately here, however, is that English is being used as MOI in these three schools where the sum of 'good' and 'very good' answers takes only 36.97% whereas the remaining, 55.76 – 62.97%, report that they have 'fair' or 'less than fair' level of English proficiency.

Table 4: Hearing English, Amharic and Gurage at Home

2a. How often do you hear English at home?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Always	0	0	0	0	0.00
Frequently	3	1	2	6	3.68
Sometimes	8	11	8	27	16.56
Occasionally	26	14	9	49	30.06
Never	27	44	10	81	49.69
Total	64	70	29	163	100.00
2b. How often do you hear Amharic at home?					
Always	8	3	6	17	10.63
Frequently	27	23	9	59	36.88
Sometimes	18	31	8	57	35.63
Occasionally	9	9	6	24	15.00
Never	1	1	1	3	1.88
Total	63	67	30	160	100.00
2c. How often do you hear Gurage at home?					
Always	60	61	32	153	91.07
Frequently	2	3	0	5	2.98
Sometimes	2	2	0	4	2.38
Occasionally	3	2	1	6	3.57
Never	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	67	68	33	168	100.00

It is clear that we are dealing with a group of students whose mother tongue language, 86.31%, is Gurage. 36.88% and 35.63% report that they ‘frequently’ and ‘sometimes’ hear Amharic at home respectively whereas 49.69 % and 30.06% report that they ‘never’ and

‘occasionally’ hear English at home respectively. No surprise, 91.07 % report that they ‘always’ hear Gurage at home.

Table 5: Hearing English, Amharic and Gurage in the Neighbourhood

3a. How often do you hear English in the neighbourhood (outside home)?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Always	0	0	0	0	0.00
Frequently	5	3	2	10	6.13
Sometimes	11	8	6	25	15.34
Occasionally	28	17	12	57	34.97
Never	20	42	9	71	43.56
Total	64	70	29	163	100.00
3b. How often do you hear Amharic in the neighbourhood (outside home)?					
Always	9	7	5	21	12.80
Frequently	16	10	9	35	21.34
Sometimes	31	34	15	80	48.78
Occasionally	9	15	2	26	15.85
Never	0	2	0	2	1.22
Total	65	68	31	164	100.00
3c. How often do you hear Gurage in the neighbourhood (outside home)?					
Always	63	65	27	155	92.26
Frequently	4	5	2	11	6.55
Sometimes	1	0	1	2	1.19

Occasionally	0	0	0	0	0.00
Never	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	68	70	30	168	100.00

As Table 5 shows, in their neighbourhood, 92.26% students ‘always’ hear Gurage, 48.78% ‘sometimes’ hear Amharic whereas 43.56% and 34.97% ‘never’ and ‘occasionally’ hear English respectively in their neighbourhoods.

Table 6: Hearing English, Amharic and Gurage in School Compound (outside classroom)

4a. How often do you hear English in the school compound (outside classroom)?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Always	3	0	1	4	2.44
Frequently	2	2	2	6	3.66
Sometimes	11	9	6	26	15.85
Occasionally	23	28	12	63	38.41
Never	26	31	8	65	39.63
Total	65	70	29	164	100.00
4b. How often do you hear Amharic in the school compound (outside classroom)?					
Always	13	19	10	42	25.45
Frequently	25	28	7	60	36.36
Sometimes	22	16	11	49	29.70
Occasionally	5	7	2	14	8.48
Never	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	65	70	30	165	100.00
4c. How often do you hear Gurage in the school compound (outside					

classroom)?					
Always	44	52	17	113	68.48
Frequently	12	10	5	27	16.36
Sometimes	8	3	5	16	9.70
Occasionally	2	3	1	6	3.64
Never	0	1	2	3	1.82
Total	66	69	30	165	100.00

The frequency that students hear these three languages (English, Amharic and Gurage) in the neighbourhood is quite similar to the frequency of hearing them in the school compound (outside classrooms). In both settings, Gurage is widely and more often heard by the students while Amharic is less frequently heard.

Most of the students, however, do not hear English in all the aforementioned settings; at home, in the neighbourhood, in the school compound. So the point is that Grade 5 school children of the Cheha Woreda/Gurage Zone, who start using English as medium of instruction two to four earlier than many other Zones/Regions of the country do, have no any different level of exposure to English language.

Table 7: Hearing English, Amharic and Gurage in Classroom

5a. How often do you hear English in classroom?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Always	29	35	18	85	49.70
Frequently	35	30	11	76	46.06
Sometimes	1	2	0	3	1.82
Occasionally	1	2	1	3	2.42
Never	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	66	69	30	167	100.00

5b. How often do you hear Amharic in classroom?					
Always	27	19	16	62	36.90
Frequently	20	26	9	55	32.74
Sometimes	18	24	5	49	27.98
Occasionally	2	0	2	2	2.38
Never	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	67	69	32	168	100.00
5c. How often do you hear Gurage in classroom?					
Always	5	5	2	12	7.32
Frequently	2	3	0	5	3.05
Sometimes	10	9	5	24	14.63
Occasionally	33	33	16	82	50.00
Never	14	20	7	41	25.00
Total	64	70	30	164	100.00

Classrooms are one of the common places where students also learn and practice the intended language. Here as Table 7 shows, 49.70% and 46.06% report that they ‘always’ and ‘frequently’ hear English respectively in classrooms. This is no surprise as English is used as a medium of instruction in these classes. And 36.90% and 32.74% also report that they ‘always’ and ‘frequently’ hear Amharic in classrooms respectively while 50% and 25% report that they ‘occasionally’ and ‘never’ hear Gurage in classrooms respectively.

Table 8: Understanding Teachers' English, Amharic and Gurage at School

6a. How often do you have difficulties in understanding English medium of instruction?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
Always	17	15	8	40	23.81
Frequently	9	17	10	36	21.43
Sometimes	31	30	11	72	42.86
Occasionally	9	8	2	19	11.31
Never	1	0	0	1	0.60
Total	67	70	31	168	100.00
6b. How often do you have difficulties in understanding Amharic when used by your teachers in the classroom?					
Always	4	1	7	12	7.59
Frequently	8	8	4	20	12.66
Sometimes	6	9	3	18	11.39
Occasionally	12	11	3	26	16.46
Never	32	40	10	82	51.90
Total	62	69	27	158	100.00
6c. How often do you have difficulties in understanding Gurage when used in the classroom?					
Always	2	0	1	3	1.92
Frequently	1	0	1	2	1.28
Sometimes	3	1	2	6	3.85
Occasionally	12	13	2	27	17.31
Never	43	56	19	118	75.64
Total	61	70	25	156	100.00

What is so alarming in the above table is that 23.81% and 21.43% of the respondents report that they ‘always’ and ‘frequently’ have difficulties to understand English medium instructions respectively. And the majority, 42.86%, report that they ‘sometimes’ face difficulties to English medium of instruction.

To the contrary, 51.90% and 16.46% in Amharic and 75.64% and 17.31% in Gurage also report that they ‘never’ and ‘occasionally’ face difficulties to understand these languages when used in classrooms.

Table 9: What language should be a MOI at Grade 5?

7. What language do you think should be a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
English	6	14	4	24	14.46
Amharic	14	9	6	29	17.47
Gurage	2	3	0	5	3.01
English supplemented with Amharic	44	43	21	108	65.06
English supplemented with Gurage	0	0	0	0	0.00
Other(if any)	0	0		0	0.00
Total	66	69	31	166	100.00

Questioned which language respondents think should be used as MOI at Grade 5, 65.06% report that they think ‘English supplemented with Amharic’ should be the MOI at Grade 5 level, while 17.47% prefer Amharic and 14.46% English. Though the Zone has officially adopted English as a MOI, in reality it is observed that teachers also support their lessons in Amharic. Gurage is only rarely used in classes.

Researches show that EMOI has both advantages and disadvantages. These advantages and disadvantages of EMOI were both included in students' questionnaire and rated by the student respondents as follows;

Table 10: Advantages of English MOI

8. Being a Grade 5 student, to what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is an advantage of English medium of instruction?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gas sore	Total	Percent (%)
8a. Helps to improve my standard of English					
Strongly Agree	41	49	19	109	64.88
Agree	21	16	10	47	27.98
I do not know	2	2	2	6	3.57
Disagree	3	2	1	6	3.57
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	67	69	32	168	100.00
8b. Gives more exposure to the international culture					
Strongly Agree	30	34	13	77	46.11
Agree	32	29	16	77	46.11
I do not know	3	2	2	7	4.19
Disagree	1	1	0	2	1.20
Strongly Disagree	1	2	1	4	2.40
Total	67	68	32	167	100.00
8c. Helps to understand course content and concepts difficult to express in Amharic					
Strongly agree	32	33	18	83	49.40
Agree	26	23	10	59	35.12

I do not know	3	5	2	10	5.95
Disagree	5	6	2	13	7.74
Strongly Disagree	1	2	0	3	1.79
Total	67	69	32	168	100.00
8d. Helps to join higher learning institutions					
Strongly Agree	44	52	19	115	68.86
Agree	21	16	11	48	28.74
I do not know	1	0	1	2	1.20
Disagree	0	2	0	2	1.20
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00
8e. To get better job opportunities					
Strongly Agree	43	50	23	116	72.05
Agree	16	14	5	35	21.74
I do not know	4	2	3	9	5.59
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	0	1	0	1	0.62
Total	63	67	31	161	100.00
8f. Helps to understand reference materials in English					
Strongly agree	41	52	18	111	66.47
Agree	23	17	11	51	30.54
I do not know	2	1	2	5	2.99
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00

As to the possible advantages of EMOI, 64.88% & 27.98% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ that EMOI helps to improve their standard of English.

46.11% and 46.11% also report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ that EMOI gives more exposure to the international culture. Similarly, almost half (49.40%) and 35.12% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ respectively that EMOI helps to understand course content and concepts difficult to express in Amharic.

Questioned whether they think EMOI helps them to higher leaning institutions, 68.86% and 28.74% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ that it does so. Similarly, 72.05% and 21.74% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ that EMOI helps to get better career opportunities respectively. In fact, this holds very surprising figures as it happened in a country where English is not considered among the major job requirements. The researcher rather implies that this is so merely because these students have had unjustifiably high prize to English language. And regarding whether EMOI helps to understand reference materials in English, 66.47% and 30.54% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to that respectively.

Table 11: Disadvantages of EMOI

9. Being a Grade 5 student, to what extent do you agree that each of the following statements is a disadvantage of English medium of instruction?	Emdibir	Aba Fransua	Gassore	Total	Percent (%)
9a. Discourages active participation in class?					
Strongly agree	32	25	10	67	40.12
Agree	10	10	7	27	16.17
I do not know	8	2	6	16	9.58
Disagree	10	19	5	34	20.36
Strongly Disagree	6	14	3	23	13.77
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00
9b. Makes it difficult to understand the course content					

Strongly agree	19	23	12	54	32.14
Agree	20	21	10	51	30.36
I do not know	8	3	6	17	10.12
Disagree	12	12	3	27	16.07
Strongly Disagree	8	10	1	19	11.31
Total	67	69	32	168	100.00
9c.Stops me from expressing myself in class					
Strongly agree	14	30	12	56	33.14
Agree	16	15	7	38	22.49
I do not know	6	3	3	12	7.10
Disagree	18	10	8	36	21.30
Strongly Disagree	11	11	5	27	15.98
Total	65	69	35	169	100.00
9d. Discourages discussion and interaction between students and teachers					
Strongly agree	21	26	12	59	35.33
Agree	25	18	13	56	33.53
I do not know	6	7	1	14	8.38
Disagree	8	10	3	21	12.57
Strongly Disagree	6	9	2	17	10.18
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00
9e. Urges students to dropout					
Strongly agree	6	7	5	18	10.78
Agree	6	7	1	14	8.38
I do not know	9	4	6	19	11.38
Disagree	23	30	8	61	36.53
Strongly Disagree	22	22	11	55	32.93
Total	66	70	31	167	100.00

Unlike the preceding table (Table 10), students' perceptions were not uniform regarding the potential disadvantages of EMOI. Student respondents, for example, were questioned if EMOI could discourage active participation in class. 40.12% and 16.17 % report that they 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that it does so. On the other hand, a very significant number of respondents, 20.36% and 13.77% report that they do not think that EMOI discourages active participation in classes.

Regarding the question whether EMOI makes it difficult to understand course content, 32.14% and 30.36% report that they 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that it does so. 'Does EMOI stop you from expressing yourself in class?' 33.14% and 22.49% report that they 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that it does so. Yet another significant portion of the respondents, 21.30% & 15.98% report that they 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree that it stops them from expressing themselves in class.

Respondents were also questioned whether EMOI discourages discussion and interaction between students and teachers, 35.33% and 33.53% of them report that they 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that it does so. And the final item presented questions respondents whether they think EMOI urges them to drop out, only 10.78% report that they 'strongly agree' with it while 36.53% and 32.93% report that they 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with the statement.

Generally speaking, as some of the preceding tables indicate, students of Grade 5 in the Cheha Woreda seem to have generally poor level of English proficiency, the language that they use as a medium of instruction. It, however, seems that most of them are happy that English is used as medium of instruction. This is so partly because teachers support their lessons in Amharic language when they feel concepts and contents of their courses are somehow difficult to be understood by their students. And secondly, this might be because students feel that using English as a medium of instruction will improve their standard of English.

4.3 Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

A different questionnaire with a total of sixteen items was administered to 25 teachers who teach different subjects in Grade 5. And their responses have been presented in tables below (Tables 12-19).

Table 12: English or Amharic for better teaching and learning

1. Teaching in Amharic can bolster students' interest in learning more than teaching in English.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	3	12.00
Agree	15	60.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	5	20.00
Strongly Disagree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00
2. Teaching in Amharic allows the lesson to progress faster than teaching in English.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	8	32.00
Agree	14	56.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	1	4.00
Strongly Disagree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00
3. Teaching in Amharic allows a teacher to go deeper into the content of the lesson than teaching in English		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	6	24.00
Agree	14	56.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	3	12.00
Strongly Disagree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

As Table 12 indicates, 60 % (15 teachers) report that teaching in Amharic can bolster students’ interest in learning more than teaching in English, 56 % (14 teachers) report teaching in Amharic allows the lesson to progress faster than teaching in English, and 54 % (14 teachers) think teaching in Amharic allows a teacher to go deeper into the content of the lesson than teaching in English. All these figures show that teachers value Amharic over English for better learning and teaching.

Table 13: Difficulties in Amharic as a MOI

4. The greatest problem in using Amharic as the medium of instruction is the need to translate a lot of special terms.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	1	4.17
Agree	5	20.83
I do not know	1	4.17
Disagree	16	66.67
Strongly Disagree	1	4.17
Total	24	100.00
5. Resources for teaching, e.g., textbooks and reference books, are more plentiful in English than in Amharic.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	5	20.00
Agree	11	44.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	7	28.00
Strongly Disagree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

6. Teaching a class in Amharic encourages students to speak uninhibitedly, thereby disrupting the order of the class.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	2	8.00
Agree	1	4.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	17	68.00
Strongly Disagree	5	20.00
Total	25	100.00

Questioned whether the greatest problem in using Amharic as the medium of instruction is the need to translate a lot of special terms, 66.67 % (16 teachers) report that they do not think so. Yet 20.83 % (5 teachers) report that they ‘agree’ with the statement.

These respondents were also asked whether ‘resources for teaching, e.g., textbooks and reference books, are more plentiful in English than in Amharic. 44 % (11 teachers) report they think resources in English are more plentiful than in Amharic. But another significant number of the respondents, 28 % (7 teachers) think otherwise.

With regard to the statement whether ‘teaching a class in Amharic encourages students to speak uninhibitedly, thereby disrupting the order of the class, 68 % (17 teachers) and 20 % (5 teachers) report that they ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ respectively with the statement.

Table 14: Teachers' Perceptions on current level of students' English Proficiency and theirs

7. I feel I have good level of English proficiency that enables me to readily teach my subjects in English at Grade 5.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	1	4.00
Agree	13	52.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	10	40.00
Strongly Disagree	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00
8. I feel that the English proficiency of Grade 5 students is adequate for them to study non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies and Mathematics) in English.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	0	0.00
Agree	2	8.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	14	56.00
Strongly Disagree	9	36.00
Total	25	100.00

Teacher respondents were also asked to rate against their level of English proficiency and their students' in light with using English as MOI. 52 % (13 teachers) feel that they have 'good' level of English proficiency that would enable them to use English as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, 40 % (10 teachers) feel that they lack the level of English language proficiency that would help them to use English as a medium of instruction.

With regard to their perceptions on the level of English proficiency of Grade 5 students, overall 92% (23 teachers), 56 %= disagree & 36 %=strongly disagree, report that they do not

think that they (students) have the level of English proficiency that is adequate to use English as a medium of instruction.

Table 15: English MOI vs. Academic Performances

9. Even studying every subject in Amharic will not help students with poor academic performance.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	1	4.00
Agree	4	16.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	15	60.00
Strongly Disagree	5	20.00
Total	25	100.00
10. Students with good academic performance should study all subjects in English.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	12	48.00
Agree	9	36.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	3	12.00
Strongly Disagree	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00
11. English as the medium of instruction will certainly lead to poorer student intake.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	1	4.00
Agree	14	56.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	7	28.00
Strongly Disagree	3	12.00
Total	25	100.00

Different researches show that L1/L2 medium of instruction help students to achieve better academic performance than FL medium of instruction does. As Table 15 shows, more than three fourth of teachers believe that studying in Amharic helps low achievers to register better academic performance. On the other hand, 48% and 36% report that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ respectively that those students with good academic performance should study all subjects in English.

And for the statement whether ‘English as the medium of instruction will certainly lead to poorer student intake, 56 % (14 teachers) ‘agree’ that it does so whereas 28 % (7 teachers) report otherwise.

Table 16: MOI vs. non-language Subjects

12. Using Amharic to study non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies and Mathematics,) will negatively affect students' English proficiency.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	2	8.00
Agree	14	56.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	7	28.00
Strongly Disagree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

13. It is easier to teach non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics) in English than in Amharic.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	1	4.00
Agree	14	56.00
I do not know	0	0.00

Disagree	9	36.00
Strongly Disagree	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

There is some widespread assumption among the Ethiopian students that using a given language as a medium of instruction would improve learners' proficiency in that particular language as some researches show (e.g. MOE, 2007). Similarly, 56 %(14 teachers) report 'using Amharic to study non-language subjects will negatively affect students' English proficiency while 28 %(7 teachers) report otherwise.

Besides, 56 %(14 teachers) report that they think that 'it is easier to teach non-language subjects (e.g., Basic Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics) in English than in Amharic while 36 %(9 teachers) report otherwise.

Table 17: Non-language Subject Teachers vs. Students' English Proficiency

14. I think non-language teachers could help students improve their level of English proficiency.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	7	28.00
Agree	15	60.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	3	12.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Total	25	100.00

As Table 17 shows, 60 %(15 teachers) and 28 %(7 teachers) report that they 'agree' and 'strongly agree' respectively that non-language teachers could help students to improve their level of English proficiency.

Table 18: English MOI vs. Career Opportunity

15. I feel that the adoption of English- medium instruction at Grade 5 level helps to create better career opportunities later in students' lives.		
Scale	Total	Percent
Strongly Agree	6	24.00
Agree	7	28.00
I do not know	1	4.00
Disagree	6	24.00
Strongly Disagree	5	20.00
Total	25	100.00

Questioned whether teachers think they feel that English-medium instruction helps to create better career opportunities later in students' lives, overall 52% (28% = agree and 24% =strongly agree) report that English MOI does so while the remaining overall 44% report it does not.

Table 19: Teachers' Perception on the Current Status of English MOI at Grade 5

16. I feel that English medium instruction at Grade 5 level is successful in terms of the provision of quality education.		
Scale	Total	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	3	12.00
Agree	6	24.00
I do not know	0	0.00
Disagree	15	60.00
Strongly Disagree	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

And finally, the respondents were presented with a general question on whether they think the current English MOI practice in primary schools of Cheha Woreda is successful in terms of providing quality education to school children. 60 % (15 teachers) report that they think that it is not successful. On the other hand, an overall 36 % (24%=agree & 12%=strongly agree) report that they think it is successful.

In general, it seems that the responses of teachers in this section (4.3) and that of the students in the preceding one (4.2) indicate very similar perceptions on the current level of both students' and teachers' English proficiency. Both question the adequacy of the current level of both students' and teachers' English proficiency to use English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level.

4.4 Results of Students' Interviews

Among the 169 student respondents who participated in the questionnaire, 34 students (20%) were randomly selected for the interview. They all were interviewed individually and with the assistance of a tape recorder. And a total of six questions that aimed at soliciting further information that would help to triangulate the data collected in the questionnaire were included in the interview.

Asked whether they have any difficulties in understanding lessons in English, 24(70.59%) of them respond that they have difficulties of understanding English medium instructions whereas the remaining 10(29.41%) say they have no problems. In relation to this, respondents were also asked to list down the major and common difficulties they are facing due to English medium of instruction. Among which the major ones include;

- There are many complex words in the textbooks which they feel are beyond their maturity level. Most of them repeatedly pointed out the course contents are difficult for them due to two reasons; language problems and the complexity nature of the contents of the courses themselves.
- 'Most teachers have no good English. Some even use English occasionally while teaching courses as they are very poor at English.'

- Some others also report that ‘EMOI has limited their interest to participate in classroom discussions.’ This is because they lack English words both to ask unclear questions and give answers to questions raised by teachers as well as students.
- ‘There are no reference materials’. Respondents think that they should have had better access to reference materials that would help them improve their proficiency in English language. This seems a very legitimate question because the researcher has noticed that one of the selected schools, Gassore Primary School, even has no library at all but a small store where students can only borrow books at times.

And there was an extra question for those students who have responded that they have difficulties in understanding English medium lessons as how they are trying to cope with their lessons. The following strategies have been forwarded by them;

- Refer to dictionaries
- Ask teachers to translate into Amharic
- Ask parents for help(those who have educated parents)
- Ask academically better students
- Ask teachers for repetitions

Student respondents were also asked ‘which languages their teachers use while teaching in class.’ 29(85.29%) report that teachers ‘almost always’ use English followed by Amharic with a significant level of frequency. Gurage is only rarely used when teachers want to include some proverbs or some peculiar issues related to their lessons.

Another question forwarded to these respondents was whether they think their Grade 5 teachers have adequate level of English proficiency to use English as a MOI. 23(67.65%) students report that they do not think Grade 5 teachers do have adequate level of English proficiency to use EMOI whereas 11(32.35%) students report otherwise.

Student respondents were also asked if schools have made any additional efforts to improve their English proficiency. Only Emdibir Primary school respondents report that their school has taken two initiatives:

- ‘Monday is English Day’. All the school community is expected to communicate in English. Some students have, however, complained that this is not practical.
- The school provides tutorial classes for low achievers with particular focus on English and Mathematics on Saturdays.

The respondents were also asked whether they were benefiting out of the EMOI as 5th graders. Most of them, 22(64.71%) think that they are not currently benefiting out of it but most think that their earlier exposure to English medium of instruction is quite helpful for them to improve their standard of English. On the other hand, 12(35.29%) report that their English proficiency is improving which they think is because of English MOI. As a result of this, most of the respondents have expressed that they are happy with the earlier start of EMOI i.e. at Grade 5. But they were not able to strongly justify ‘why?’ other than providing the aforementioned reasons. Some say that though the MOI is supposed to be English, many teachers also frequently use Amharic. This seems helpful to students and makes them feel that the current EMOI policy is acceptable.

And finally the students have pointed out that they want to see such changes as capacity of teachers improved, availability of reference materials increased and some tutorial classes arranged for English and other major subjects.

4.5 Results of Teachers' Interviews

Out of the 25 teachers who participated in the teachers' questionnaire, 15 teachers (60%) attended the interview. All the interviews were made individually and with the assistance of a tape recorder.

Asked about the current level of Grade 5 students' English proficiency to use EMOI, 12(80%) teachers claim that it is generally poor whereas the remaining 20% report that students have some 'good' level of proficiency. When further asked, they disclosed: 'their English is terrible,' and 'they struggle to get the message across'. Some teachers, on the other hand, note that students have different levels of proficiency: 'A few can follow in English but most cannot,' 'Very few will cope in English,' 'Some are going to be following but then there's going to be this other percentage that you're leaving behind'. 'As a result, teachers and learners are forced to code-switch between English and Amharic.' Some teachers strongly feel that students do not receive enough support from their subject teachers in learning and practicing English.

Asked whether EMOI is benefiting Grade 5 students, 9(60%) teachers claim that students have been disadvantaged by the English medium of instruction: many students are confused when teachers use English, and are embarrassed when they could not pronounce English words. These teachers further say that students have problems in communicating what they know, in English and this has contributed to high failure rates: 'What I've realized, they fail [examinations] because of the language problem. They understand what is being asked but they can't express themselves in English'. On the other hand, the remaining 6(40%) teachers think that Grade 5 students are benefiting and will benefit out of this early EMOI in the future. They further argue that students have already started registering good progress in their English language proficiency. They say that since EMOI is an inevitable policy in subsequent grades, students who have EMOI as of Grade 5 would be more advantaged latter. They also point out that whether they are benefiting or not should not be limited to Grade 5 but go beyond that.

Asked what difficulties they as teachers of Grade 5 are facing in using EMOI, most teachers note that teaching through the medium of English is time-consuming: And in most cases you will find that... as a teacher who teaches a content subject, you spend most of your time in explaining things, rather than in giving them exercises whereby they could now automatically show themselves to be understanding. But most of that time is just spent on explaining things and all that. Some other teachers also observe that the students' textbooks have difficult subject terminology which makes it difficult for them to understand course contents. Teachers also refer to the stresses of teaching through English: they described this as 'the burden of the teacher.'

Teachers were also asked whether the language-in-education policy was discussed in their schools, and to what extent it determined classroom practice. There seemed to be some differences between schools. Some Emdibir teachers say "...we teach in both English and Amharic, though the examination is always set in English that is why we have a high failure rate." The English teachers say that using English in the classroom is emphasized in the English department, rather than in the school as a whole. Other non-subject teachers feel that they should be 'addressing lessons in English and whatever the answer that has to be given by a pupil in class has to be in English.' The Aba Fransua and Gassore teachers say 'there has been no discussion of the current language-in-education policy and practice in their schools.' Some teachers, however, note that 'the vernaculars, both Amharic and Gurage languages are smuggled while teaching ...though it is not the policy'.

Teachers were asked about their preferred language of instruction at Grade 5 classes. Opinions ranged from strongly in favour of English – because English is more convenient to teach non-language subjects than Amharic; both Amharic and Gurage do not have the necessary terminology; and it is an international language so it may also help us to improve our level of proficiency. They also reason out that the current EMOI policy would also benefit students in the subsequent grade levels as English is medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education systems in Ethiopia. On the other hand, some other teachers feel the language medium should be Amharic as far as the factors that are negatively affecting the effectiveness of EMOI could not be addressed. They point out that they sometimes face

difficulties to explain things in English. They argue that students at Grade 5 should learn through Amharic as it is the language they understand best. They also remind that Amharic is the language these students have been using as MOI for the earlier four grades.

In general, it seems that most teachers think the current level of their students' English proficiency is generally poor. However, on the other hand, students' responses in both the questionnaire and the interview show that they(students) have high interest to retain the English medium of instruction as it is now, starting from Grade 5, even though they feel that it is not without any difficulties.

4.6 Results of Interviews with Cheha Woreda Education Officials

In addition to the students' and teachers' interviews, another detailed interview was also held with two Cheha Woreda Education Officials. The discussion was made with them to reflect on their current perceptions regarding the implementation of EMOI in its second cycle primary schools.

Both officials report that cognizant of the teachers' language proficiency, students' level of proficiency in English language and lack of other resource materials, the current EMOI policy at Grade 5 is felt to be too early. These officials also point out that the office is well aware of the major difficulties that Grade 5 students are facing due to EMOI. The officials mention factors such as complexity of some words, complexity of some course content and concepts, the low level of students' English proficiency, shortage of good English teachers and the like have brought about challenging difficulties on the current EMOI policy practice. Hence, officials say, they recommend Amharic to be extended up to Grade 6 and English MOI to start at Grade 7.

The Education officials also disclose that schools are being communicated to facilitate tutorial classes for improving students' English proficiency and reduce the number of failures. A case in point is that of Emdibir Primary School which is providing tutorial classes for English and other subjects on Saturdays. This has also been confirmed by both teachers and students of the school.

Asked whether the Education Office has either conducted any survey before or have any plan to conduct on the impacts of English MOI, the respondents mentioned that there was no in-depth study conducted so far on the area. The Educational officials, however, pointed out that the MOI issues have been raised in different educational seminars, workshops and conferences at various levels. In these occasions, the officials disclose, the problem of the increasing number of students' failures has been discussed and there is somehow an assumption that this can be attributed to English MOI'. They also have plans to share the difficulties and challenges of the current EMOI to the relevant department of the Zone.

4.7 Document Analysis

Some researches found out a positive correlation between students' proficiency in language of instruction and academic achievement. With regard to this, the researcher included a summary of academic scores of four randomly selected Grade 5 classes (one from Emdibir, two from Aba Fransua (with larger no of students) and one from Gassore primary schools. Attempts have also been made to analyse these results in relation to the language of instruction being used, English, at the Grade level.

Table 20: Summary of Grade 5 Section-5C Class 1st Semester Results, Emdibir Primary School, 2006

No	Subjects	Above 50			Below 50			Below 50 in %		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total (%)
1	Amharic	39	37	76	7	5	12	7.95	5.68	13.64
2	English	26	16	42	20	26	46	22.73	29.55	52.27
3	Math	34	31	65	12	11	23	13.64	12.50	26.14
4	B. Science	25	22	47	21	20	41	23.86	22.73	46.59
5	S. Science	42	35	77	4	7	11	4.55	7.95	12.50
6	Civics	43	36	79	3	6	9	3.41	6.82	10.23
7	Art	45	38	83	1	4	5	1.14	4.55	5.68
8	Music	46	42	88	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	Sports	36	35	71	10	7	17	11.36	7.95	19.32
Sat for Examinations										
Male	Female	Total								
46	42	88								

Table 21: Summary of Grade 5 Section-5F Class 1st Semester Results, Aba Fransua Primary School- 2006

Subjects	Above 50			Below 50			Below 50 in %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total (%)
Amharic	37	25	62	10	10	20	12.20	12.20	24.39
English	14	11	25	34	24	58	41.46	29.27	70.73
Math	38	31	69	9	4	13	10.98	4.88	15.85
B. Science	30	24	54	17	11	28	20.73	13.41	34.15
S. Science	35	27	62	12	8	20	14.63	9.76	24.39
Civics	47	35	82	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Art	36	32	68	11	3	14	13.41	3.66	17.07
Music	25	23	48	22	12	34	26.83	14.63	41.46
Sports	44	31	75	3	4	7	3.66	4.88	8.54
Sat for Examinations									
Male	Female	Total							
47	35	82							

Table 22: Summary of Grade 5 Section-E Class 1st Semester Results, Aba Fransua Primary School, 2006

Subjects	Above 50			Below 50			Below 50 in %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total (%)
Amharic	26	31	57	16	13	29	18.60	15.12	33.72
English	16	20	36	26	24	50	30.23	27.91	58.14
Math	31	27	58	11	17	28	12.79	19.77	32.56
B. Science	33	34	67	9	10	19	10.47	11.63	22.09
S. Science	30	30	60	12	14	26	13.95	16.28	30.23
Civics	31	34	65	11	10	21	12.79	11.63	24.42
Art	42	44	86	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Music	37	42	79	5	2	7	5.81	2.33	8.14
Sports	36	37	73	6	7	13	6.98	8.14	15.12
Sat for Examinations									
Male	Female	Total							
42	44	86							

**Table 23: Summary of Grade 5 Section–A Class 1st Semester Results, Gas sore
Primary School, 2006**

Subjects	Above 50			Below 50			Below 50 in %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total (%)
Amharic	33	15	48	10	7	17	15.38	10.77	26.15
English	35	13	48	8	9	17	12.31	13.85	26.15
Mathematics	28	14	42	15	8	23	23.08	12.31	35.38
B. Science	21	16	37	22	6	28	33.85	9.23	43.08
S. Science	33	12	45	10	10	20	15.38	15.38	30.77
Civics	38	19	57	5	3	8	7.69	4.62	12.31
Art	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Music	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sports	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sat for Examinations									
Male	Female	Total							
43	22	65							

NA= Not Available

As shown above, the first three tables (Tables 20-22) revealed that more than half of those three class students scored below 50 in English i.e. 52.27% in Table 20, 70.73% in Table 21 and 58.14% in Table 22. They all have very surprising figures as this happened in schools where English is being used as a medium of instruction.

This was, however, not as worse as the other three classes; 26.15% scored below 50. Nevertheless, as indicated in Table 23, the number of students who scored below 50 in Basic Science(43.08%), Mathematics(35.38%) and Social Science(30.77%) in particular is still a worth noticing one. Students learn these subjects through English which most of the students claimed that they have only ‘fair’ or ‘less than fair’ level of proficiency in it.

Whether this failure is attributed to English medium of instruction needs a separate in-depth study of its own. It is, however, good to add at least one widely perceived assumption. When a language of instruction is not functioning fully, cognitive functioning and academic performance may be negatively affected (Baker, 1993). In fact some teachers and students, in their respective interviews, noted that the current practice of English medium of instruction policy has caused many academic failures of students.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter Five presents an analysis and discussion of the findings of the present research. This chapter begins with a restatement of the objectives of the study. Next, findings of the present research are discussed in relation to previous studies on medium of instruction areas in light with the research questions.

The present research has attempted to assess mainly views of both Grade 5 students and teachers regarding the English medium of instruction at Grade 5 level in three selected primary schools of the Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone. Attempts have also been made to explore what difficulties both Grade 5 students of Cheha Woreda and their teachers are facing due to English medium of instruction.

The research employed semi- structured questionnaires and interviews to achieve its objectives. The results of both the students' and teachers' questionnaires were presented in tables while the interviews responses were qualitatively and quantitatively described in the preceding chapter. Besides, four summary scores of Grade 5 classes were also analyzed. Based on the data collected through the aforementioned instruments, the following summary of the major conclusions have been drawn out and discussed with findings of other similar studies as follows;

5.1.1 The current level of both students' and teachers' English proficiency is perceived to be inadequate to use English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5.

Both the questionnaires and interviews reveal that both Grade 5 students and their teachers feel that they lack adequate level of English proficiency to use English as a medium of instruction at Grade 5 level. 55.76% student respondents report that they only have 'fair' level of English language proficiency (Table 3). This is strongly supported by 12(80%) interviewed teachers who feel that students' English proficiency is generally poor.

Ones development of a given language proficiency is largely affected by his/her exposure to the language. Noting this, students were questioned to rate against how often they hear

English at home, in the neighbourhood and school compound (outside classroom). The report shows that their exposure is so limited that they ‘never’ or ‘occasionally’ hear English at home (overall 79.75%), in the neighbourhood (overall 78.53%) and in the school compound (outside classroom) (78.04%).

The inadequacy of Grade 5 students’ English proficiency has also indirectly been confirmed by students’ response of difficulties to understand English medium instructions. 42.86% and 23.81% students report that they ‘sometimes’ and ‘always’ have difficulties in understanding EMOI lessons respectively. Similarly, 9(60%) interviewed teachers claim students are disadvantaged by the English medium of instruction. Teachers further express that EMOI even has created ‘additional burden’ on teachers and is ‘time consuming’ as they have to spend a lot of time in explaining things.

The fact that these students at Grade 5 level have low level of English proficiency and that they have difficulties to understand English MOI courses is no surprise particularly when it is viewed in our Ethiopian school contexts that are characterized by low availability of inputs and low competence of English language teachers among other factors. Findings of the recent local study on ‘Medium of Instructions in Primary Schools in Ethiopia’ which was conducted by MOE (2006: 30-31) also reinforces this idea by saying: ‘what we know very clearly from both the African research and that from other better resourced school systems, is that students require a minimum of 6 years of MTE plus very good, native-like teaching of the L2(English) before it is possible for large numbers to succeed in a system which changes over to L2 English medium.’

English MOI at Grade 5 in Cheha Woreda primary schools is a problem not only for students but also for teachers as well. 40% teachers believe that they have ‘poor’ level of English proficiency as against the 52% that claim ‘good’. 23(67.65%) interviewed students, however, have reported that they do not feel Grade 5 teachers do have adequate level of English proficiency to use English as medium of instruction at Grade 5 level.

Those who lack adequate level of proficiency in the language of instruction stand out as low achievers (Pluddermann, 1997). It is thus imperative for low English proficiency learners to

obtain a level of English language skills that will lead to the achievement of their academic goals. Similarly, Tharp (1997) also argues that inadequate language skills in English are a fundamental retarding factor for low English proficiency learners in the subject classroom, because of the difficulty these learners experience in comprehending subjects associated concepts. Tharp (ibid) states that low English proficiency learners therefore have to acquire English language skills to succeed academically. Hence, the Zone Education Department in collaboration with the Regional Education Bureau has to take actions accordingly to curve the existing problem.

5.1.2 Students think that 'English supplemented with Amharic' need to be adopted as a MOI policy.

Officially the Gurage Zone has adopted English as medium of instruction starting from Grade 5 since September 2004. 65.06% of the students, however, report that 'English supplemented with Amharic' should be a medium of instruction at Grade 5. This is followed by Amharic (17.47%) and English (14.46%).

While students realize that it is easier for them to understand the subject matter if Amharic is used as the medium of instruction, they express regret when there is less chance for them to be exposed to English. The same dilemma is felt when English, being the medium of instruction, can on one hand help to improve the standard of English by providing opportunities for English expression, but on the other hand, will discourage discussion and interaction between the teacher and students and among the students themselves.

The current practice in classrooms shows that most teachers use both English and Amharic despite at varying degrees of frequencies. And students are happy with this practice though it does not comply with the English medium of instruction policy of the Zone. It has also come to the researcher's knowledge while interviewing teachers that some teachers are opposing this practice (code switching). They feel this practice would hinder the development of students' English language proficiency. They also argue that examinations are conducted only in English where students can not do that (use Amharic to answer questions).

The researcher, however, feels that particularly at a level where both students and teachers are perceived to have low level of proficiency at the MOI, teachers' code-switching skills need to be recognized as a legitimate and valid strategy. Regarding dual medium instruction, Malherbe (1943) pointed out that:

“....earlier research on bilingual education in South Africa in the 1930s and 1940s shows that students who have MTE throughout primary school plus bilingual (MT plus a second language as two mediums of instruction/ dual medium in secondary school) can outperform students in MTE only programs. In other words, students gain academic and cognitive benefits from such programs.”

Apart from that, it has to be clear that the primary aim of the teaching and learning process at this grade level is for students to grasp the intended knowledge and skills of the course content, not the development of either the students' or teachers' language proficiency.

5.1.3 The current English medium of instruction practice at Grade 5 level is negatively affecting students' cognitive development.

Grade 5 students have very uniform perceptions about the advantages of EMOI (Table 10). Most of the respondents, with a range between 46.11% and 72.05%, report that EMOI has the following advantages; helps to improve students' standard of English, gives more exposure to the international culture, helps to understand course contents and concepts difficult to express in Amharic, helps to join higher learning institutions, helps to get better job opportunities and to understand reference materials in English.

With regard to the disadvantages of EMOI, students' responses are, however, not uniform like that of their responses to its advantages (Table 11). Less than half of the student respondents, 32.14% to 40.12%, report that the following set of statements are the main disadvantages of EMOI; discourages active participation in class, makes it difficult to understand the course content, stops students from expressing themselves in class, and discourages discussion and interaction between students and teachers. On the other hand, overall 79.46% student

respondents note that they do not think that EMOI urges students to drop out against the overall 19.16% that think it does so.

Students' responses on the advantages vs. disadvantages of EMOI is, however, not consistent with what they have reported in their interviews. Most of the interviewed students, 24(70.59%), have reported that they have difficulties of understanding English MOI lessons whereas the remaining 10(31.25%) have reported otherwise.

Most of the interviewed students report that they are currently disadvantaged though they are happy with the earlier transition to EMOI. This is also supported by the teachers' response where 9(60%) teachers claim students are disadvantaged by the English medium of instruction. Another indication that enforces these responses, I think, could also be the academic records of these students. For better clarification, a summary of four classes' semester results that scored below 50 has been presented below;

Table 24: Summary of four Grade 5 Classes Results who scored below 50

Subjects	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Total	Total Sat for Exam	Below 50 in %
Amharic	12	20	29	17	78	321	24.30
English	46	58	50	17	171	321	53.27
Math	23	13	28	23	87	321	27.10
B. Science	41	28	19	28	116	321	36.14
S. Science	11	20	26	20	77	321	23.99
Civics	9	0	21	8	38	321	11.84
Total (Sat for Exam)	88	82	86	65			

As Table 24 shows, out of the 321 Grade 5 students of four classes who sat for 2006 first semester examinations in three primary schools, 171 students (53.27%) scored below 50 in English and this was followed by 116 students (36.14%) in Basic Science. And 87 students (27.10%) scored below 50 in Mathematics. The researcher believes that this should not be a surprising fact as researches on languages of instruction versus cognitive development have shown that 4 years of studying a language as a subject in not-well resourced school

environment and lack of exposure to the language speaking community is not sufficient enough to students to register good academic achievements. For example, from 1955 – 1975 when African language speaking students had 8 years of MTE followed by transition to mainly English medium the overall percent in 1976, and pass rate in English as subject reached 78% in 1978. However, the number of years of MTE decreased from 8 to 4 years from 1977, and this was followed by a serious drop in achievement in English as a subject fell to 38.5% by 1984, and by 1992 the average overall pass rate for the African student at the end of Grade 12 flopped to 44% in 1992(Heugh 2003), cited in MOE (2006).

The researcher believes all the above results are clear indications that students are not really benefiting out of English medium of instruction at present. The students valued advantages of English MOI over its disadvantages in their questionnaire but their response to same question provided during interview was reversed. The researcher believes these responses of students have been affected mainly by two reasons. One is a very large number of students assume that EMOI would improve their standard of English. And secondly, the researcher has observed that many students have developed unjustifiable and highly prized attitude towards English language.

5.1.4 Amharic medium of instruction is valued over English medium of instruction for better quality instruction.

Teacher respondents value Amharic-medium instruction over English medium one (items 1-3 in Table 12). Teachers are confident that Amharic as an instructional medium enhances student learning (Item 1, 60%), in that they can cover the materials of the course faster (Item 2, 88 %) and in greater depth (Item 3, 80%).

Questioned to rate against their level of proficiency in English and Amharic languages, (Table 3), 74.85% and 23.35% students report that they think they have ‘very good’ and ‘good’ level of Amharic proficiency respectively while only 36.97%, when ‘very good’ answers are taken together with the ‘good’ answers, report that they think their level of English proficiency is good enough to use EMOI. So this shows that even though Amharic is not a mother tongue language for most of these students, it is undoubtedly true that most of these students readily

understand Amharic quite far better than English. It is also good to remember that Amharic is the language which these students used as MOI for the earlier four grades i.e. from Grades 1 through 4.

Moreover different researches also show that students could do well at school when they are taught in a language that they can readily understand. In countries and schools where languages familiar to children are used as languages of instruction, the studies indicate that teachers and students communicate better. Such communication leads to better teaching on the part of the teachers and better learning for students (Alidou and Brock-Utne (2006). But when this is not a reality, teachers do most of the talking while children remain silent or passive participants during most of the classroom interactions. Because children do not speak the languages of instruction, teachers are also forced to use traditional teaching techniques such as chorus teaching, repetition, memorization, and recall, code-switching and safe talk. In this context, authentic teaching and learning cannot take place. Such situation accounts largely for the school ineffectiveness and low academic achievement experienced by students in Africa (ibid).

But contrary to all the above findings, most of the students still show higher interest in using English as a medium of instruction. Some teachers also share this interest of students accepting all the current difficulties and disadvantages these students and teachers themselves are facing due to English MOI.

5.1.5 Both students and teachers believe that English medium of instruction improves students standard of English.

Out of the 168 Grade 5 students, overall 156 students (92.86%) report that using English as a medium of instruction helps them improve their standard of English (Table 10). On a different item of teachers' questionnaire, overall 16 teachers (64%) report that using Amharic to study non-language subjects will negatively affect students' English proficiency.

With regard to this, the MOE (2006:106) Study Report on Medium of Instruction in Ethiopian Primary School also maintains, 'there is a widespread assumption that English MOI will help

people learn English.’ The Study Report further points out that the hypothesis that in order to learn a second language successfully, it should be used as a medium of instruction is a mere hypothesis and is not peculiar to Ethiopia. The researcher of the present Study also shares this observation.

Oller and Nagato (1974) looked at the long-term effects of foreign language study between seventh, ninth and eleventh graders who did and those who did not follow a sequence of FLES study. According to this study, FLES did not have a lasting impact on student achievement. The student participants were girls educated in private elementary and secondary schools in Japan. A control group (students not previously exposed to FLES) and a treatment group (students previously exposed to FLES) at each of the three grade-levels (seven, nine, eleven) were established. In order to examine the impact of foreign language study on English proficiency, students took a cloze test tailored to their grade level. The results show that non-FLES participants outperformed their FLES counterparts on the cloze measure by the time they reached the eleventh grade. Therefore, Oller and Nagato claim that FLES study did not have a lasting positive effect and that FLES students will not progress more rapidly than non-FLES students when participating in secondary and postsecondary foreign language study.

To sum up, there are no researches that prove using a language as a medium of instruction does guarantee automatic improvement of ones standard of a given language.

5.1.6 Teachers think that EMOI is not successful at Grade 5 in light with the provision of quality education to students.

With regard to the status of the English-medium instruction at Grade 5 in Cheha Woreda (Table 19), it is claimed by 60 % (15 teachers) that current English-medium instruction is not successful if we are to consider students’ level of English proficiency. Teachers also claim that EMOI is time consuming and has created additional burden on teachers as they have to explain things repeatedly or through code switching.

Teachers’ perception about the current EMOI practise to be ‘unsuccessful’ could not be out of ones expectation. Let us see why this is so. First, both the students’ and teachers’ level of

proficiency in English that is used as a medium of instruction is perceived to be generally poor. Secondly, students' exposure to English language is highly limited to classrooms. And thirdly, among the interviewed 15 teachers, only 33.33 % (5 teachers) are diploma graduates while the remaining 66.67 % (10 teachers) are Certificate (TTI) graduates.

The above figures on whether English medium of instruction is successful at Grade 5 level in Cheha Woreda Second Cycle Primary Schools in terms of providing quality education to students can not, I think, be a surprise. The MOE Study Report (2007:25), for example, points out four options that can work in African settings which, according to the Report, have been tried out and are currently practised in Africa. The two options state that:

- *'six years of MTE, followed by transition to a second language can succeed under very specific and well resourced conditions,' and*
- *'eight years of MTE, followed by transition to a second or foreign language, can succeed under less well-resourced, but nevertheless adequate conditions in Africa.'*

So in general with all the current existing realities of primary schools in Cheha Woreda, it would not be striking to hear that EMOI in the Woreda is without disadvantages and difficulties. But what is more striking is the fact that a large number of both students and teachers still prefer to retain EMOI at Grade 5. In fact, this was not shared by the two Woreda education officials. They rather suggested Amharic MOI to replace the first earlier grades i.e. Grades 5 and 6 and English MOI to start at Grade 7 level.

Finally, the researcher would like to make a few points. Teachers' practice is moulded by a number of factors over and above language policy; including their own preconceptions of language and learning, and the language proficiency of the students' in their classes. Further, teachers have a wide range of concerns related to English-medium instruction at Grade 5 level such as the unavailability of resources in English, low level of students' proficiency in English, students' low participation in classroom discussions and the like.

Having said this, the researcher would now like to move to the final chapter of this paper where summary and recommendations are forwarded.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Researches have shown that language plays a very important role in students' cognitive development. Following the 1994 New Education and Training Policy, many Zones or Regions of the country have adopted their respective nationality languages as media of instruction. In the Gurage Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, however, Amharic continued to be used as a medium of instruction from Grade 1 through 6 until 2004. Since September 2004, however, the role of Amharic as MOI in Grades 5 and 6 was taken by English.

As the researcher used to have frequent field travels in the Zone and particularly in Cheha Woreda, he learnt that the Zone adopted EMOI starting from Grade 5 that is two to four years earlier than many of the other Regions or Zones of the country. This ignited a question into the researcher's mind whether this could be so without any significant disadvantage on the cognitive development of students.

Having this question in mind, the researcher tried to assess both students' and teachers' reflections through questionnaires and interviews. An analysis was also made on randomly selected summary scores of four Grade 5 classes of three Primary schools of the Woreda.

A total of 169 students and 25 teachers participated in filling in their respective questionnaires. And 34 students and 15 teachers did take part in their respective semi-structured interviews. A discussion was also held with two Cheha Woreda Education officials on the overall EMOI policy implementation in the second cycle primary schools of the Woreda.

And findings of the current research show that students of Grade 5 in Cheha Woreda seem a group at risk of academic failure. Not only English subject teachers should strive to develop the English proficiency of low English proficiency learners, but all stakeholders such as non-language subject teachers, parents, education officials at various levels and students themselves all have to realize that the level of students English proficiency is at a lower level

that needs a top priority . If these learners are to realize their full potential, a strong commitment must be made to their educational needs. It is imperative for low English proficiency learners to acquire English proficiency on the level that helps them steadily understand course contents and concepts.

Based on this general remark and all the findings of the current Study, the researcher would at last like to put forward a list of recommendations so as to curbe the existing difficulties and challenges that both students and teachers of the Cheha Woreda are facing due to the adoption of English as medium of instruction at Grade 5 level and ensure better quality instruction instead.

6.2 Recommendations

After analyzing all the findings of the current Study, the researcher has come up with the following recommendations;

- It is of vital importance that the Cheha Woreda Education office in collaboration with Gurage Zone Education Department and the Regional Education Bureau as well as all other stakeholders to put the issue of English medium of instruction at Grades 5 on their priority agenda.
- It is imperative for students to acquire English proficiency to a level that enables them readily understand course contents and concepts before using it as a medium of instruction so that meaningful learning takes place. And the current level of students proficiency in the language of instruction, English, is perceived to be very low. Hence, I recommend that Amharic be reintroduced as a medium of instruction for the first two grades of second cycle primary schools (Grades 5 and 6) and English MOI to start at Grade 7.
- The researcher also suggests that primary schools of the Cheha Woreda can enhance students' English proficiency along side extending the Amharic-medium of instruction up to Grade 6. This can be done by the following strategies:

- Schools may allocate, on top of English language lessons, additional English lesson time for extended learning activities conducted in English with a view to increasing students' exposure to English.
 - Schools in collaboration with the Woreda and Zone Education officials should enhance the teaching effectiveness of English by making effective deployment of manpower resources as well as improving the quality of curriculum design, teaching pedagogy, assessment for learning, etc.
- The researcher also believes that Teacher Education Programs at Colleges need to include language awareness courses; although teachers might have good knowledge of English language, for example, in terms of language teaching and learning, it would seem that some theoretical knowledge about language and cognition and second language acquisition would enhance their capacity for informed practice.
 - The efforts made so far by the Ethiopian government to increase the number of qualified teachers and improve their professional capacity is commendable. But along with that, the Regional Education Bureau/Zone Education Department/Woreda Education Office need to provide English language teachers on-job trainings with a focus on language acquisition and language teaching methodologies.
 - It would be very helpful if schools have to design a viable system to normalise the unjustifiably high level of students' perceptions towards English language proficiency.
 - I finally recommend that the Cheha Woreda Education Office and the Zone Education Department in collaboration with the Regional Education Bureau and other stakeholders need to conduct a further in-depth study on the same theme, English as Medium of Instruction practice, as the scope of the current study is limited to only three primary schools of the Cheha Woreda.

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