Routledge Research in Language Education

EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND LITERACY PRACTICES IN ETHIOPIA

PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, GENDER AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Edited by
Kassahun Weldemariam,
Margareth Sandvik and Moges Yigezu

ROUTLEDGE

Early Childhood Language Education and Literacy Practices in Ethiopia

This edited volume explores how indigenous knowledges and practices can be instrumental in improving literacy outcomes and teacher development practices in Ethiopia, aiding children's long-term reading, and learning outcomes.

The chapters present research from a collaborative project between Ethiopia and Norway and demonstrate how students can be supported to think pragmatically, learn critically and be in possession of the citizenship skills necessary to thrive in a multilingual world. The authors celebrate multilingualism and bring indigenous traditions such as oracy, storytelling, folktales to the fore revealing their positive impact on educational attainment. Addressing issues of language diversity and systematic ignorance of indigenous literacy practices, the book plays a necessary role in introducing Ethiopia's cultural heritage to the West and, hence, bridges the cultural gaps between the global north and the global south.

Arguably contributing to one of the first publications on early literacy in Ethiopian languages, this book will appeal to scholars, researchers and postgraduate students studying the fields of early years literacy and language, indigenous knowledge and applied linguistics more broadly.

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Preface to *Early Childhood Language Education and Literacy Practices in Ethiopia*

The use of mother tongues, particularly in the early years, has been a subject widely discussed and debated among linguists, educationalists, psychologists and the like. Brock-Utne (2000), following Obanya (1980), asserts that the African child's major learning problem is indeed a linguistic one and that instruction is typically in a language that is not the child's home language, or indeed, a language used in their immediate environment. The use of mother tongues in primary education offers both pedagogical and socio-cultural advantages for all children and is supported by strong educational, socio-cultural and political arguments.

Nevertheless, its implementation in the educational system of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country like Ethiopia presents serious challenges. Among these challenges, especially in the Ethiopian context, is the subject of literacy and reading instruction. This has been highlighted by the Ethiopian government and its partners' subject assessments (EGRA, 2010, 2018), as well as independent subject assessors. There is an implementation gap in Ethiopia, which is counterproductive to the multiple advantages of using mother-tongue languages in the early years of education. Improving the quality of reading skills in primary schools in Ethiopia can only be achieved if a major intervention strategy is planned and implemented – one that enhances the capacity of teachers in early years reading methodologies and pedagogical techniques, increases the availability and quality of reading materials (in and outside the school) and creates awareness of a reading culture amongst school administrators, education bureau officials and the community at large.

It is within this milieu that a project entitled 'Beyond Access: Improving quality of early years reading instruction in Ethiopia and South Sudan' was initiated by partner institutions and launched in 2016 with financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) under its NORHED program from 2016 to 2023 (project number: QZA-0483 ETH-16/0028). The chief project's aim was to improve the quality of education for primary grades in Ethiopian schools with a strong focus on teacher training and building the capacity for early literacy instruction among Ethiopian higher education institutions. The partner institutions are Addis Ababa University in

Ethiopia (the grant recipient), Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway and Bahirdar and Gambella Universities, also in Ethiopia.

The current text contribution, *Early Childhood Language Education and Literacy Practices in Ethiopia*, is part of a joint endeavour to provide research data and knowledge-based recommendations to inform the quality improvement of Ethiopian reading instruction. This publication was inspired and motivated by the research conducted by the project team members, including PhD students, over the past six years. The chapters derived from the research manuscripts were also discussed at a series of workshops and seminars organized by the project team and presented at international conferences over the past six years. We contend that the research-based manuscripts included in this volume will shed some light on the challenges of the Ethiopian educational system in the lower grades in particular by (1) pinpointing some pertinent contemporary challenges in the area of teacher socialization for the lower grades; (2) highlighting the potential of overlooked indigenous literacy practices; (3) providing evidence-based knowledge for policy makers; (4) suggesting areas of intervention for improving the quality of early reading instruction in Ethiopian schools; and (5) indicating future directions, inspiring researchers, and outlining the nature of language education in early years education.

The review process

In order to ensure the quality of the chapters included in this volume, we invited two reviewers for each contribution. The reviewers for this volume were experts from universities and academic institutions across the global south and north. We thank all of them for their input in identifying any inconsistencies or unclear arguments and for their thorough and constructive contributions.

Moges Yigezu

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Moges Yigezu
PI, Beyond Access Project

1 Introduction

Context for language education in Ethiopia

Kassahun Weldemariam, Margareth Sandvik and Moges Yigezu

Ethiopia is a multilingual country where the field of language education and becoming literate in a particular language is highly contested. Due to the turbulent political history of Ethiopia from the 1970s to now, language education in Ethiopian schools remains a complex and controversial topic (Benson, Heugh, & Bogale, 2013). The problem is multifaceted and can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the wide national linguistic diversity, with about 85 languages registered has led to a policy of promoting education in mother tongues. During the past three decades, mother tongue education in Ethiopia has been widely expanded. Currently, about 36 languages have been introduced into the school system either as a medium of instruction or as school subjects to be taught in early years education. In an effort to accommodate this perceived diversified need, over the past three decades, a range of language policies have been introduced, including English and mother tongue starting from grade 1 and the introduction of Amharic from grade 3. Whilst diversity could have been turned into an opportunity, the lack of research-based systematic knowledge and the scarcity of educational resources have hindered efforts to capitalize on and improve this complex situation.

Aside from the major challenge of managing linguistic diversity and the concomitant absence of research-based knowledge, there has also been a lack of effective pre- and post-service teacher training, and thus, a culture of continuous professional development is absent. This has proved to be a major hindrance to effective language education in Ethiopian education in general and in early years education in particular. As pointed out by Yigezu (2010), training teachers for a highly multilingual environment like Ethiopia has remained a challenge. However, as many studies attest bilingual and multilingual environments afford multiple benefits for students' cognitive development, so this complex challenge is actually a unique opportunity, if appropriately utilized (Ware, Kirkovski, & Lum, 2020).

While Ethiopia is rich in cultural capital and sources of knowledge, teachers' competence and skill to translate this knowledge base into educational advantage has remained far below adequate. This has led to a situation in which language education is generally decontextualized; it fails to use the

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existing social capital but instead places emphasis on the mastery of discrete language elements at the expense of important communicative, cultural and social values. Despite some recent progress, teacher training programmes have not been successful in utilizing indigenous knowledges and other authentic cultural resources (Heugh, 2009) in training primary school language teachers. This has created a gap and mismatch between the training provided and the challenges on the ground.

The language of instruction in Ethiopia has undergone various reforms as shifts have occurred from traditional teaching to Western education approaches. The instruction for language teachers is mostly in English, although their level of English proficiency is below the required government level. However, after graduation these teachers are expected to teach in their mother tongue, not English. This hinders the knowledge transfer from trainers to the trainees. In turn, this results in poor language acquisition skills and children's low level of foundational reading and writing proficiency, which are important precursors for future academic and life success. Current Ethiopian students' poor performance in reading skills has brought about a negative self-image reflected in the national learning assessments; this is in spite of national and international efforts to raise reading skills (The United States Agency for International Development, 2019).

As hinted at in the first paragraph, the history of indigenous language education is intimately tied up with politics. It is the language policy of the government that dictates and shapes the language policy and practice in schools and teacher training institutions. Ethiopia has undergone a range of educational policy reforms from the Haile Selassie regime to the current government (Getachew & Derib, 2006; McNab, 1990). In both the Haile Selassie era pre-1974 and the Dergue era from 1974 to 1991, Amharic was the language of instruction, and various ethnic groups championed both national liberation and insurgency coupled with advocating indigenous language use, literacy and oracy. Thus, the subject of education in the mother tongue became a political rallying call for various national insurgencies notwithstanding the fact that during the Dergue regime, multiple Ethiopian languages were used for national literacy campaigns. After the victory of the different ethnically based insurgencies coalesced under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) from 1991 the government pursued a policy of Ethnic Federalism designed, so its adherents saw it, as a way of promoting diversity and equality. However, due to the lack of democracy and the frequently ruthless suppression of any dissent, critics began to see Ethnic Federalism as a way of cementing division rather than pursuing genuine liberation and many sceptical about the policy argued it was leading to further ethnic conflict. In 1994, Ethiopia adopted a multilingual national Education and Training Policy (Ministry of Education/MoE, 1994), which brought about the use of learners' mother tongues for literacy and learning through the full eight years of primary schooling.

Whilst the chapters in this book are not directly political, this is the context within which the chapter debates and discussions take place. If Ethiopia can

successfully address issues of language diversity, celebrate multilingualism and its positive effects on educational attainment overall, this could bring indigenous traditions of oracy, storytelling, song, dance and folktales to the fore. A prize to be richly celebrated and cultivated by all Ethiopians.

Ethiopia's huge cultural capital is manifested in the diversity of cultural practices including church and mosque education/schools. Such traditions have been documented since the 16th century. Albeit old, the traditions are still vibrant in most parts of the country but not often talked about and appreciated in educational contexts. Some scholars have indicated that African indigenous knowledge systems are ignored and remain as untapped resources (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). There has not been a systematic research-based knowledge that particularly promotes and incorporates indigenous knowledge exemplars into modern education. The chapter contributors to this volume strongly believe that the relevance and potential of indigenous practices to modern education need to be highlighted and also shared with Western countries. As such, this book plays a role in introducing Ethiopia's cultural heritage to the West and, hence, bridge the cultural gaps between the global north and the global south.

However, despite there being rich indigenous knowledges and cultural practices, these are widely overlooked in the scientific community and modern education. The contribution of the rich indigenous practices such as church education to modern education deserves particular attention. However, a hegemonic Western-oriented approach, in the name of modernity, has become rampant in many parts of the country such that this rich seam of indigenous knowledge and cultural practice is overlooked and at risk of being lost. Particularly in educational settings around large cities, the Western-oriented approach has become a customary practice with other forms of non-Western knowledges ignored. As an example, Ethiopia has a rich tradition of cultural and indigenous songs, as well as folk tales, with potentially huge relevance and value to language and literacy development, but they are largely ignored in the scientific discussions among scholarly researchers around language acquisition and education. There are also rich cultural trends towards learning through play (e.g. rhythmical songs) with much potential to enhance children's literacy development, but they too are often overlooked, and thus, not systematically or professionally utilized in school and educational settings. Much of this rich cultural heritage is neither documented nor researched.

Aim, focus and organization of the book

The multilingual and complex linguistic environment in Ethiopia underwrites the need for a course book for teacher training. Currently, there is no easily available anthology illustrating cultural-linguistic scenarios supported by carefully argued research-based evidence. Thus, this book aims to fill this gap, to highlight some highly pertinent contemporary challenges that teacher training institutions face while training language teachers for primary schools and

perhaps contribute to wider debates, discussions and resolutions of the challenges of multilingual and multi-ethnic education and governance. The book also aims to broaden teachers' practice and inform their view of the current state of the art which is valuable, and in some cases crucial, for literacy and language learning.

The contributors to this volume address different relevant aspects of today's challenges and pertinent language education practices in the early years from various perspectives, including multilingualism, pedagogy, instructional materials, indigenous practices and teacher training. Moreover, language behaviour and linguistic features of selected languages and their role in Ethiopia's rich culture are also addressed in some chapters.

The book is organized under three major parts or strands: fundamental challenges of early grade reading competency and teaching practices; indigenous literacy practices; and language development issues from instructional and pedagogical perspectives. Each strand contains three chapters, and each chapter presents a unique contribution to the issues at hand both methodologically and topically and has different orientations. Some chapters highlight the challenges associated with students' reading competencies, the development of appropriate instructional materials and the quality of teacher preparation and professional development in the context of early grade instructions, while others explore the potential and relevance of the long-neglected indigenous education system of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC), in which the authors examine the literacy practices as well as the teacher training programmes and mentorship schemes of an age-old education system. A couple of chapters offer cases and empirical examples on metaphorical expressions as a pedagogical tool and language behaviours related to gendered expression of selected Ethiopian languages. One more chapter highlights the relevance of language development in light of instructional and pedagogical principles. It should be noted that these three major parts are not mutually exclusive, and hence they naturally overlap.

Part 1: Challenges associated with early reading competency and teaching practices

The first part contains three chapters that discuss the challenges of early grade reading competency in Ethiopian schools and factors that contributed to the poor reading achievements of children in primary schools. The chapters further explore the quality of an aspect of teacher preparation and professional development as well as the relevance and appropriateness of instructional materials used in teaching how to read and write in local languages. The part draws together chapters in which the quality of early grades education is tackled from different perspectives – reading instructions in mother tongue languages, quality of teacher preparation programs and appropriateness of instruction materials.

Chapter 2 explores challenges associated with students' poor reading skills in the early years of education. The author presents the challenges related to

reading competencies and discusses the issues and factors that contributed to the failure in finding effective solutions at the national level. In order to arrive at amicable solutions to the challenges, the author calls for a comprehensive research-based approach and context and/or language-specific interventions. *Chapter 3* deals with the preparation and professional development of teachers in the context of multilingual classroom situations. The author cites previous assessments made on reading competencies of children in early grades (cf. USAID/Ethiopia, 2010; USAID, 2019) in which the poor quality of teacher preparedness has contributed to the low level of reading competencies of children in Ethiopian schools. The author argues that teacher socialization through the process of induction of beginning teachers is one aspect of improving the quality and preparedness of teachers. In light of this, the author assesses the form and content of the induction programmes and the adequacy of such programmes in introducing novice teachers to multilingual classroom ecology in both urban and rural areas. The author highlights that the absence of proper socialization in the ecology of multilingual classroom undermines the role of the beginning teachers and negatively affects teacher quality and student learning. *Chapter 4* provides a critical evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of instructional materials prepared for grade 1 for teaching and learning in a minority language, that is Koorete. The chapter is framed around the analysis of the textbook and existing syllabus of primary schools (grades 1–4). The author concludes that primary curriculum designers and material developers ought to explicitly incorporate the basic components of phonological awareness activities in early grade curriculum, specifically in students' textbooks. He further recommended that the Ministry of Education and educational officers select early grade literacy experts, an experienced curriculum designer and a well-trained textbook developer in the preparation of instructional materials for early grades.

Part 2: Indigenous literacy practices

Emphasizing the potential of indigenous literacy practices, the second part consists of three chapters that address the practices of the church education system and its contribution to language and literacy development in the early years of education. The contributions within this strand discuss the potential of the EOTC in enhancing literacy education in local languages and the need to explore lessons that can be drawn today from this locally based and indigenous education system. In their chapter, the authors investigate how the church education system gives particular emphasis to the quality of teacher training and development and consider teacher socialization as a crucial component of teacher education and preparedness.

Chapter 5 highlights the role and contribution of church education in modern/Western schooling. Specifically, the chapter presents the contribution of 'Nibab-Bet' (the House of Reading in the church school system) in

promoting reading abilities and understandings. The author highlights the acute need to enhance students' reading skills and points out that it is imperative to consider the positive experiences of Nibab-Bet in modern Ethiopian schooling. Drawing on empirical data from field visits to two well-known monasteries in South Gondar region of northern Ethiopia, *Chapter 6* examines the literacy practices of the traditional church schools. The chapter investigates the literacy practices of the church schools and the methods and strategies employed in teaching how to read and write in light of the modern concepts of reading instructions related to phonological awareness, phonics and reading fluency. The author further argues that a system of indigenous education that has been totally neglected may have something to offer to the contemporary challenges affecting the quality of early years reading instructions. While contributing to the retrieval of African indigenous knowledge systems, *Chapter 7* sheds light on the EOTC schools' teacher training programme and mentorship scheme. The contributors describe teacher preparation and development and discuss the ways in which teaching, and the teaching profession, is theoretically and ideologically conceptualized and institutionalized in the EOTC school system.

Part 3: Language development: instructional and pedagogical relevance

This part consists of three chapters that address aspects of the different linguistic features of some Ethiopian languages and their instructional and pedagogical relevance. For a language to be effectively used for pedagogical purposes, it is imperative that the language is empowered and its foundational constitutes (i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics elements) are developed and described so that it is easier to develop textbooks and also train teachers with the necessary linguistic and pedagogical competencies to teach the language. The authors state that this in turn leads to the children/students becoming literate in the language and being aware of and learning how to deal with these linguistic features in the early years of their language and literacy development.

While referring to the linguistic features of a language, one central aspect to focus on is the gender system and how it is built into the linguistic structure. It is uncommon to see gender referred to as an important and central aspect of language and literacy study. Ethiopia has often been identified as a patriarchal nation and has very defined gender roles embedded within the culture. Many argue that the African nation has seen very traditional gender roles as observed in other nations. With the use of religion and culture, men have been able to keep women in subordinate roles. Due to the patriarchal nature of Ethiopian culture, women are disadvantaged economically, socially and in raising families. If it is used and taught appropriately, language has the power to either perpetuate gender bias or serve as a mechanism to counteract and challenge it. Some of the chapters in this book take up how gender and

culture are represented in different languages along with the implications for pedagogy and preparation of instructional resources.

The chapters under this part address a range of topics including metaphor as a pedagogical tool, gendered expression in some Ethiopian languages and the prevalence of gender balance and bias in textbook preparations. *Chapter 8* discusses metaphor as a pedagogical tool in the Anywaa language – a member of the western Nilotic language group spoken primarily in the western part of Ethiopia. Although the level of development of the language for modern use such as in education is at its earliest stage, the authors discuss how conceptual metaphors could be used in the teaching of subjects like language, mathematics and environmental sciences in grades 1–4, where Anywaa is used as a medium of instruction in early grades. The authors highlight the usefulness and affordance of metaphors for teaching abstract concepts in various subjects.

Chapter 9 deals with gendered expressions and gender-sensitive language use in selected Ethiopian languages of Cushitic, Omotic and Semitic. The chapter highlights the didactical and pedagogical significance of gender-sensitive language use. The author elucidates that teacher-student communication is marred by gendered diction that has an impact on female positioning and participation in the classroom and beyond, and hence has didactical and curricular implications.

Chapter 10 addresses the prevalence of gender bias in English and Amharic language textbooks prepared for primary schools. The chapter is framed around a study that investigated gender bias, via raw count of the representation of females and males, focusing on nouns, pronouns, illustrations and occupational roles, assigned for females and males. Based on the empirical findings, the author recommended that schools, textbook writers, families and all stakeholders dealing with female students' lives have to be attentive and cautious in their treatment of female learners, for most of the subjectivities in female lives and education are observed to spring from the biases in school and home environments. Moreover, mainstreaming gender in the teaching learning processes and furnishing gender normalization centres in schools and immediate society are vital to create gender awareness and address the critical issue of gender bias.

Situating the book in international contexts and previous related publications

The book has an international appeal across language education and linguistic diversity. In a world of global interconnection, communication and collaboration, identifying 21st-century skills has become important. Organizations have tried to define and select these competencies (UNESCO, OECD, Partnership for 21st Century Learning), and common among the efforts is the promotion of versatility in developing students' deeply engrained transversal skills. These transversal skills rest upon a foundation for learning that

emphasizes global awareness, creative, critical and pragmatic thinking, collaboration in analogue and digital environments, skills for citizenship and expanding forms of literacy (OECD, 2018). Teachers and researchers are aware of the need to cultivate students as cosmopolitan citizens within a global culture of openness and with the ability to look beyond the communities in which they were born or live, thus promoting an inclusive and global mindset (de Costa, 2016).

The book can meet the needs within such a cultivation process, in addition to addressing 21st-century skills from a global perspective. Several universities in the USA and Europe have study programmes addressing education from a global perspective. They also offer student exchange, and longer studies and stays in African countries. The book is of significant relevance for such international students.

Regionally and across the entire African continent, there is a movement and visible push for the importance of introducing languages into literacy – particularly in the early years. Every country with a colonial history is endeavoring to promote a mother tongue in the early years – apart from their mission of promoting English and French.

Moreover, nowadays there is a significant global focus on the relevance of early years literacy. Institutions like the World Bank are promoting global literacy in the early years based on the argument that children should be taught in a language they are familiar with, which in turn impacts development and promotes national economic benefits. By elucidating the significance of indigenous literacy practices and pointing out the overlooked potential of minority languages, this book contributes to the development of global literacies in the early years. In addition, some of the languages addressed in this volume (e.g. Anywaa in Chapter 8) are spoken in neighboring countries like South Sudan, which reassures that this book is regionally/geographically relevant albeit on a smaller scale.

Regarding previous research publications, there have been several research outputs over the past decades on early childhood education (ECE)-related issues in Ethiopia and published in peer-reviewed national and international journals. But, a recent book published in 2020 by a group of ECE scholars from Addis Ababa and Jigjiga universities is worth mentioning. The book entitled *Early Childhood Education in Ethiopia: Past developments, Present Practices and Future Directions* was edited by Belay Tefera, Haile, Teklu, Melaku and Admas (2020) and published by the East African Development Research Institute of Jigjiga University in Ethiopia. The book is a collation of previously published ECE articles from local and international journals with the aim of documenting the available but somewhat scattered research in a way more accessible to professionals in the field. The book offers vital information by synthesizing existing knowledge and pooling together salient features to underscore major achievements and gaps in the field of ECE in Ethiopia. It also draws attention to future research directions for ECE in Ethiopia.

The current proposed volume focuses on language education in early grades and would be a natural addition to the above book where language education was barely mentioned. The proposed volume includes issues such as the need to investigate child learning from the perspective of pedagogy and associated teacher development practices and exploits the potential of indigenous knowledge and practices for early reading and literacy.

Another related international publication is a book entitled *Improving Early Literacy Outcomes: Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment*, edited by Nic Spaull and John Comings (2019). The focus of this volume was to improve early literacy achievement using the constructive alignment of curriculum, teaching and assessment. This book resonates very well with the envisioned volume since its main focus is on the analysis of literacy instruction programmes in African countries with low literacy rates such as Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal. Since the scenario in Ethiopia is somewhat similar, this related publication can serve as a reference point to mirror and compare the practices of language and literacy education across different contexts, thus we can extrapolate the implications and produce a research-based guide for policymakers, practitioners/educators and academics working in the field of language education.

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Part 1

Challenges associated with early reading competency and teaching practices

2 Challenges of early grade reading competency in Ethiopia

A synthesis of research and experience

Abraha Asfaw

Introduction

The Education For All (EFA) global commitment is helping many countries to focus and register encouraging achievements in access. School systems are expanding and educational opportunities are opened to many children than ever before. However, there is a growing concern regarding quality of education defined by status of learning, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia. The changing definition of quality as learning has encouraged the use of international tests and the integration of learning assessment schemes into education systems of different countries (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2004). In resource-poor countries, Early Years Education (EYE) is one of the critical areas of intervention in reforming education systems for better learning outcomes. The current move towards the use of tools such as the International Development and Learning and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) is a case in point in this regard.

Early grade reading ability or literacy[1] has strategic fit to the context of Ethiopian education in particular and that of poor resource countries in general. First, early reading ability has far-reaching effects in learning other subjects, in later school achievements, and even success in life (including career choice and income level increase) (Antoni & Heineck, 2012; DES, 2011; Dugdale & Clark, 2008; Duncan et al., 2007; French, 2013; Glass, 2002; Neumann, Hood, Ford, & Neumann, 2013; Purdie, Reid, Frigo, Stone, & Kleinhenz, 2011; Shomos, 2010). Conversely, children who have learning difficulty at the start of literacy are highly likely to lag behind their peers in academic progress. Second, reading skill development is critical because learning strengths or difficulties have the characteristic of being accumulated overtime and affect children's learning ability and progress accordingly (Cramman et al., 2018; Purpura & Reid, 2016). While children with good start will strengthen the ability in due course, those with learning difficulties lag behind their peers when they go up the educational ladder because of the critical space of reading in learning. Third, identification of learning difficulties is relatively easier at early ages and cost effective. Not only interventions at this level are local resource and practice

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intensive but also prevents wastage and gives time to amend a limitation before it is too late. Fourth, in this age of information processing, using mobile and internet, individual competition and independent learning without reading skill is hardly possible.

Above all, early reading competency is an integral part of quality. McCormac (2012) presented the connection between reading, literacy and quality of education as indicated in Figure 2.1.

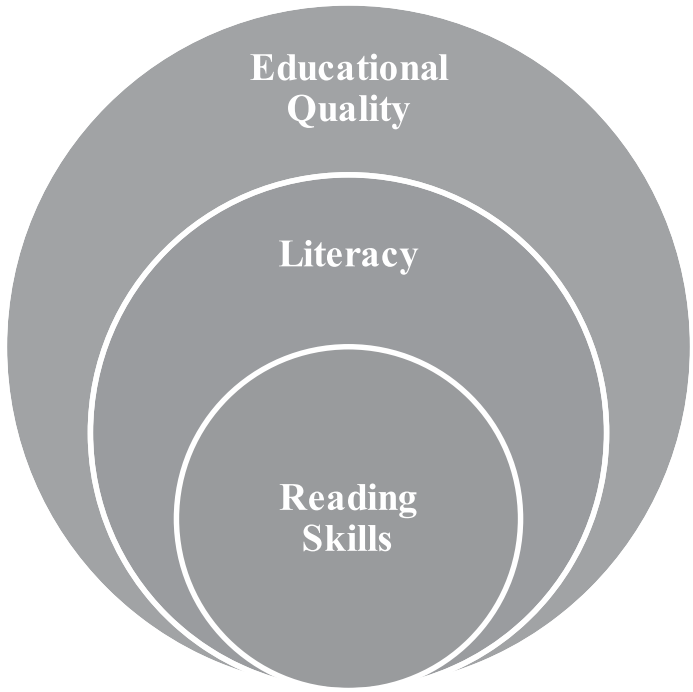

Figure 2.1 Relationship Between Reading Skills, Literacy, and Educational Quality

Source: McCormac, Meredith. (2012). *Literacy and Educational Quality improvement in Ethiopia: A mixed methods study.* University of Maryland (Unpublished PhD Dissertation).

This relationship is not only simple to comprehend but also indicative of policy, research and action points. Figure 2.1 reveals that failure to develop reading skills will ultimately lead to dysfunctioning of the education system and thereby to the cultivation of less productive citizens.

The concept of *competency* here has to do with not only the measure of meaningful performance or action that incorporates knowledge, skill and attitude but also *accuracy* and *speed* in doing so. Thus, reading competency is to mean accuracy to read words in a passage in a reasonable time span. However, research in local languages in Ethiopia is only a recent phenomenon, and practices are shaped by lessons from the developed world, especially research on English language (Spaull, 2019). It is only after the first national Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) (Piper, 2010) that intervention schemes are being introduced (including mother tongue curriculum review and redesign), and research efforts are on the mount to influence policy and practices.

Despite improved focus towards early grade reading by the Ethiopian government and NGOs, research shows that there is no significant improvement so far in the area (AIR, 2019). Besides, while availability of research outputs on the status of reading ability in different languages is improving, evidence on the nature of challenges that hinder the realization of satisfactory and sustainable improvements in the area is scarce. Accordingly, the central objective of this chapter is identification of the basic challenges of early grade reading competency development in Ethiopia through analysis and synthesis of research reports and reflection on personal professional experiences. Subsequent parts, therefore, focus on the status of early grade reading competency in Ethiopia, theoretical framework, challenges, concluding remarks and way forward.

The status of early grade reading competency in Ethiopia

As is the case in many countries, Ethiopia introduced a four-year cyclic national learning assessment practice at grades 4 and 8 in 2000. This package of assessment includes, among others, reading comprehension assessment in mother tongue languages. However, results failed to show progress and rather increased public concern regarding how the education system is functioning. See Figure 2.2 for achievement status and trends in Mother Tongue Language

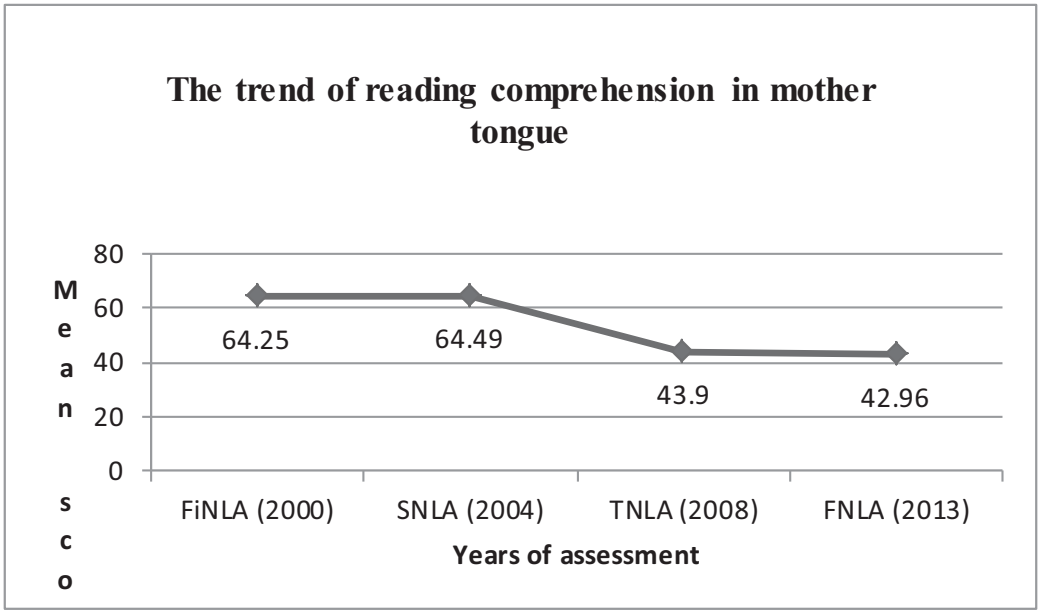

Figure 2.2 Mean scores (in %) of grade 4 students in reading comprehension in mother tongue languages in Ethiopia

Note

1. FiNLA/SNLA/TNLA/FNLA stands for First/Second/Third/Fourth National Learning Assessment
2. Sample sizes: FNLA = 10,495; SNLA = 13,346; TNLA = 12,220; FNLA = 10,787

Reading comprehension in the four National Learning Assessment (NLA) studies.

Figure 2.2 shows that achievement scores of grade 4 students in reading comprehension in mother tongue languages decreased over the exam period. In the four assessments, the composite mean also (the sum of achievements in Reading, English, Math and Environmental Science) declined from about 47% to 40%. However, there was no clear answer to the following question: are students failing because of difficulties in meaning making or because of problems in reading ability? The results are about failure to make meaning but no evidence on what explains the low reading ability of children, an issue which was not clear until the EGRA research in Woliso area, Oromia Regional State, in 2009.

For this first EGRA study in Ethiopia, data were collected from 24 government and nine community schools to understand how grade 3 students were able to read in their mother tongue language (Afaan Oromo). Findings obtained from a sample size of 456 indicated that only 15% read at 40 words per minute (viewed by the researchers as acceptable). On the contrary, 36% of the students could not read a single word correctly and this situation sent a signal to both MoE and USAID (DeStefano & Elaheebocus, 2009).

While the National Learning Assessments tend to measure curriculum-based outcomes, EGRA is a measure of the development of appropriate capabilities at a given age. Thus, in 2010, a nationwide EGRA was conducted with a sample size of over 13,000 grades 2 and 3 in five languages (Tigrigna, Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Af Somali and Sidaama Afoo) and in seven regions (Tigrai, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP/Sidama zone, Harari, Benshangulgumuz, Ethiopia Somali and Addi Ababa). Findings were extremely frustrating for everybody: MoE/government, community/parents, academicians, practitioners, NGOs and so on. For example, there were a considerable number of children who could not read a single word properly, and the percentages of zero scorers in reading comprehension were alarmingly high as indicated in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 (Piper, 2010). Note that it is not possible to compare across language areas because of variations in script, language structure, language development and so on.

Figure 2.3 shows proportion of children who, after two and three years of schooling, could not read even a word correctly in their own mother tongue language. This ranges from 3.8% for grade 3 in Addis Ababa to 69.2% of grade 2 in Sidama zone. Such a limitation is critical and highly likely to affect negatively, at least, the motivation of parents to send their children to school, the independent learning possibilities of children and reading comprehension competencies in schools.

The data in Figure 2.4 indicated higher proportions of low scorers in reading comprehension in each of the languages and regions. This is expected as word reading is the prerequisite of comprehension. If we fail to read passages, it is obvious that we cannot provide appropriate answers to questions from the passage. Both speed and accuracy elements affect the achievement scores not

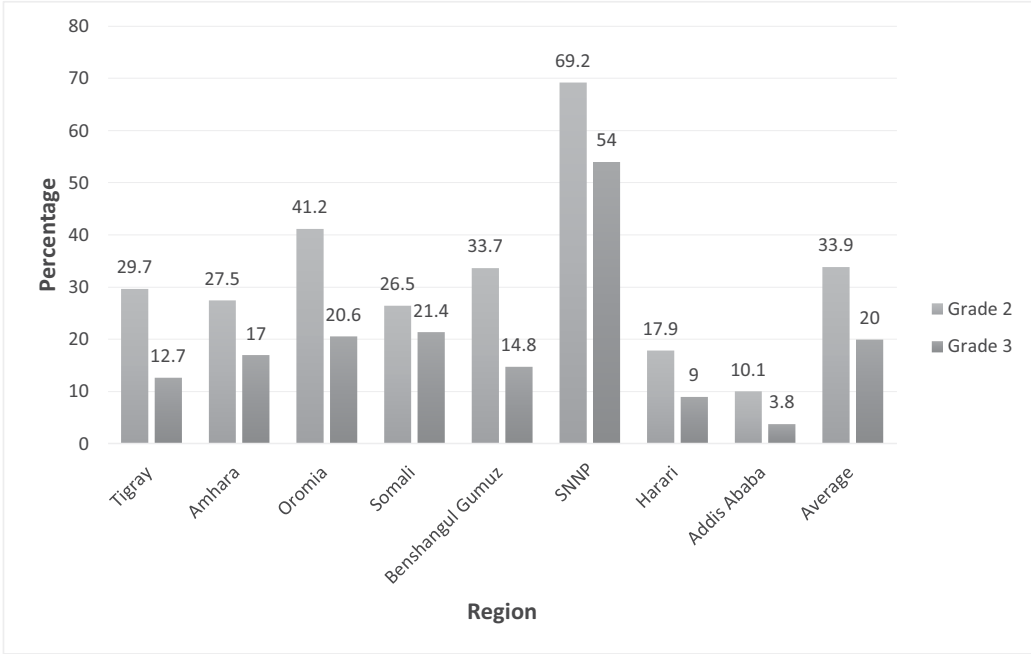

Figure 2.3 Children who were unable to read a single word in their mother tongue language

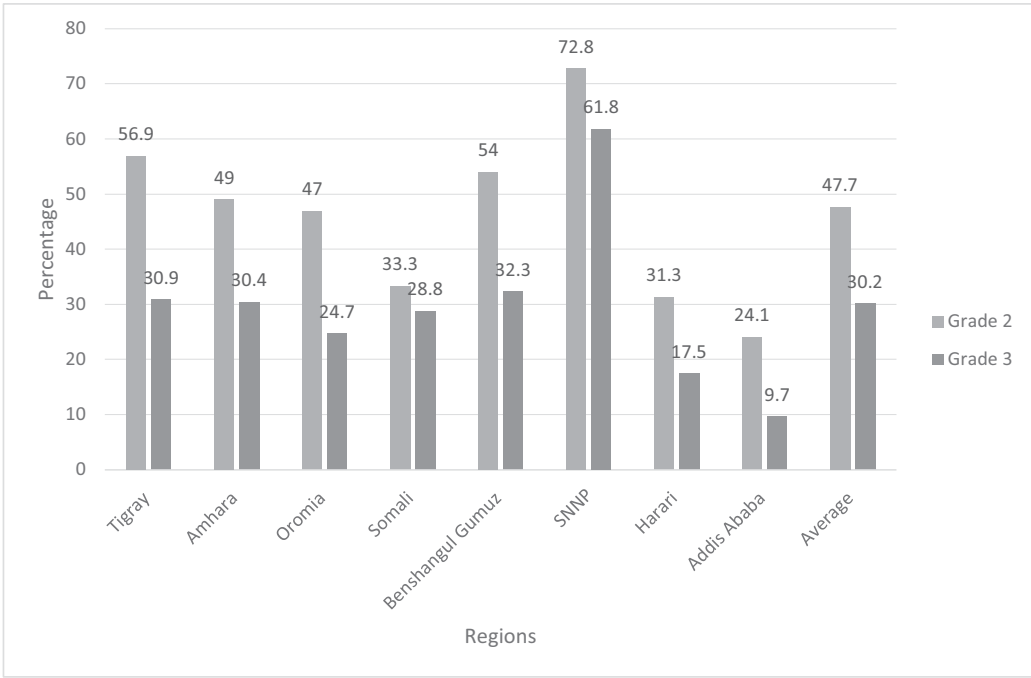

Figure 2.4 Percentage of children who scored zero in reading comprehension

only because students will not finish the test in the given time but also because conceptualization of passage reading depends on time span and accurate reading of the words to understand their meaning. If such a problem continues, students' ability to study other subjects such as environmental science will also be affected. Thus, reading problem is a learning problem and hence a determinant of quality.

Since the dissemination of such evidence, interventions have been taking place, most commonly in reading, by MoE and NGOs to redress the problem. The notable one from the Federal Ministry of Education side, with funding from USAID, is the improvement of the national mother tongue curriculum, development of improved textbooks in seven languages[2] and upgrading of teachers for effective implementation. However, it is too early to discuss the intervention outcomes.

NGO-led intervention schemes are also designed and taking place in many corners of the nation. Though some evaluation reports indicate marginal improvements (Abraha, 2015, 2018; AIR, 2019; MoE, Ethiopia, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2013) at project levels, breakthrough solution is not yet achieved in early years education in general and in reading ability development in particular. Why? What are the challenges? This chapter forwards some comments based on research and professional experiences.

Challenges of early grade reading competency development in Ethiopia

I am a teacher and I believe effective instruction, curriculum-based interaction of the teacher and students, matters in student learning. In other words, learning is a result of students' contextual involvement in thinking and tasks organized by the classroom teacher. To Veiga (2012), this is engagement which refers to children's view of school and learning (belongingness), participation in learning activities (e.g., accomplishment of assignments and involvement in extracurricular activities) and the involvement in thinking process. Willms (2000) reports recognize the first two dimensions of engagement as belongingness and participation.

Logically, schools work towards better engagement of students to realize learning. The active learning pedagogy in this sense is all about working on the types, level and environment of engagement to affect learning. Teachers stimulate learning and shape the process of involvement in a meaningful and productive way. Research also shows that students who accept the responsibilities of a learner and the process of learning accomplish better; interaction of teachers and students on learning tasks enhances student engagement (OECD, 2009).

The synthesis and analyses process in this chapter, therefore, adopted this conception of engagement (belongingness, participation and cognitive involvement) with a focus on macro-level factors: language learning context, early grade mother tongue curriculum and resources, teacher capacity and

effectiveness, and accountability coherence. Each of these is discussed in detail in light of lessons to realize effective reading instruction in the Ethiopian school system.

Language context: multiplicity and underdevelopment of mother tongue languages

Ethiopia is a multilingual and multiethnic society. It has over 86 ethnic groups that have their own vernacular languages. In schools, however, Amharic remained the only language of instruction in all areas and communities up until the 1990s. It was after the regime change in 1991 that Ethiopia adopted a policy of mother tongue language instruction at KG and primary levels. Both the National Constitution of Ethiopia (established in 1995) and Education and Training Policy (1994) underline the right to use mother tongue languages as media of instruction as appropriate. Accordingly, a decade of experience showed that the number of local languages used as media of instruction in primary education has reached over 20 as of 2002 (MoE, 2002) and the number is still growing.

The second reality in language learning in Ethiopia is the issue of script. The languages in Ethiopia use two types of scripts: Geez and Latin. Languages such as Tigrigna, Amharic and Harari use the Geez script with a minimum of 29 family letters, each having seven components. The total number of letters a child should learn in the first year of schooling, therefore, amounts to at least 203 symbols (29 family letters multiplied by 7). On the other hand, languages such as Afan Oromo, Sidama Afoo and Af Somlai use the Latin script with, on average, 36 symbols (26 consonant sounds and ten short and long vowels).

Following the EGRA research conducted in 2010, USAID designed and implemented READ TA (Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed – Technical Assistant), a five-year (2013–17) project in Ethiopia. Fortunately, I was part of both the national EGRA study (2010) and the review and redesign process of the national mother tongue syllabus in 2013. While reviewing the old mother tongue syllabus, the review team learned that the old mother tongue syllabus focused on the four languages skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and assumed that all languages use the Geez script. As a result, the period allotment for letter and word learning in Latin script languages was not appropriate to Latin scripted languages such as Afaan Oromo. Comparatively speaking, letter learning in Geez script needs longer time because there are many letters to study. If children are done with Geez letter identification, word learning is relatively easy, for letters in words do not change their sounds in any way. Languages that use Latin script, however, have manageable number of letters, but word formation is a bit complex because of the short and long vowel issues.

There is no question with mother tongue language instruction in early years education per se. However, the mother tongue languages differ in structures, nature of vocabulary, history in academic context and above all in development.

Before 1991 (the downfall of the Derg regime), the only local language in curriculum was Amharic. It was since 1993 when the House of Representatives decided this: 'የትምህርት በብሄረሰብ ቋንቋ መሰጠት በተጀመረባቸው ለምሳሌ ትግራይና ወለጋ የተዘጋጁት ስርዓተ-ትምህርትና መፃሕፍት በትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ታይተው ሰለደረጃቸው አስፈላጊው ግምገማና ማሻሻል እንዲደረግ' (MoE, Ethiopia, 1993:1). In other words, curriculum and textbook development in local languages such as Tigrigna and Afaan Oromo should start from the evaluation of existing materials that were designed by OLF and TPLF during armed struggle respectively. Thus, the use of mother tongue languages in curriculum and classroom is only a recent practice, and the languages are in different levels of development to serve academic purposes and especially for early grade reading.

Use of multiple languages as media of instruction has many implications. In the context of Ethiopia, the basis for using a language as a medium of instruction is basically the constitutional right. Consideration of scientific evidence on structure of languages, vocabulary, pedagogical implications and so on is not common. National learning assessment in Ethiopia is a curriculum-based four-year cyclic assessment that came into being in 2000. Development-oriented research started only recently with the national Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) conducted in 2010. Subsequent studies in the area still focus on measuring reading outcomes rather than on pedagogical strategies and issues. So far there is no documented evidence on how each of the components of reading (letter identification, phonics, word reading, fluency and comprehension) can be characterized so far and on effective instructional strategies, leave alone a theory to guide the whole endeavor. Even the components of reading, technical procedures of EGRA research and pedagogical strategies are simply derived from research in other languages and contexts, especially, as asserted by Spaull (2019), English as practiced in the developed world.

EGRA is a technical measurement of reading and not a thinking approach to learning. The education system in Ethiopia today seems fond of EGRA in both research and curriculum or classroom instructional designs. As a professional in the area, I have a fear, in support of Prices' (2003) warning regarding the unintentional consequence of ignoring thinking to give more room for skill development. Besides, in the EGRA research in Ethiopia, we professionals experience one critical challenge while presenting the results of a study that involves two or more languages. Researchers recognize that reading results cannot be compared across languages because of differences in nature and developmental stages. However, numerical findings (like proportions of zero scorers by language) cause discontent and politicizing outcomes. It is common to misperceive researchers as politicizing research and as if they are messaging that some languages are not good enough to serve as media of instruction at the time. I faced similar complaints as often as not.

Given the multiplicity of languages in the country, the use of mother tongue language as a medium of instruction is not yet universally applicable in all places and societies. Children may not get the chance to attain their education

in mother tongue language because of two reasons: mixed settlement and language underdevelopment. Some areas or towns include diverse groups with diverse mother tongue languages. It is not always possible to bring all mother tongue languages into the school setting. Reverting to child's first language is an alternative and that seems well functioning in areas like Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Early grade reading development is challenged when children learn a second language that is not widely used in the community or daily life. Though studies did not try to uncover the contributions of learning in mother tongue language so far, differences in reading competency are evidently clear in some studies (Abraha, 2015, 2018; Piper, 2010). Thus, children learning in non-mother tongue language are at a double disadvantage of learning in second language as well as scoring comparatively low in reading fluency tests.

Early grade reading curriculum and resources

As described earlier, the Ethiopian national mother tongue curriculum was revised in 2013 with focus on the reading components. This conforms to one of the suggestions for effective reading instruction from a decade-long lessons of experience (Bulat et al., 2017). Textbooks were developed following a similar pattern and are operational these days.

With the doubt on obscured status of teaching thinking being indicated earlier, the interest here is on challenges of creating conducive literacy environment to enhance early grade reading ability. Availability of reading materials in local languages, purposely arranged and appropriate for children at home and schools, connects the reading experiences of children, develops their interests and stimulates thinking. In Ethiopia, however, low level of household income, widespread illiteracy level that amounted (in 2017) to 46.21% of 15–60-year-old youths and adult citizens (MoE, 2021) and scarcity of supplementary reading materials in local languages are some of the logjams in this regard. Even in NOG project areas, the level of use of supplied reading materials in instructional process is negligible.

Teacher capacity and effectiveness

Teacher capacity is a critical factor in learning. Creating conducive learning environment in classrooms, designing appropriate lessons, facilitating classroom interaction and assessing outcomes are all responsibilities of the classroom teacher. Early grade teachers in Ethiopia, however, face personal and systemic obstacles in accomplishing those tasks properly. The personal factors are more teacher capacity in active learning pedagogy in mother tongue languages. The reading textbook uses the five components of reading as themes for lesson presentation by week. However, experiences show limitations on the use of active learning in teaching reading. In a recent research project where I stayed for about 20 days to collect data on active learning pedagogy in early grade classrooms, I learned that teachers focus on content coverage

partly because that is the norm of the school system and partly because of their limited capability. Question and answer or read-loud technique on contents displayed on the chalkboard was the common approach. Why? What is the source of the problem?

There are a lot of systemic reasons in this regard. First, the pool of teacher education as a whole continues to attract those lower achievers in the national examinations – grade 10 completers who could not join grade 11 or those with relatively low achievements at grade 12 to compete for other professions. Thus, the quest for quality of education seems in a vicious circle and likely to persist for a long time without adequate policy and practical response.

Second, while the focus of early grade language teaching has changed with new research findings on human learning, language philosophy and aim of education, our teacher education curriculum still tends to focus on whole language teaching. Skills like reading are treated as parts of language teaching rather than as integrating issues of instruction in early grade classrooms. Third, for so long the curriculum of teacher education for grades 1 through 4 was intended to produce generalists for self-contained classrooms. Such a process seems to limit specialized teacher instructional ability like teaching reading. Fourth, despite changes in the lower primary school mother tongue curriculum to focus on reading and writing, there are no graduate programs in the area to make the change institutional and sustainable. I recognize the changes in the structure of lower primary teacher preparation curriculum from generalist to a cluster system. However, the congruence still seems loose. Fifth, new beginnings in the use of mother tongue medium of instruction also requires deploying individuals trained in other subjects because of scarcity of human power in such areas. Sixth, teacher evaluation gives priority to quantity than quality. How many children got pass mark or above certain scale, achievement scores etc. get priority by school administration than the how of learning, the quality of interaction and socio-emotional development. Finally, teacher pay increases with qualification; lower-level qualification teachers are assigned to early grade level and get relatively lower payments. The cumulative effect is, therefore, a compromise in the quality of instruction at the early grade level.

Accountability system incoherence for reading competency development

Pritchett (2015) produced a helpful analytical framework for the analysis of education system accountability coherence for learning outcomes. The framework is a four-by-four matrix that indicates how accountability for learning outcomes works in education. The designation includes accountability of (1) citizens to the state (called politics), (2) state to the organization (e.g., MoE), (3) organizations to frontline providers (schools and teachers) and (4) service recipients (students and parents). Accountability of each of these is measured in terms of delegation, finance, information (M&E) and motivation. Accordingly, Pritchett analyzed the contributions of proxy determinants in many

contexts and concluded that the results are not consistent in different contexts because of accountability incoherence to learning outcomes – each is not doing as expected to improve the quality of education.

I was lucky to participate in professional discussions regarding this framework as applied to Ethiopian education system. I learned that this framework worked in an accepted manner with regard to access but not for learning outcomes. The issue of delegation at different levels, including teachers' daily activities, nature of information (authenticity), financial allocation for the right activities and resulting incentives or punishments, need to be analyzed to understand the relationship of each to improving learning outcomes. Though subject to criticisms, I am personally convinced that we do not have a coherent system for learning outcomes in our school system. Teachers are required (or may plan) to enhance student learning or reading ability. However, evaluation of teachers (including incentive) very much depends on the proportion of students who got pass marks; the number of students in the list by the end of the year matters more rather than actual attendance; teachers are obliged to participate in campaigns leaving students in classroom alone. In general, numbers matter more than actual learning; teachers' accountability is evaluated based on numbers than learning outcomes – a mismatch between intention to promote learning and maximize enrolment. This is the governance system we have, and until we believe that the central mission of teachers is facilitating learning by integrating knowledge of content, child and teaching, we will face difficulty in improving child learning in general and enhancing early grade reading ability in particular.

Concluding remarks

The discussion on challenges of early grade reading development in Ethiopia identified many critical issues of policy, practice and research. The findings also showed both practical incapability of the nation to bring lasting solutions to the problem issue and areas of dilemmas when it comes to looking for practical solutions.

Believing that reading skill development is a matter of sustained practice, analytical results influenced by the engagement conceptual framework showed the following critical challenges of early grade reading competency in Ethiopia:

1 Languagecontext – The issue of addressing the right to mother tongue instruction is motivating the use of local languages as media of instruction. This is commendable given its implications not only to the realization of constitutional rights but also in terms of its contributions to enhanced learning. However, all local languages are not in a developmental stage to serve the intended purpose mainly because of lack of experience, scarcity of research evidence and guiding theory in the area.
2 Curriculumand reading resources – Following the EGRA 2010, the mother tongue language syllabus is redesigned and focuses on the five components of reading (letter identification, phonics, word reading, fluency and

comprehension as well as writing). However, creating conducive literacy environment at home and in schools is a critical problem because of scarcity of supplementary reading materials in respective languages and parental literacy level to support their children.

3 Teachercapacity and effectiveness – Implementation limitations of active pedagogy in schools being one critical problem, crisis management approach in deploying teachers that were not trained for and in local languages worsens the teacher capacity limitation issue in many contexts.

4 Accountabilityincoherence – Theoretically the mission of schools at this time is ensuring learning. Practically, however, the school governance system focuses more on access issues or numerical figures than on process and quality indicators.

Therefore, given these challenges in the context and from the perspective of engagement for reading skill development (creating motivating environment for reading, enhancing participation in reading activities and realizing acceptable level of thinking in practicing reading), redressing the situation calls for taking appropriate measures in policy, practice and research to inform stakeholders and integrate initiatives.

Notes

1 Literacy is operationally defined here in terms of the ability to read and write in mother tongue language.

2 The seven languages are Tigrigna, Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Af Somal, Sidaama Afoo, Hadiyyisa and Wolayttatto.

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3 Induction of beginning teachers in Ethiopian schools with reference to multilingual pre-school programs

Moges Yigezu

Introduction

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of around 110 million. It is a linguistically and culturally diverse nation and home to more than 80 ethno-linguistic groups. Although Ethiopia has made commendable progress towards achieving universal education (94.7% in 2018–19), there are serious challenges in terms of the quality of primary education as well as quality of teacher trainings being given in local languages as shown in various assessments (EGRA, 2010, 2018).

The Ethiopian education system has witnessed massive transformation and expansion over the past two decades, and as a result of this action in 2018–19 academic year, the total population of primary education has reached more than 26 million, of which about 16% are preschool children (MoE, 2019). Such a massive expansion has necessitated the recruitment and training of teachers on a large scale, and there are 38 Colleges of Teacher Education in the country dedicated to training pre- and primary school teachers in a three-year diploma program providing education in the teaching profession. In terms of qualification, only 20% of the pre-school teachers have the required qualification (Ibid.).

The Ethiopian primary education system consists of eight years of instruction divided into two cycles: grades 1–4 make up cycle one and grades 5–8 make up cycle two. Pre-schooling or ECCE has been introduced in many schools over the past six to seven years. In Ethiopia, pre-school programs (also known as pre-primary education) are delivered through the following three modalities (MoE, 2019):

1 KG(kindergarten), a three-year program which is predominantly operated by non-governmental schools such as NGOs, community schools, private schools and religious institutions.
2 Anon-formal pre-school service delivered mainly through child-to-child initiatives (a one-year program) where older children play with younger siblings or other children in the neighborhood, supervised by qualified teachers. The aim of this modality is to teach basic skills such as counting, differentiating colors and identifying letters before joining primary school.

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3 '0'class (a one-year school readiness program), which is the most widespread form of pre-school program that is a grade before grade 1. In this type of pre-schooling children are introduced to the school environment and take part in learning-focused play. It is a reception class based in government primary schools for children aged 6, before starting formal schooling at age 7.

However, the majority of children in Ethiopia (81%) are enrolling in 'O' class modality, while 2.9% are enrolling in child-to-child modality and 11.1% in KGs. Altogether only 40.7% of children are enrolled in pre-primary classes nationally (MoE, 2019).

Ethiopia has launched mother tongue education in diverse languages, and to date there have been 36 languages introduced into the school system either as a medium of instruction or as a school subject. Most children, therefore, attend a multilingual classroom where the three-language model is the norm: the mother tongue, the official language, Amharic, and the international language, English. Hence, children are confronted with three languages as early as grade 1. Such a multilingual environment has influenced the way pre-primary school teachers are being trained and deployed. As a result, teacher training is largely given in MT languages. The language factor is indispensable in providing pre-service teacher education so as to ensure that teachers can engage in effective pedagogy, be culturally competent, have subject-matter knowledge for the academic level they teach (UNESCO, 2015).

This study tries to investigate how the induction of a new pre-school teacher into the teaching profession is being carried out in Ethiopian multilingual schools.

Teacher education

Teacher education has also been organized into three stages: pre-service training (a pre-service course before entering the classroom as a fully responsible teacher), induction (the process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school) and teacher development or continuing professional development (CPD) – an in-service process for practicing teachers.

Although the actual forms of induction differ across contexts, the Ethiopian school system theoretically recognizes the provision of comprehensive systems of support to help beginning teachers during their first years in the profession through orientation, mentoring, peer network and feedback. Induction is generally viewed as part of an ongoing continuum of teacher preparation and claimed to enhance new teacher transition, socialization, retention and quality (Kane, 2017).

The elemental importance of pre-school programs in accelerating attainment of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals has been recognized in national policy framework and guidelines for early childhood

care and education. The policy documents also highlight the central philosophy of ECCE which is based on child-centered active learning and the need to focus on teaching approaches and methods. In order to achieve these objectives and goals, the government has launched teacher education programs in multiple mother tongue languages. To date there have been 36 languages introduced into the school system either as a medium of instruction or as a school subject to be given at the primary level.

Problem statement

What is an induction program?

There are two types of teacher induction programs with different objectives and forms. One has a narrow objective and is all about providing teachers with an orientation to the school environment and the community at large. The other, a broader aspect, comprises a comprehensive program that includes some form of mentoring and professional development that enhances new teacher transition, socialization, retention and quality with the aim of supporting a seamless transition from a pre-service to in-service professional learning. Hence, a comprehensive teacher induction program may include components such as *new teacher orientation, mentoring relationships, support teams, workshops and training for beginning teachers, workshop and training for mentors, and evaluation*.

Why are induction programs needed?

Teachers play a critical role in early childhood development and in recognition of such a role UNESCO has been engaged in the professionalization and capacity development of ECCE teachers. It has been stressed that a teacher induction program can help new teachers improve practice, learn professional responsibilities and ultimately positively affect student learning and has also the potential of elevating the teaching profession.

What are the Ethiopian standards for teacher induction programs?

The Ethiopian school system in principle recognizes the provision of comprehensive systems of support to help beginning teachers during their first years in the profession. Elements of such a program include (1) orientation to the school environment, (2) mentoring: the assignment of an experienced teacher to each beginning teacher, (3) a peer network: for mutual support but also for peer learning and (4) input from educational experts (e.g., supervisors' feedback). Research suggests that such comprehensive programs can increase the retention of beginning teachers in the profession, improve teaching performance and promote the teachers' personal and professional well-being.

In trying to assess to what extent the aforementioned induction types are implemented in Ethiopian schools, this study focuses on the following research questions:

- How widespread beginning teacher induction programs across the pre-school programs?
- What types of and amounts of induction beginning teachers actually get?
- What are the challenges, important experiences and opportunities observed in the implementation of the teacher induction processes in Ethiopian pre-school programs?

Methods of data collection and analysis

The study employed a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Structured interviews, document review and focus group discussions were employed. The target groups are pre-school in-service teachers, school principals and local education officials responsible for employing and assigning of teachers to local schools. The focus of the study was on two batches of graduates of pre-school program at Hawassa College of Teacher Education located in Sidama Regional State of Ethiopia. These were the first and second batches of graduates in the pre-school program in 2016–17 and 2017–18 academic years, which were around 160 teachers assigned to the various schools in and in the vicinity of Hawassa town. Both rural- and urban-based schools were taken into account. Private and public schools were also considered. Incidentally, all the pre-school teachers happened to be females. Thirty-two pre-school teachers, supervisors and school principals and local educational officials were interviewed and two focus group discussions were conducted.

Conceptual framework

The process of induction has been conceptualized as 'teacher socialization' (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999), and the general framework of 'uncertainty reduction theory' has appealed to explain the process of teacher socialization (Berger, 1986; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). According to this theory, socialization is viewed 'as a process of seeking information to reduce uncertainty'. The literature on socialization of elementary and secondary school teachers conceives that perspective teachers go through two types of socialization, namely, occupational or role socialization and organizational or cultural socialization. In the process, pre-service teachers are mainly involved in the former, while beginning teachers experience role or occupational socialization as well as cultural or organizational socialization. The latter has been described as having three phases: the choice phase, the anticipatory and the entry or encounter phases, and 'uncertainty reduction' is most salient during anticipatory and encounter phases of socialization (Staton-Spicer & Darling, 2019:12–15).

The upshot of the theory is that it is through communication that both pre-service teachers and beginning teachers gain information in order to reduce uncertainty about the role or occupation, and also about the organization or culture (Ibid., p. 16). The current study employs the general framework of 'uncertainty reduction theory' with an emphasis on communication in order to understand the process of induction and teacher socialization in Ethiopian schools.

Findings

Among the type of induction processes, orientation is the most widely practiced form of induction in many schools but it is merely used as an introduction to the school environment and the school community. It is also brief in nature and takes a few hours and does not involve professional development and support for beginning teachers. The other form of induction process, mentorship is not common due to lack of experienced pre-school teachers in schools since pre-schooling is a recent phenomenon in public schools in particular. Properly trained pre-school teachers in public schools visited have limited experience – a maximum of two years. Educational experts or school supervisors themselves are not quite familiar with the pre-school teaching methods and practices, which makes the use of input from educational experts practically impossible.

Officially there is a minimum standard that is required to be a pre-primary teacher in Ethiopia. One has to be a holder of college diploma in the field. But due to the shortage of pre-school teachers, untrained or unqualified teachers were assigned to run pre-school classes, and this practice has been predominant in rural schools. The untrained teachers lack awareness about the value and type of care and education of young children and often hold misconceptions about teaching children and the linguistic and cultural diversity of classrooms.

Besides, pre-primary programs tend to be more heavily concentrated in urban areas, and there is an urban versus rural divide in the capacity, understanding and implementation of induction of beginning teachers. In some rural schools we visited, induction of beginning teachers is non-existent in any form. In some cases, pre-primary education is integrated into primary education.

Pre-schooling is relatively well organized in private urban-based schools, and some level of induction is practiced in the form of orientation and feedback from supervisors and school principals. But such orientations do not take into account the ecology of the classroom, and the workforce prepared to handle such classrooms lacks the capacity and preparedness to work with these children in a culturally and linguistically relevant way. Both beginning teachers and school principals are less experienced in multilingual instruction. By and large, beginning teachers are left to succeed or fail on their own within the confines of their classrooms and they are faced with 'sink or swim' scenario.

The use of mother tongue languages in all schools is an asset in the sense that the home-school divide has been bridged as most children have access to basic education in the language they use at home and they understand better. This is true for remote rural schools where linguistic homogeneity of the community is rather the norm. In multilingual settings such as the town of Hawassa and its vicinities, beginning teachers need support and resources to work with children from diverse backgrounds. Pre-school teachers are by and large native speakers of the languages they teach so that in principle there is no language barrier in a classroom situation. Once again, in multilingual classrooms, there is a need for a linguistically diverse workforce so that pre-school children participate in various activities such as drama, arts, language group, digital tools, rhymes, riddles, excursions, diaper changes or toilets, and play.

Although there are a handful of experienced pre-school teachers in private urban-based schools, a critical lack of human capacity, both of specialized ECCE administrators and qualified classroom teachers and facilitators, has been reported (Tigistu, 2013). Particularly the shortage of O-class teachers resulted in large classes, and shortage of qualified teachers has been exacerbated by temporary low-paying contracts, inadequately trained teachers and low overall teacher motivation (Ibid.). Despite the general lack of personnel at the grass-root level responsible for pre-primary education, private schools and religious-based schools appear to show interest in induction of beginning teachers but these pre-schools are not accessible to the majority of children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Conclusions

Research has shown that the process of induction positively affects teacher retention and can facilitate socialization of beginning teachers in the profession (cf. Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). In Ethiopian schools there is limited evidence that the degree to which the current practice in induction process adds value in terms of teacher professional learning, teacher quality and student learning. The 'uncertainty reduction theory' identifies the ecology of classrooms as one of the agents of socialization that serves as an information source to the beginning teacher (Staton-Spicer & Darling, 2019:14). The absence of such crucial information on the diversity of classrooms, for instance, would increase uncertainty about the environment, the expectations, the norms and the role of beginning teachers and negatively affects teacher quality and student learning. Schools are, therefore, not providing an environment where beginning teachers can learn how to teach multilingual classrooms and succeed as teachers. Reports show that in many developing countries, there is generally a mismatch between the political discourse around the importance of early learning and the actual commitment and support provided to pre-primary teachers (UNESCO, 2015:10). The Ethiopian case is not different. In multilingual settings, where children come from diverse backgrounds, especially urban schools, a diverse workforce would be indispensable

if those children have to participate in programs or activities that are culturally relevant.

In a nutshell, the Ethiopian pre-school programs need to (1) tackle the acute shortage of manpower and develop the required capacity in the field; (2) address issues and problems related to effective employee entry, orientation and support programs; and (3) resolve the mismatch between political discourse and the actual commitment and support.

Recommendations

The main challenges of Ethiopian schools lie in the capacity to implement policies and guidelines already in place and the level of commitment in seeking to address issues and problems related to effective employee entry, orientation and support programs. 'Schools must provide an environment where novices can learn how to teach, survive, and succeed as teachers' (Ingersoll, 2012:1).

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4 Early Grade Reading in Ethiopia

Phonological awareness in grade 1 textbook: the case of Koorete Language

Samuel Zinabu Haile and Binyam Sisay Mendisu

Introduction

Phonological awareness (PA) is a key component in developing children's literacy skills in early grades. It is the ability to recognize, reflect, and manipulate the sound structures of words regardless of their meaning. It is a broad umbrella concept that encompasses awareness of the phonological structure of spoken words, including rhyme, alliteration, words, syllables, onset rhyme, and phonemes (Cabell, Justice, Kaderavek, Turnbull, & Breit-Smith, 2009; NELP, 2008; Vloedgraven & Verhoeven, 2009). Existing research has shown that this is a strong predictor of their future reading ability. It also improves and accelerates early-stage reading learning (Milankov, Golubović, Krstić, & Golubović, 2021; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Carson, Gillon, & Boustead, 2013).

In first grade, children should develop a full range of skills ranging from fewer complexes to more complex sequences of phonological awareness activities. The less complex components of phonological awareness include words into syllables, rhymes, and alliteration (e.g., initials and finals). The more complex sequences of phonological awareness activities include onset-rime segmentation, segmentation of initial and final sounds, a blending of sounds into words, segmentation of words into sounds, and phonemic manipulation (isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, substitution) (National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US), 2000; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008; Costenaro & Pesce, 2012).

In particular, the content of preschool and early grade textbooks needs to include the key components of teaching phonological awareness to develop reading skills (i.e. listening, rhyming, blending, deleting/segmenting) (Skibbe, Gerde, Wright, & Samples-Steele, 2016:231). Similarly, longitudinal studies recommend that these skills should be integrated into early grade classroom curricula as they represent the most important aspects of developing children's reading literacy (National Reading Panel (US) et al., 2000;

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Schuele & Boudreau, 2008). The key components of PA should be integrated into teachers' lessons and teachers should be aware and practice according to early grade curriculum to improve children's reading skills. However, several studies have shown that children in low- and middle-income countries, even by the end of primary school, do not develop basic reading skills (UNESCO, 2017a). In these countries, children in primary schools struggle to read even simple words. According to recent United Nations (UN) data, nine of ten children in sub-Saharan Africa lack basic reading skills. Similarly, in Central and South Asia, about 81% of children cannot read to a minimum level (UNESCO, 2017b). As a result, the poor countries' reading scores are generally low compared to the developed countries. On average, only 9% of children in rich countries cannot read by the age of 10. In developing countries, across all low- and middle-income countries, more than half of children by the age of 10 cannot read and understand simple text (World Bank, 2019).

Ethiopia is a multinational state residing in Africa in which approximately more than 80 languages are spoken by more than 100 million people of different ethnic groups. Since 1994, Ethiopian education and training policies have marked a turning point in the way over 36 native languages have been introduced as the medium of instruction or taught as a school subject in primary schools (Roadmap Ethiopia, 2018:14). Therefore, the implementation of a multilingual language policy has created a great opportunity for less advantageous languages and language groups in such a multilingual country. As a result, many native language groups have attempted to use their mother tongues as the language of instruction and as a subject in primary schools. Nevertheless, several challenges have been hampering the implementation of mother tongue practice in Ethiopian schools. These include a lack of research-based knowledge and application of teaching and learning methods, lack of access to effective teacher training, lack of supplementary reading material, and lack of native language experts in Ethiopian education in general and minority languages in particular. Because of these challenges, education in Ethiopian schools remains complex and requires further investigation and intervention.

Piper (2010) conducted the Early Grade Reading Assessment in seven Ethiopian languages that are more populated. The result of the early-childhood reading assessment in seven Ethiopian languages, namely Tigrinya, Afan Oromo, Amharic, Somali, Sidaamu Afoo, Wolaita, and Haddiyissa, showed that children are not able to reach the expected minimum learning skills in the second and third grades in Ethiopia (Piper 2010). The assessment focused on the students' understanding of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, word decoding skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension. The results of the assessment showed that many children are unable to read at the minimum level of expected learning ability set by the Ministry of Education. The result also indicated that 34% of the second graders could not read even a single word and 48% of the children could not understand a single question in their mother tongue (Piper 2010).

Based on the results, an intervention focused on the development of reading particularly (teacher training at both pre-service and in-service levels and preparation of the quality of reading materials), and so on was conducted. Next, procedural and other tools for teacher competence assessment and school competence assessment tools were developed. The designing, development, and implementation of a formative assessment system enable teachers to monitor and promote the reading competence of students in the early grades (USAID Ethiopia, 2014, 2016, 2018). However, the results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment showed that the students in Ethiopia were making progress in acquiring reading comprehension and the progress was slow. The percentage of students who performed at the upper benchmark levels over the years was 31.3% in 2014, 34.2% in 2016, and 32.4% in 2018. It can be observed that the differences in the reading achievements of students in Ethiopia were very little in the three studies assessing reading comprehension in the early grade class USAID Ethiopia (2014, 2016, 2018).

Moreover, the most recent results showed that 6.2% of Ethiopian students in grades 2 and 3 and across all languages achieved the target reading benchmark, that is, reading fluently with complete or almost complete comprehension (USAID Ethiopia, 2018). The study found that nearly more than 80% of children in early grade have reading comprehension difficulties and are at risk of falling behind in their early grade reading achievement. The final report of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in Ethiopia by USAID Ethiopia (2018) showed that only 20% of children achieved a passing mark on reading comprehension questions, which is very low at the national level. In developing countries, in particular, the textbook is used as the main source during the classroom practice of teaching reading in the early grades; they still play a dominant role in many countries (Reichenberg, 2016). Therefore, evaluating the quality of the content of students' textbooks in alignment with the mother tongue's primary education curriculum and inquiry-based knowledge helps improve early grade reading achievement.

Children's inability to read a specific text limits the knowledge they acquire about the sound system; as a result, the children lack the knowledge to process and understand texts. As mentioned in the previous section, Early Grade Reading Assessment and Intervention have been used in Ethiopia for ten years since 2010 G.C. The results indicated that at an aggregated national level, overall reading performance changed little across the three Early Grade Reading Assessment End line reports (USAID Ethiopia, 2018). This result stated that reading achievement in elementary school classes in Ethiopia is not showing the progress one would hope for, considering several years of reading intervention. The majority of students had serious problems with letter identification, understanding phonological patterns, dealing with new words in the text, and understanding longer texts (Anteneh et al., 2016:17).

In Ethiopia, the primary school curriculum promotes the first language as the medium of instruction in primary schools, and several mother tongues use their first languages as the language of instruction in various minority

language groups. However, these minority languages are becoming increasingly popular due to deficits in raising awareness, adequate teacher training, the suitability of the languages in terms of orthography and scientific terminology as a medium of instruction, the availability and quality of teaching and learning materials, standard orthography of guidelines, and a strategy for delivering the mother tongue educational program, support, and follow-up of the implementation of mother tongue teaching (Mesfin, 2020:164). On the other hand, the language development of a native speaker in a country varies greatly from language to language and requires language-specific support. Development depends on language policies, the curriculum, the quality of teacher education, the literacy environment, language experts and the quality of textbooks and teacher's guides, and home literacy. In this direction, no opportunity for further scientific research and interventions to develop reading literacy is given to beginners and less preferred languages like Koorete.

Studies have found that the quality of textbooks and curriculum plays an important role in early grade reading achievement, particularly in developing countries that lack access to local literacy materials. Textbooks play a crucial role in many language classes and are considered the second most important factor in language teaching after teachers, for they serve not only as teaching materials but also as supplementary materials by incorporating definitions of the terms and the results of many different types of research (Riazi, 2003; Zemenu, 2013). In the Ethiopian context, where there are not enough teaching materials, textbooks are seen as the basic sources of ideas and information (Zemenu, 2013:45). A review of the recent literature on the use of textbooks in language teaching shows that textbook has become the central important tool in schools as it prescribes implicit and explicit tasks that define the core work of schools (Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung, & Chung-Chieh, 2011:92). Similarly, Dalim and Mubarrak (2013) noted that textbooks are used as the main source of information when teaching a particular subject and that the quality and accuracy of the content are critical to their pedagogical effectiveness.

The quality of textbooks should be assessed and evaluated during implementation by external consultants who were not involved in the textbook development and selection process (USAID Ethiopia, 2016). This paper aims to evaluate the adequacy of the content of the first-grade textbook in terms of components of phonological awareness in Koorete in the context of primary education in Ethiopia. It assesses the alignment of the textbook with the Ministry of Education's mother tongue syllabus (MOE Ethiopia, 2013) and with research-based early school literature on the components of phonological awareness (National Reading Panel (US) et al., 2000; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008). Evaluating the content of textbooks for primary school classes in terms of phonological awareness is very important to appraise the content alignment towards mother-tongue primary school education curriculum, literature-based knowledge in the teaching of reading skills, and to recommend possible measures to improve the quality of the textbook.

This paper aimed to evaluate the alignment of the textbook with the Ministry of Education's mother tongue syllabus (MoE Ethiopia, 2013) and with research-based early school literature on the components of phonological awareness (National Reading Panel (US) et al., 2000; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008).

Theoretical framework

The development of early grade literacy is the basic foundation for later children's academic achievement which has multiple theoretical frameworks related to literacy learning in early grade. The theoretical frameworks that frame this study employ Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (1978). According to a social constructivist perspective, knowledge is constructed by individuals, groups, and society and not simply transferred. The main concepts of the theoretical framework that emerge from the mediation process, in particular, are the key concepts of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and their direct implications for the process of teaching and learning phonological awareness. In this way, mediation is one of the key crucial concepts in social constructivism theory.

In addition, the sociocultural language learning theory claims that language cannot be learned in its isolation rather it is a social effort in its substance it needs to be learned in a social context with the help of peers, parents, teachers, and so forth (Zuengler & Miller, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). It describes learning and development as being embedded within social events and occurring as a learner interacts with other people, objects, and events in the collaborative environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The relationship between the social world and cognitive development of the sociocultural theory of learning is the understanding of the relation between the social world and cognitive development. The underlying themes of sociocultural theory on cognitive development have thus often been summarized as the significance of culture, the role of a principal proponent of culture and language, and the student's relationship with and development within this sociocultural world. In this context, culture is viewed as socially accepted behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. It is constructed through human societal products such as institutions, symbol systems, and tools such as language (Zhou & Brown, 2017).

A sociocultural perspective emphasizes that infants experience, participate in, and develop literacy knowledge, attitudes, and skills as they, directly and indirectly, take part in literacy practices within various social and cultural contexts (Hamer, 2005). By viewing infants as active literacy participants and learners, educators can provide opportunities for infants to take part in a wide range of relevant, purposeful, and contextually meaningful literacy practices. The social process also recognizes the important role of a teacher as a mediator or facilitator who should help learners develop their reading skills by working with the teacher and peers and later being able to work alone. This is what other scholars call 'scaffolding the learners', which means giving learners help

only when they need it and withdrawing it once they can work on their own (Bauman-Barton, 2001; Enyew & Yigzaw, 2015; Fottland & Matre, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978).

This study was conducted to evaluate the content alignment of students' textbooks with the primary school curriculum with phonological awareness in the first-grade Koorete Language in Ethiopia. Alignment refers to the degree to which the elementary school language textbook and relevant syllabuses match to achieve the specified minimum learning competency at the level. Accordingly, in this study, the alignment of early Koorete Language textbooks with their corresponding curricula on the components of phonological awareness was evaluated by adopting the frameworks given in MoE Ethiopia (2013) and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). Well-designed curriculum and textbook alignment play a central role in the quality of early grade instruction (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Poor alignment of curriculum materials and their components leads to disagreement, confusion, and poor learning outcomes for students (Stabback, 2016). This demonstrates how early graduate materials and the quality of curriculum delivery contribute to early grade learning.

Method

This chapter aims to evaluate the alignment of the first-grade Koorete Language textbook with the corresponding mother tongue language primary school syllabus. To this end, the following content analysis checklist was used to evaluate the alignment of the content of the grade 1 textbook with its corresponding syllabus about phonological awareness in the Koorete Language. The quality of the description of the textbook was also assessed in line with the early grade reading literature. The key components of the phonological awareness lessons were adopted from the syllabus of primary education in Ethiopia prepared by the Ministry of Education (MoE Ethiopia, 2013) and the early grade reading literature from Schuele and Boudreau (2008) as can be seen in Table 4.1.

Design

This study used a qualitative content analysis method inspired by a case study to evaluate the alignment of a grade 1 mother tongue textbook with the corresponding syllabus in terms of the components of phonological awareness. Qualitative content analysis is a systematic, repeatable technique that groups specific words of a text with smaller content categories using codes based on specific rules (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023). In this study, descriptive content analysis was employed as it has a systematic analysis, involving the discussion of specific textbook content in a descriptive assessment (Sozbilir, Kutu, & Yasar, 2012). In addition, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the grade level, textbook, and textbook content, since the analysis focused on a specific aspect of teaching throughout the units. The data were coded, organized, and trans-themed according to the components of phonological

Table 4.1 The components of phonological awareness activities

Stages	*Type*	*Description*	*Example (answer)*
Words into syllable	Isolation	Given a word, children recognize the first syllable in a word	Tell me the first syllable in 'forget'. (for)
	Blending	A broken word is given in syllables and combines the word parts to create the word.	What word is, /'ex/- /er/- /cise/? (exercise)
	Deletion	Omitting part of a multisyllabic word, to create a new word	What is 'teacher' without / er /? (teach)
	Segmentation	Breaking the given compound words into two smaller words.	Sound out (clap hands; tap knee; count on fingers) the number of syllables in the word 'remember'. (re/ mem/ber, = 3 syllables)
Rhyme	Identity recognition	Recognize & generate familiar rhyme pairs in a familiar context.	Tell me which two words are among these rhymes. 'Forget, remember, bet' (bet)
		Recognize & generate familiar rhyme pairs in an unfamiliar context.	Rhyme such as bat, cat, mat
	Production	Given a word, the student says a word that rhymes.	Which one sounds different – jug, ram, bug?
Alliteration	Initial & final sound sorts	Recognize and play with the same first sounds in words	What is the first sound of the words? (e.g., *a big burly black bear)*
Onset and Rime	Onset Unit:	The initial consonant or consonant cluster	Which one sounds different – jug, ram, bug? What is the initial sound? (e.g., *b + ug, st + op*).
	Rime Unit:	The medial vowel and its final consonant or consonant cluster	What are the medial vowel and final consonants? (e.g., *–up, -at, -ops*)
Phonemes (narrow tasks)	Isolation	Given a word, the student recognizes individual sounds in the word.	What is the first sound in */mat/*? /m/ What is the last sound in */cat/*? /t/
	Identification	The ability to identify the phoneme of a word	*What sound is the same in the word let, love & lap?* e.g., */l/*
	Categorization	Given a set of three or four words, the student recognizes the word that has the 'odd' sound.	Which word does not belong: */bus/, /ball/, and /mouse/*? (mouse)

(*Continued*)

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Stages	*Type*	*Description*	*Example (answer)*
	Blending	Given individual sounds of a word, children combine to form a word.	What word is, /f/- /i /- /f /- /t /-/i/? (fifty)
	Segmentation	Given a whole word, children break a word into separate sounds.	(e.g., *Tell me all the sounds you hear in a cat: / k / + / æ / + / t /*). /3/
	deletion	Recognizing the word that remains when a letter is removed.	What is 'train' without /t /? (rain)
	Addition	Given a word, the student makes a new word by adding a phoneme.	What word do you have if you add */s/* to the beginning of */park/*? (spark)
	Substitution	Recognizing the word that remains when a letter is removed. What is 'train' without /t/? (rain)	The word is a rug. Change /g/ to /n/. What is the new word? (run)

awareness and analyzed accordingly (Wong, 2008). The qualitative case study design is deemed appropriate in this chapter because the major essence of this research is to assess the extent to which the student's textbook is consistent with the curriculum and the literature related to phonological awareness.

In qualitative research data, trustworthiness and credibility are key issues, so in building trustworthiness in this research, the researcher has provided a set of evidence by giving some general lesson content and pictures in the textbook analysis (see Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) and referring as well as relating these lessons and images with the material being assessed. Besides, to ensure the validity of the data collection tools, the content of PA was extracted from the curriculum of the native language primary education in Ethiopia, that is, MoE Ethiopia (2013) and the early grade reading literature review from National Reading Panel (US) et al. (2000) and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). The tools were then piloted and the results of the analysis were presented in a seminar.

The method of content analysis involves collecting similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and organizing and interpreting them in an order that the reader can think of, as well as an in-depth description and explanation of the questions to be examined (Macnamara, 2018). Krippendorff (2004:18) also defines content analysis as a research technique for drawing reproducible and valid conclusions from texts about the contexts of their use. It is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data

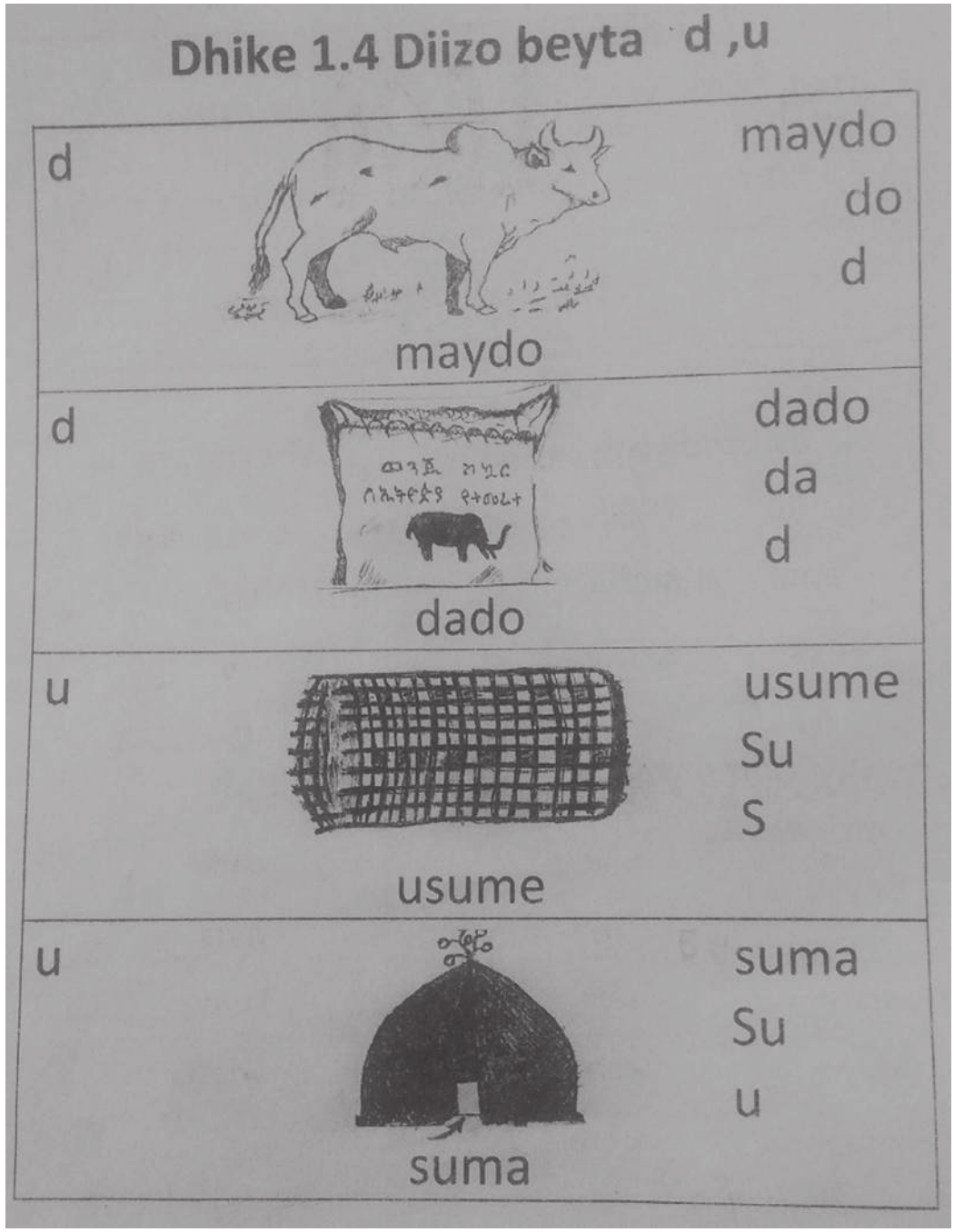

Figure 4.1 Extracted lesson from unit 1

into clusters of similar units or conceptual categories to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes. The content analysis protocol was developed by reviewing the first-grade native language primary school curriculum as given in MoE Ethiopia (2013) and the related literature on teaching the key components of phonological awareness in early grades in

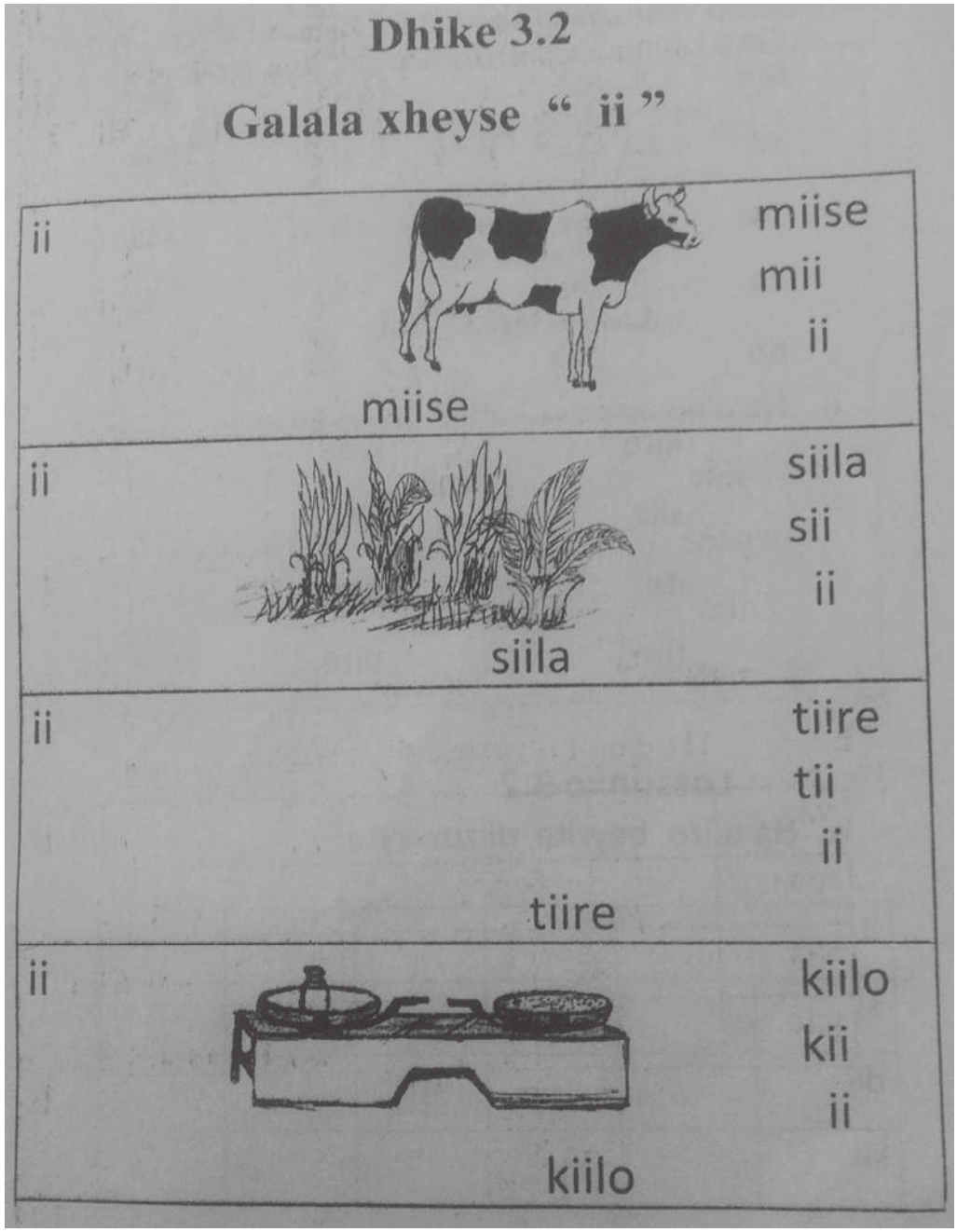

Figure 4.2 Extracted lesson from unit 3

the following works: National Reading Panel (US) et al. (2000) and Schuele and Boudreau (2008).

Qualitative content analysis is one of the research methods for analyzing text data. Typically, a study using a summative approach to qualitative content analysis begins by identifying and quantifying specific words or content in the text to understand the contextual use of the words or content. This

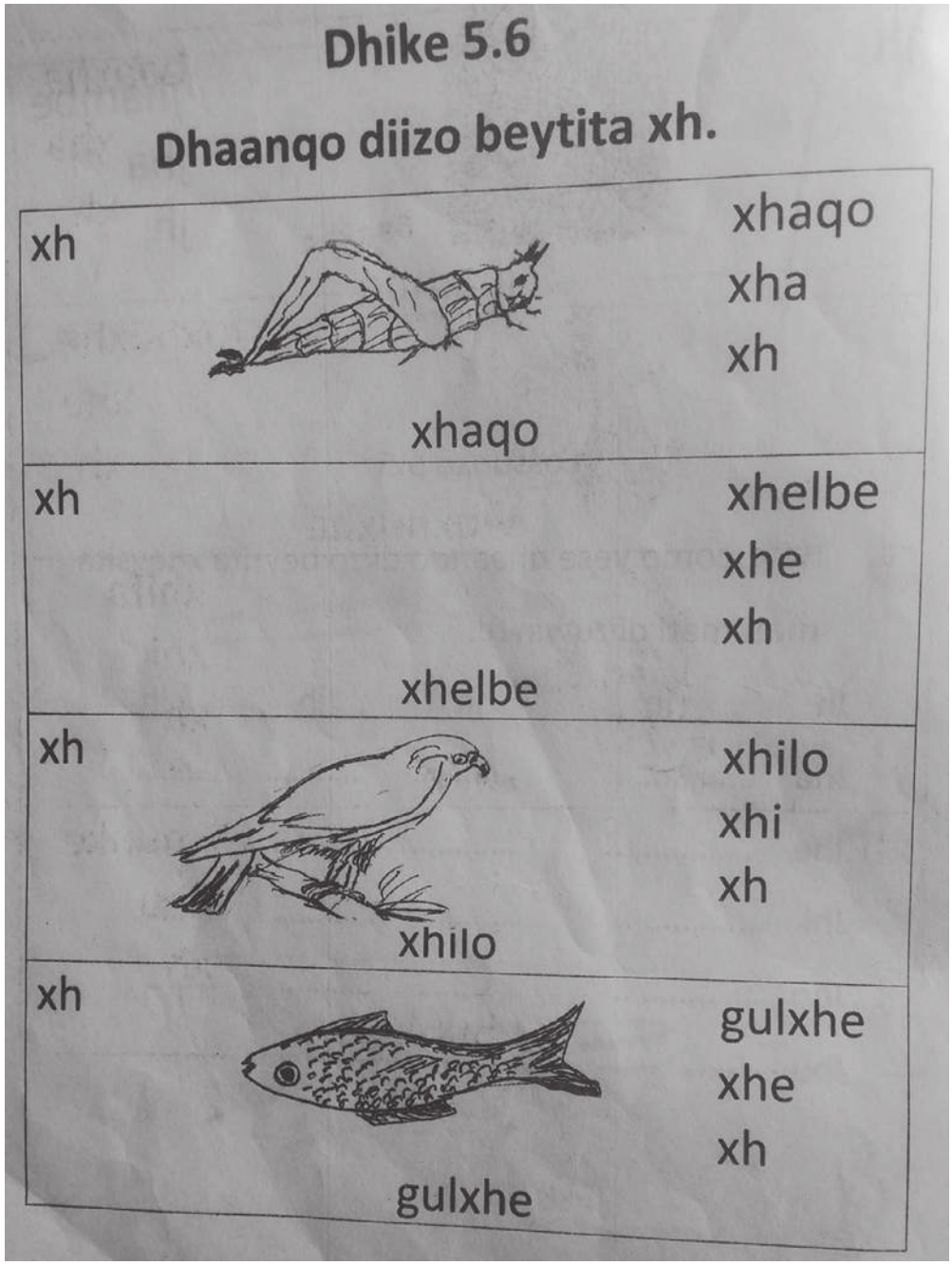

Figure 4.3 Extracted lesson from unit 5

quantification is an attempt not to infer meaning, but rather to examine usage. Analysis of the occurrence of a specific word or content in textual material is called manifest content analysis (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Summative content analysis involves counting and comparing, usually keywords or content, followed by interpreting the underlying context as is shown in

Hsieh and Shannon (2005). On the other hand, thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing and providing insights into patterns of meaning (themes) in a dataset. By focusing on the meaning of a dataset, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and understand collective or shared meanings and experiences. The identification of unique and idiosyncratic meanings and experiences found only in a single data item is not the focus of the thematic analysis.

Thematic content analysis helps to synthesize and interpret a specific topic from a critical perspective by developing themes. Therefore, based on the objectives of the study, a guiding criterion based on the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, and the literature on the components of phonological awareness in the first grade was adapted to determine the quality of the textbook and to assess whether the textbook meets the requirements in the literature. Accordingly, descriptive content analysis was employed to examine the components of phonological awareness activities in the textbooks of first-grade students in the Koorete Language. Accordingly, using a content analysis checklist the data were coded, organized, transcribed, and analyzed thematically according to the criteria. To collect data, the researcher used a content analysis checklist and document analysis.

To analyze the data, the researcher used both frequency and percentage simple statistics to determine what percentage of the key components of phonological awareness have been emphasized by the existing first-grade Koorete Language textbook. In addition, an in-depth evaluation of the alignment of the textbook with the corresponding curriculum was carried out. For this effect, five main components and 18 sub-components were used as units of analysis for the study. Finally, based on the findings, interpretation, and discussion of the results, as well as, conclusion and recommendations would be proposed.

This research was conducted in the Koorete Language of the first-grade textbook in Amaro Special Woreda in Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). The textbook introduced four levels of reading activity, namely sound-level activity, syllable-level activity, word-level activity, and sentence-level activity. The first three reading activities were intentionally chosen throughout the units as they are related to phonological awareness activities, which are the basis for analysis. The data were collected through interviews and content analysis based on the content analysis protocol given in Table 4.2. The content analysis protocol was adapted from the mother tongue syllabus for primary education in Ethiopia prepared by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in 2013 and from the early grade literature given in NRP (2000) and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). To ensure the external and content validity of the tools, a pilot study was carried out, and the results of the data were presented in a seminar organized by the NORAD project and Addis Ababa University.

Table 4.2 A protocol of content alignment between syllabus and textbook

Themes	*Components of phonological awareness*			
	in syllabus & literature	*in textbook*		
		yes	*no*	*reflection*
syllable	isolation blending deletion segmentation			
rhyme	identity recognition production			
alliteration	initial & final sound			
onset-rime	isolation identification categorization			
phoneme	isolation blending identity segmentation deletion addition substitution			

Materials

The first-grade textbook was chosen for investigation because it is the only resource used in the first grade to teach the Koorete Language according to the Ethiopian Primary School Curriculum for grades 1–4 (see MoE Ethiopia, 2013). The textbook was developed in 2000 by a group of native Koorete-speaking scholars with diverse academic backgrounds. An officer from Amaro Special Woreda Education Office coordinated the process. It was revised in 2012 G.C. by selected language teachers coordinated by the Woreda Education Office. The textbook is divided into 7 units and has 94 pages. Each unit is integrated with different language lessons, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. For this study, only reading instruction was focused across all the units. Specifically, this research focused on evaluating the alignment of the syllabus of mother tongue language in primary education with the contents of the first-grade textbook concerning phonological awareness, which is a core component of reading instruction.

Procedures of data collection

The procedure of data collection in this work follows the practice proposed by Ur (2009:185–187), which comprises three steps: criteria definition, criteria

application, and summary. In establishing the criteria, the components of phonological awareness in the literature were considered using the works of the National Reading Panel (US) et al. (2000) as well as Schuele and Boudreau (2008), and then the researcher adopted the checklist. Next, based on the criteria, a description based on key components of the phonological awareness activities was set, and then the textbook for first-grade students was evaluated accordingly.

The components of phonological awareness were coded thematically based on the syllabus and literature of early grade, then the selected content of the textbook was presented through the units for interpretation and analysis. Then the obtained data from content analysis were categorized, transcribed, translated, organized, and analyzed according to the theme. Finally, in the summary step, conclusions were drawn based on the ratings and descriptions. Then, an overall evaluation of the first-grade textbook was made.

Coding

Qualitative content analysis has been defined as a research method for subjectively interpreting the content of textual data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). Therefore, primary school home language curricula and the available literature especially on the key components of phonological awareness were used to encode the specific content of the textbook for further analysis.

The components of PA activities were coded into five themes: words into syllables (isolation, blending, deletion, segmentation); rhyme (identity, production); onset and rime (isolation, categorization); alliteration (sorting initial and final sounds); phoneme manipulation (identifies, isolate, categorize, blend, segment, delete, add and replace) based on the works in MoE Ethiopia (2013), NRP (2000), and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). On this basis, observation checklists were created. The contents of the textbook were coded based on the content analysis framework given by Krippendorff (2013).

The unique facets of the method of qualitative content analysis were taken into account (Forman & Damschroder, 2008; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009), which includes careful consideration of the following: first, credibility issues, such as the content sample (if required), the selected unit of analysis, the code development, and the coding process; second, analysability processes, such as filling out and checking auxiliary materials, for example, coding forms and the identification of categories and topics; three, transparency in the final document and inclusion of important details related to the conception and implementation of the method of qualitative content analysis and the interpretation of qualitative content analysis data.

Results

The results of the data analysis were divided into five themes: syllable activities (isolation, blending, deletion, and segmentation); rhyming activities (identity,

recognition, and production); alliteration (initial and final sounds); onset rhyme identification; and phoneme manipulation (isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution). The content analysis was analyzed in two sections: evaluation of the frequency and description of the selected lessons about their content quality and relevance according to the syllabus of primary education. The qualitative method extracted representative lessons from units 1, 3, and 5, which resulted from the qualitative data analysis, and was organized into word, syllable, and sound-level activities to assess the adequacy of the contents. In the following sections, the frequency and percentage of occurrence of the components of phonological awareness across the chapter have been presented.

Description of the frequency of the components of phonological awareness

Words into syllables activities

This section evaluates the occurrence of the components of phonological awareness lessons across the units: words into syllables. In particular, word-to-syllable activities include syllable (isolation, blending, deletion, and segmentation) activities. The frequency (f) of the components of phonological awareness of the distribution through the units is presented. The result of the contents distribution across the units is presented in the following section (see Table 4.3).

In the table above, the occurrence of the lessons is summarized in terms of their frequency and percentages. Syllable isolation activities were found in all units via words in the syllable phase. Accordingly, unit 1 has 4 (13.8%) lessons; units 2, 4 (13.8%) lessons; units 3, 6 (20%) lessons; units 4, 3 (10.3%) lessons; and units 5, 6, and 7, contain 1 (3.4%) each. The results of the syllable segmentation per unit are similar in frequency and percentage to syllable isolation (see Table 4.3).

Other activities: rhyming, alliteration, and onset-rime

Other activities of phonological awareness like rhyming activities (identity, blending, and production); alliteration (initial and final sound); and onset-rime identification activities are not integrated through the units as can be seen from Table 4.4.

Table 4.3 Total distribution of words into syllable activities across the units

Syllable	*unit 1*		*unit 2*		*unit 3*		*unit 4*		*unit 5*		*unit 6*		*unit 7*	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*F*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
isolation	4	13.8	4	13.8	6	20	3	10.3	1	3.4	1	3.4	1	3.4
segmentation	4	13.8	4	13.8	6	20	3	10.3	1	3.4	1	3.4	1	3.4

Table 4.4 Distribution of phoneme manipulation across the units

phoneme	*unit 1*		*unit 2*		*unit 3*		*unit 4*		*unit 5*		*unit 6*		*unit 7*	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
isolation	3	10.3	4	13.8	5	17.4	4	13.8	7	24.1	5	17.2	1	3.4
identity	3	10.3	4	13.8	5	17.4	4	13.8	7	24.1	5	17.2	1	3.4
segmentation	4	13.8	4	13.8	5	17.2	3	10.3	7	24.1	5	17.2	1	3.4

Phoneme manipulation

Phoneme manipulation is another component of phonological awareness. Phoneme manipulation activities include phonemes (isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution). The following section presents the occurrences of phoneme manipulation activities (isolation, identity, and segmentation) lessons in the units of the textbook under consideration.

In the table above, the occurrences of the phoneme isolation lessons in terms of their frequency and percentage are unit 1, 3 (10.3%) lessons; unit 2, 4 (13.8%) lessons; units 3, 5 (17.4%) lessons; unit 4, 4 (13.8%) lessons; unit 5, 7 (24.1%) lessons; unit 6, 5 (17.2%) lessons; and unit 7, 1 (3.4%) lesson are presented as can be seen from Table 4.4.

In addition, the occurrence of phoneme identity lessons is: unit 1, 3 (10.3%) lessons; unit 2, 4 (13.8%) lessons; units 3, 5 (17.4%) lessons; unit 4, 4 (13.8%) lessons; unit 5, 7 (24.1%) lessons; unit 6, 5 (17.2%) lessons; and unit 7, 1 (3.4%) lesson is presented (see Table 4.4).

The occurrences of phoneme segmentations lessons activities in unit 1 are 4 (13.8%) lessons; unit 2, 4 (13.8%) lessons; units 3, 5 (17.2%) lessons; unit 4, 3 (10.3%) lessons; unit 5, 7 (24.1%) lessons; unit 6, 5 (17.2%) lessons; and unit 7, 1 (3.4%) lesson are presented as can be seen from Table 4.4.

Table 4.5 shows the absence of some components of phonological awareness activities across the observed units in the textbook. The lessons, which were not integrated with phonological awareness activities in the different units of the textbook, are shown as 0% in the table (see Table 4.5).

As can be observed in the table, syllable (blending, deleting); rhyming (recognition, production); alliteration (initial and final sounds); and onset-rime activities were not made parts of the units of the textbook. Similarly, phoneme manipulation, namely phoneme categorization, blending, deletion, addition, and substitution, was not integrated across the units observed (see Table 4.5).

Content relevance concerning the syllabus

Three lessons were extracted from the textbook to evaluate the appropriateness of the textbook in following what is encapsulated in the syllabus. Because the textbook content contains the same lesson presentations in all of the units,

Table 4.5 Distribution of phonological awareness activities across the units

Components of phonological awareness		*Lesson frequency and percentage*	
		Freq.	*Perc. (%)*
Syllables	blending	0	0
	deletion	0	0
Rhyme	identity	0	0
	recognition	0	0
	production	0	0
Alliteration	initial sound	0	0
	final sound	0	0
Onset-rime	identification	0	0
Phoneme	categorization	0	0
	blend	0	0
	deletion	0	0
	addition	0	0
	substitution	0	0

Table 4.6 Alignment of words into syllables in the G1 textbook and the syllabus

Theme	*Components of phonological awareness*			
	In the syllabus & literature	*In textbook*		
		Yes	*No*	*reflection*
Syllable	isolation	yes		inappropriate
	segmentation	yes		inappropriate
	blending		no	omitted
	deletion		no	omitted

the researcher purposely selected only three representative lessons from units 1, 3, and 5 out of the 7 units (see Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

In the extracted lesson, each word is syllabified as, *maido* 'ox' (*do, d*), *dada* 'lightening' (*da, d*), *usume* 'storage' (*su, u*), and *suma* 'door' (*su, u*) (see Figure 4.1.). This includes the word, the syllable with the focused letter like *do, da-,* and *su-*, and the sounds like */d/, /s/, & /u/* as shown earlier. It is also shown that words like *maido* 'ox' have been segmented into *do*, and *dado* 'detainment' into *do*, whereas items like *usume* 'storage' and *suma* 'door', have been presented in the lesson being segmented into *su* and *su* respectively.

The result of the textbook's content alignment with the syllabus in terms of word-in-syllable activities, such as isolation, segmentation, merging, and deletion, is presented in Table 4.6.

In **syllables isolation**, in unit 1, page 8, words are syllabified as *maido* 'ox' (*do, d*), *dada* 'lightning' (*da, d*), *usume* 'storage' (*su, u*), and *suma* 'door' (*su, u*);

in unit 3, page 32, words are presented as *miise* 'cow' (*mii, ii*), *siila* 'seedling of enset' (*sii, ii*), *tiire* 'squatting' (*tii, ii*), and *kiilo* 'kilo' (*kii, ii*); and in unit 5, page 70, words are exhibited as *xhaqo* 'locust' (*xha, xh*), *xhilo* 'eagle' (*xhi, xh*), and *gulxhe* 'fish' (*xhe, xh*). The textbook also presented the only syllable with the given sound; '*do'*, *da*, *su*, *mii*, *sii*, *tii*, *kii*, *xha*, *xhe*, *xhi*, and so on. However, in the given words, other syllables that can be used for further practice are not presented in the textbook.

In **syllables segmentation**, in unit 1, page 8, the word *maido* 'ox' are segmented a (*do, d*), *dada* 'lightning' (*da, d*), *usume* 'storage' (*su, u*), and *suma* 'door' (*su, u*); in unit 3, page 32, words are segmented like *miise* 'cow' (*mii, se*), *siila* 'seedling of enset' (*sii, la*), *tiire* 'squatting' (*tii, re*), and *kilo* 'kilo' (*kii, lo*); and in unit 5, page 70, words are segmented like '*xhaqo*' (*xha, xh*), '*xhelbe*' (*xhe, xh*), '*xhilo*' (*xhi, xh*), and '*gulxhe'* (*xhe, xh*).

Other syllables in the given words are not segmented, as indicated both in the syllabus and in the available literature. On the other hand, it was found that **syllable blending and syllable deletion** were not integrated into the textbook (see Table 4.6).

The extracted lesson on the components of phonological awareness is presented in Figure 4.2 for further analysis.

The lesson in unit 3, taken from page 31, deals with syllable isolation; these are *miise* 'cow' (*mii, se*), *siila* 'seedling of enset' (*sii, la*), *tiire* 'squatting' (*tii, re*), and *kiilo* 'kilo' (*kii, lo*). This includes the word, the syllable with the focused letter like *mii*, *sii*, *tii*, and *kii*. Besides, in the textbook the words like *miise* 'cow' is segmented into *mii*, *siila* 'seedling of enset' into *sii*, *tiire* 'squatting' into *tii*, and *kilo* 'kilo' into *kii*. The vowel */ii/* is also represented in the given words and syllables as can be seen in Figure 4.2. The results of the matching of rhyming activity and alliteration against the textbook and the syllabus are presented in Table 4.7.

Rhyme activities like rhyme (identity, recognition, and production) were not integrated into the contents of a textbook (Table 4.7). Similarly, as seen in the rest of the chapters, **alliteration** (initial and final sounds) activities were not made part of the textbook. The extracted lesson on the components of phonological awareness is presented in Figure 4.3 for further analysis.

Table 4.7 Alignment of rhyme activity and alliteration between textbook and syllabus

Theme	*Components of phonological awareness*			
	In the syllabus & literature	*In textbook*		
		Yes	*No*	*reflection*
Rhyme	identity		no	omitted
	recognition		no	omitted
	production		no	omitted
Alliteration	initial and final sounds		no	omitted

Table 4.8 Alignment of onset and rime between curriculum and textbook

Theme	*Components of phonological awareness*			
	In the syllabus & literature	*In textbook*		
		Yes	*No*	*reflection*
Onset-rime	isolation		no	omitted
	identification		no	omitted
	categorization		no	omitted

Table 4.9 Alignment of phoneme manipulation between curriculum and textbook

Theme	*Components of phonological awareness*			
	In the syllabus & literature	*In textbook*		
		Yes	*No*	*reflection*
Phoneme	isolation	yes		incomplete
	identification	yes		incomplete
	segmentation	yes		incomplete
	categorization		no	omitted
	blending		no	omitted
	deletion		no	omitted
	addition		no	omitted
	Substitution		no	omitted

In unit 5, page 70, lessons on words, syllables, and sounds were also presented. The lessons are *xhaqo* 'locust' (*xha, xh*), *xhilo* 'eagle' (*xhi, xh*), and *gulxhe* 'fish' (*xhe, xh*), which represented the syllables with the focused letters, that is, *xha*, *xhe*, and *xhi*. In addition, the words *xhaqo*, *xhilo*, and *gulxhe* were found to be broken down into *xha*, *xhii*, and *xhe* syllables respectively (see Figure 4.3). In this section, the grapheme */xh/* is represented both in words and syllables (see Figure 4.3). In addition, the results of the textbook-syllabus content alignment on the onset and rhyming activities are provided in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 shows that onset and rime activities – isolation, identification, and categorization – were not integrated into the students' textbook contrary to the syllabus. The results of the evaluation of the contents of the textbook with the corresponding syllabus in terms of phoneme manipulation are summarized in Table 4.9.

This study found that **phoneme-identifying** lessons were incorporated into the textbook under consideration. For instance, the phoneme */d/* was presented in the words *maido* 'ox' and *dada* 'lightning', and */u/* was the other phoneme identified in the words *usume* and *suma* respectively as given in Figure 4.1.

The phoneme */ii/* was found to be presented in the words *miise* 'cow', *siila* 'seedling of enset', and *tiire* 'squatting' as in Figure 4.2. Similarly, the phoneme */xh/* was identified as being presented in the words: *xhaqo* 'locust',

xhilo 'eagle', and *gulxhe* 'fish' (see Figure 4.3). This phoneme was given in different words so that it would be possible to identify similar phonemes from different words.

Moreover, in the **phoneme isolation** lesson, the textbook presented a given phoneme in a manner to help the children recognize individual sounds. Some of such phonemes that appeared in the lesson include */d/*, */s/*, */u/*, */ii/*, and */xh/* (see Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

In the extracted lessons from the different chapters observed **phoneme segmentation** activities were made an integral part of the lesson. In the different sections of the lessons, for instance, *maido* 'ox' was segmented into *(do, d)*, *usume* 'storage' into (*su, u*), *miise* 'cow' into (*mii, se*), *siila* 'seedling of enset' into (*sii, la*), *xhaqo* 'locust' into (*xha, xh*), and *gulxhe* 'fish' into (*gul, xhe*). They were not, however, appropriately stated according to the early-grade literature.

A gap was observed in the textbook regarding **phoneme segmentation**. In the words given in the textbook, individual sounds should have been segmented. That is, the word *maido* 'ox' has been segmented as */m/ + /ai/ + /d/ + /o/*; the word *miise* 'cow' as */m/ + /ii/ + /s/ + /e/*; and *xhaq* 'locust' as */xh/ + /a/ + /q/ + /o/* (cf. Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). This implied the presence of an **incomplete description** of phoneme segmentation in the textbook, especially when its alignment with the syllabus and the literature is considered. Another observation also indicated that the extracted lessons from the textbook did not integrate the phoneme (**blending, deletion, addition, and substitution**) activities across the chapters according to the syllabus and early grade literature. Such lessons were entirely omitted from the textbook.

Discussion

Textbooks are the main educational materials used in Ethiopian schools for teaching and learning activities (Setegn, 2021), and aligning textbooks with the appropriate curriculum helps improve student learning in a given subject (Hadar, 2017). In the study, evaluating contents of the selected textbook regarding the components of phonological awareness was made based on the protocol adapted from the mother language curriculum for primary education in Ethiopia and early grade literature as given in the following works: MoE Ethiopia (2013), National Reading Panel (US) et al. (2000), and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). The results of the textbook evaluation showed the presence of gaps in three areas across units. These are (1) inappropriateness, (2) incomplete description, and (3) omission of components of phonological awareness. A discussion of each of these gaps is presented here.

Inadequacy of the components of phonological awareness

Two components have been introduced in word-to-syllable activities: syllable isolation and syllable segmentation. Content inadequacies in syllable isolation

were counted for a maximum of 20% of lessons presented across the units. With syllable segmentation, a similar percentage of lessons were integrated through the units. As the data analysis showed in each unit the number of lesson presentations was too low; for example, in unit five, the reported lessons were only 3.4%. This result indicates that the phonological awareness components of syllable isolation and syllable segmentation are inadequate lessons in the first-grade textbook.

Regarding phoneme manipulation, most of its components were not adequately integrated into the units of the student textbook. For example, in the case of phoneme isolation, a maximum of 24.1% of lessons were shown in unit 5, whereas the minimum number of lessons was observed in unit 7, which was 3.4%. In addition, in terms of phoneme identity and phoneme segmentation, an almost similar percentage was obtained for the lessons (see Table 4.3). The result shows that the content of the first-grade textbook failed to present adequate lessons throughout the units to help children learn to read.

Inappropriate presentation of the lessons

In **syllables isolation**, the textbook presented words by syllabifying them as *maido* 'ox' (*do, d), miise* 'cow' (*mii, ii*), and *xhaqo* 'locust' (*xha, xh*). That means, the textbook tried to present a single syllable from the given word, other syllables are not mentioned as these syllables */do/, /mii/*, and */xha/* occurred in the above words. The correct syllable isolation would be *maido* 'ox' (*mai-do*), *miise* (*mii-se*), and *xhaqo* (*xha, qo*), and so on, but as the analysis showed, the lessons did not present to the children in a manner that helps them practice each syllable.

In **syllables segmentation**, in the textbook words were segmented as follows: *maido* 'ox' (*do, d*), *usume* 'storage' (*su, u*), *miise* 'cow' (*mii, se*), and *xhaqo* 'locust' (*xha, xh*), etc. The correct way of segmenting these syllables would be*, for example*, *maido* 'ox' as *(mai-do)*, *usume* 'storage' (*u-su-me*), *miise* 'cow' as (*mii-se*), *and xhaqo* 'locust' as (*xha-qo*) (cf. Figure 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). In the textbook, the **syllable segmentation** focused only on a syllable with a given sound, but the rest of the syllables in the words under consideration were not given. This shows that syllable segmentation is inappropriately treated. Generally, the words in the textbook were not syllabified according to what was set out in the curriculum and given in the established literature (MoE Ethiopia, 2013; NRP, 2000; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008).

The incorporation of words into syllabic awareness includes activities such as joining a word into a syllable as in the items *pen-cil* to form the word pencil and **syllable segmentation**, counting the syllables in the word and pronouncing the syllables separately (Bauman-Wängler, 2009; Yule, 2006).

In the **phoneme segmentation** section words are segmented accordingly: for instance, *maido* 'ox' into (*do, d*); *miise* 'cow' into (*mii, ii*); and *xhaqo* 'locust' into (*xha, xh*), etc. As it was observed in the textbook, these words

were not syllabified into individual sounds. For instance, *maido* 'ox' was not segmented into */m/ /ai/ /d/ /o/; miise* 'cow' was not syllabified as */m/ /ii/ /s/ /e/* and *xhaqo* 'locust' was not divided into */xh/ /a/ /q/ /o/* as the syllabus and the literature prescribe (see Figure 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). Phoneme segmentation activities of these kinds enhance children's reading skills (Justice et al., 2010; Shapiro & Solity, 2008). However, as can be observed in the above lesson presentation, the phoneme segmentation is not segmented according to the grade 1 syllabus (MoE Ethiopia, 2013) and the early grade literature by National Reading Panel (US) et al. (2000) and Schuele and Boudreau (2008).

The incompleteness of components of phonological awareness

An incomplete description of phonological awareness in the textbook was reported in the result section. Regarding phoneme isolation, the textbook must provide individual sounds in a given word. In the current textbook, however, only the given sound was represented as the */d/* sound in the word *maido* 'ox', the */ii/* sound in the word *miise* 'cow', and the */xh/* sound in the word *xhaqo* 'locust' */xh/*. The presentation of individual sounds helps children to easily recognize individual sounds and words as was shown in the work of Wessels (2011). The practice observed in the textbook is contrary to the existing literature in which the subdivision of a word into individual sounds is strongly recommended (cf. National Reading Panel (US) et al., 2000; Schuele & Boudreau, 2008).

For phoneme identification, the lesson should include an activity that asks children to identify similar phonemes in different words. For example, it should entail questions like what sound is the same in the words *let*, *love*, and *lap*? In the given textbook, the phoneme */ii/* was represented in various words in mid-word position as in the words *miise* 'cow', *siila* 'seedling of enset', and *tiire* 'squatting'. The small gap observed in this representation was that the sound */ii/* did not occur in the initial and final positions of several words (see Figure 4.2). A similar finding was reported by Bulman (2021), and it was noted that incomplete phoneme identification in early educational material makes children's reading abilities difficult.

Omission of components of phonological awareness

Several components of the phonological awareness activities were omitted from the textbook for first-grade students. Specifically, the result of the textbook evaluation showed that syllable (blending and deletion), rhyme (identity, recognition, and production), and alliteration activities were not integrated into the textbook. This situation, however, contradicts the current literature which demonstrates the importance of familiarizing children with rhyming and alliteration and initial and final sounds for their success in preschool and early grade education (Turan & Gul, 2008). Moreover, onset-rimes (isolation, identification, and categorization) are important skills as units in preschool

and early grade as shown in the work of Goswami (2001). However, such activities were omitted from the student textbook under study.

Phoneme manipulation activities (categorization, blending, deletion, addition, and substitution) are reported to be very important to recognize individual sounds in a word in previous works as in Hayward, Phillips, and Sych (2014). However, the current student textbook lacked these key components of the phonological awareness tasks. Also, the result of a study showed that there is a serious discrepancy between teacher practice and textbooks designed for classroom teaching in Ethiopia, as in Fitsume (2020:66). The inclusion of phoneme manipulation in preschool reading materials and textbooks for preschool children is commonly suggested in early childhood education (cf. Piasta, 2016). Nonetheless, graded reading material is one of the teaching materials that can be used by teachers to teach reading (Ali & Saiden, 2015). The results of the study showed that there is a lack of availability and quality of teaching and learning materials related to the components of phonological awareness in the first grade. This showed that teachers' classroom practice lacks appropriate strategies and phonological awareness of the content to develop reading skills. A study also indicates that the practice of the curriculum led to serious malfunctions due to missing content (Kablan, Topan, & Erkan, 2013).

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings of this study showed that the first-grade Koorete textbook does not reach the minimum learning competence (MLC) specified in the language curriculum as it did not integrate the standard teaching contents and many reading activities of PA. The analysis also revealed that some components of phonological awareness activities, namely syllable isolation, and syllable segmentation were inappropriately displayed in the textbook. Moreover, incomplete descriptions of phonemes (isolation, identification, and segmentation) and activities were incorporated in the grade 1 textbook of the Koorete Language. It fails to present appropriate lessons and activities throughout the chapter to help children learn to read. If teacher skills or classroom resources are insufficient to support these children's acquisition of PA skills, the children will not achieve the expected reading development (Hayward, Phillips, & Sych, 2014:20).

Further, other components of PA, such as syllable (blending, deletion), rhyme (identity, recognition, production), alliteration (initial & final sound), onset-rime (isolation, identification, categorization), and phoneme (blending, deletion, addition, substitution) activities, were omitted from the textbook. Gaps were, thus, observed in the alignment of the textbook with the components of PA activities with the corresponding syllabus and early grade reading literature given in MoE Ethiopia (2013), NRP (2000), and Schuele and Boudreau (2008). Generally, the textbook is failed in giving an appropriate presentation of lessons, a complete description as well an integration of key components of phonological awareness.

The outcome of this research is of great interest to curriculum designers and early grade material developers who are interested in improving the quality of reading materials, particularly to improve learners' phonological awareness. These findings point to the need to revise the first-grade Koorete textbook to address components of PA skills that are consistent with children's reading development. To ensure the quality of the textbook, the relevant stakeholders, such as the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, Amaro Special Woreda Educational Office, SNNPR, and District Education Agencies should select appropriate experts and trained mother tongue teachers in early literacy, curriculum designing, and textbook development, particularly in disadvantaged Ethiopian languages like Koorete. Moreover, developers of reading materials for early grade children need to be aware of these limitations of the textbook and take them into account when they prepare new material or revise the existing one.

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Part 2

Indigenous literacy practices

5 The contribution of *Nibab-Bet* (school of reading) for modern schooling

The perspectives of educated Ethiopians studied in traditional and modern schools

Woube Kassaye

Introduction

Every society whether simple or complex have its own distinct system of education. Indigenous education forms part of African heritage and therefore is inseparable from the African way of life. It pre-dates the colonial period and has survived many challenging forces posed by Western influences. Reconstructing the education policy in contemporary Africa requires analyzing its traditional/indigenous education. Fafunwa's (1982:9), for instance indicates that the history of education in Africa is not complete or meaningful without adequately understanding the traditional or indigenous educational system of Africa. Similarly, Pinar (2012), in Corrigan and Ng-A-Fook (2012:62), underlines that one cannot understand the present without first examining the past.

Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi (2012) argue that despite the denigration by the West, Africans had an equally worthwhile (E)ducation and not an inferior (e)ducation system. Church and Quranic education are among the traditional education systems considered as exemplars. Church education in Ethiopia was introduced in Ethiopia in the 4th century (Eyasu Gemechu, 2016). Although traditional Ethiopian Church and Quranic systems of education have their own limitations, various authors have stressed their importance. The traditional Church education (*Ye'abinet Timhrt*) is appreciated by the following qualities (Woube Kassaye, 2003): (1) overcoming illiteracy, (2) cultivating the essential virtues of being good, (3) placing emulation as a method of teaching, (4) assessing the progress of each pupil daily rather than setting formal examination, (5) sustaining the cultural and intellectual wealth of the society, (6) emphasizing learning by doing, (7) encouraging teacher and pupil relationships, (8) applying simple teaching and learning materials, (9) using simple classroom and multi-grade teaching in the class, (10) encouraging peer teaching, and (11) employing low-cost building, desks, and chairs.

The study made by Aselefech G/Kidan (2014) reveals the role Church education (*Ye'abinet Timhrt*) has played particularly in the development of adult

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education. It did well in contributing a lot to provision of adult education such as reading, writing, and life skills as well as in providing learning opportunities for adults even though there wasn't a centrally designed curriculum. Despite the strengths of Church and Quranic education, it has its own limitations. Some of the shortcomings include (Girma Amare, 1967; Tilahun Sinishaw, 1997; Teklehaimanot Haileselassie, 1999), (1) lack of a coherent standardized system of education under a central authority, (2) low enrolment of female, (3) de-emphasizing originality, (4) overreliance of learning on several religious texts which are considered sacrosanct and unchanging, (5) providing little attention for secular culture and spoken languages, and (6) disregard practical skills related to production and livelihood.

However, Tilahun Sinishaw (1977) believes that the limitations of Church education should not be taken as a failure but something that should be subjected to critical appraisal and examination.

The chronic negligence of indigenous education has resulted in Africa's formal educational policies to be totally dependent on indiscriminately imported educational ideas and thought (Elleni Tedla 1995:148). Setargew Kenaw (2004) indicates that traditional education does not seem to attract much attention from academia rather most of them superficially attempt to examine the field that seems to concentrate on the explication of the drawbacks of the system. Hailu Fulass (1974) also states that the virtual absence of argumentation and criticism in traditional education has severely limited the field in which methodological and substantive innovations could be introduced.

Abdi (2009 in Yisak and Gumbu, 2012, p. 180) proposed that there is a need to reconstruct the philosophical and epistemological platforms of education, establishing in the process, what he called 'the re-culturing and the relative Africanization of knowledge systems' (pp. 392–393). Largely, the views of these scholars can encourage enlightened discussion and could have a broader implication on how African-centered education and African renaissance can be considered in promoting indigenous African culture.

Mutekwe (2015) argues that the advent of modern type of western education has resulted in the death of the importance of indigenous forms of knowledge in Africa. The same author indicates that the modern Eurocentric philosophy of education has alienated and affected some of Africa's indigenous education systems. In order to overcome such problem, it is suggested to overhaul a new education system ('the re-culturing and the relative Africanization of knowledge systems') in Africa by reconstructing the philosophical and epistemological platforms of education (Abdi, 2009b). Higgs (2003) also suggests that in order to focus on African renaissance, it is imperative to overhaul the education system; to this end the role of educators is indispensable, largely by encouraging enlightened discussion. It could have a broader implication on how African-centered education and African renaissance can be considered in promoting indigenous African culture.

The deterioration of quality education in Ethiopia is indisputable. This is reflected in reading, writing, and speaking. The Early Grading

Reading Assessment (EGRA) made in Ethiopia in eight regions in six languages (Tigrinya, Afan Oromo, Amharic, Somali, SidaamuAfoo, and Hararigna) in May and June 2010 focused on a variety of subtasks, including letter (or Fidel) sound fluency, phonemic awareness, word naming fluency, unfamiliar word naming fluency, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension (RTI International, 2014). The findings of this study indicate that there is strong evidence that reading achievement is low in all regions sampled.

In this endeavor, the role traditional education particularly the traditional elementary Church education known as *Nibab-Bet* (Reading school) plays was neglected. No serious studies have been made particularly on its contribution to learning in modern schooling. Hence, the main purpose of this chapter is to examine the role *Nibab-Bet* plays on modern schooling and to make pertinent recommendations that could help to improve reading in modern schooling.

Basic questions of the study

Qualitative research studies focus on individuals who are selected purposively, is deeply contextualized, and relies on the interpretation of the researcher (Keyton, 2001:74). Its research questions usually emphasize on how or what. Furthermore, researchers can pose questions to discover, explain, or seek to understand, explore a process, or describe the experiences of participants (Keyton, 2001:69). Although not always the case, research questions developed for qualitative studies usually use non-directional wording such as affect, influence, impact, determine, cause, and relate all have a directional orientation (Creswell, 1994 in Keyton, 2001:69).

Hence, the basic questions are:

1 What are the significances of *Nibab-Bet* (School of Reading)?
2 How do the experiences of *Nibab-Bet* can be transferred into modern schooling?

Significance of the study

Church and Quranic schools are considered as formal traditional schools. They have offered education for more than thousands of years. These schools have their own structure, curriculum, method of teaching, assessment, etc. Students enrolled in *Nibab-Bet* are mostly special groups of students in the context of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church traditional schools. The knowledge produced by this study with special emphasis of the voice of research participants can be valuable information for educational policy makers and social service providers in Ethiopia. Students from *Nibab-Bet* narrated their own experiences in relation to the contribution of *Nibab-Bet* for their later learning in modern schooling. The curriculum and methodologies experienced in *Nibab-Bet*, their strengths and shortcomings are shown in what the modern

schooling seeks. The study made on formal traditional education in Ethiopia is little. Hence, this study could make important contribution to the formulation of education policy in connection with the role of Church education. Moreover, the study can serve as a reference and a base for other researchers who are interested to conduct related studies.

Background of the study

It is argued that evidence of research is useful for making informed decisions in identifying effective educational practice. Research when it is based on sound scientific observations and analysis provides reliable information about what works and why and how it works. The information is essential for effective teaching and learning process. 'Responsible decisions about what is good for students, therefore, require scientific evidence' (Reyna, 2004).

Linguistic ability is one of the Multiple intelligences identified by Howard Gardner in his Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory (Armstrong, 2003:13). According to the same author, linguistic ability focuses on the understanding of the phonology, syntax, and semantics of language, and its pragmatic uses to convince others of a course of action, helps one to remember information, explains or communicates knowledge, or reflects upon language itself. Similarly, Derakhshan and Faribi (2015) emphasize that the understanding of linguistic ability focuses on the capacity of using a word effectively whether orally or in writing, the ability to manipulate the syntax or structure of a language, the semantic or meaning of a language, and the pragmatic or practical use of a language. It also refers to an individual's sensitivity to the sounds, rhythms, and meanings of words; and sensitivity to different functions of language (ibid.).

Chhabra and McCardle (2004) indicate that reading is both necessary and crucial for children's academic success. They further underline that

> the importance of success in reading for lifelong achievement must not be underestimated, how well a child learns to read may determine future opportunities, including not only career possibilities but also his or her ability to accomplish the basic activities of daily life.
>
> (ibid.:3)

Various studies indicate that learning to read early is helpful in success in school. Reading is considered as a fundamental ability for higher learning. Reading undergirds the entire learning experience of a child; it needs to be the foundation of any education enterprise (Gove & Cvelich, 2011). The study made by Brown, Hurst, and Hail (2016:126) indicates that 'early reading experiences laid the foundation for the students to develop into self-motivated learners'. It could be taken as an exemplar for improving the overall quality of education. Furthermore, Brown, Hurst, and Hail (2016) underline that early reading experiences have an impact on future success in reading.

Furthermore, Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) in Brown et al. (2016:118) found that first-grade reading ability was a strong predictor of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and general knowledge in later grades. Various studies indicate that the best opportunity to teach children the skills of reading is in the early grades (1–3), or earlier if possible, and if this window of opportunity is missed, then children who have not begun to read and understand what they read will continue to fall behind unless a prompt action is taken.

The deterioration of students' reading and writing abilities is the subject of much concern, and the debate over who is responsible for what continues (Ruddell, 1997). In fact, there are several factors that contribute to low results in reading. Among them are lack of training and support for teachers, minimal instructional time, poorly resourced schools, absence of books in the home, and problematic language of instruction policies and practices (Gove & Cvelich, 2011).

Church education (*Yeabinet Timihrt*)

Makgoba, Shope, and Mazwai (1999) indicate that African indigenous knowledge systems were ignored and remain untapped resources that researchers can harness to contribute to knowledge creation. To this end, the role education plays is pivotal. Amare Asgedom (1998) indicates that the 'Efforts at modernization were necessarily doomed to failure because the approach was to discard but not to fertilize domestic cultures', [since] 'development is . . . possible only by developing (enriching) one's own culture and not by replacing it by alien cultures as advocated by the followers of modernization theory' (p. 2). Woube Kassaye (2014) also argues that although Ethiopia has a rich indigenous system of Education, modern education started in vacuum where its invaluable experiences of the traditional education were either belittled or totally ignored.

According to Lemma Tadesse (2020), since the inception of modern education/western education in Ethiopia, exceeding precedence has been given over indigenous education, that is, neglecting invaluable experiences accumulated over a long period. Similarly, Tekeste Negash (2019:1) indicates that although modern education in Ethiopia was introduced to modernize the country, it inclined to Westernize the country at the expense of the short-lived experiences of modernization, as a result of which education and nation building seem to be loosely coupled. To curb this, he suggests the following (ibid.): (1) the Ethiopian government has to learn from the past failures and should revisit the language of instruction, and (2) commendable efforts may still be important to align education with a deeply entrenched endogenous knowledge and cultural traditions of the country.

Yirga Gelaw (2017) writes, 'people should not be disconnected from their traditional experiences because their experiences embody the most important resources for their education; only in this way, education becomes an internally

driven and dynamic cultural experience' (p. 93). To overcome this problem, he recommends that it is necessary to make a shift in educational policies towards a focus on traditions by constantly highlighting the idea that traditional education systems and indigenous knowledge sites (places) should have a leading role in Ethiopian education. To this end, it is necessary to revisit the possibility of developing a curriculum that integrates both traditional and modern education (ibid.).

Ashenafi Kassahun (2012:99) forwarded a similar view on the same issue as follows. First, policy makers in the area of education and childhood in Ethiopia should consider the traditional practices of *Yek'olo- temari* [student of *Ye-abenetTimihirt Bet*]. Second, efforts should be made to integrate modern education with the traditional education of EOC. Third, regardless of educational goals and practice[s] of traditional education of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the government should give attention [to] students in the modern school.

Curriculum of Church education with emphasis on Nibab-Bet

The formal indigenous education system of Ethiopia include Church, Quranic, and *Fallasha/Bete-Israel*.

They have their own established stages of study. The school of Church education is divided into different schools known as *Bet* (a school where a particular study is carried out). These schools are known as *Nibab-Bet* (School of Reading), *Zema-Bet* (School of Liturgical Music), *Qene-Bet* (School of Poetry), *Aququam-Bet* (School of Church Dancing), *Kidase-Bet* (School of the altar priest), and *Metshaf-Bet* (School of commentary).

Nibab-Bet (School Reading) is the first stage of the traditional education exclusively focusing on reading. It is the beginning to pursue different branches of higher-level schools. Students in each branch of higher level must pass through the *Nibab-Bet* where the basics of the study are offered. The education provided in school focuses with emphasis on reading the Scriptures in Ge'ez. Mastering the syllabary of the 26 basic characters, each having seven forms is the first stage of learning in *Nibab-Bet* (Chaillot, 2009).

Ethiopia has its own writing system. Its syllabic writing system is based on the following major properties: pictography, ideography, astrography, number system, grammar, and syllabry (Ayele Bekere, 1997: 7). It is considered as a system of knowledge and knowing through concretized symbols. Ayele Bekere describes this system as follows: it is based on the principle of repetition, where each main graph is repeated on the basis of vowel marks (it repeats itself seven times). Each letter of repetition, however, manifests a distinct style that allows autonomy, and yet remains an integral part of the system. Largely there are 26 letters where each consists of seven letters and vowels that formed the system. In fact, there are additional letters added later.

Haile Gabriel Dagne (1977) classifies learning in the *Nibab-Bet* into three phases: (1) learning *Fidel* (alphabet), and (2) drill in the reading of various

religious texts, and (3) reading the Psalms of David. Others classify the stages of learning in *Nibab-Bet* into four: (1) identifying *Fidel* (the alphabet), (2) Apostle's alphabet or *Fidel Hawaria*, (3) reading from religious books, and (3) reading the Psalms of David. Specifically, the method of learning in the school of *Nibab-Bet* follows the following processes. The first is *fidel mequter* (learning by counting each letter for letter identification). This stage emphasizes on pronouncing every letter of the word pointing at each letter with a straw stick. This practice is known as *Qutir* method. The second stage is *Magaz* (drilling – the letter are drilled in the form of chanting known as *Geez Zema*). This stage is taken as the beginning of reading. The third stage is known as *Wurd Nebab*. Here the child practices reading words, again chanting, but different from the *Ge'ez*. Much care is taken to read properly in connection with accents, pauses, and the soft or hard pronunciations of the syllables. The final stage is known as '*Qum-Nebab*', where the student practices reading at a very lively pace but without mistakes. After completing this stage, the student can proceed to the next school.

Reading a text for beginners begins at the *First Epistle of St. John*. According to Haile Gabriel Dagne (1977), the following texts have been used in different *Nibab-Bet* schools: *Gabata Hawaria* (selected epistles of St. Paul, St. James, and St. Peter), the Gospels (usually the Gospel of St. John is used as a text for exercise), *Arganon* (praises of St. Mary); *Tamara Mariam* (the miracles and wonders of St. Mary), *Paulos* (the epistles of St. Paul); *Tamara Eyesus* (the miracles of Jesus), the acts of the Apostles, and so on. The methods of practicing reading in *Nibab-Bet* are those described under the *Fidele Hawaria*, namely, *Qutir, Ge'ez*, *Wurd Nebab*, *and Nebab* (ibid.).

In addition to reading a text, there is *Ymata Timhirt* (an evening lesson) or *Yekal Timihirt* (reading and learning by heart). The aim of these lessons is to memorize daily prayers during evening in the presence of the teacher or an advanced student. In this session students are required to memorize prayers such as *Weddase Maryam* (praises of Mary), *Anqeste Birhan* (the Gate of Light), *Melke'a Maryam* and *Melke'a Iyesus* (the angels praise Mary and Jesus) by heart (Mengesha Gebrehiwot & Paulos Asrat, 2002).

As Chaillot (2009:528) indicates that after a student has finished and mastered reading Psalms of David, he/she can study the advanced education of the traditional schools either in one of the three branches, *Zema-Bet* (the house of liturgical music or the school of liturgical music) or *Qene-Bet* (the house of metaphoric poetry or the school of metaphoric poetry) or *Metshaf bet* (the school of commentaries). Each discipline or branch also has different courses which should be performed in its specific school. The whole program of *Church* education takes a longer time – usually more than 25 years.

Research methodology

This study is based on qualitative research. Qualitative research represents the views and perspectives of the people (participants) (Yin, 2016:8). It is

useful for describing and answering questions about participants and contexts; in other words, it studies the perspectives of the participants toward events, beliefs, or practices (Gay & Airasian, 2003:163). Case study is one of the types or variants of qualitative research (Yin, 2016:8). According to Gay and Airasian (2003:193), it is a way of organizing social data for the purpose of viewing social reality by examining the social unit as a whole. The unit may be a person, a family, a social group, a social institution, or a community; probes deeply; and analyses interactions between the factors that explain present status or that influence change or growth (ibid.). In case study, depth analysis is highly required.

Sampling

Qualitative studies can be carried out with a single participant or, when studying multiple contexts, may have as many as 60 or 70 participants (Gay & Airasian, 2003:195). In this study purposive sampling was preferred. Informants were selected on the basis of their qualification and experience to explain their thoughts and ideas clearly, familiarity with the study's context, and openness to explore new perspectives on their experience. Accordingly, 58 research participants who had gone through both Church education (*Ye'abnetTimihert*) and modern schooling were selected.

Data gathering instruments

Data gathering uses a variety of methods. Questionnaires and opinionnaires are among them (Gay & Airasian, 2003:193) where this study focuses on. The questionnaires consist of open-ended, broad questions that keep the research topic open while collecting data. In order to get the appropriate response the questionnaire was prepared in Amharic.

It should be noted that even though there is usage of primary data sources, the study also relied on secondary sources – books, journals, policies dealing with traditional education, and researches made on early reading assessment. The questionnaires consist of open-ended, broad questions that keep the research topic open while collecting data. It was prepared in Amharic.

Ethical consideration

In a research study, researchers are expected to protect participants from physical or psychological harm, discomfort, or danger that may arise due to research procedures (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Accordingly, one of the ethical issues considered in the analysis of this study is to replace the real name of informants by pseudonyms.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Distribution, qualification, and specialization research participants

This part focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data secured from the questionnaire.

The total number of informants (research participants) who completed the items in the questionnaire and returned were 58. Among the total informants, 53 (91.2%) were males and 5 (8.8%) females. The informants were purposively selected from different organizations. Most of the research participants hold the highest qualification in modern education: 8 PhD, 10 Masters, 16 BA, 7 (still studying in the undergraduate program), 1 certificate, 2 diploma, 1 grade 10, and 4 studying in the elementary school. Duration of their studies and concentration area in traditional education vary. Accordingly, years that took the participants to study in Church education from 1 to 22 years. Their study focused on *Nibab*, *Zema*, *Qidassie*, *Aquaquam*, *Qene* as well as Interpretation of New and old Testaments.

Qualitative data analysis emphasizes the qualities exhibited by data. To have a sound qualitative analysis patterns, coherent themes, meaningful categories, and new ideas are given due emphasis in this study. In general, the analysis intends to uncover a better understanding of a phenomenon or process. The categorization of the data is made as follows:

1 Contribution of Church Education: Generation of knowledge; Promotion of thinking, inquiry, and memorization; Enhancement of research; contribution to the growth of language, literature, poetry, philosophy, and history; enhancement of proper Discipline, Peace, Love, and Unity; and promotion of reading, speaking and writing
2 Curriculum and methods of teaching and learning
3 Strength and limitation of *Nibab-Bet*
4 Reading and writing in modern schooling: challenges, transferable experiences of *Nibab-Bet* to modern education
5 Suggestions forwarded by the informants to overcome the challenges/problems

Contribution of Church education

Generation of knowledge

Responses connected with generation of knowledge, thinking, inquiry, and memorization were made. One of the purposes of education is to generate knowledge. Knowledge is promoted through education. According to Magocha (2013), knowledge is generated everywhere, every time, and from everyone; however, it differs from time to time, place to place, and from organization to organization. Concerning the usefulness of traditional Church education as part of Indigenous knowledge in creating knowledge, the informants gave the following responses:

Church education (*Ye'abinet Timhirt Bet*) enhances the quality of education based on culture, values, and philosophy (48GasAshM). The other respondents made their responses as follows: it is the bases for all knowledge (53AbeAdeM); useful for knowledge creation (21GonSocM), and has a great role in building knowledge because we visualize various secrets of the spiritual life through it (10DebTabM); its contribution in gaining knowledge is significant (05AMemPauM); it is the bases for knowledge attainment, because discipline particularly fear of God is highly emphasized (05BManWelM); the source of knowledge is gained from traditional education because wisdom exists in books published in Geez and Holly books (06DebTabM); and it is the source of Indigenous knowledge consisting of Qine, Literature, History, Interpretation, Astronomy, Art and Zema (35BelMekM).

Most of the above responses are supported by Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003). They argue that the basic component of any country's knowledge system is its indigenous knowledge.

Promotion of thinking, inquiry, and memorization

Informants concerning enhancement of thinking, memorization, and inquiry capacities gave various responses. Accordingly, Church education enhances mental capacity (07MecEngM), the capacity of thinking (56EnaFAA, 57FirFAAU) and develops the capacity of memorization (57FirFAAU); the capacity of thinking and produces a generation who would be inquirers (57FirFAAU); encourage the capacity of thinking and become inquisitive (55EihFAA). Further responses given include the following: it broadens critical thinking (32SimNigM), it helps to understand quickly and to look issues thoroughly (07MecEngM) and to see issues in different angles (12DebBirM), and it helps to understand issues quickly (12DebBirM), it promotes knowledge creation (17DebBirM), it is the basis for knowledge foundation (20GonMusM), it helps to gain both religious and non-religious knowledge (17DebBirM) and it lays a foundation for science and Qine for instance is taken as the basis of philosophy (30YohTam M).

Further responses given include the following. Church education:

- has a great contribution for knowledge production; it provides appropriate reading, writing and speaking skills; it broadens the scope of imagination (28ZelMesM).
- gives due respect for knowledge attainment, takes responsibility, cooperates with the community, and encourages to question and to inquire about something (29TesAmaM).
- lays a foundation for thorough thinking;
- helps to understand issues quickly; it encompasses imagination scope; make yourself to be filled with happiness; and it instills the concept of 'greatness' (14DebBirM).

- it highly emphasizes memorization and enhances the capacity for thinking (37MisHizuM).
- it enhances the capacity of thinking and memorizing (49GetDemM).

In addition to the above informants the following responses were made. The other issue emphasized in this study is memorization. Their responses are as follows. Since the traditional education is more emphasized on memorization, it has a role in enhancing mental capacity (37MisHizuM). It enhances memorization (27ManPhiM), capacitates the brain, has a great contribution in memorizing particular issues (11DebTabM), gives due emphasis for memorization and understanding within a short time (04AniHeaM), and enables one to easily recall what was learned (13DebBirM). Furthermore, it has a great contribution in instilling knowledge; it easily makes one to memorize easily (19GonCriM).

Various authors such as Forrin and MacLeod (2018), Khamees (2016), Saquib et al. (2017), and Girma Amare (1963) have emphasized the importance of memorization. The memorization strategy used by learners is helpful to facilitate their ability to learn language (Ozcan & Kesen, 2008 in Khamees, 2016:248). Cook (1994) in Khamees (2016:248) believes that repetition and learning by heart are two valuable and interesting language learning activities. They can give the learner an opportunity of practicing authentic and communicative use of language.

Researchers give accounts of the types of memorization, evaluates its use as a learning strategy, and investigates the interrelation between comprehension and this strategy (Khamees, 2016). There exist different views such as a backward element for learners, an effective learning style, the most accessible means of possessing knowledge on the contribution of memorization (Yusuf, 2010). The finding of his study indicates that memorization is related to the research participants' academic achievements and is considered as an effective tool for brain empowerment, illustration enhancement, and oration feature (p. 49).

Enhancement of research

It is emphasized that in research, there should be room for alternative ways of exploring and knowing so that there is no imposed *one* way to investigate. Hence, it is useful to revisit the traditional education in relation with research. Responses given in connection with research on Church education are as follows:

1 It is very helpful in conducting research on the area (50DanAtnM);
2 It is useful to analyze indigenous knowledge and its importance to look into issues thoroughly (52TadEsuM);
3 It provides a thorough experience if studied thoroughly (04AniHeaM).

The above responses given on research are supported by Mji (2009) as follows:

> We were all born as researchers; research is the creating element that runs through our minds, bodies and feeling to guide, protect, and assist us to move to the next level of creation. Without research, human beings would quickly or slowly approach their extinction.
>
> (p. 7)

Promotion of reading, speaking, and writing

Learning in *Nibab-Bet* has various benefits. It increases interest of reading (12DebBirM). One of the research participants, (09EleMacM) shares his experiences of *Nibab-Bet* as follows: '[*Nibab-Bet*] has increased my reading interest; it has helped me to understand the social life (this world life)'. Similarly, an informant, 29TesAmaM, on his personal experience on the contribution of *Yeabinet Timihert*, responds, 'It has helped me to pay due attention, encouragement and self-confidence for my study'.

Furthermore, other informants indicate that *Nibab-Bet* contributes to proper speaking skills, as a result it develops confidence (31TegAdaM), enhances reading skills (52TadEsuM, 16DebBirM), and develops confidence in speaking, listening, and writing by following the proper rules (54GovUniM); promotes basic reading skills and emphasizes on indigenous knowledge of methodology (58TizMulF); helps to understand the fall and rise of sounds of words and punctuation; enables to understand the meaning of messages easily; and emphasizes reading loudly in the classroom and as a result encourages confidence (59AleTenF).

Based on his experience, one of the research participants (02DecTekM) describes the contribution of *Nibab-Bet* as follows: 'Overcoming my illiteracy is made successful through the education I had gone in the traditional education. It has laid the foundation of the existing personality, knowledge etc.'.

Furthermore, learning in *Nibab Bet* builds confidence in speaking, listening, and writing (54GovUniM) and enhances basic reading skills (58TizMulF). It promotes indigenous knowledge methodology (58TizMulF). Specifically it helps to understand the fall and rise of sounds of words and punctuation (59AleTenF). Other research participant (24AbaKelM) responded that *Nibab-Bet* enables to identify the shape and sound of alphabets as well as its proper way of writing. Furthermore, it enables to understand the meaning of messages easily (59AleTenF).

Reading efficiently is highly significant. Accordingly, *Nibab-Bet* is said to make students become efficient in reading. Furthermore, *Nibab-Bet* enhances the capacity of listening (32SimNigM); produces fast reader with understanding (35BelMekM); teaches many students in a single class (multiple grading) (32SimNigM); the teacher monitors students' progress and provides immediate feedback and corrections (35BelMekM); develops appropriate reading and writing skills; emphasizes on repetition and helps to internalize the issue;

the blind students study orally; studying orally helps the students during the absence of electricity or lamps (37MisHizuM), enhances memorization and helps to have reading skills in Amharic (41YibMenM), encourages learning, as a result students become voracious and fast readers and thoroughly revise the daily lessons either in group or individually (42TseWouM). Furthermore, it promotes the skill of reading as well as expressing ideas using writing skills (46AbeSelM), and helps to easily identify letters and read without difficulty (57FirFAAU). Unless the student does not know the subject and is unable to study exhaustively and explicitly, he/she is not promoted to the next level. It is not possible to pass without understanding the subject (31TegAdaM).

Enhancement of proper discipline, peace, love, and unity

Peace, love, and unity are emphasized by the informants. Accordingly *Yeabinet Timihert* instills encouragement, hope and strength, love, compassion, cooperation, and unity (13DebBirM). It is taken as the source of peace, love, unity, and strength (17DebBirM). The other contribution of *Yeabinet Timihert* is to instill good discipline and promote the religion (55EihFAA) and to instill respect, love, patience, commitment, to serve others (16DebBirM).

The cardinal goals of African traditional education identified by Fafunwa (1974) in Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003:249) include (1) to develop character, (2) to inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority, and (3) to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

Different responses were given on the contribution of *Nibab-Bet* in instilling proper discipline and ethics. It makes the students to be highly disciplined (currently the major problems in modern schools is lack of discipline) (11DebTabM), instills fear of God (17DebBirM), helps to know about oneself and evaluate himself/herself (41YibMen), displays appropriate personalities, helps to overcome challenges, develop patience and being an inquisitive (43TseAbeM), and has a great contribution in promoting love for a particular profession (24AbaKelM). Furthermore, a respondent – 22GonM – underlines that traditional education is not only useful in knowledge production but also important in making students have the proper discipline and ethics.

Learning in *Nibab-Bet* is not only based on reading but also moral and ethical education is part of the curriculum; however, no specific time is allotted for moral and ethical education (59AleTenF). Moral education based on religion is part and parcel of the curriculum (04AniHeaM).

The responses indicated earlier are supported by Fafunwa (1974), where he underlines that the aim of traditional African education was multilateral, playing many roles, and that its end objective was to produce an individual who is all-rounded, honest or trustworthy, respectable, skilled, cooperative, and who conforms to the societal order of the day. Moral Education is considered as a useful component of traditional education. It is a basic need for modern times because of the fast witnessing degeneration of moral

values (Srivastava, 2017). Moral virtues, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others, are the domain of moral education. Furthermore, diversity, tolerance, mutual respect, and pluralistic values are also very important for moral education.

Curriculum and methods of teaching and learning

It is very difficult to understand education and its practices without discussing curriculum, because it is a key element or the main means to achieve the purposes of education (Woube Kassaye, 2005:49). Curriculum planning is usually based on objectives, curriculum (educational) experiences that consist of content and methods, organization, and evaluation; it is reflected in syllabuses or in subject guidelines, teachers' guide, student's text, and supplementary materials (ibid.).

The curriculum of Church education focuses on *Nibab-Bet*, *Qidassie-Bet*, *Zema-Bet*, *Qine-Bet* and *Meshaf-Bet* (01MemFanM). *Nibab-Bet* focuses on identifying letters (*Geez-Nibab*, *Wurd-Nibab*, *Qum-Nibab*), *Wengel-Nibab*; Psalms of David (*Ɣedawit-Nibab*) and *Ɣzweter-Tselot* (Daily pray), *Widassie-Mariam*, and *Melkea-Melk* (01MemFanM).

Responses were given on the curriculum and methods of *Nibab-Bet*. According to 28ZelMesM, *Nibab-Bet* emphasizes on (1) identifying the shape and sound of the alphabet through *Gebeta Hawaria* and *Melikte Ɣohannes*, (2) reading some of the Chapters of the New Testament and *Arganon Dingil*, (3) reading the Psalms of David. The other informant specifies the type of reading as follows (37MisHizuM): first identification of the alphabet, speaking orally (pronounce the alphabet), and writing. Reading *Melkite Ɣohannes* is taken as a means to enhance these skills. According to the same respondent, additional reading materials included in the curriculum are *Gedelat*, *Dirsanat*, and *Wengel*.

The responses given on the curriculum of *Nibab-Bet* by the respondents vary. Let us see their responses. *Nibab-Bet* focuses on Alphabet, Melikte Yohannes, Aratu Wengelat, Psalms of David (Mezmure Dawit), Tibebe Selomon, Mesthafe Sirak, Wudassie Mariam, Aneqetse Berhan, Melkea Mariam, Melkea Eyesus (25YohBirM); Nibab, Zema, the doctrine of the religion (27ManPhiM), believing in God, related with Saints and St. Marry (36HReManM).

Reading in *Nibab-Bet* emphasizes on *Fidel*, *Melikte Ɣohannes*, *Wurd-Nibab*, Dawit (21GonSocM). *Zema*: *Wudassie Mariam*, *Qidassie*, *Seatat*, *Qene*, *Aquaquam* (21GonSocM). Reading psalms of David, Qidassie, Seatat sometimes Abushahir (the history of Ethiopian Calendar and how to determine the days in the future) are considered (22GonM). However, most of them are not taught in *Nibab-Bet*. They are studied after completing *Nibab-Bet*.

Learning in *Nibab-Bet* focused on first, in identifying the letters; second, reading in Geez known as *Magaz*; and third, reading in *Wurid nibab* and

fourth, reading in *Qum nibab* (plain reading) (30YohTam M). Reading is considered as a central component of *Nibab-Bet* where it is divided into three styles known as *Qutir*, *Wurid Nibab*, and *Sid Nibab*' (26MisHizM; 01MemFanM).

Similar responses were made in connection with the above issue. These are the following:

- Learning in *Nibab-Bet* focuses on Yekuter (magaz) Nibab, Wurd Nibab, and Qum Nibab (04AniHeaM).
- the different styles of reading of Nibab-Bet based on *tenesh, tetay, seyaf, wedaqi, meteklel, mequter, malalat* (06DebTabM).
- Reading in *Nibab-Bet*is based on *Qotera (bezema)*, *Geez-Nibab* and *Wurd-Nibab* (16DebBirM).
- Reading Psalms of David for instance is based on the three style of reading (*Qum Nibab, Wurd Nibab, Geez Nibab*) is part of the curriculum (37MisHizuM).

Teaching and learning are part of any education program. Traditional education has its own methods of teaching. In order to achieve its objectives, it is characterized by the following practices: peer teaching (the advanced student teaches the non-advanced ones) (01MemFanM), cooperative learning (those who are on similar learning stage study in group) (02DecTekM), as well as a chance is given to read in front of the teacher, and the teacher makes correction if mistakes are done (01MemFanM). Exam is practical and it is based on the decision of the teacher (07MecEngM). Similar responses were given by informants. *Nibab-Bet* is skill-based and practice-related (37MisHizuM) individually and in groups (*Mahibere Nibab)* (02DecTekM). Learning in *Nibab-Bet* is characterized by face-to-face learning (practical, day–to-day assessment, face-to-face individual students and teacher interaction) and immediate feedback (when a student makes mistakes the teacher corrects the student) (49GetDemM). It is also characterized by the following features: it encourages cooperation as well as individual learning; although there is no failure, it does not accept mistakes (48GasAshM). Furthermore, it emphasizes on theoretical and practical approach and it also focuses on physical performance as well as on cooperation and respect and learning actively (07MecEngM).

Nibab-Bet focuses on oral learning, cooperative learning and repetition (25YohBirM). The importance of collaborative learning [cooperative learning] is mentioned by different scholars. Collaborative learning [cooperative learning] is defined by Laal and Ghodsi (2012) as an educational approach to teaching and learning that consists groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Furthermore, they underline that 'Cooperative Learning (CL) compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, has numerous benefits and typically results in higher achievement and greater productivity, more caring, supportive, and committed relationships; and greater psychological health, social competence, and self-esteem' (p. 489).

Nibab-Bet is characterized by various experiences, where some of the identified by respondents are as follows.

1 The teacher teaches the advanced students while the advanced students teach beginners or those who are at lower stage of learning (12DebBirM).
2 Peer teaching and cooperative learning are applied (22GonM).
3 Learning takes place during day and night (22GonM). During the night, revising what was taught in the day takes place (13DebBirM).
4 Learning is characterized by observation (seeing), listening, speaking, and writing. Identification of the alphabets in relation of their shape is connected with for instance with of stick, sun, moon, eye, foot (23AddAbaM).

The methods in *Nibab-Bet* vary from stage to stage (41YibMenM). Students read the portions of the lesson in front of the teacher, and whenever the student makes mistakes the teacher corrects him/her (42TseWouM). Cooperative learning, contact with the teacher and individual and group study are given consideration (46AbeSelM). The teacher shows the students until he/she memorizes the topic; the student makes rehearsal to internalize (until he/she memorizes) what was taught (56EnaFAA). Peer teaching and memorization are highly emphasized (57FirFAAU). The teacher assigns advanced students to teach others (36HReManM). Continuous assessment is applied to maintain the quality of its education (24AbaKelM). No hesitancy in learning (if you aren't able to show your task practically you are not transferred to the other section (study area) (20GonMusM). Morality and discipline issues are emphasized; learning follows the required standard; learning is practice oriented (20GonMusM).

Nibab-Bet relation to some of the above responses the reflection made by Woube Kassaye (2018) on *Nibab-Bet* and *Zema-Bet* indicate that learning in Church School is characterized by rote learning, practice and skill-based learning, and little theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, learning is enhanced by observation, listening, and self-act on the portions to be studied. Paper-and-pencil exam was hardly employed; rather, day-to-day performance is very important to assess the progress of the student. Similarly, some of the above responses were supported by the study made by Ashenafi Kassahun (2012:ii) on the exploration on the perspectives (education, mobility, livelihood, and social life) of *Yek'olo-temari* (students of Church school) in Danglia, Ethiopia. The findings are as follows: (1) the students' daily life is dominated by educational activity, (2) play is less important than education which is considered as a childish activity and a reflection of less maturity, (3) students social relationships were found out to be horizontal (sharing and cooperation characterized their friendship after it is initiated by social networking), vertical (interdependence social relationships among older children and *Yeneta* (lead teacher) and institutional social relationships. In the horizontal (peer) relationship, sharing and cooperation characterized their friendship after it is initiated by social networking.

Strengths and limitations of *Nibab-Bet*

Nibab-Bet has its own strengths and shortcomings. Informants came up with their responses concerning the strengths and shortcomings of *Nibab-Bet*. It emphasizes on peer teaching, learning in groups, respect each other while learning (01MemFanM). There exists a strict follow-up by the teacher, rigorous repetition while studying (04AniHeaM), and learning is aimed at overcoming challenging problems (challenges in life – hardship). It encourages patience and strong commitment and ignites courage and hope (06DebTabM; 05BManWelM); enhances patience, and helps in overcoming challenges and encouraging cooperation and proper discipline (16DebBirM).

Learning in *Nibab-Bet* is active and emphasizes on cooperative learning (07MecEngM). Creation of interest, encouragement (09EleMacM), and appreciation are encouraged (10DebTabM). In this school, what was learned is remembered, because learning is practice-oriented, cooperation intensive, and there is no place for hate in one's promotion, rather one has to become competitive like him (13DebBirM). Furthermore, it takes into consideration previous experiences and practices while learning (14DebBirM). It is not allowed to make someone to pass without properly knowing; cooperative learning, and memorization are emphasized. The program is permanent (15DebBirM).

It was reported by 02DecTekM that many of the learnings in *Nibab-Bet* are studied orally. Orality as a method is described by Hussain and Sajid (2015) as a theoretically consistent set of teaching procedures that define best practice in language teaching and captured the different dimensions of the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching. In this method, 'speech' was the basis of language, and 'structure' was considered as the heart of speaking ability (ibid.).

It has implications for learning in modern education. Accordingly, the responses made are the following: instills a proper ethics and discipline (21GonSocM); promotes unity, love, and being genuine; gives due emphasis to promotion of culture and history; and enhances intellectuality (22GonM); promotes to the next stage on the basis of exhaustively digesting or knowing what was studied; instills an interest in education and work (24AbaKelM); gives ample time to make students read appropriately; and applies a follow up on the progress of each individual student (25YohBirM).

The other contribution emphasized by respondents includes the following: applying the different style of reading (26MisHizM); the strong commitment and encouragement to learn despite there are problems; being courageous in overcoming problems (34AscDemM); the emphasis given for individual and group learning; a mechanism to identify brave and weak students by teachers; and enhances the capacity of rethinking, memorization, and imagination; and avoids repeated mistakes (28ZelMesM).

Some of the responses given above are supported by Ashenafi Kassahun (2012). His study on *Yek'olo-temari* (meaning students of *Nibab-Bet*) was based on the perspective of the students on their mobility, livelihood, and social life in the traditional schools of Dangila, Ethiopia.

Limitation of *Nibab-Bet*

Despite the strengths of *Nibab-Bet*, informants identified its limitations in their responses. One of its limitations is the omission of writing skills (03MemHai). Similarly, the informant 35BelMekM responds that *Nibab-Bet* is useful to make good readers without understanding. It is worth to underline that this issue has to be further studied.

According to Ayele Bekere (1997), traditionally, writing is not taught in *Nibab-Bet*, since it was hardly needed in everyday life; rather, reading is highly required for the reason that it is required for daily prayers and to participate in church service.

Different scholars emphasize the significance of writing. Construction of meaning lies at the heart of education. Writing has been considered as central, though not the only means (Hillocks, 1995:xvii).

The other limitations identified by research participants include the following. First, dogmatic studies are hardly taught; since the thinking of few students is narrow they indulge in ill-conceived practices (02DecTekM). Second, it does not make the students master the subject in a short period; it takes time to master the subject thoroughly (31TegAdaM). It takes (many) years to complete the whole program (12DebBirM). Third, there exists inappropriate learning situation (scarcity of food, inappropriate learning situations for example lack of appropriate place in reading) (07MecEngM). Fourth, it is not designed in modern way; lack of studying the education system itself (05BManWelM). Fifth, it hardly utilizes time properly; the process and the method of teaching is not up-to-date (04AniHeaM).

Furthermore, the respondent 01MemFanM underscores the factors that lead to its failures as follows:

> Since recently, emphasis has not been given for this traditional education by both teachers and students; it has not updated itself with the required developments; the government itself has not considered this education as education; forcing the students who are studying in the traditional school to join modern schooling.

By and large, the problems identified by research participants in connection with *Nibab-Bet* are the following. Accordingly, it lacks conducive learning place (32SimNigM); learning materials (32SimNigM); appropriate materials for learning (25YohBirM); basic needs (42TseWouM); basic needs like lodging, soap, food (40HaiTarM); reading materials (26MisHizM); attention given for traditional education (26MisHizM); lack of responsible body for running these schools (26MisHizM); lack of space, and the education is not based on centralism (27ManPhiM). Furthermore, *Nibab-Bet* does not have a fixed time to complete its program (32SimNigM); there is no vacation and lacks proper utilization of time (wastage of time) (42TseWouM); there exists wastage of time (34AscDemM); it emphasizes on rote memorization (25YohBirM); it

does not give space (opportunity) for learning Geez grammar (25YohBirM); it applies punishment (28ZelMesM).

Challenges of reading and writing in modern schooling

Modern education in Ethiopia is dominated by Western education. Hence, it is necessary to look at the challenges that modern schooling is facing in connection with reading and writing. Few of the salient responses made by informants are specified here.

Reading in modern schooling is not thoroughly taught. It is mainly aimed at passing to the next grade without getting the appropriate knowledge; modern education does not take into consideration the indigenous method of teaching and learning (03MemHai). Modern schooling is not based on practice oriented, and there is no proper way of enhancing knowledge (13DebBirM). Modern schooling highly emphasizes English as compared with Amharic (15DebBirM). There is no standard of reading and follow-up in modern schooling (05AMemPauM).

The specific problems of reading in modern education were identified by the informants. Accordingly, the students who are attending modern schooling:

1 do not identify the shape of the alphabets and their usage and fail to read properly (04AniHeaM);
2 hardly identify the Sabean alphabet and fail to consider the good experiences of traditional method of learning reading (14DebBirM);
3 do not read properly and understand what they have read (15DebBirM);
4 do not identify the alphabets and the numbers of Sabean properly; giving high emphasis for learning English rather than Amharic (21GonSocM).
5 lack of experience in indigenous language and interest in reading writing and the inappropriate attention given by the teachers (26MisHizM);
6 become a slow reader; not identifying the sound of alphabets appropriately and lack of interest in reading (29TesAmaM);
7 have low speed of reading, display mistakes in reading, developed poor writing (the alphabet) skills (12DebBirM); lack of understating the proper alphabets in usage (20GonMusM); and
8 are promoted to the next stage without having a proper competency for instance in reading (42TseWouM).

The quality of teachers' experience in teaching reading is questionable. In relation to this the responses given are the following. First, failure to apply appropriate methodology for teaching reading as of the Kindergarten (neglecting indigenous pedagogy) (35BelMekM), second, poor training and lack of attention in teaching reading by teachers (25YohBirM), third lack of qualified instructors of Amharic language (31TegAdaM), and fourth inadequate training of teachers in teaching reading; even if they are trained they probably do not teach properly (28ZelMesM).

Transferable experiences of *Nibab-Bet* to modern education

Research participants emphasized the contribution of *Nibab-Bet* for learning in modern education. The responses of 18GonCulM support the positive contribution of *Nibab-Bet:* first, it initiates joining schooling (modern education); and second, it encourages the interest in reading and promotes cooperation. The other respondent 21GonSocM, on the same issue, responds:

> It is the basis for my schooling in the modern education. The traditional education has made me to appropriately know the alphabets of Sabean with its proper reading. It has helped me to be disciplined in respecting elders, colleagues, and in applying the principles of my religion. Developing a proper writing skill is the other qualities that I have gained.

Nibab-Bet could be taken as the basis for modern education since most of students from the rural areas have gone through traditional education (11DebTabM).

The contribution of *Nibab-Bet* could be related with maximizing moral elevation. Yao and Enright (2018) for instance examined the role and consequences of moral action in maximizing moral elevation. They underline that moral elevation is explained as a state of positive emotion that includes uplifting feelings, positive views of humanity, and a desire to be a better person. Elevation is elicited by moral acts: acts of charity, kindness, loyalty, and self-sacrifice and seem to be powerful elicitors (Haidt, 2003a in Yao & Enright, 2018:452).

Nibab-Bet is considered as playing a great role in eradicating illiteracy (23AddAbaM). The role of religious institutions in overcoming illiteracy was underlined by researchers. Similarly, the finding of Mengesha Robso (2021) indicates that 'church schools played a significant role in the development of adult education; and have also a good implication on the improvement of modern education qualities in Ethiopia' (p. 4158). One of his suggestions is that 'the Ethiopian educational policy should give a proper place to indigenous knowledge transfer systems like of Ye'abinet Timhirt Bets [traditional Church schools]' (ibid.). Woube Kassaye (2003:79) for instance indicated that education will not make its optimum input on development unless its various elements – whether formal, non-formal or informal, and the interrelationships between them are conceived and planned as part of a coherent overall approach.

Suggestions made by informants

Various challenges/problems were already identified regarding reading in modern schooling. To overcome the challenges, the following suggestions were made by the informants: (1) promoting reading skills; (2) coming up with an appropriate system and strategy; (3) strengthening research; (4) transferring the exemplar experiences of methods (teaching and learning) of *Nibab-Bet*; (5) promoting the speed of reading abilities, and (6) providing proper training for teachers and creating an awareness on the community support for the enhancement of *Nibab-Bet*.

Conclusions

There are various Indigenous Knowledge/Education Systems (IKS) that consist of an integrated body of knowledge, where *Ye'Abinet Timiherit* (Church Education) is among them. Various academics reported that African indigenous knowledge systems were ignored and still today remain untapped resources that researchers can harness it in order to play its role in knowledge production. This study can help the researcher to access the thoughts and feelings of participants. By scrutinizing their perspectives on the different issues connected with *Nibab-Bet* and modern schooling in connection with reading.

The findings of this study indicate various useful responses. The informants emphasized the strengths of *Nibab-Bet* where its exemplar experiences should be considered in modern schooling in connection with curriculum, methods, teacher's professional development, community support, research, and so on. To this end, policy makers in the area of education should consider the traditional practices of *Yeabinet Timiherit – Nibab-Bet*, and efforts should be made to consider its exemplary experiences in integrating with the modern education.

Although the findings are based on personal experience of the informants, it requires conducting a comparative reading assessment in the future between two groups (i.e. those who had gone through both *Nibab-Bet* and modern schooling and those who did not attend *Nibab-Bet* but are pursuing or completed modern schooling).

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6 Reading instructions in the schools of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC)

Moges Yigezu

Introduction

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) has been the centre of learning for the last 16 centuries and is still important in the lives of rural Christian majority. Some estimates put the number of church schools currently operating in the country around 30,000–35,000 which is indicative of the fact that church education still plays a vital role in contemporary Ethiopian society (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:58). For centuries, the EOTC has been the sole provider of literacy education through the monastic education it has established and able to sustain to the present day. As a well-organized and functioning indigenous educational system, it has produced generations of scholars and teachers that served the church and the society at large. At the turn of the 20th century, this indigenous educational system was replaced by modern Western education with little or no effort to connect it to the long-time tradition of church education and, according to Setargew Kenaw (2004:112), the break was rather sharp.

After a century or so, over the past decades, the poor quality of education in modern primary schools and the inadequate literacy competencies of children attending the first cycle (grades 1–4) have become a national concern as a result of the various assessments made by the government and its major stakeholders (USAID Ethiopia, 2010, 2019). The minimum literacy competency established by the Ministry of Education (MoE) is by the end of grade 1, students are expected to be readers. As shown by a series of assessments conducted by the ministry and other partners, the majority of the students remain illiterate after staying in school for two or three years. According to the EGRA survey, a significant number of students in Ethiopian schools are nonreaders in grade 2 and grade 3. For example, in Amhara region 27.5% of the students in grade 2 and 17% of the students in grade 3 are unable to read a single word correctly (USAID Ethiopia, 2010:19). To make things worse, similar results were found in the students' level of reading comprehension, which stands at 49% in grade 2 and 30.4% in grade 3 in the same region (USAID Ethiopia, 2010:20). What is more troubling is that the required benchmark level of reading skills has only been achieved by less than 5% of the participant second-grader students in the region.

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In some sections of the society, including primary school teachers, there is a perception that the traditional church schools perform better in teaching how to read and write (UNESCO-IICBA, 2020). This perception is against the widely circulated view in the literature regarding the method of teaching employed in the church schools which has been assumed to be a form of "rote learning". The majority of writers, who described the church education system, in one way or the other, held the view that the method of teaching in these schools is invariably based on memorization or rote learning. Girma Amare (1967:3), for instance, stated that memorization is the only method of teaching. Teshome Wagaw (1979) likewise commented that the method of teaching in church schools encourages rote learning rather than reflective thought. Some recent studies have also echoed the same criticism made by previous studies. Among these, Mengesha Robso (2021:4147) concludes, ". . . in all forms of the instructional methodology, learning by heart or memorization commonly characterizes the provision of traditional church education".

Nevertheless, there are quite a few writers who argued that such views are simplistic and shallow in their understanding of the church education system. Tilahun Sineshaw (1997), as quoted in Woube Kasaye (2000:54), pointed out that 'the limitations of Church education should not be taken as failure but something that should be subjected to critical appraisal and examination'. A more pronounced view has been stated by Setargew Kenaw (2004:112), who contends that most of the works that attempted to examine the system of church education were superficial and they seem to be preoccupied with the explication of the drawbacks of the system. The author further argued that although the critiques forwarded by many writers may reflect some aspects of early primary level of education, the position adopted by many is rather uncritical, and these previous studies have therefore "distorted, neglected or overlooked certain elements of the educational system of the church."

Despite the uncritical evaluation and hasty generalizations made about the teaching method in church schools by various researchers, the early reading instructions and the strategies used in teaching how to read and write have never been closely examined. The first stage of the school system, where primary instruction is given, is the House of Reading. It roughly corresponds to basic literacy (perhaps equivalent to the first cycle of primary education in the modern schools, i.e., grades 1–4) and takes a minimum of two years of intensive learning to complete. This level of study focuses on the development of skills that enables the student to read and write as well as understand key social and religious concepts (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:63).

This study tries to investigate the literacy practices of the church schools and the methods employed in teaching how to read and write based on the field visits made to well-known monasteries in South Gondar, namely, Zara Michael and Eyesus monasteries. Intensive interviews were conducted with both teachers and students supplemented by classroom observations. In order to get a glimpse of the level of reading fluency, a preliminary assessment has

also been conducted among some randomly selected students of the House of Reading in both monasteries.

Conceptual framework

The theoretical assumptions and methodological issues regarding reading instructions emanate from the multidisciplinary nature of the field of reading. In the literature, (Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Goswami, 2006), there is a general agreement that reading as a field of inquiry has five pillars or components: *fluency*, *comprehension*, *vocabulary*, *phonological awareness* and *phonics*. The understanding of issues related to reading instructions in general and the teaching practices in particular must take into account these five pillars or components of reading as well as the skill of writing.

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. It entails the ability of students to read a narrative or information text with accuracy, with little effort, and at a sufficient rate and respond to literal and inferential questions about the text they have read.

Vocabulary refers to the words that we must know to communicate effectively. Teaching vocabulary as part of the reading instruction requires teaching ideas or strategies such as reading aloud, using word parts to help teach vocabulary (prefixes, suffixes, base words, root words), discussing the meaning of vocabulary words before reading a story, using each of the vocabulary words in a sentence, encourage students to use context clues to determine word meanings and giving lessons on using the dictionary to learn the meaning of new words, among others.

Text comprehension is the understanding of the meaning of what one is reading and the teaching of reading or listening comprehension focuses on at least six strategies, namely, monitoring comprehensions, using graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structure and summarizing.

Phonological awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds or syllables in spoken language. In other words, it is the process of understanding that words are composed of individual sounds or syllables and the practice of segmenting words into sounds or syllables. The ability to identify sounds or syllables in words and to separate words into sounds or syllables as well as be able to manipulate those sounds or syllables is termed as phonological awareness.

Phonics instruction is teaching children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language and must consider skills such as synthetic phonics, analytic phonics and phonics through spelling.

It should be noted, however, that most of the research done on early reading instructions and teaching practices has been conducted in developed countries where print-rich environment, physical resources and expertise to support the literacy goal are abundant. Besides, the literature focuses on contexts where

the writing system is primarily alphabetic in which the letters of the written language map into phonemes in the oral language system. In the subject under study, the writing system is alpha-syllabic where graphemes represent largely syllables and the mapping is between graphemes in the written language and syllables in the spoken language system. Mindful of these limitations, in what follows, the literacy practices of the traditional church schools and the strategies employed in teaching how to read and write will be examined in light of the above components or pillars of reading instructions with a focus on how to teach phonological awareness, phonics and reading fluency.

The curriculum and structure of the education system

The EOTC has a well-developed, well-structured and elaborated curriculum with an estimated duration of study for each course of study. The detailed fields of study and the average time of completion of each field are given in the following table. According to Yirga G. Woldeyes (2017:58), among others, the curriculum consists of 12 subjects that belong to the various schools of learning.

The following course breakdown and duration of study for each subject illustrate that the curriculum is well-thought-out and tested over a long time period.

Subject of study	*Duration of study*	*Level of study*
Nibab Bet (The School of Reading)	2 years	Primary level of education
Kidassie Bet (House of Holy Mass)	6 months	
Zema Bet (The School of Church Music)	4 years	Secondary level which is based on music and hymnody as well as dancing and movement
Zema Bet: zimare and mewasit zema	1 year	
Zema Bet: akwakwam	3 years	
Qine Bet (The School of Poetry)	5 years	College level where traditional poetry is taught
Metshaf Bet (The School of Commentaries)	4 years	University Level where literature and commentary are the focus of the study
Liqawunit (interpretation of the books of scholars and monasticism)	3 years	
Merha Ewur (mathematical computation of time)	6 months	
Yetarik Tinat (the study of history)	1 year	
Yetgbare'ed timihirt (art and handicrafts)	4 years	
Masmesker (certification or dissertation)	2 years	
Total years of study	30 years	

Source: Adopted from Imbakom Kalewold (1970); Yirga G. Woldeyes (2017)

Different scholars classified the church education system into different levels of study. Some divided it into two levels: the ordinary level that includes the School of Reading (Nibab Bet) and the House of Liturgy (Kidassie Bet)

and the advanced level that comprises the School of Music (Zema Bet), the School of Poetry (Qine Bet), and the School of Commentaries (Metsehaf Bet). Others such as Kefyalew Mehari (1999) and Mengesha Robso (2021) tried to draw a parallel between the levels of church education and that of the modern education by dividing the church education into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Quite a similar type of classification is made by Girma Amare (1967:1) and Binns (2017:169) that divides the entire education system into four levels of study: primary, secondary, college and university levels of study. Still others such as Ephrem Isaac (1971) preferred to classify it in terms of the specific type of lessons: the School of Reading (for Deacons), the School of Singing and Dancing (for Priests), the School of Creative Writing (for Scribes) and the School of Literature (for Scholars).

Within these levels of study, there are different schools of learning and each school has multiple stages and branches of learning that enable students to develop religious and secular skills and knowledge. The main schools are School of Reading (Nibab Bet), School of Music (Zema Bet), School of Poetry (Qine Bet) and School of Commentary or Books (Metsehaf Bet).

The School of Reading

The School of Reading (Nibab-Bet) also known as House of Reading focuses on the skills of reading and writing plus basic arithmetic. It is the primary level of learning where the focus is developing literacy skills mainly reading skills rather than writing and the duration of the study takes at least two years of intensive learning. The first level of study focuses on the development of literacy skills that enables the student to read and write. The usual age for a child to be admitted to the School of Reading is between 7 and 12. But the most recommended age, especially for those who will continue their studies in the higher levels of study, is five. According to our respondents, ideally a child was considered ready for learning when he/she becomes four years and four months old. A child that enters the school at the age of four or five will graduate at around the age of 35 with the highest academic qualification of *memihir* or *merigeta*.

In principle, boys and girls as well as members of all ethnic groups and members of different classes are eligible to enrol in church schools. But girls seldom join the school due to cultural perception that they are destined for household activities. There is no discrimination in admitting disabled individuals. In the monasteries visited by the researcher there have been physically challenged students.

The School of Music

The School of Music (Zema-Bet) is essentially an intermediate stage between the lower level of study and the advanced level of studies. Girma Amare (1967) labelled the school of music as secondary education in the church educational

system where students prepare themselves for the higher level of studies that involves a set of specializations in the various disciplines. Those students who want to pursue their secondary education must go to distant monasteries or churches and must be prepared to face long years of extreme privation. The core curricula in the school of music constitute church music, dancing and the beating of time, as well as the study of the collection of hymns (Deggwa). In the school of music students master the songs sung at the termination of mass (Zemare) and the commemoration services and funerals (Mewaset) as well as the art of church dancing (aquaquam) and time-beating.

The third stage of education, according to Girma Amare (1967) and Binns (2017), is the college-level education, which is offered by the School of Poetry (Qine Bet) as a pre-requisite for the higher levels of study at the university level. At this stage, students are introduced to Ge'ez grammar and prosody, translation of Ge'ez texts into Amharic, and the composition of verses. Mastery of the Ge'ez language is required in order to be able to compose Qine. The study of Qine is said to require more intense intellectual engagement in which the student has the opportunity to contemplate and relate religious values to historical, social and natural issues (Haile Gabriel Dagne, 2019:211).

The School of Commentary

The School of Commentary (Metsaf-Bet), which is labelled as the fourth stage or university level of education, constitutes all the higher levels of specializations. Those who would like to specialize in Qine will stay in the same school where they studied the college-level education – the completion of the fundamentals of Qine or poetry. Those who are endowed with a good voice and a talent for music return to the Zema School for a more specialized study of church music and dance. Those who have the inclination towards a philosophy inquiry may join the School of Commentaries and choose among the four areas of specializations. The four branches of specialization are (1) the Old Testament (known as Beluy), (2) the New Testament (Haddis), (3) the Patristic Studies (Metsehafe Liqawent) and (4) the Monastic Studies (Metsehafe Menekosat) (Girma Amare, 1967:3) and Haile Gabriel Dagne (2019:226). Haile Gabriel Dagne further describes the four branches of the School of Commentaries in the following way.

> The first type is known as Beluy. The 46 Books of the Old Testament are studied and commented upon. The second branch is the Haddis, a specialized school on the commentaries of the 35 Books of the Ethiopian New Testament. The third branch is Liqawent, which presents studies and comments on the various writings of the Church Fathers, e.g. Saint John Chrysostom, Qerlos and others. The canon law (Fetha Negest) as well as the calendar calculation (Bahre Hasab) are also studied here. The last branch of the Metsehaf Bet is the Menekosat, the School of Commentaries on monastic literature.

The church education system therefore has a syllabus, a national course of study, a set of specializations which lead to different career opportunities, and centres of excellence which issue recognized certificates to graduates of higher schools of learning (Binns, 2017:169). Since the focus of the present study is specifically on the School of Reading (Nibab Bet), the details of the practice of reading instructions in the School of Reading will be examined in the next sections. Before doing so, however, a brief presentation of the major teaching materials and textbooks used in the church schools in teaching how to read and write would be in order.

Teaching materials and textbooks

Instructional materials in church schools are limited and the learning environment is not well resourced with abundant reading materials. Due to limited resources, textbooks and reading materials are generally in short supply and the school setting is not a print-rich environment. Any of the religious texts can be selected for reading exercises but the main instructional materials for literacy instructions are the Fidel chart (the alphabet), A-bu-gi-da (a second syllabary), Melikte Yonhannes (the Apostles' syllabary), Wengele Yohannis (the gospel of St. John) and Mezmure Dawit (the Psalms of David).

The Fidel Chart

The Fidel Chart (also known as Ge'ez or Ethiopic script) is the first instructional material used for literacy instructions. The Ge'ez Fidel is an alpha-syllabary writing system consisting of 26 basic graphemes, each of which has seven forms when combined with vowels that are indicated by diacritic marks. The Fidel syllabary is a segmental writing system in which consonant-vowel sequences are written as unit. Each unit is based on a consonant grapheme where the vowel is indicated by additional diacritics. Mainly, each grapheme represents the syllables of the language, that is, a consonant-vowel combination, rather than phonemes or distinct sounds of the language as is the case in alphabetic writing system. So, unlike the alphabetic writing system, the Ethiopic script is a system that treats the syllable as the unit of representation. In such kind of alpha-syllabary writing system, consonants are the basic grapheme units and vocalization is obligatory but indicated by the use of diacritics displayed on the basic consonant graphemes.

As shown in Figure 6.1, the Amharic Fidel chart contains seven extra basic graphemes added to represent the additional sounds of the language. Amharic adopted the Ge'ez or Ethiopic script with some modifications to fit into its sound pattern. In this system, there is no capital versus small letter distinction to be learnt. Syllables are spelt as they are pronounced, and difficulties of spelling and pronunciations by and large do not occur. However, there are some extra graphemes Amharic has inherited from the Ge'ez script, which are relevant to the Ge'ez writing, but not so in writing the Amharic language.

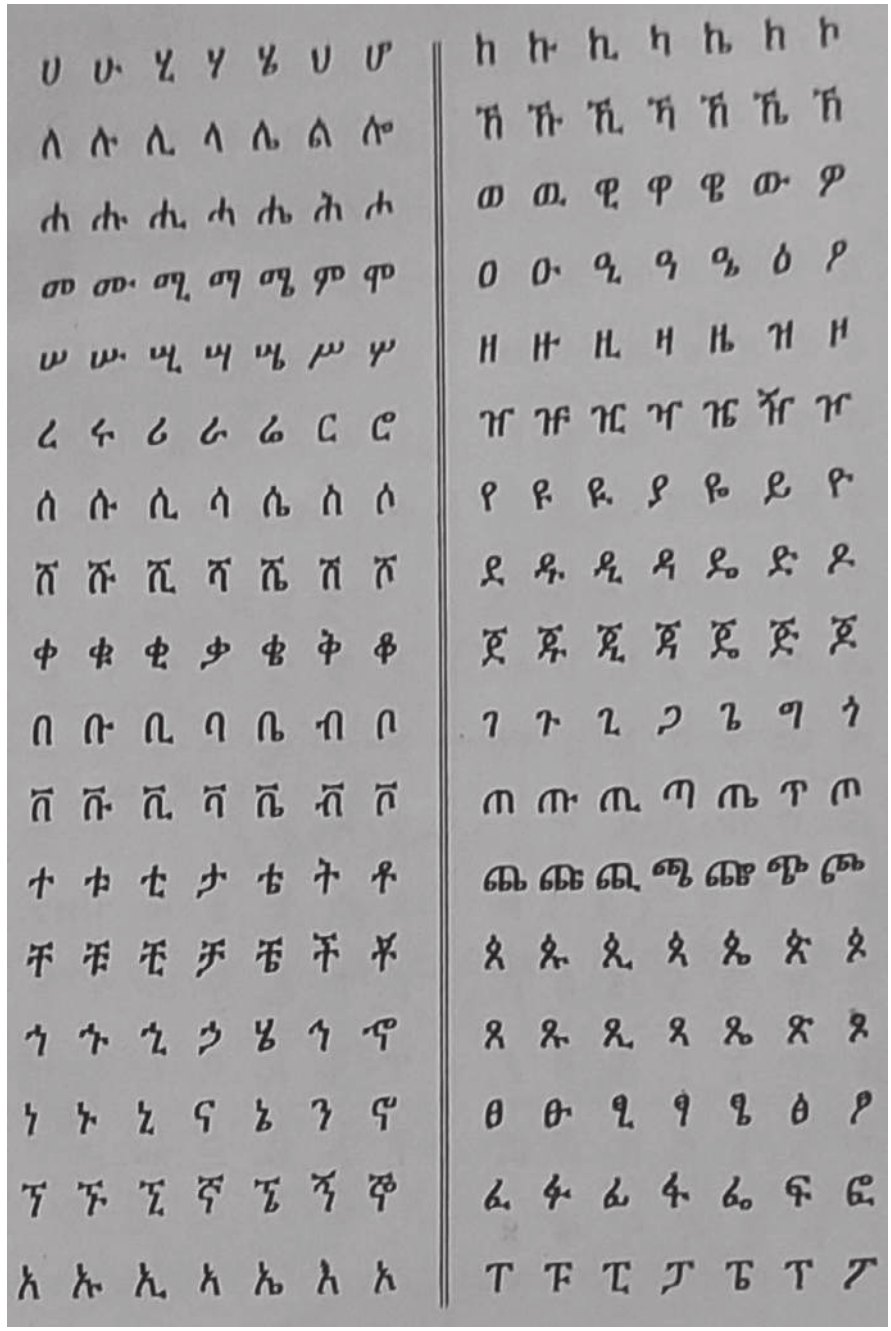

Figure 6.1: The Fidel Chart (for Amharic)

A-bu-gi-da

A-bu-gi-da is the second Fidel chart developed for literacy instructions in which the graphemes are ordered differently to help the child differentiate the individual graphemes. The number of graphemes is the same but the order of the graphemes is mixed up by changing the place of each grapheme to

help learners develop phonological awareness as well as phonics skills without recourse to sheer memorization.

Melikte Yohannes (the First Epistle of Apostle John)

The art of reading a text begins with Melikte Yohannes (the First Epistle of Apostle John) in which the learner follows the four modes of reading (see Part V) to learn how to read a text in Ge'ez language. Using this text, the child learns

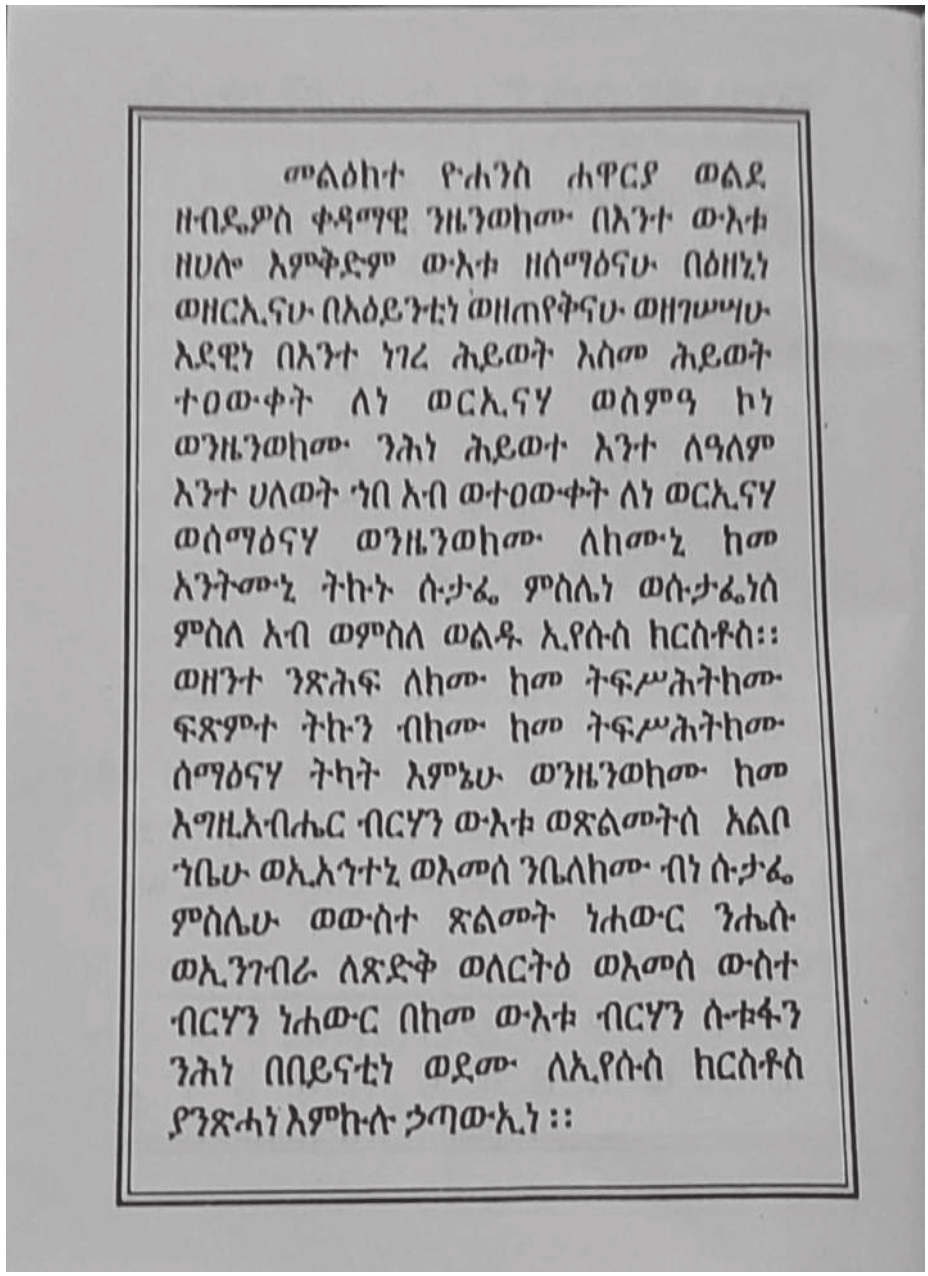
መልዕክተ ዮሐንስ ሐዋርያ ወልደ
ዘብዴዎስ ቀዳማዊ ንዜንወክሙ በእንተ ውእቱ
ዘሀሎ እምቅድም ውእቱ ዘሰማዕናሁ በዕዘኒነ
ወዘርኢናሁ በአዕይንቲነ ወዘጠየቅናሁ ወዘገሠሣሁ
እደዊነ በእንተ ነገረ ሕይወት እስመ ሕይወት
ተዐውቀት ለነ ወርኢናሃ ወስምዓ ኮነ
ወንዜንወክሙ ንሕነ ሕይወተ እንተ ለዓለም
እንተ ሀለወት ኀበ አብ ወተዐውቀት ለነ ወርኢናሃ
ወሰማዕናሃ ወንዜንወክሙ ለከሙኒ ከመ
አንትሙኒ ትኩኑ ሱታፌ ምስሌነ ወሱታፌነሰ
ምስለ አብ ወምስለ ወልዱ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ።።
ወዘንተ ንጽሕፍ ለከሙ ከመ ትፍሥሕትክሙ
ፍጽምተ ትኩን ብከሙ ከመ ትፍሥሕትክሙ
ሰማዕናሃ ትካት እምኔሁ ወንዜንወክሙ ከመ
እግዚአብሔር ብርሃን ውእቱ ወጽልመትሰ አልቦ
ኀቤሁ ወኢአኀተኒ ወእመሰ ንቤለከሙ ብነ ሱታፌ
ምስሌሁ ወውስተ ጽልመት ነሐውር ንሔሱ
ወኢንገብራ ለጽድቅ ወለርትዕ ወእመሰ ውስተ
ብርሃን ነሐውር በከመ ውእቱ ብርሃን ሱቱፋን
ንሕነ በበይናቲነ ወደሙ ለኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ
ያንጽሓነ እምኩሉ ኃጣውኢነ ::

Figure 6.2: Melikte Yohannis (Fidele Hawaria)

how to differentiate each grapheme within a word and also taught the correct pronunciation of the prosodic features of the language such as stressed and unstressed syllables at word level. Gradually, the child also learns the correct pronunciation of phrases and sentences with the right stress pattern and intonation using the same text.

Wengele Yohannes (the Gospel of St. John)

Wengele Yohannes is another major text used for further reading practices after the completion of melikte yohannes. The learner follows the same modes

Figure 6.3 Wengele Yohannis (The Gospel of St. John)

of reading employed in reading melikte yohannes but with extensive practices in reading a text.

Mezmure Dawit (the Psalms of David)

This is the most devotional book among the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Reading practice at this stage is made with particular attention to the pronunciation of the Ge'ez language both segmental and prosodic features. The Psalms of David is used for advanced reading exercises. The mastery of the reading of the Psalms of David is considered to be the conclusion of the education in the House of Reading.

Early reading instructions in the House of Reading

Learning to read at the House of Reading (Nibab Bet) begins with the Fidel Chart (the Ge'ez alphabet) that contains 182 graphemes largely representing syllables. The first stage of instruction is naming the graphemes in a loud voice by pointing to each grapheme using a straw from left to right and from top to down. The drill is repeated several times with slow and medium rhythmic dictation followed by fast counting in the same fashion. The purpose of this initial lesson has multiple purposes. The first is to develop print awareness, that is, developing the child's recognition of the rules and characteristics of the written language. Print awareness includes the child's ability to understand that words in print correspond to speech and directionality, that is, reading from left to right, top to bottom (Adams, 1990). The second purpose of the same drill is to develop alphabet awareness, which is cultivating the child's ability to recognize and name the graphemes of the Fidel in isolation. Through exposure and opportunity to experiment with the alphabet, in the process the child develops alphabet awareness. When children learn to write the graphemes of the alphabet, their name and other words, they develop an understudying of the conventions of print and written language. This is a drill meant to help students learn and recognize all the sounds and/or syllables of the language which leads to the development of phonological awareness. Children may demonstrate phonological awareness in several ways. One such way is through a child's ability to identify the number of syllables in a word or the ability to identify and manipulate syllables or combination of sounds or phonemes in spoken words.

Phonological awareness refers to a child's ability to hear, identify, manipulate and use the sounds or combination of sounds spoken in words. This includes rhyming, blending and segmenting of words. Such an oral method of teaching is called *Qutir method*, that is, learning by counting each grapheme. In other words, in order to help the child distinguish the individual syllables of the language, he is led to pronounce each grapheme from left to right and then from top to down. The purpose of such a drill in *Qutir method* of

teaching is, therefore, to develop the child's print awareness, alphabet awareness and phonological awareness which are key elements of a child's early literacy development and subsequent literacy successes.

Phonological awareness is a broader set of skills that includes parts of a spoken language such as phonemes, syllables, rhymes as well as comprehension of other qualities of speech – intonation, stress, accent and alliteration. In the context of learning reading skills in Ge'ez syllabary, recognition of consonants and vowels alone would not be sufficient to achieve reading fluency. Reading skills also include the ability to recognize the other set of phonological skills known as prosodic features. Prosody is an area of phonology that focuses on the study of rhythm, intonation, stress and related attributes to speech that are layered upon individual phonological segments. In reading, prosody refers to the ability to make oral reading sound like authentic oral speech and has been identified by reading scholars as an essential component of reading fluency (Rasinski et al., 2011:293).

The second stage of counting is called *a-bu-gi-da*, in which the graphemes of the Fidel chart are mixed up making it difficult for the student to identify them by their positions. The mixing up of the graphemes in the *a-bu-gi-da* is believed to reduce the effect of rote learning. So, a different chart of graphemes known as *a-bu-gi-da* is used to help the child distinguish the different graphemes of the Fidel and map them with the corresponding spoken sounds or combinations of sounds. Hence, the second stage of counting is related to the identification of phonics.

Phonics refers to the mapping between the graphemes of a written language and the individual sounds or syllables of a spoken language. Through the use of phonics, children are able to understand that there is a predictable connection between the units of the alphabet and spoken sounds or combinations of sounds. Phonics skills and activities are taught by way of reciting rhymes in which children learn sounds or combinations of sounds by having fun. Songs and rhymes are a fun way to have children practice phonics. Children may demonstrate their understanding of phonics by combining graphemes to form larger units of written language.

A student who could correctly identify the graphemes using the *a-bu-gi-da* chart is provided with a text from the Epistle of St. John to start the third level of reading. The pupil continues exercising the *qutir method* using the text of Melikte Yohannes until he/she distinguishes the graphemes from one another and maps them to the sound combinations each grapheme represents.

The third stage of reading instruction comprises four modes of reading: (1) Ge'ez (counting or reading syllables within words) which is the beginning of reading, (2) maggaz or net'ela nibab (reading words with slow rhythmic chanting), (3) Wurd nibab (reading with fast rhythmic chanting of each phrase) and (4) K'um nibab (fast and laud of sentences or larger syntactic structures or chunks) (cf. Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:647–665) and Haile Gabriel Dagne (2019:186–188).

(a) Ge'ez (reading syllables within words)

The first mode of reading, Ge'ez, is a drilling method according to which students start reading by simply putting graphemes together in a chanting form and read them as an isolated syllable. This could be a drill made in the form of consonant-vowel combinations such as in *ha*, *hu*, *hi*, *ha* etc. The method is a syllable-based drill which is the beginning of reading instructions.

(b) Maggaz or net'ela nibab

The second mode of reading known as maggaz or net'ela nibab is a word-level reading where students combine graphemes to make words and read the word with slow rhythmic chanting. Students repeat the same process several times for days or even months. Repetition is a commonly used strategy in reading instructions. Writing lessons and numerical studies usually begin at this stage, but this was rather optional and depends much on the interest or motivation of the teacher (Paulos Milkias, 1976:80).

(c) Wurd nibab

The third mode of reading is known as Wurd nibab where a student reads phrases and expected to master the prosodic features of the Ge'ez language such as accents, pauses and pronunciation of unstressed and stressed syllables. This is an important stage of reading that requires more time and commitment to master. It is a phrasal-level reading where text is read aloud by students in unison with the emphasis of mastering the pronunciation of the prosodic features, particularly the phrasal-level stress pattern. Reading skill is not equated with the capacity to identify the words in a text but it also involves the knowledge of the correct stress pattern that should be used at a phrase level (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:64).

(d) Qum nibaba

The fourth mode of reading instruction is Qum nibab, where the child practices reading at a faster pace but without mistakes. Reading at this stage involves fast and loud reading. It is a sentence-level of reading practice in which students are expected to master the right pattern of intonations. The child then would go on practicing reading through the use of different texts.

The fourth stage of reading, an advanced reading exercise, begins with the Psalms of David which follows a rigorous method of learning. This stage is devoted to strengthening the reading abilities of the student by providing him/her with more texts from the Gospels (Wongel) and the Book of Psalms (Mezmure Dawit) and other biblical songs. The Nibab-Bet education is concluded with the mastery of the reading of the Psalms of David. No formal

examination is required to judge the ability of the pupil since his/her progress would be followed daily and individually by the teacher and/or the tutor. When the teacher believed that the student has mastered the art of reading the Psalms of David the young would be discharged ceremonially (Haile Gabriel Dagne, 2019:191)

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the primary goal of the School of Reading is to develop the skills of reading and writing. The second goal of the School of Reading is the socialization process. In the monasteries under discussion, the socialization process takes place during evening sessions. In a kind of plenary session, students are exposed to stories, proverbs, jokes, allegorical puzzle games, manner of sitting, speaking and walking. In addition, the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the six commandments of the New Testament are explained to the students. The socialization process is to familiarize students with the various spiritual and material concepts of the society. Essentially, it is socialization to the church tradition and the school system as well as socialization to the cultural and spiritual values of the society they live in.

Very often the teaching takes place in the form of questions and answers combined with telling and retelling of traditional stories by the teacher or students. An example of this method of teaching on the Mystery of Trinity takes place in a question-and-answer method as follows (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:65):

***Q**: Who created you?*

***R**: Sellasie, (the trinity)*

***Q**: How many are Sellasie?*

***R**: One and three*

***Q**: What makes them one, and what makes them three?*

***R**: They are three in name, in task and in person. They are one in divinity, in power, in glory and in similar things of this sort they are one*

***Q**: Can you give me an example?*

***R**: the sun has shape, light and heat. But I say one sun not three.*

Reading fluency

Fluency is considered to be an essential part of reading instruction that bridges between word recognition and reading comprehension. More specifically, it is the ability to read text accurately with the correct prosody, that is, reading aloud effortlessly and with expression. Teaching the skill of reading fluency employs a wide range of methodologies and strategies and the most commonly used are teacher modelling, oral reading, guided repeated reading of texts with feedback.

Fluency-oriented reading instruction, which is designed for primary grade reading and content area reading instruction, involves teacher modelling,

oral reading of a text several times using echo-, choral-, and partner reading (Rasinski et al., 2011:297). In the church schools chanting, choral reading, and guided repeated reading of texts with feedback from the teacher or tutor are commonly used strategies in promoting fluency. The oral recitation lesson is another instructional method developed in church schools in which teachers read a text aloud while students follow along with their copy of the text.

Assisted reading fluency practice, which is defined as a student's oral reading of the text while simultaneously listening to a fluent rendering of the same text, is often performed by an adult teacher or tutor who reads with the student (Rasinski et al., 2011:300) is yet another method employed in the House of Reading and the practice includes guided repeated oral reading with feedback.

In confirmation with the tradition of the church school practices, Snow et al. (1998:110) underline the importance of assisted reading fluency practice and suggest that in order to promote fluency among their students teachers need to learn three important things. These are (1) provide repeated readings of the same material to improve fluency at early stages through different approaches, (2) extensive reading of many different texts; and (3) more reading through reading widely. As such repeated readings employ different teaching strategies in reading fluency including the following:

1 Pre-readingand rereading: providing with many opportunities to read the same passage several times increases the child's reading fluency
2 Repeatedoral reading: have students read and reread texts as they receive guidance and feedback
3 Choralreading: In choral, or unison, have students read along as a group with a fluent adult reader
4 Partnerreading: have paired students take turn reading aloud to each other
5 Modelfluent reading: first, read aloud to students; then have students read the selection
6 Readingaloud for students can increase student vocabulary. Students of all ages learn words from hearing text aloud to them.

Reading the same text several times for weeks or even months, rereading texts through the guidance and feedback from the teacher, choral reading guided by teacher modelling and reading aloud are the most commonly used strategies of the church school in teaching fluency.

Prosody and fluency

Research has shown that prosody plays an important role in reading fluency. Prosody can assist readers in constructing meaning in several ways. For instance, it can be used to emphasize certain words or mark phrase or sentence boundaries in texts; it can be used to mark a sentence as an interrogative or exclamation; or it helps the reader in segmenting or chunking text into syntactically appropriate and meaningful phrasal groupings or words (Rasinski et al.,

2011:293). Referring to reading fluency, the same authors argue that "phrasing plays an important role in oral language production and comprehension" and further states that "the ability to chunk or phrase text into syntactically appropriate and meaningful multi-word units is an important aspect of learning to read".

Prosodic reading, or reading with expression, is one of the hallmarks of the achievement of reading fluency since much of the meaning of the sentence stems from the prosodic features rather than the words themselves. Teaching the correct use of prosodic features with appropriate methodology happened to be one of the salient features of the church school system that is totally lacking in the modern schools.

Assessing reading fluency

Reading rate, as a measure of reading proficiency, has been studied since the early 20th century. Recently, however, Deno (1985) developed an approach referred to as Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) in reading, also often referred to as Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessment. This approach requires readers to read grade-level text orally and the ORF score is operationally defined as the number of words read correctly in one minute. The ORF fluency assessment has been validated through a number of studies in which it correlates significantly with other measures of reading achievement and reading comprehension and correlations ranging in magnitude from $r = .45$ to .91 for students in early grades to secondary levels (Deno, Mirkin, & Chiang, 1982, as quoted in Rasinski et al., 2011:295).

Some critics, however, argue that measures of reading rate emphasize reading speed rather than comprehension. Measures of automaticity that involve only reading rate cannot be true measures of fluency since fluency involves decoding and comprehension while reading, not simply quick word decoding (Rasinski et al., 2011:295).

Unlike word decoding, prosody or expressiveness in oral reading does not lend itself to precise quantification. Hence, qualitative rating scales need to be used to guide assessment of prosodic features. In this rating scale, a reader reads a grade-level passage while a rater listens to the reading for as little as 60 seconds. Then the rater consults the rubric or the rating scales and assigns a score that mostly closely aligns with prosodic characteristics of oral reading. Raters need to have a well-established sense of what constitutes appropriate phrasing and expressiveness in reading for the assigned grade level. It has been argued that such qualitative approach to assessing prosody is valid and appropriate for classroom uses. If this rating is used in the hands of knowledgeable teachers, they provide practitioners with tools for informing and guiding classroom instruction which allow teachers to make informal data-based instructional decisions (Rasinski et al., 2011:296).

Following this rating scales, as part of the initial study, the reading proficiency of a randomly selected ten students, who have been studying at the

House of Reading, were tested for their reading fluency in line with the rubrics of ORF assessment.

The age of the students was between 12 and 14 years. They were given both Ge'ez and Amharic texts. While the Ge'ez text is a grade-level text they are familiar with (i.e. Melikte Yohannis), the Amharic text was taken from a local newspaper. The students are equivalent to grade 2 students of the modern schools. Each student was asked to read a text for 60 seconds and rated for the word decoding as well as expression in oral reading. Those words that were read with speed, accuracy and proper expressions were counted.

The result of the reading fluency test in both languages was conducted in terms of the number of words they read correctly without mistakes per minute:

Student	*Fluency rate in Ge'ez per minute*	*Fluency rate in Amharic per minute*	*Average Fluency rate per minute*
Student 1	52	40	46
Student 2	43	29	36
Student 3	59	87	73
Student 4	55	65	60
Student 5	56	48	52
Student 6	58	60	59
Student 7	57	58	58
Student 8	52	56	54
Student 9	49	59	54
Student 10	49	58	54

This preliminary assessment gives a clue to the reading proficiency of students attending the House of Reading. Except for one (student 2), the reading rate of all students ranges between 46 and 60 words per minute. Though preliminary and not conclusive, the fluency rate of the sample students is indicative of the quality of reading instructions being given in the two monasteries under study and is in sharp contrast to the official assessment results shown in modern public schools (USAID Ethiopia, 2010, 2019). As a follow-up to this study, an in-depth assessment of the fluency rate of students attending the House of reading will be a requisite for a comprehensive understanding of the reading proficiency of students in church schools.

Conclusions: lessons to be learnt

The House of Reading teaches key skills in phonological awareness, phonics and reading fluency. In teaching how to read and write the system follows at least four stages (counting the Fidel Chart, counting A-Bu-Gi-Da, reading Melikte Yohannes and reading Wongele Yohannes and the Psalms of David). The third stage, reading Melikte Yohannes, has four modes of reading instructions, namely, Ge'ez (counting or reading each syllable within a word), Maggaz or net'ela nibab (reading words with slow rhythmic chanting), Wurd nibab (reading phrases with fast rhythmic chanting) and K'um nibab (fast and laud

reading of sentences). As such reading instruction has four interesting modes of teaching corresponding to different phonological units.

Ge'ez mode is a syllable-based instruction where pupils count each syllable within a word – a type of drill made through the Qutir method of teaching. The purpose of this drill is to develop print awareness as well as alphabet awareness (recognizing the names of graphemes in isolation) and finally develop phonological awareness. Instruction at this stage is essentially an oral practice meant to help pupils learn and recognize all the sounds and/or syllables of the language, that is, develop the ability to hear, identify, manipulate and use the units of spoken language.

Maggaz or net'ela nibab mode of teaching is a word-level instruction where pupils combine graphemes to make words and read the word with slow rhythmic chanting. In addition to rhyming, blending and segmenting words, repeating the same process several times is a strategy used in recognizing the connection between the graphemes of a written language and the individual syllables of a spoken language. In other words, this is where phonics skills are taught by way of reciting rhymes and chanting.

Wurd nibab mode is a phrasal-level instruction combined with rhythmic chanting and laud reading. This is a critical stage where students are taught the prosodic features of the Ge'ez language at phrasal level. Phonological features such as accents, pauses and pronunciation of stressed and unstressed syllables are taught at this stage of reading instruction.

K'um nibab, the fourth mode of teaching how to read and write, is a sentence-level instruction that involves fast and loud reading, where students are expected to master the right pattern of intonations as well as the ability to segment sentences into syntactically appropriate and meaningful multi-word units – which is an essential part of learning to read fluently.

The four teaching modes are expediently structured to develop reading skills in early reading instructions which includes not only recognition of consonants and vowels or syllables but also other set of phonological skills known as prosodic features. How to teach the right use of stress, intonation and rhythm has been efficiently embedded in the methods of teaching of how to read and write.

It is interesting to note that the method of teaching how to read with the correct prosodic features of the language is unique to the church school system. The method is an innovative instructional technique for teaching prosody and a lesson to be drawn by the contemporary modern schools. In the modern schools, where mother tongue languages are being used in providing reading instructions, there are quite a number of languages that exhibit complex prosodic features such as tone, stress and pitch-accent. Nonetheless, none of these languages have methodologies on how to teach the correct prosodic features.

The dominance of an oral method of teaching is a characteristic feature of the church school system for which the school has been criticized for. It goes without saying that prosody can only be mastered through repeated oral practice involving different strategies such as teacher modelling, oral

reading of a text several times using choral reading, guided repeated reading of texts with feedback from a teacher modelling appropriate aspects of fluent oral reading.

Another salient feature of the House of Reading worth mentioning is its robust strategy of socialization process in which students are familiarized with the various spiritual and material concepts of the society. Socialization takes place in the form of plenary session in the evening and involves telling stories, proverbs, jokes, allegorical puzzle games as well as manner of behaving within the church tradition, the school system and the society they live in. Schooling is not detached from the real world outside, and socialization is the process through which the knowledge, skills and values of the society had been conveyed to the next generation.

In a nutshell, this study has shown a glimpse of the indigenous learning system focusing only on the literacy practices of the School of Reading. A system of education that has been totally neglected may have something to offer to the contemporary challenges affecting the quality of primary education and early literacy competencies of children in Ethiopian schools.

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7 Teacher training, development and mentorship practices in the EOTC schools

Moges Yigezu and Binyam Sisay Mendisu

Introduction

Teachers are known to play a key and irreplaceable role to ensure the relevance and quality of education. In many countries in the Global South, the huge respect and admiration the teaching profession used to receive a few decades ago are gradually diminishing, and it has become a last resort and choice for many (Burns & Luque, 2015). In Ethiopia and the rest of the continent, the quality of teacher education and practice has been moving from one crisis into another, and currently learning outcomes are at their historic low (cf. USAID Ethiopia, 2019). It has been a few years since some studies such as Tekeste Negash (2006) have raised a red flag about the ongoing crisis in the education system in Ethiopia leading to a stage in which it is on the 'brink of collapse'. At the backdrop of such grim realities on the ground, education reform agenda are not only expected to work to improve existing structures and systems but also look for new and bold inspirations that help us in re-defining and re-imagining education and the role of teachers. A potential and promising source of such inspiration can be found when one pays closer attention to alternative, local and indigenous knowledge and education systems that have existed in local communities and regions for years.

In Ethiopia, for instance, indigenous schools and education systems existed for millennia linked to religious institutions such as the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and Muslim-based learning institutions. In particular, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church (EOTC) has practiced in its various monasteries and churches a well-structured and functioning education system, with a strong, lifelong and high-quality teacher training and mentorship component for hundreds of years. Considering the retrieval of African indigenous knowledge systems, what lessons can be drawn today from these locally based and indigenous education systems? This study attempts to shed light on the teacher education program and mentorship scheme of the EOTC schools in Ethiopia. It makes an effort to describe the overall system of the selection, training and mentoring of a teacher in an integrated fashion. Moreover, it aims to tease out the various ways in which teaching and the teaching profession are theoretically and ideologically conceptualized, and institutionalized in EOTC educational systems.

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Teaching in the EOTC is very often criticized for placing quite a lot of emphasis on obedience and subservience to authority as well as on emulation as a method of teaching particularly in the lower grades. The teaching given at the highest levels, however, encourages independence of thought, for example, in *Qene* education where a good deal of learning takes place through group discussions and criticizing compositions of a given theme. The more educated the students are, the less conformist they are expected to become. In terms of teacher-pupil relationships, the instructor simultaneously takes the role of parent and of the teacher. S/he is responsible for teaching them what is in the books and also helping them to cultivate the essential virtues of the good person – deep spirituality, honesty, obedience, politeness and so on, and s/he does this by being an example to the students. Such kind of close teacher-pupil relation is gradually disappearing in modern schools due to the larger number of students assigned to a single teacher where the teacher in modern schools is in no position to inspire, guide and counsel them.

Teacher socialization takes a central place in the whole teacher education and development process of student teachers in EOTC traditional schools. Teacher socialization is defined as a process in which 'people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge – in short the culture-current in groups to which they are, or seek to become a member' (Merton and Kendall, 1957:287, as quoted in Staton-Spicer & Darling, 1987). It has been noted that there is a continuous, regular and close follow-up of student teachers in order to familiarize them gradually to the role and organizational culture and values of becoming a teacher. What is special about it is that teacher socialization is seamlessly embedded and integrated in every step and stage of student preparation and development. It is quite interesting that unlike currently available models of teacher education in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the Global South, the EOTC traditional schools give particular emphasis to teacher socialization as a crucial component of teacher education and preparedness.

According to Staton-Spicer and Darling (1987), there are two models of teacher socialization, namely functionalist and dialectical models. While functionalist models give special attention to preparing and guiding the student teacher, dialectical models provide more room for student-teacher's agency to negotiate and participate in the transaction of knowledge. Teacher education in the early stage of EOTC takes mainly a functionalist model, and there is a lot of focus on students to conform and abide by the rules and values of being a teacher. However as the process of teacher development moves to higher levels, it leaves more room for dialectical approaches in which interactions take center stage and individual creativities are given more space and are appreciated.

Several studies show that teacher motivation is directly associated with student's learning outcome and achievement, thereby quality of education (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011). According to Crehan (2016), the rapid and ambitious move to expand education over the last few decades has

contributed to the unintended consequence of lowering "the status and motivation of teachers," with some even discussing of a looming "teacher motivation crisis" across Africa. As the continent of Africa is going through a teacher motivation crisis mainly driven by the lack of enough extrinsic factors for the professionals, we believe there is a lesson or two that can be drawn from traditional school systems such as EOTC that mainly use intrinsic motivation factors. Teacher education in EOTC mainly uses spiritual rewards and being at the service of others, and all the respect that comes with it as its main source to motivate teachers. Even if the two school systems are operating in different set of contexts, there is so much one can learn from traditional schools systems and the ways in which they motivate teachers.

This study examines closely the teacher training and mentorship schemes of selected EOTC schools in order to understand their conceptual underpinnings and practical implementations. The study will be mainly a qualitative study, including review of important documents, field visits to two monasteries, namely *Zara Mihcael* and *Eyesus* in South Gondar, and in-depth interview made with teachers and students.

EOTC schools

Teaching profession in EOTC schools

Teaching as a profession in Ethiopia must have started early on during the 5th century (Girma Amare, 1967; Binns, 2017; Haile Gabriel Dagne, 2019) through the monastic tradition established by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). The period that stretches from the 5th century up to the 13th century has been considered as the golden age in the history of the EOC. During this period, the church enjoyed the translation of several spiritual books into Ge'ez[1] anguage, witnessed the construction of many monolithic churches that paved the way for the flourishing of indigenous church schools and monasteries (EOC, 2000; Bahiru Zewdie, 1998; Mengesha Robso, 2021). The same period had also observed the revival of Ge'ez literature through the translation of different books that spread Christianity to the masses.

Teaching as a profession must have widely advanced with the expansion of Christianity when several liturgical books were translated from Greek, Arabic to Ge'ez since 300 AD. With the expansion of Christianity and the upsurge of churches in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, the EOTC established an education system that aimed at training the clergy and introducing the various religious books translated into Ge'ez. Those who were involved in disseminating the newly translated religious books to the clergy were used to be called teachers (*memihiran*) and are still called by this name.

Binns (2017:163) notes that "the education system of the EOC is claimed to be one of the oldest systems of learning in the world and it is still widely taught at schools attached to churches and monasteries throughout Ethiopia". This education system secured a remarkable continuity that has lasted over

seventeen centuries and provided the only schools in the Christian highlands of Ethiopia for centuries (Haile Gabriel Dagne, 1970). Girma Amare (1967:1) upholds that the EOC "has developed an educational system comparable in its elaborateness to that of the Hebrew, Greek, or Chinese systems".

Some of the works of scholars which were produced between the 14th and 17th centuries indicate the high level of education that was achieved at the time (Haile Gabriel Dagne, 1970:193). Some of the eminent products of this tradition include Aba Bahrey, the author of the history of Oromo around 1600, who was a member of Birbir Monastery in the south. Another notable product of the church school system was the philosopher Ze'ra Ya'eqob (1600–93), who taught in the monasteries of northern Ethiopia.

Since 1800, however, Catholic and Protestant missionaries started preaching their respective versions of Christianity, and began teaching reading and writing skills along with religious education. There were some Catholic and Protestant preachers who used to teach some arithmetic, geography, history and the Amharic language to their followers; later on after 1900 some of these missionaries opened modern schools and officially joined the teaching profession.

On the surface, the Church education system seems to be dedicated only to the task of propagating the faith and preparing young men for the services of the church as deacons, priests, scribes and so on. Nevertheless, underneath this surface there is a complex and rich structure of education that has been providing a pool of educated men for the service of the state Girma Amare (1967:4), Ayenachew (2017:11). In what follows, we shall briefly outline the structure and content of the curriculum as well as its methods of teaching employed in the various church schools.

Church education: structure, content and methods

The EOTC education system has a well-developed curriculum, textbooks and method of instruction. The curricula can generally be divided into two levels of study that comprise the ordinary (or primary level) and advanced (or higher) level of studies. Some writers tried to draw a parallel between stages of the church education and modern/Western education. For instance, Ephrem Issac (1971:243–247), as quoted in Andargachew A. Woldegiyorgis (2017:12), classified the curricula into four distinct schools with specific types of lessons in each: the School of Reading (for Deacons), the School of Singing and Dancing (for Priests), the School of Creative Writing (for Scribes) and the School of Literature (for Scholars).

Other scholars such as Kefyalew Mahari (1999) and Mengesha Robso (2021) divided the education system into first stage (primary school), intermediate stage (secondary school) and the third stage (higher education). Binns (2017:169), on the other hand, came up with a four-way division of the level of education: the primary level of reading; the secondary level, which is based on music and hymnody; the college level, which focuses on traditional poetry;

and finally the university level of literature and commentary. The total years of study in these four stages is between 24 and 30 years, and each school has multiple stages and branches of learning that enable students to develop religious and secular skills and knowledge (Imbakom Kalewold, 1970; Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017).

The primary level of reading – Nibab Bet (House of Reading)

The primary level is usually a one-teacher school with a one-room building or *tukul* house in or near the church compound; sometimes education can be conducted under the shade of a tree. A Nibab Bet can be housed in the compound of every church; churches belonging to the rural community ran only the Nibaba Bet. Historically, the courts of the kings and higher politico-military leaders kept a Nibab Bet in their compounds until the first half of the 20th century. Today, most churches maintained at least the basic form of such schools, while advanced studies – scholarship and research – are carried out at certain long-standing centers, mostly in the Northern parts of the country. The teacher in these schools could be a priest or *debtera* – a graduate of higher learning.

The House of Reading is where children approximately between 5 and 12 years study the basics, and the instruction process has four stages (Ayenachew A. Woldegiyirgis, 2017:12). The first stage is the mastery of Fidel, the Ethiopian alphabet with 231 characters – an alpha-syllabic writing system containing 33 letters with seven variations each. The second stage called Fidel Hawaria (the Apostles Syllabary), which requires the reading of the first chapter of the first epistle general of St. John in Ge'ez. The third stage, called Gabata-Hawaria, is learning by heart of parts of the New Testament and the Apostles Creed. These are read aloud by pupils in unison to the right pronunciation and intonation. The fourth stage in the School of Reading is called Dawit, which is the accurate recital of the Psalms. In the House of Reading, there is more emphasis on reading than writing. Graduation from the House of Reading is celebrated with feasts.

As the education in House of Reading focuses on basic literacy and arithmetic for many the end of the House of Reading is the end of formal education. Most of the students complete their education at the primary level focused on the skills of reading and translation. These are likely to become deacons and priests and hold lower-level jobs in the hierarchy of the church.

The secondary level – the House of Music and Hymnody (Zema-Bet)

The House of Music or Zema Bet is the place where the church's liturgy is taught and the student learns to take part in the singing and dancing of the church's liturgy (Binns, 2017:171). Zema is a general term for the music and hymns of the church. Within Zema, there are several parts, and these can be studied at different levels and with different aims in mind. Those who want to become deacons and priests briefly attend the Zema Bet (the Mass or House of

Liturgy – Training of the Alter Priest). However, those who would like to specialize in Qiddase, the horologium, become Qiddase teachers after attending a recognized Qiddase school of higher learning. Completing a short course of study at the Qiddase bet is sufficient to be ordained as a priest – as a result, the clergy in Ethiopia have usually achieved only a basic level of education (Binns, 2017:172). The learning at Qiddase School is brief since attendance of higher education was not required to be ordained as an alter priest. The functions of the alter priest were limited to carrying out the rituals of the mass.

The House of Music and Hymnody (Zema-Bet) is also where students are taught how to chant in church services including the study of Deggwa (Musical Composition of the Ethiopian Church); Zemare and Mewaset (Eucharist Songs and Songs for commemorations and funerals, respectively); and Qeddase (general liturgy) as well as Aquaquam, the rhythmic movement, dance or style of singing (literally meaning posture, manner of standing or balancing) (Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis, 2017:13). To become a priest, one is required to master Qiddase and have a general knowledge of church music or melody.

The college level – school of poetry – Qine Bet (the house of poetry)

The completion of the fundamentals of Qine constitute college education, according to Girma Amare (1967:3), and the focus of the Qine school is introducing the grammar of the Ge'ez, the translation of Ge'ez texts into Amharic and the composition of verses. This is a kind of preparatory school for the higher level of study where students specialize in different subjects. Those who wish to specialize in Qine remain in the Qine School or move to a similar school of greater reputation. The philosophically inclined join a House of Books. While those endowed with a good voice and a talent for music return to the Zema School for a more extensive and specialized study of Church music and dance (Girma Amare, 1967:3).

A graduate of this school, a Scribe, is expected to be not only a copyist but also a poet and composer in his own right. A good knowledge of the Bible and the religious history of Ethiopia are also crucial. At the best-known schools of northern Ethiopia, philosophy is also taught (Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis, 2017:14).

The university level – the School of Literature and Commentary

This level also known as Matshaf Bet or House of Books is the highest level of the Ethiopian church education system. For a student who joins the School of Literature and Commentary there are four areas of specialization: the Old Testament, the New Testament, Dogma and Philosophy as well as Astrology. Specializations in a particular field must be preceded by a study, both broad and deep, of all aspects of the church's teaching, music, poetry and history (Girma Amare, 1967). Scholars of Matshaf Bet used to have exclusive custody of the Fetha-Negast, the major Ethiopian code of law. Furthermore, Tarike-Negest (monarchic history), Kibre-Negest (Glory of the Kings) and world

history texts such as Josppon's/Janson's History of the Jews, Johannes Madabba's writings on history of the world up to Islamic expansion into Egypt and other historical tales were studied (Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis, 2017:15).

The higher schools of learning produced mass of Debteras or graduates of higher school religious scholars serving at different church functions and leadership positions as well teachers qualified to teach at the schools of higher learning, corresponding to a professor Teshome Wagaw (1990) as quoted in Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis (2017:12).

The students

A young person who completed the House of Reading could hardly get higher education because higher learning centers are usually not available in the villages. It is, therefore, a tradition for a student who would like to attend higher schools to secretly depart from his parents' home at adolescent age and join higher schools of learning – living the life of a "wondering student" nicknamed as "yekolo temari". Hence, students travel long distances in search of the center of higher learning in line with their interests. Students choose to join a given school on the basis of the reputation of the teachers which puts the teacher at the center of learning rather than the particular church school or monastery. The migration factor, where students from different parts of the country travel to these centers of higher learning, is a characteristic feature of the education system of the church.

Besides, students are self-sponsored and no support is provided by the church in terms of subsistence or any other provision. But, as per tradition, villagers around the monastic schools felt obliged to support students with food items. So basically education is community sponsored and students are responsible to build a hut from grass, wood and mud within the compound of the monastery which serves as student dormitories. Lodging presents less of a difficulty for students because, by tradition, students or would-be students of any one church school do have the privilege of asking for and receiving accommodation; they are also rewarded with a hospitable environment upon arrival (Setargew Kenaw, 2004:13). The student is left alone to live a life with hard conditions by limiting his needs to modest provisions he gets by begging from homesteads near the school or serving the church or working as a casual laborer.

The teachers

In the church tradition, there are influential group of scholars who are graduates of the higher schools of learning, called by a generic name Deberas. The Debteras are church scholars who studied at a church school at high level usually having completed zema, aquaquam and qine bet. The Debteras have a reputation for scholarship; they are the persons who have absorbed and know the church tradition. They are those who hold the tradition, perform it during

liturgical celebration and pass it on to those who come to learn it (Binns, 2017:190). Hence, they are the teachers who specialize in the various sub-disciplines of the church education system.

Debtera is a general term given to all those who have completed one of the higher schools of the church and recognized by extensive knowledge of patristic and biblical scriptures, church music, qine poetry, state and canon laws. Debteras carry different titles:

- SomeDebteras have devoted their lives in teaching in monastic schools.
- Afew of them contributed in composing or translating religious works in Ge'ez.
- Someothers have written the annals and chronicles of the rulers, and some history books.
- Thereare also Debteras who contributed to the rise of Amharic literature since the 19th century.

For those who have devoted their lives in teaching, their role as teachers is not only to nurture the spiritual growth of the students but to discipline them as well (Teshome Wagaw, 1990; Haile Gabriel Dagne, 2015). Teachers, on the one hand, impart knowledge, skill and attitudes from the realms of the objective world to their pupils, and on the other, they administer disciplinary measures (at least at the early levels) upon any infractions of rules and regulations. In effect one of the defining characteristics of the Ethiopian traditional education is a vertical relationship between the teacher and the students where the teacher has unchallenged authority over the student, and the student is required to address the teacher as *yeneta* (equivalent of master). The teacher is feared and revered (Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis, 2017:18–19).

Qualification: teacher preparation and development

The making of the profession of *memehir* (a teacher) requires a lifelong study, and those who aspire to be a teacher in higher schools of learning must join the House of Commentaries (House of Books) where they learn the traditions of the church, theology, church history and law, among others. The title "*memehir*" literally means "teacher" or "professor" and is only conferred upon an individual who successfully completed the highest level of education with specialization in one or two of the disciplines. A *memehir* enjoys high prestige as a scholar and can also take a high post in the church hierarchy such as the head of a monastery (Gedam) or a large church (Debir).

In the church schools, there is a well-structured syllabus for all sub-disciplines, a national course of study that takes between 24 and 30 years of study to reach the highest level of scholarship and a set of specializations which leads to different career opportunities. There are also centers of accreditation for each of the disciplines, which will issue papers as proof of the abilities in the

chosen area of specialization that qualifies him to teach at any of the monasteries or establish his own Chair in one of the churches (Binns, 2017:169).

In order to ensure the quality of its graduates every school of higher learning follows strict and rigorous procedures in the admission of new students, in carrying out day-to-day academic administrative routines as well as in follow-up and assessment mechanisms.

Admission

In order to recruit the future generation of scholars and teachers, the church education system follows a rigorous, well-structured and transparent system although admission criteria may vary depending on the nature of the study. Generally, those who aspire to join the higher schools of learning have to sit for the entrance examination and must pass the oral examination prepared by a committee comprised of established scholars. For instance, in one school of higher learning, Bethlehem-Ethiopia Monastery in South Gondar Region, which is a center of excellence for Deguwa teaching in the House of Music, passing an oral entrance examination is compulsory (Petros Tibebu & Marew Alemu, 2022). Whereas the entrance requirements for Qine Bet (the House of Poetry) are the successful completion of the studies in elementary and intermediate levels of education such as having solid background in the School of Music (Atale Tilahun, 2021:16).

Academic management

Academic management is participatory and appointment is based on election of the right candidate. As a tradition, the school of higher learning is managed by the Chair of the school who would be elected by the teachers and appointed by the church. The Chair assumes the position until he dies or becomes incapacitated due to health or other problems. He is in charge of all academic activities. The Dean of Students is also elected from the student body and represents students in the management and is in charge of the day-to-day administrative routines of the students. It is, however, needless to say that the academic governance is highly hierarchical, and the Chair is the highest decision maker of the school.

Graduation

Before graduation, there is an exit-exam, and in order to graduate and certified as a qualified teacher (to be a *merigeta*) one has to pass the exam successfully. A student can apply to sit for the final examination or the exam can be initiated by his teacher. A successful candidate will be given a written proof that he has completed his studies in the given area of specialization. But academic excellence alone does not qualify someone to be a graduate of those schools of learning.

Promotions and recognitions are based not only on academic achievements and passing of exams but also on other ethical qualities such as honesty and personal integrity are taken into account in assessing students and would-be teachers or graduates in general. This is an indication that moral and ethical education is given high importance in the education system and considered as an integral part of the assessment of graduates of a particular school.

The student will, therefore, be formally evaluated on moral grounds – whether he has required discipline and integrity as a learned person of high standard. As a requirement to graduation, the Dean of Students and the senior instructors must give their assessment on the moral discipline and ethical behavior of the graduate and recommend him for graduation.

Assessment

The major assessment methods employed in Zema-Bet education are oral reflection and performance-based assessments (Atale Tilahun & Solomon Mesele, 2022:18). Routinely, learners are evaluated based on their day-to-day activities, whereas written exam is very rarely used in Church schools (Woube Kassaye, 2018). The assessment methods of Qine education are mainly oral reflection, and they rarely use written exams; students are measured based on the quality of their Qine and the composition of verses (Atale Tilahun, 2021:18).

The pace of learning is assumed to be personal and relative to the individual learner, with regard to what is to be learned as well as when it is learned. Whereas assessment is based on the content of the curriculum in which the emphasis is in evaluating content-based knowledge instead of evaluating for labeling or grading purposes. Evaluation is through continuous informal assessment that the teacher and his assistants gather and interpret specific pieces of information about students' learning (Mengesha Robso, 2021:4157).

Assistantship – the concept of mentorship

The method of teaching in general and the teacher preparation and development practices in particular are supported by a cadre of assistants who support the teacher. Mentorship serves as a kind of internship or practicum in training the future generation of teachers. It is one of the salient features of the church school that is methodically integrated into the system to ensure the quality of education and the quality of the training of teachers.

There are different types of assistantships and learning methods employed in the church schools depending on the type of specializations. The most common type is where the more advanced students teach the less advanced ones as a compulsory approach. In the monasteries we visited, an advanced student is obliged to teach and follow up at least three junior students, while the teacher attends to the advanced students periodically checks on the progress of the junior students.

The second type of mentorship is a form of co-teaching executed by one of the students in delivering a lesson in the classroom. Petros Tibebu and Marew Alemu (2022:10) observe that in Bethlehem-Ethiopia monastery the teaching-learning system is organized in a three-way interaction between the teacher, the co-teacher who leads and coordinates the interaction between the teacher and the rest of the students within the classroom. The lesson for the day is customarily introduced by the co-teacher who brings the original *Deggwa* book (the reference book or the textbook for teaching hymns) to the classroom. While the co-teacher is leading the lesson for the day, the teacher carefully listens to the interaction between the assistant and the rest of the students and gives corrections whenever necessary. Hence, there is a one-to-one interaction between the co-teacher and the teacher on the one hand and a one-to-many interaction between the co-teacher and the rest of the students. This type of assistantship goes in turn and every student has the chance to be an assistant for the day.

The third type of training technique is the internship method where students give service in nearby churches, and in so doing they learn from the scholars who are regularly providing the services (Petros Tibebu & Marew Alemu, 2022:10).

Livelihood of teachers and students

Traditionally, teachers are not paid at all but live on what the church community could offer in terms of subsistence. The underlying principle is a teacher is not paid for his teaching services, as he cannot market the words of God.

Before the 1974 Revolution, some teachers owned land allotted or endowed for the chair of the school as *maderiya* (land for substance). Community members usually till such lands for the teacher. Since 1974, churches have lost this right to farmers – and the central church administration introduced budget allocated as salary for some of the churches.

In the majority of cases, teaching in church schools that have been established in several monasteries is a free service. In the monasteries of Zara-Michael and Eyesus we visited, the teachers are not paid. The chair of the school at Zara-Michael, Yenta Tibebu, who passed away in 2021, has never been paid for the service he provided for over 60 years as the Chair of the school and the head of the monastery where he had trained hundreds of church scholars. In the church schools located in some big cities such as Gondar, however, some teachers were reported to have been paid a salary from the church for their services (Binns, 2017:243). But this does not seem to be the norm in the monasteries and church schools located in remote areas.

The life of the students happened to be full of challenges as they are on their own, supporting themselves. By and large, the livelihood of students is reliant on begging for food from the neighboring homesteads. Setargew

Kenaw (2004:115–116) describes the life of students in the monasteries he visited in Gojjam and Gondar regions:

> Almost every day, students go out and collect food from homesteads near their school. There has been a strong relationship between church schools and surrounding communities. Due to the immense influence that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in central and northern parts of the country, people feel obliged and responsible for church schools. On their part, students as well as their teachers rely on the communities around schools for their food. In this regard, there is a traditional arrangement that church schools create with households: a certain village or quarter that neighbors a school will be divided between students. In other words, a given student is assigned to a group of households for his subsistence.

The author further notes that there is a long-standing tradition where schools establish good relationships with surrounding communities, and these communities are expected to supply food to students as part of their moral and religious obligations.

What we have observed in the schools of Zara-Michael and Eyesus monasteries in South Gondar is comparable. Begging is not something that takes place arbitrarily, but students are divided between the surrounding villages and homesteads in order to distribute the burden among the members of the communities and avoid overlap among the students when they go out in search of their daily food. Members of the communities are aware of these arrangements and voluntarily support students as well as teachers in the provision of their subsistence. An interesting point worth mentioning is the students solicit food not only for themselves but also for their respective teachers. The teachers do not go out in search of food but stay at their home and students share the food they received from the nearby homesteads with their teachers. Generally, there is a painstaking effort made by both teachers and students in obtaining their daily bread. According to the respondents, some members of the surrounding communities, as part of their religious duties, go beyond providing food and give additional support to teachers by donating clothes, medicines and other supplies.

By and large, at least in the two monasteries we visited, the provision of church education in general and the livelihood of teachers and students in particular are community-sponsored. There is a tacit agreement between the school and the surrounding communities in backing the monasteries and churches in their endeavors of running the education system. In this sense, it does not seem to be appropriate to call it 'begging' in the literal sense; it is more of a partnership established between the school and the communities surrounding the monasteries.

Generally the life of students and teachers is not an easy one. Most students attending church schools come from very distant areas, facing various kinds

of sufferings on their way, and sustain themselves on a bare minimum provision, and teachers (who are mostly monks) provide a free lifelong service to the school. A casual observer could easily realize how students and teachers endure a hard life and undergo lots of privations. Given that students and teachers operate under such tough and trying circumstances, one may wonder what really motivates students and teachers to choose such a life and a professional career. This is the next topic of discussion.

Sources of motivation

Motivation is generally viewed as the energy or drive that moves people to do something by nature. It has to do with the direction and magnitude of human behavior that "specifies the reason why people decide to do something and how long they are willing to sustain the effort and how hard they are going to pursue it" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Ofoegbu (2004) recognizes motivation as having two dimensions – intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic motivations are essentially linked to personal variables such as attachment to certain values and it is the self-applied feeling that comes from the direct relationship between the person undertaking the task and the task itself. This is usually from within and reflects the love and appreciation of the duty towards a certain goal or satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation refers to the importance and status given to a profession, such as material reward, social acceptance, status accorded to the profession and job security.

Historically, the propensity for joining the various church schools was more of an extrinsic motivation. Children of the clergy, who utilized church land, usually join such schools to become a deacon or a priest in order to retain the church land in the hands of the family or acquire a new land. Before the 1974 revolution, priesthood had been attractive to tenants and landless peasants because the office entitled them to possession of *semon* land attached to the service of the church. Some say that the adventurous life of a wandering student about whom much was spoken and fabulous stories were told in the villages drove young men to join the life of a wandering student. But since the second half of the 20th century the institution of the wandering student has been declining – ever since the church elite lost its traditional status in the state structure to graduates of modern schools.

Since the second half the 20th century, modern theological colleges and universities were established. Holy Trinity Theological University founded in 1950s trains church scholars by combining traditional studies with the broader curriculum demanded by the modern world – tries to bridge the transition. Nonetheless, in the monasteries of Zara-Michael and Eyesus in south Gondar, teaching in the traditional way has been going on at full scale by admitting the maximum number of students the schools can accommodate.

Setargew Kenaw (2004:113) argues that the motivating factor is rather the quest for knowledge. It is the value students attach to education and to scholarship that stimulates them to be committed and dedicated to their education

even under extremely severe situations. He maintains, "The type and extent of the hardships that students have to deal with in order to reach their destination represent . . . a sort of trial of devotion to scholarship".

Another intrinsic motivating factor is the centrality of a teacher in the church school system. The number of students joining a particular school depends on the fame of the teacher – the scholar is the point of reference, not the particular school per se. Hence, primarily students are motivated by the quality of education they expect to obtain and the kind of longing they nourish to be taught by a renowned teacher (Setargew Kenaw, 2004:113).

Some students in the Zema School insisted that the incentive and inspiration for learning in the School of Music and Hymnody are motivated by intrinsic rather than extrinsic values and further argued that following Zema education cannot be done without intrinsic motivation as there are no immediate external benefits and rewards to be obtained as a result.

From the teachers' perspective, teaching in the monasteries is considered to be sacred, just as prayer is. So, teaching or transmitting knowledge to one's successor is considered to be a religious and moral obligation to many teachers – which is a strong intrinsic motivational factor.

Extrinsic motivations are also mentioned by some of our respondents such as aspiring for a high position in the church hierarchy upon graduation. Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis (2017:17) states that graduation from the schools of higher learning is considered a means of upward social mobility as "educated elites in the church and state structure enjoy position of privilege as opposed to the rest of the population who are mostly peasants or soldiers". It appears that the chance for upward social mobility is limited to a few privileged ones. Those scholars teaching in the monasteries for free must have regarded the profession as a moral duty that brought its own intrinsic reward.

Teacher-pupil relationships

The teacher takes the double role of being a parent and a teacher. He is responsible for teaching them what is in the books and also helping them to cultivate the essential virtues of the good man. The teacher does this by being an example to his students and through his daily contacts he encourages his students to emulate him (Girma Amare, 1967:8).

The bond between the student and the teacher is so deep that they act as families. Binns (2017:146) describes such an affectionate relationship in the following way: "he (the teacher) accepted them to the school and he cares for them, assesses their progress and acts as a father to them throughout their time at the school". The teacher is, therefore, in a position to inspire, guide and counsel his students. Such kind of close teacher-pupil relation is gradually disappearing in modern schools due to the larger number of students assigned to a single teacher.

Conclusions: lessons to be drawn

In the church schools, the quality of teachers is given high importance – it is considered as a lifelong learning. Teaching as a profession is highly regarded and respected and largely practiced as a result of intrinsic values attached to it. So, teachers in church schools are intrinsically motivated and undertake the task of teaching and coaching for the satisfaction it provides or for the feeling of accomplishment. The undervalued status of the teaching profession by society in modern-day schools, which is conceived as a major demotivating factor, is not the characteristic of the church schools.

The extensive use of assistantship or mentorship scheme has served two purposes: (1) it is used as an integrated teacher training scheme where teachers pass through a rigorous preparation and development, and (2) the teaching-learning process is consistently supported by a cadre of assistant teachers thereby contributes in ensuring the quality of education. In doing so, the system employs different mentorship schemes including involving students as co-teachers in the classroom delivery, assigning students as assistants in teaching and coaching junior students and assigning them for internship in providing church services to the community. Absence of mentorship schemes for novice teachers joining the teaching profession and the use of untrained teachers in modern schools are in sharp contrast to the teacher training and preparation practiced in the church school system.

The teacher in church schools simultaneously takes the role of the parents and of the teacher. He has the chance to coach, inspire, guide and counsel his students, a practice vanishing in modern schools due to the large number of students a teacher has to handle in a classroom. Teachers in the church schools have the duty to prepare their successors. Transmitting their knowledge to the next generation of scholars and coaching them is considered to be part of their religious and moral responsibility.

Promotions and recognitions not only are based on academic achievements and passing of exams but take into account ethical qualities such as honesty and personal integrity. In church schools moral education constitutes a major part of the education of the student. The cooperative learning scheme that directly involves the learner, the group discussion method that provides opportunity for participation and the co-teaching technique that gives the learner internship opportunity make the teaching-learning process more so practical and engaging (Mengesha Robso, 2021; Ayenachew A. Woldegiyorgis, 2017); and at the higher level of studies a good deal of learning takes place through discussion groups and the criticism of composition in a given theme (Girma Amare, 1967:3). Kyrincou (1998:91) observes that cooperative activities are very important in assessment method because they enable pupils to obtain greater insight into the conduct of learning through observing the performance of their peers and sharing procedures and strategies.

Education in the church school system is relevant and practical and is not detached from the reality. Teaching practice in the EOTC has immediate

application to practical life. Schooling is not a make-belief that bears little resemblance to the real world outside, and the knowledge, skills and values that were imparted were relevant to the socio-economic activities of an individual. Whatever the specialization of the student and degree of mastery of his subject may be, the student can effectively utilize what he has learned in the service of the society and may serve as a deacon, as a teacher, as a scribe, as an advisor and as a civil servant. Unlike in modern education, a lesson to be learned regarding the relevance and practicality of education, according to Girma Amare (1967:10), is whatever is taught in the church schools had some cash value to the society outside.

Note

1 Ge'ez is an ancient language widely used in the Axumite Kingdom between 4th and 9th centuries. It has seized to be spoken sometime between 9th and 12th centuries but remains the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.

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Part 3

Language development

Instructional and pedagogical relevance

8 Metaphor as a pedagogical tool in Anywaa

Okello Ojhu Ogud and Baye Yimam

Introduction: background of the study

In the traditional approach, metaphor was thought of as an aesthetic and rhetoric device in language use. According to Lazar (1996), the term 'metaphor' derives from the Greek word *meta* 'change' and *pherein* 'to carry to another'. Based on these etymological roots, metaphor can be defined as carrying meaning of one object to another object. Briefly, in the traditional approach, metaphor use is limited to talented people like poets, singers, playwrights, writers and critics. However, since Lakoff and Johnson (1980), this style-based use of metaphor has been disproved. Metaphor is now understood as a cognitive device with language as its realization. As a cognitive device, metaphor is pervasive in human life. Language is metaphorical, because it expresses conceptual system, which governs our everyday speech, thought and actions (Wen-juan & Hong-bo, 2010:42; Mitchell, 2014:75). One area where language serves as a metaphorical manifestation of the conceptual system is in education, where it serves as a pedagogical device in the mapping between abstract concepts and concrete objects (Lazar, 1996). A study of metaphor as a pedagogical tool in Anywaa for lower-primary grades is worth doing for subjects like mathematics, language and environmental science, where issues of calculation, time, tense, aspect and emotions are presented to learners in metaphorical terms.

Ethiopia is very rich in linguistic diversity, cultural resources and sources of knowledge but teachers' knowledge and skill to put the indigenous knowledge into practice are inadequate; teacher trainings have also been ineffective and challenging in Ethiopia while using indigenous knowledge and other original cultural material to train primary school language teachers. This is due to lack of research and appropriate culture-based training materials (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (MoE), 2012; Yigezu, 2010). Since the introduction of modern education in Ethiopia, the curriculums have not incorporated the indigenous knowledge which is rooted in the cultures of the indigenous Ethiopians, but the curriculums are simply copies from Western countries. Indigenous knowledge has direct practical experience of the local people, because it is based on long period experience and tradition. It is the knowledge that is important for sustainable development,

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survival of the community in different settings and sustainability of education (Abera, 2020:39–40). Therefore, conducting a research which links indigenous knowledge, cognitive metaphor and pedagogy is very important to overcome such challenges to primary school education among the Anywaa.

Cognitive linguistics and meaning

Cognitive linguistics is the study of the relation between language and the mind. It assumes that language is an integral part of human cognition contrary to Chomskyan view of language as an autonomous modular faculty. In cognitive linguistics, language is studied based on what is generally known about human mind. To cognitive linguists, knowledge of language comes from usage and meaning, which is equated to conceptualization, which is a facet of mental experience and meaning construction (Langacker, 1987, 2000). With such an assumption in mind, knowledge of concepts is a representation of objects based on the way they appear to us in the culture we share. For example, 'Candy is sweet' is a declarative statement of factual knowledge. But knowledge is also procedural in the sense that it can come in the form of instruction of doing things. Example, firing a gun requires demonstration of procedural knowledge. Knowledge comes from vision, which provides more information than any other perceptual mechanism. The end result of learning as a cognitive process is change in one's behavior (Johnson, 1987; Friedenber & Silverman, 2016).

Statement of the problem

Metaphor is used in academic areas to encourage learners' insight and understanding. It is assumed that analysis and use of metaphor are reliable ways of making new meaning/understanding and that this becomes an issue in current educational research. Learning abstract concept requires concrete or physical object to understand. In classroom instructions, the use of metaphors helps students understand unfamiliar subject matter through familiar experience of their environment. However, it is stated in Mitchell (2014:76–77) that 'The use of metaphor as a pedagogical tool is not new, but its expected application is very small.' Observing textbooks like Daaraac (2012), one realizes that pictures do not clearly show experience-based performance in subjects like maths in Anywaa. In such subject matters, the use of metaphors would be more useful. Hence, doing research on the pedagogical use of metaphors in teaching complex concepts like numbers and their calculations based on indigenous knowledge is worthwhile.

Methodology and objective

The major objective of this study is to find out the extent to which metaphors could be used as pedagogical tools in the teaching and learning activities in

lower primary grades of Anywaa schools. The study is based on the assumption that learning/understanding abstract or complex objects in subjects such as mathematics, language and environmental science is easier with metaphors than with pictures only. The findings of the study help teachers, material producers, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and researchers in their respective roles. The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in the issues in *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (Kovecses, 2010a). The study employs elicitation, introspection, classroom observation and text analysis for data. This study adopts qualitative design for the analyses and interpretations of the findings. To understand teachers' experience, unstructured interview was conducted with two resource persons Bangaath Ogaala (32, M) and Akuch Obang (32, F) on September 15–26, 2022. See Appendices I and II for the interviewee and interview questions. Classroom observations were made in three public schools namely Wibur, Nyoopira and Elay Schools on October 15–26, 2022. The schools were chosen, because, they are in Gambella town, in which the principal investigator resides. During the classroom observation, more attention was given to teachers' use of metaphors for teaching without intervening in the teacher-student interaction.

For transcribing the data, the Anywaa alphabet, which is phonemic, was used. The subjects selected for investigating the pedagogical use of metaphors in Anywaa were language, maths and environmental science. The elicited data were checked with three resource persons: Bangaath, Akuch and Ojulu William. These resource persons were selected based on the fact that they are native speakers and are very experienced teachers. Introspection was based on the principal investigator's native judgment/experience on the use of metaphor as a pedagogical tool. Textbooks were reviewed for the extent to which metaphors are used. The textbooks analyzed were those of grades 1–4.

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section provides background of the study, the claims of cognitive linguistics, research problem, objectives of the study and the methodology used. The second section deals with literature review, whereas section three provides an analysis of the data, results and interpretations. The last section presents the summary and discussions.

Literature review: metaphor as a set of mappings

In cognitive literature, metaphor is defined as a mapping of one domain onto another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999:52–54). This means metaphor serves as not only an artistic device but also an experience-based understanding of one concept in terms of another. Domain is any coherent organization from which we draw an object of experience. The Domain from which we draw understanding and experience is called source domain and the domain to be understood is called a target domain. The correspondence between the source and target domain is called mappings. A source domain is usually more familiar, more

concrete or more basic than a target domain, which is more abstract and less basic (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Kovecses, 2010b). Consider the following English examples from Kovecses (2010a:6) to illustrate mappings between the two domains.

(1a) Look how far we have come.
(b) We are at cross roads.
(c) Our marriage is on rocks.

These linguistic metaphors are the physical realizations of the conceptual METAPHOR LOVE IS JOURNEY, whose mappings are shown below:

Table 8.1 Illustrating mappings between LOVE and JOURNEY, Kovecses (2010a:9)

SOURCE DOMAIN: JOURNEY	*MAPPINGS*	*TARGET DOMAIN: LOVE*
travelers	→	lovers
vehicle	→	love relationship
journey events	→	events in the love relationship
distance covered	→	progress made in love process
obstacles to journey	→	difficulties in love relation
Destination	→	goal of love relation

Major types of metaphor

Metaphors fall into three major types. These are structural, ontological and orientation metaphors. In structural metaphor, the source domain provides rich knowledge about objects of a target domain. The function of such metaphor is to help speakers understand abstract objects of target 'A' in terms of the source 'B' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980b).

Consider the following examples of structural metaphor:

2 (a) *He passed the time happily.*
(b) *We are getting close to Christmas.*

Both structures represent the abstract concept of time in terms of motion event, which is concrete. Hence, the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MOTION.

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that deals with questions of nature and forms of existence. Ontological metaphor represents abstract concepts as concrete objects so that they are understood easily. Examples of such metaphors include:

3 (a) *Life has cheated me*
(b) *a lot of running in the game* (Kovecses, 2010a:38–40).

In (3a) the abstract object LIFE is presented in terms of a cheater (person), which is very concrete. In (3b) running has been quantified like a CONCRETE OBJECT with mass (amount).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980b), orientation metaphors have spatial dimensions like UP, DOWN, NEAR, FAR and FRONT-BACK. The following are examples of orientation metaphors from Lakoff and Johnson (1980a:195) with the Anywaa equivalents from my introspection.

4 (a) My income rose last year.
(b) His income fell last year.

(c)	Ajulu	cwïny	-e	o	-pädhö
	Ajulu	liver of	3sg	perf	fall down
lit.	Ajulu's liver has dropped.				
	'Ajulu has become sad.'				

The orientational linguistic metaphor in example (5) represents the abstract concept of SADNESS as DOWN. When we are sad, we fall down, sleep or stoop. These metaphors are based on the concept of UP as more/better and DOWN as less/low. The orientation UP and DOWN represent the psychological states of Happiness and sadness. These are mental states that increase and decrease intensity. The following is an example of an emotional state of high intensity.

5.	cwïny	-a	ya	-a	ngaap	máal	bäät	jaath
	liver of	1sg	pf	1sg	hung	up	on	tree
lit.	I have hung my liver up on the tree in the sky.							
	'I'm very happy.'							

Application of metaphor analysis in education

Education is a process of nurturing a child, facilitating learning, or acquiring knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits and personal development. The Methods of education include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. The word pedagogy originated from the Greek word paidagōeō, in which paidos means *child* and agōeō means *lead*. From this etymological root, pedagogy can be defined as the study of teaching method, interaction between student and teacher, learning task and teaching environment. The difference between teaching and pedagogy is that teaching is an act of facilitating but pedagogy is both and act and discourse (Shah& Campus, 2021:6–8). What Shah and Campus (2021) imply with this definition is that pedagogy guides students in learning and teachers in teaching.

Moser (2000) also argues that metaphor is important for exploring the social and cultural process of understanding. Hong-bo and Wen-juan (2010) state that metaphor is used in activating students' insight and understanding. It evokes students' experience and background knowledge to make lessons easy. The belief that the use and analysis of metaphor is a reliable technique of making lessons explicit has contributed to the development and improvement of methodology through educational research. (Hong-bo & Wen-juan,

2010:43). In this regard, there are metaphors that refer to students as customers, as products and as employees (Sirvanci, 1996).

Furthermore, Ortony (1979:45) and Hong-bo and Wen-juan (2010:43–45) mention the following as major functions of metaphor:

(a) facilitates learning because concepts are rooted in natural areas like rivers, land and forest;
(b) helps students develop critical thinking;
(c) serves as a concrete tool for teaching/learning figurative language like idiom and proverb;
(d) makes abstract idea concrete through vivid image and expression; and
(e) makes it easy to express an idea that cannot be expressed by any other means.

Metaphors help students reflect on themselves as learners and create other metaphors to expand in meta-cognitive effort that activates past learning and links it to future learning and engagement. Handy (1998) states that one learns by reflecting on what has happened but he/she must also give opportunities for reflective learning. In a study conducted by Wang and Xu (2006), it was found out that metaphor is a tool of reflection, which in turn helps learners' cognitive processes. The study also showed that the teaching-learning process is based on the life, experience and cultural trends and value orientations of learners.

The role of metaphor for teachers

Metaphors open the way we think about ourselves and others. Teacher's cognition includes knowledge, belief and thought and metaphor they use in classroom interactions. According to Pajak (1986), metaphors help teachers understand their role as teachers. In a study conducted on L2 teaching and metaphor usage, Oxford et al. (1998) found metaphors that describe a teacher as a manufacturer, nurturer, scaffold, entertainer, acceptor and learning parent. Furthermore, Hong-bo and Wen-juan (2010:45) state that there are metaphors which refer to teacher as a coach, a consultant, a performer and an orchestra conductor. Cortazzi and Jin (1999:149–176) cited in Hong-bo and Wen-juan (2010:45) explored metaphors that relate to students, teachers, teaching-learning activities and to language. In short, Metaphors help both teachers and students.

Metaphor as a pedagogical tool for teaching language in Anywaa schools

The Anywaa alphabet

Anywaa is locally called dha[1] Anywaa 'mouth of Anywaa'. It is spoken in Gambella regional state of western Ethiopia and in the Greater Pibor Administrative

Area and Jonglei State of South Sudan (Reh, 1996; Okello, 2014). According to the 2007 census report, the language has 88,000 speakers (Reh, 1996; Okello, 2014). It had not been used in schools until the 1994/1995 policy of FDRE which granted nations and nationalities to develop their languages for official and academic uses. Following this policy, Anywaa became written using the modified version of the Latin scripts produced in Akobo,[2] Sudan, in 1948 for translating the New Testament[3] into Anywaa. This Latin-based orthography was adapted in 1994 by the Educational Bureau of the Gambella Region State. Since 1995, Anywaa has become a medium of instruction for grades 1–4, and as a school subject in grades 5–10. Now it is taught as a school subject up to grade 12. It has a department in Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College (Okello & Mekonnen, 2017:6). Here is the list of vowel graphemes and the corresponding phonemes they represent.

A grapheme with a diacritic above (left) represents a breathy voiced vowel. In the IPA, a phoneme with the diacritic below it is a breathy-voiced vowel phoneme. The grapheme **<u>** has no two dots above it, but it is a breathy grapheme as its voice suggests. Furthermore, Tables 8.2 and 8.3 imply that

Table 8.2 Anywaa vowel graphemes and their counterparts phonemes based on Okello and Mekonnen (2017:25)

Anywaa Vowel Grapheme	*IPA Phoneme Equivalent*	*Example word*	*Gloss*
A	a	acaara	thought
Ä	a̤	bäk	boil
E	ɛ	beth	sharp
Ë	ɛ̤	dëël	body
I	ɪ	piny	earth
Ï	ɪ̤	dïbïdhï	fisher
O	ʊ	kïdö	colour
Ö	ʊ̤	öörö	dry season
Ø	ɔ	øtø	house
U	ṳ	agulö	pot

Table 8.3 Consonant Graphemes of Anywaa adapted from Okello and Mekonnen (2017:24)

Anywaa Grapheme	*IPA*	*Example word for occurrence*	*Gloss*
b	b [bí]	bääla	banana
c	tʃ [tʃǐ]	cam	food
d	d [dí]	dwøl	sound/word
dh	d̪(ð) [d̪́]	dhøk	mouth
g	g [gí]	gwök	dog
j	dʒ [dʒí]	jaath	tree
k	k [kí]	koony	dig
l	l [lí]	lak	teeth

Anywaa Grapheme	*IPA*	*Example word for occurrence*	*Gloss*
m	m [mí]	maal	sky
n	n [ní]	naam	river
ng	ŋ [ŋí]	wang	eye
nh	n̪[n̪í]	nhøth	suck
ny	ɲ [ɲí]	nyaang	crocodile
p	p [pí]	puul	lake
r	r [rí]	raac	bad
t	t [tí]	tar	white
th	t̪[t̪í]	thööth	many
w	w [wi]	waac	story
y	j [ji]	dipööy	teacher

Anywaa uses an alphabetic writing in which one grapheme represents one phone/phoneme. Thus, the language uses an alphabetic writing system with a phonemic orthography (see also Okello & Mekonnen, 2017). The correspondence between consonant graphemes and consonant phonemes is shown below.

Alphabetical order

The Anywaa alphabet has 29 graphemes (letters) which correspond to the 29 phonemes (Reh, 1996; Okello, 2014). Their order is very close to the order of the letters in the English alphabet. It goes from simple to complex. For example, the plain vowel <a> precedes its breathy counterpart <ä> and the simple grapheme <d> precedes the digraph <dh>.Here is the order of the graphemes in capital and small letters.

In Anywaa, capital letters are called göörë moa døøngngø 'bigger letters' and the small ones are called göörë moa therø 'smaller letters'. During teaching, teachers associate letters with concrete objects like a house, trees and other objects. Table 8.6 shows capital letters, which are taught through concrete objects serving as their metaphoric representations.

Table 8.4 Order of capital letters of Anywaa, Okello and Mekonnen (2017:26)

A	**Ä**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**DH**	**E**	**Ë**	**G**	**I**	**Ï**	**J**	**K**	**L**	**M**	**N**	**NG**	**NH**	**N**		
Y	**O**	**Ö**	**Ø**	**P**	**R**	**T**	**TH**	**U**	**W**	**Y**										

Table 8.5 Order of small letters of Anywaa, Okello (2020:3)

a	**ä**	**b**	**c**	**d**	**dh**	**e**	**ë**	**g**	**i**	**ï**	**j**	**k**	**l**	**m**	**n**	**ng**	**nh**	**ny**	**o**	**ö**	**ø**	**p**
r	**t**	**th**	**u**	**w**	**y**															

Table 8.6 Associating letters with big concrete objects

Letter	*Pronunciation*	*Concrete object extended to the letter*	*Gloss*
A	a	abïla	hut
B	bï	lädhäärë	eye glasses
C	cï	ogut	bracelet
D	dï	döödl akumma	trap ring
O	o	cïbï	pot-stand
Y	yï	okar	crotch
U	u	athaa	stew-pot

Consonant gemination and vowel length

In Anywaa, vowel length and consonant gemination are distinctive. Length is duration of articulation and it is represented by doubling the symbol/letter. Gemination also refers to long duration and muscular tension in articulation. It is also indicated by doubling a symbol/letter. The followings are words with long vowels and geminate consonants in Anywaa.

6 (a) lak 'teeth'
(b) laak ' (to) bloom'
(c) gïrï 'your object'
(d) gïrrï '(it is) trembling'

Examples (6a&b) contrast in vowel length and those in (6c&d) differ in consonant gemination.

Anywaa is a tonal language with contrasts of high, low and mid tones. The function is lexical and grammatical (Okello, 2014).Consider the following examples for lexical and grammatical tones:

7 (a) láw 'tonic'
(b) làw 'a spiritual snake whose bone is used as a conjure'
(c) òthø̀w 'dead/has died'
(d) ōthø̄w 'will/should die'

The tones in 7 (a) &(b) are high and low and are lexical. Those in (7c) and (7d) are low and mid, and they are grammatical tones indicating perfective and imperfective aspects. However, such distinctions and features are not represented in the orthography (Okello, 2018). Orthographically, tonal contrasts are indicated through words of high, mid and low pitch and variation and by pointing objects of reference on to learners' awareness. For example, the word /láw/ 'tonic' reminds an Anywaa student of the taste of salt or mucus from the nose. This suggests cognitive base and an experiential awareness of the feature. Okello and Mekonnen (2017) argue that tonal features must be represented only where it is necessary like in the above examples.

Table 8.7 Concrete words

Anywaa word	*Gloss*
øtø[4]	house
maac	fire
wenyø	bird
rëëö	fish
maal	sky
ngøøm	soil
pïï	water
kïdï	stone
nyaang	crocodile
adhurï	cat
gwök	dog
cenø	hand
wang	eye

Concrete nouns

These are nouns that refer to physical entities in an environment. When teaching such nouns in grades 1–4, teachers use pictures or physical objects as examples of such entities. Textbooks in Anywaa suggest assignments, which engage adults in explaining the words in relation to the associated objects with their functions, shapes, habitat and features. This is consistent with the dictum 'KNOWING IS SEEING' OBJECTS TO WHICH THE WORDS REFER. In the following table are the concrete nouns, which are taught through pictures.

Adjectives

Adjectives modify nouns and they are taught in association with nouns they modify by specifying their size, height, shape, colour, taste etc. For example, the adjective /bäär/ 'tall' is taught about its antonym /ciek/ 'short' where two objects with different heights are shown to students. Similarly, the adjective /dwøng/ 'big' is taught in relation to /thiinh/ 'small' where two objects of different sizes are presented to students to learn from their differences in size.

Demonstration and association

In teaching the concept of tall and short, teachers invite two students of different heights and ask the class which of them is tall or short. Such demonstrations also employ sticks of different heights which are compared and contrasted for the students to understand the concepts. In such instances, TEACHING IS DEMONSTRATING AND UNDERSTANDING IS COMPARING AND CONTRASTING objects in terms of dimensions such as height. The colors of the objects found in the environment are taught in the same contrastive manner. In doing so, a teacher can show an object that has the color. Here,

Table 8.8 Colors and associated objects

Colour Term in Anywaa	*Gloss*	*Associated object*
tar	white	white flour, ash, white clothe, cloud, paper, light, etc
cøl	black	clay, charcoal, cooking pot
kwaar	red	blood, fire, red flour
mar	green	plant leaf, green grass and mucus from the nose
lïw	blue	blue water, cat's eye, blue clothe
abäga	yellow	yolk, yellow clothe, flower

Table 8.9 Concepts and associations based on sensation

Concept in Anywaa	*Gloss*	*Associated object*
lïëth	hot	fire/sun
ngec	cold	ice, cold water, dew
jööt	light	paper, dry cane, cotton
peek	heavy	stone
beth	sharp	spear, knife
teek[5]	hard	stone, metal
jööm	soft	sponge, soft porridge, boiled meat, mud

are the basic colors of objects in Anywaa (Obang & Ochan, 2012) with their associated objects.

Adjectives for 'hot' and 'cold' are associated with feelings of burning and freezing sensations. Such feelings stand for the concepts of heat and cold. For example, /Dëërï atïmö ni maac/ 'Your body has become fire' means your temperature is very high.

Tactile concepts of hard and soft are taught by touching hard and soft objects like stone and sponge, respectively. In the same manner, the concepts of 'light' and 'heavy' are easily taught by easily picked-up different objects. Thus, LEARNING IS DOING/MANIPULATING. Here are the concepts with their metaphorical associations for the teaching.

In teaching emotions like happiness, sadness and anger, pictures of smiling and frowning faces can be included in textbooks. In Anywaa, the word for happiness is /met ec/met cwïny/ 'tastiness of stomach/liver' and anger is /gootø/räny cwïny/ 'spoilage of liver'. The concept of happiness or pleasure is taught in terms of DELICIOUS FOOD, which reminds elementary school students of delicious foods. On the other hand, anger is associated with dirt, bad or black things, which trigger unpleasant feeling when viewed or touched. Consider the examples below.

8 (a).	Yi	-a	met
	stomach of	1sg	delicious
lit.	My stomach is delicious.		
	'I'm happy.'		

The metaphor in 8(a) is based on tasty things like cane rat stew, meat and delicious soup. When a grain of salt is put in food, it becomes tasty and one may say 'Acäbö amïnnö' 'The salt has made the stew delicious'; similarly, when one becomes happy, he may say Yia/Cwïnya amïnnö 'My stomach/liver has become delicious'.

b.	cwïny	-e	ngweeth
	liver of	3sg	sweet
lit.	His/Her liver is sweet.		
	'He/She is happy.'		

In such expressions, the target is the abstract feeling/concept of happiness represented in terms of the concrete object SWEET LIVER, which serves as the source domain for understanding of pleasure is the source domain for happiness. And a heightened degree of emotion can be represented by extending vowel in an adjective as Cwïnya ngwe . . . th 'My liver is swe . . . t'.

An example of expression of anger like Ojulu ogootø 'Ojulu is angry' is accompanied by a furious look and clinched mouth, which symbolize a high degree of negative emotion. Children understand such feelings of uneasiness contrary to happiness, which is associated with good food like FISH STEW, FISH OIL/FAT, SUGAR, SUGAR CANE AND WHITE FLOUR, which trigger positive feelings. On the other hand, expressions like the following may come as manifestations of anger.

9. Yia raac 'My stomach is bad'/'I am angry'

The Anywaa perceive the body part tielø 'leg' as the base/root or origin' of a plant. Consider the following example.

10.	Tier	luumm	-ï	ker	ci	wï	-a
	leg of	sentence of	2sg	neg	entered	head of	1sg
lit.	Leg/root of your sentence has not entered my head						
	'I have not understood your sentence.'						

In this example, the meaning of the expression is associated with the root/leg of a tree, which is in the soil or the human leg which carries the weight of the body. Such metaphoric representations are in evidence of the claim that linguistic expressions are manifestations of abstract mental objects.

Among the Anywaa, head is the center of intellect /knowing and liver is the locus of feeling, love, desire and faith, followed by stomach, which is the center of spontaneous emotion. The Anywaa believe that academic lessons

enter human head to be understood, and biblical lessons and/or parental advices enter the liver for a person to lead a good life. Things that enter human liver remain there as part of his entire life. Thus, expressions like:

11. pwöc aci wïa 'The lesson has entered my head'

In relation to concepts in lessons like math, language and physics, if one says:

12. Pwöc aci cwïnya 'The lesson has entered by liver'

The sense here is that such a lesson changes the behavior or life of the person. Thus, the brain and the liver are metonym of knowledge and advice respectively in Anywaa.

The concepts of truth and falsity are associated with being in PROPER PLACE among the Anywaa. Kare is truth associated with an object in its proper place. *Pathakare* 'falsity' literally refers to an object not being in its proper place. If an object is put in its proper place, it stands firmly without creating a problem unlike that which is put in a wrong place and thus causing imbalance. Thus, truth is being in one's proper place and falsity is being not in such a place. The two abstract concepts are represented relative to physical objects located in their (im)proper places.

Prepositions

Prepositions are words that show relations between objects in space. Okello (2018) described Anywaa prepositions as nyuunh kar gïrpiny 'an object's location indicator'. A preposition like ki 'at' in the phrase ki wäär 'at night' expresses a point or location of time. Prepositions are derived from nouns of human body parts like ec 'stomach', wïc 'head', bäät 'shoulder', tielø 'leg' and buut 'side of lower abdomen' by usually modifying the basic noun form. The following table shows body part nouns and their associated prepositions.

Table 8.10 Derivation of prepositions from human body parts in Anywaa

Body part	*Gloss*	*Modified noun form*	*preposition*	*Plural in Anywaa*	*Gloss*
(Y)ic,ec	Stomach	(y)i 'stomach of'	In	Yïth	In
Tielø	Leg	Tier 'leg of'	Under	Tiet	Under
Wïc	Head	Wï 'head of'	On	Wïth	Above
Bäät	Shoulder	Bäät 'shoulder of'	On	Bäät	On
nyïm	Front/Face	Nyïm 'face/front of'	Before	Nyïm	Before
Töök	Occiput	Töök 'occiput of'	Behind	Töök	Behind
Dèng	Jaw	Déng 'jaw of'	Near	Déng	Near
Ngäc	Back	Ngää 'back of'	Behind	Ngäth	Behind

Consider the following examples where body parts serve as source domains of prepositions.

13a.	Ogwaal	jwööng	-ö	yi	dak
	frog	cry	prog	stomach of	pot
lit.	The frog is croaking in the stomach of pot.				
	'The frog is croaking in the pot.'				
b.	Nyilaal	en	-a	tier	jaath
	child	be:loc	foc	leg of	tree
lit.	The child is under the leg of the tree.				
	The child is under the tree.'				
c.	Wenyø	määd	-ö	wï	jaath
	bird	fly	prog	head of	tree
lit.	The bird is flying at the head of the tree.				
	'The bird is flying above the tree.'				
d.	Køøm	en	-a	nyïm	øtø
	Chair	be:loc	foc	forehead of	house
lit.	The chair is in the forehead of the house.				
	'The chair is in front of the house.'				

The spatial orientation of objects relative to a figure-ground or source domain is represented by such body parts as stomach of a pot, leg of a tree, top/head of a tree and forehead/front of a house. Sometimes, a teacher[6] may put his hand on the shoulders to teach the concepts of *on* and puts his hands back to teach the concept of *behind*.

Tense and aspect

According to Riemer (2010), tense is a temporal location of event as present, past or future, whereas aspect is an expression of manner of an event in time. Both tense and aspect are abstract concepts for learners to understand. Teachers use actions, time adverbs and body part nouns to help them understand. Formally, Anywaa verbs show the past tense with the prefix a- and the time adverb yaawäärë 'yesterday'. The future tense is indicated by the body part noun nyïm 'forehead' and the progressive aspect with the prefix ö- and the body part bäät, 'shoulder', which serves as a locus of continuous action such as carrying an object. Consider the following examples.

14a.	Ajulu	kwön	a	-thaal	-e	yaawäärë
	Ajulu	porridge	pst	cook	3sg	yesterday
lit.	Ajulu porridge cooked yesterday					
	'Ajulu cooked the porridge yesterday.'					
b.	Pathanha		poot	en	-a	nyïm
	exam		still	be:loc	foc	front
lit.	The exam is still in the front/forehead.					
	'The exam is still in the future.'					

c.	A	mädh	-ö	ki	caak	(ennø)	
	1sg	drink	prog	obl	milk	(now)	
	'I am drinking milk (now).'						
d.	A	en	-a	bäät	maath	(ki)	caak
	1sg	be:loc	Foc	shoulder of	drink	obl	milk
lit.	I am on the shoulder of drinking milk.						
	'I am drinking milk (now).'						

The body part nouns nyïm 'forehead', bäät 'shoulder' and time nouns such as yaawäärë 'yesterday' and ennø 'now' are used to demonstrate the abstract concepts of tense and aspect. In light of the foregoing presentation, how are subjects like math and environmental science taught in Anywaa schools? A subject presented next.

Metaphor in the teaching of math in Anywaa

In Anywaa, the term acääp stands for thinking and computing alias mathematics, which is considered the most difficult to understand. Concepts in math are metaphorically called teek 'hard' as opposed to concepts, which are called jööt 'light'. In Anywaa, a clever student is called nyilaar göör mo teek 'a hard student' as opposed to a lazy student, called nyilaar göör mo jääk 'A weak student, who falls down'. Hence, difficulty is associated with hard and simple is associated with light things. Further, in Anywaa, failing in exams is associated with pädhö 'falling down', which is physical whose frequentative form is päänhnhö 'fall down repeatedly'. Lakoff and Nunez (2000:5) state that conceptual metaphors structure mathematical ideas, but most of the issues in mathematics have not been described well on the basis of cognitive science perspective.

Numbers

Number is kwääni/kwäänö (pl. kwäännë) in Anywaa. The term kwäänö literally means counting, which extends its scope to reading or investigating. Cardinal numbers refer to objects we see and count and ordinal numbers like rietge 'second' refer to objects, which we rank-ordered. Below is the list of cardinal numbers.

As Table 8.11 shows, the numeration system is base five, which corresponds to five fingers. For example, abïciel 'six' is the combination of abïïc 'five' and aciel 'one'. The numeral abära 'eight' is a recent coinage, because in early days it was abïdäk, which is a combination of abïïc 'five' and adäk 'three' (see Reh, 1996). The conjunction ka/ki 'and' conjoins the two numerals, the base and the additions.

Ten is the five fingers of each hand combined. Fifteen is the combination of five fingers of each hand and the five toes of right foot. Twenty is the combination of ten fingers and ten toes of a person. This suggests that numbers

Table 8.11 Illustrating counting numbers in Anywaa

Number in Anywaa	*Literal Meaning*	*Gloss*
bänggø	empty, non-existent	0
aciel	one thing	1
ariew	two things	2
adäk	three things	3
angween	four things	4
abïïc	five things	5
abïciel	six things	6
abïriew	five and two	7
abära	five and three	8
abïngween	five and four	9
apaar	five and five fingers of hand	10
apaar ka aciel	ten and one	11
apaar ka ariew	ten and two	12
apaar ka adäk	ten and three	13
apaar ka angween	ten and four	14
apaar ka abïïc	ten and five	15
pïërariew	ten times two	20
dïpa (pïërapaar)	ten times ten	100
kuma (pïër ma dïpa)	ten times hundred	1000

The following table shows polygons and mathematical symbols with source domains like round objects.

Table 8.12 Polygons and mathematical symbols

English name/ Symbol	*Anywaa name*	*Literal meaning*	*Modified form*	*Literal meaning*
triangle	atukdäk	three horned	agøøtdäk	three sided/angled
rectangle	atukngween	four horned	agøøtngween	four sided/angled
line	laany	extended figure	the same	the same
circle	ogul	round object	the same	the same
greater than (>)	dwøng ki . . .	bigger than	the same	the same
less than (<)	thiinh ki	smaller than	the same	the same
equals to (=)	diet	the same	röömi	equal size

which are abstract objects are represented in fingers and toes, which are concrete human body parts serving as sources of realization. Lakoff and Nunez (2000:24) state that numbers are related to fingers, because children learn to count numbers based on their fingers; numbers are related to writing because they are symbolized by written numerals like 1, 2, 3 etc. Thus, a number is a concept representing objects in the external world.

Objects exist in space. The space which an object occupies is a place or plot in space. The value of each plot is equivalent to øtø 'a *house*'. For example, in 123, 3 has the place (house) of øt aciel 'ones', 2 has øt apaar 'tens' and 1 has øt dïpa 'house of hundreds'. Concepts of aciel 'one(singular)' and thööth 'many(plural)' come from the physical experience in which we see and

manipulate one and many objects and the physical experience later becomes our conceptual experience, which is the stored meaning in the head.

Mathematical operations

Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, symbols and polygons have metaphorical words embedded in the daily lives of the Anywaa people. This metaphor comes from culture and activities. see also Boers (2000:553).

Mathematical concepts have concrete experiential bases. For example, a three-sided object one-half of a gourd, which is used in serving stew and porridge, represents the concept of a triangle. A four-sided house represents that of a rectangle and a pot stands for the concept a circle. The concept of = (equals to) is based on objects of the same size, color or age of people. The concept of > is based on two objects of which one has a bigger size than the other while the concept < is based on two objects of which the first has a smaller size than the other. Thus, 123 > 122, because 1 + 2 + 3 (6) is greater than 5, which is the sum of 1 + 2 + 2.

Addition (+)

In Anywaa, addition is dwal, which is a combination/admixing of objects to make one set or mixture. Objects of one, two or three members located at different places are brought into one group or set. So, addition is putting different things into one. Consider the following example.

15.	Ariew	dwal	ka	ariew,	angween
	two	combine	with	two	four

lit. If two objects are mixed/combined with two other objects, the result is four.
'Two plus two is equal to four.'

This addition is based on the experience where two objects such as two cobs of maize are put in one place and another two cobs in another place and they are then mixed into one. The result is four cobs of maize, which is greater than the sum of each group. This is a concrete instantiation of 2 + 2= 4. The abstract numbers and their total sum are represented with concrete objects like maize or cob serving as metaphor. Thus, NUMBERS ARE (PORTABLE) OBJECTS.

Multiplication (×)

Multiplication is tiel 'legs', which is a metaphor for journeying back and forth. For example, the expression Tieta adäk Jïmma 'My legs are three in Jïmma' represents three legs of journey made to Jimma implying that the speaker went to Jimma three times. The concept of multiplication is associated with going

back and forth with objects, which represent numbers. Consider the following example.

16.	Tiet	-ï	ariew	ni	-ï	käl	-a	ariew,	angween
	legs of	2sg	two	con	2sg	bring	foc	two	four

lit. If you go with your two legs and bring two objects, the result is four.
'Two times two is equal to four.'

Teaching multiplication is based on the experience of making rounds (legs) of journey to and from a place. Each journey has a value of objects. The number of objects in each journey adds up to a total number of objects of the total rounds of the journey. If one makes a single round that would be equal to two objects (1×2). Movements with some number of objects in each round (legs) serve as an experiential demonstration of abstract equations in terms of concrete objects. So, it is metaphorically easy to teach and perform, 2 × 2 = 4.

If one goes and comes back empty-handed, the journey has a value of nothing (zero). Zero x one (1) would therefore be equal to zero (0). A journey that ends up with empty hands is a metaphoric of nothing or zero. The number of objects associated with each leg of the journey (movement) may vary from zero to any number greater than it, zero.

Subtraction (–)

Subtraction is taking out an object from a set of objects. In Anywaa kän wøk, which is a term for subtraction, literally means taking out or excluding one or others from the whole. Objects like mangoes, fishes, bananas, sticks, maizes and canes are stored in a container. When a person needs some amount, he/she takes out some from the containers. The Anywaa's conception of subtraction (–) is the experience of taking out objects from a set of which they form a part. The following is an illustrative example of subtraction.

17.	Angween	oo	kän	wøk	ka	ariew	tïmö	na	ariew
	four	and	take	out	obl	two	become	con	two

lit. If you take out two objects out of four objects, two objects remain.
'Four minus two is equal to two.'

In explaining the concept of subtraction, a teacher puts five objects, like books, in one place, and tells one student to take three of them, away. Then he asks the same student to count the remaining books. In other words, subtraction is an activity of taking some objects away from the set to which they belong. This metaphorical experience makes it easy to understand 4–2=2 during teaching-learning process.

Division (÷)

In Anywaa the word for division is päängngö, which literally means sharing. In their daily life, the Anywaa share flours, fishes, beads, durras, maizes, mangoes, canes, firewood and other objects. This experience underlays the notion of DIVISION of OBJECTS between or among people. Consider the following example.

18.	Apaar	päängng	-i	jï	ariew	tïmö	na	abïïc
	ten	shared	pass	to	two	become	con	five
lit.	Ten is shared to two, each gets five.							
	'Ten divided by two is equal to five.'							

In a classroom demonstration, a teacher shows students ten pencils, and then he calls out two students to come forward and he gives each five pencils. Then, the ten pencils are now divided into two groups of five. Thus, 10 ÷ 2 = 5.

Metaphor as a pedagogical tool for teaching environmental science

The environment is an important source for teaching, because it is where objects exist. In Anywaa, the term for environment (surrounding) is atut, which literally means a place of collection of objects. It is the space with Objects. In Anywaa, the word for world is *piny*, which literally means 'earth', which the Anywaa believe to be the best place for life, because it is more accessible than any other part of the universe, where objects are divided into those which contain life/heart and those whose bodies do not contain these. Contrary to them are non-living things such as stones which the Anywaa perceive as objects without heart/life or liver, the center of appetite. They do not eat, drink, walk, talk, etc. They never change location, unlike living things which do move about until and unless they fall ill (see also Ojulu, 2012).

Health and sickness

The Anywaa word for health is jööt dëël 'lightness of the body', which is figurative of a healthy body. A person who is healthy walks fast, runs and jumps up unlike one who is sick or low spirit, and hence, the expression dëëre peek 'His/Her body is heavy'. Heavy and light are metaphors of poor (sick) and good health, respectively. When one shows symptoms of disease, expressions like the followings are used.

19.	Nyilaal	deer	-e	da	täw
	child	body	3sg	exist	disease
lit.	There exists a disease in the body of the/a child.				
	'A/The child is sick.'				

This example implies that disease is a feeling of heaviness caused by a bad substance/spirit entering the human body. The conception of human body as a container is evident from Dëëra akïthï ki täw 'You have entered the disease into my body', or that the disease forced itself into the body as the following expression suggests.

20.	Ajulu	a	-mak	këëdï
	Ajulu	pst	catch	cold
lit.	Ajulu got caught by cold.			
	'Ajulu has cold.'			

Parts of a plant

Human body serves as a metaphor of various things one needs to know about his environment. For example, one learns about various parts of plants. One learns about branches of plants in terms of body parts like fingers of hands, arms, which stretch out and toes of the human feet that are like roots of trees. When teaching the concepts of plant life, a teacher uses such parts of the human body. The following table shows the metaphoric relation between human and plant life.

The globe and the directions

The globe is a domain of places and objects situated in them in relative distance to each other. In determining directions, the Anywaa use the sun as a

Table 8.13 Plant parts as human body parts, adapted from Ojulu (2012:44)

Plant part in English	*Anywaa Equivalent*	*Literal meaning of the Anywaa word*
leaf	ïth jaath	ear of a plant
the top part of a plant (apex)	wï-jaath	head of a plant
stem	tier-jaath	leg of a plant
root	lweet-jaath	the toe of a plant
branch	bat jaath[7]	arm of a plant
trunk	köör jaath	chest of a plant

Table 8.14 The four main directions in Anywaa

Anywaa	*Literal translation*	*Free Translation*
Kur-tuul-käng	where the sun rises	East
Kur-pänh-käng	where the sun falls down	West
Buut piny baät caam	left of the earth's side of lower abdomen	North
Buut piny bäät cwïïc	right of the earth's side of lower abdomen	South

point of reference. Facing the sun, they determine directions of places and objects. Consider the following examples.

The front part of the human head points to the east and the back part locates the west. Facing the sun and stretching out the hands, the left side of the lower abdomen corresponds to the north, and the right side of the lower abdomen corresponds to the south. Such body-based teaching of the cardinal directions of the globe, and any place or object located in it is possible with body parts serving as source domains. This use of body to understand locations and spatial orientation of objects has been stressed by Kovecses (2010b:742): *speakers use spatial orientations relative to their bodies by using orientations like right, left, in front of and behind so that locations like direction will be clear or meaningful than otherwise. This type of bodily orientation is called ego-centered or relativistic spatial orientation system.*

Time is space

Space provides domain for understanding the abstract concept of time for which the Anywaa word is piny 'earth'. Time is conceived in relation to objects moving and events happening in spaces and in sequences. The word caa (pl. caae), a loan word from the Arabic saa (cf Amharic *səhat*) refers to both a space/duration of time such as caa aciel 'one hour' or to an object, a wrist watch. The duration of time and the object of measure of time have the same word.

Like other Ethiopian societies, the Anywaa associate daytime with käng' the sun'. One sun is one day-time, which is divided into amöölla' morning', dïcäng ' midday' and abøøya 'afternoon'. In their conception and reckoning of time, the Anywaa perceive the night as a totally different time-space (duration). Thus, the sun is usually a metaphor of only daytime. In the same manner, the moon serves as a metaphor of month as the following example demonstrates.

21.	Dwääy	aciel	a	-päng
	moon	one	pst	be full
lit.	One moon be came full.			
	'It became one month.'			

A new month is associated with a new rising moon as a new day is associated with the rising sun. The abstract concept of time of day and month is understood in terms of the celestial bodies, the sun and the moon and their movement in space. Hence, DAYS ARE SUNS and MONTHS ARE MOONS in the conception of the Anywaa. Consider the following expression.

22.	Piny	bäär	kany	a	jood	-a	Aried
	earth	long	place	pst	see	1sg	Ariet
lit.	It has become long earth since I saw Ariet						
	'It has become long time since I saw Ariet.'						

In this example, kany 'this place' refers to the time now as opposed to kaaca 'that place' which may refer to the past hour, day or month, year and so on. Hence, people pass with a certain part of time-space on their back. In other words, space can help teach the duration of time like an hour, day and century in relation to space and motion. Specific questions about what time it is relate space as the following examples imply.

23 (a)	Piny	a	nyïëdi?
	earth	be/pst	how much
lit.	How much earth?		
	'How long has it been?'		
(b)	Caae	adïï?	
	hours	how many	
lit.	How many hours it became?		
	'What is the time now?'		

An expression of measure of time to the exact minute uses the body part, head, as its metaphor. The following is one such expression of exact timing.

24.	Caa	aciel	dï	wï	-e
	hour	one	center of	head of	3sg
lit.	One hour in the center of its head.				
	'It is exactly one o'clock'				
25.	Caa	-e	ariew	ki	thäängö
	hour	pl	two	and	temple
lit.	The time is two hours and temple				
	'It is half past two.'				

The concept of 'half' is based on the sides (temples) of the head, which is a part of our head. Like half-pot, the Anywaa assume that the head has two parts or halves. This is extended to the reckoning time as full or half. Concepts like half a lesson, half a time, half a day, half a year, etc, are represented in terms of parts of the head. When it is a full time, it is said Caa apäng 'The time/hour has become full'.

Summary and discussion

In this study, different metaphors for the teaching of subjects like language, math and environmental science in grades 1–4 have been considered by using texts, interview, elicitation and introspection. The major objective was to find out the degree to which metaphor is pedagogically used in the primary schools where Anywaa is taught. Hence, the study applied qualitative design. The study has shown that the pedagogical application of metaphors in Anywaa schools helps learners understand abstract concepts in lessons in subjects like those mentioned. The metaphors bring the concepts down to real life of learners.

The study further shows that cultural household objects like pots and gourds, plants, fruits and activities like hunting and fishing are important in the teaching of abstract concepts and relations embodied in the lessons of subjects. The existing picture-based teaching of lessons could and should be enhanced with the use of concrete objects and body parts serving as metaphors. Most of the pictures in grades 1–4 are black and white. A single picture may have different interpretations as it reminds learners of many different objects. For example, a fish eagle in a black print may look like a cock, rooster, dove, or any other kind of bird (see Obang & Ochan, 2012; Abala, 2012).

Further, classroom observations and interviews have shown that teachers do not use metaphors in demonstrating abstract objects. They heavily depend on pictures in the books and on the wall of classrooms. In fact, the teachers stated that applying metaphor is difficult as the books do not guide them to apply metaphor; they also stated that the training they take does not emphasize metaphors. So, textbooks and training manuals should contain metaphorical activities to guide students and teachers. As the results indicate, in order to teach adjectives easily, objects with different sizes, height and colors must be available in the pedagogical centers. These objects include mud cattle, clothes, pot-stand, sticks and ropes. Prepositions like under, near, in and on can be easily taught by sitting under trees, putting an object on a table, putting an object in a pot and putting an object near another object. To teach progressive aspect, a student can be ordered to do an action in the actual time, but past tense can be related to the passed sun or yesterday and future tense is easily taught by associating it with tomorrow or the rising sun of tomorrow. To teach the concept of light, a torch, sun or moon can help students understand light. This in turn implies that in addition to texts books and trips, there must be training manuals or references to help teachers apply metaphor.

Directions can be easily taught. The easiest direction to teach is the east where the sun comes from and the next direction to teach is the west, where the sun sets. Yet teaching north and south is a bit difficult based on which one to teach first. Because many people are right-handed, it is good to teach the south first. The sequence of teaching concepts implies that metaphor helps teachers prepare listen plan in good, clear and reasonable way. The study also indicates that demonstratives are abstract concepts but can be easily taught by pointing out near and far objects like trees. Due to complexity, the teachers have mentioned that environmental science and math are difficult to teach metaphorically.

Mathematically, the findings of the study indicate that simple numbers like 2 and 3 can be easily added, but complex numbers like 300 and 500 are difficult to add based on metaphorical activities of combining 300 objects and 500 objects. Similarly, $300 \times 3 = 900$ is difficult to perform metaphorically, because it is difficult to carry 300 objects three times and add them on a narrow space. Yet the experience of adding simple numbers serves as a base for adding 300 and 500 on a chalkboard. For example, 0.2+0.6 can generally be complex to perform but adding 2 and 6 to make 8 is easy as two objects and six objects

can be combined to make 8. Thus, the more complex the target domain is, the more difficult to apply metaphor for teaching. This in turn implies that applying metaphor in lower level of education is easier than in higher level. The use of objects to represent numbers implies that whole numbers exist because a whole object like a full papaya exists (Lakoff & Nunez, 2000:5–6). The application of conceptual metaphor theory in this study takes us to the general pedagogical dictum KNOWING IS SEEING/MANIPULATING. If a teacher has no good mastery of the subject, it is difficult to apply metaphor. In general, this study confirms that conceptual metaphor theory is important for pedagogical activities and the study should be applied in different academic areas as a pilot material. However, because the present study is limited to grades 1–4, further study on pedagogical use of metaphor should be conducted on the subjects used in grades 5 and above so that the application of metaphor in teaching more complex concepts in wider area of academy will be clear.

Notes

1 The very abstract/underlying form is dhøk Anywaa 'mouth of Anywaa', which is formed out of dhøk 'mouth' and Anywaa, the tribal name, which is pluralized as Anywaae. So, deleting k in dhøk 'mouth' takes us to another abstract form dhø Anywaa 'mouth of Anywaa', which is realized as dha Anywaa 'The Anywaa language'. Similar case can be seen in /ɖ̪ɔ́k tʃɔ̀llɔ̀/ 'mouth of Shilluk', which is uttered as [ɖ̪ɔ̀ tʃɔ̀llɔ̀] 'The Shilluk language' (see Gilley, 1988).
2 Currently, Akobo is a part of the Republic of South Sudan.
3 In 1962, the translation was completed and the New Testament was translated into Anywaa as Luuma Nyään na Met mar Yesu Kïrïctɔ 'The New Tasty Word of Jesus Christ' (Okello & Mekonnen, 2017:5).
4 Due to the influence of Amharic, in urban areas Anywaa children use code mixing of Anywaa with Amharic. For example, the English word butterfly is adiellakwac (adeellakwac) in Anywaa, but the Anywaa children in Gambella town call it abirrabirro 'butterfly', which is compounded from the Amharic word birrabirro 'butterfly' and the Anywaa nominalizer {a-}. This nominalizer can be found in derivations like abäc 'maize, which is formed out of the derivational morpheme {a-} and bäc 'wrap'.
5 In Anywaa, the concept of teek 'hard(ness)' is extended to energy. For example, electrical energy is called teek maac 'energy of fire' (Ojulu, 2012:36).
6 This is based on the principal investigator's personal communication with Bangaath Ogaala
7 The general word for plant leaf in Anywaa is bøøng jaath, which literally means *peel of a plant*. The part of a maize from which plumule and radical develop is called cwïny abäc, which literally means the *liver of maize*. Human activity is also used to understand plant reproduction. For example, when a plant produces a flower, it is said in Anywaa as Jaath angøøk 'The plant has vomited'. Furthermore, in Anywaa, branches of a tree are called tuk- jaath 'horns of a tree', whose singular form is tuung jaath 'a tree's horn', because the dry branches are sharp and hard like an animal's horns. See also Abala (2012).

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Appendices

Interviewees

Bangaath Ogaala currently teaches grades 1 maths and grade 1 Anywaa in Wibur Primary and Secondary School. Akuch Obang teaches environmental science in grade 3 in Nyoopira Primary School. Both Wibur and Wangnyoopira Schools are found in Gambella town. Bangaath completed a certificate program under clustered subjects of math, Amharic, Anywaa and science. Currently, Bangaath holds a diploma in natural science. He has an experience of 16 years of teaching. Akuch completed a certificate program with clustered subjects of Amharic, English, Anywaa and science. She now has a diploma in civics and has an experience of 14 years of teaching. Ojulu William (35yrs, M) completed his M.Sc. in applied mathematics and has an experience of 17 years of teaching math in Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College. He also writes texts books of math in English and Anywaa.

Interview questions

The interview questions were prepared in English but were orally asked in Anywaa. Here are the interview questions.

1 To what extent do you apply metaphor while you are teaching?
2 In your school, are there adequate cultural objects like mud cattle used for applying metaphor during teaching?
3 Do the texts books really guide you to apply metaphor for the teaching?
4 What makes the application of metaphor difficult for you to apply?
5 Do the trainings you take usually help you to use metaphor for teaching?

Anywaa-English academic words

Anywaa (Dha-Anywaa)	*English (Dhi-Nyigïlïc)*
dhøk	language
acääp	maths
wëël – jwïëy	biology
wëël bäät-piny	geography
wëël jööt dëël	health/medicine
wëël – lam	history

Anywaa (Dha-Anywaa)	*English (Dhi-Nyigïlïc)*
kwään göörе	alphabet
bwøth göörе	alphabetical order
dun acuut- luup	essay
acuul-luup, dun luup	paragraph
lwiinh luubö	topic sentence
bøøgø	page
cwödö	pronunciation
cwödö mana tiir/mana näk kare	enunciation
göörö	letter, grapheme
dwør cäänö	phone
nyi-dwør yi-ngeth	allophone
piil dwøl	morpheme (møørpïïm)
thääng piil dwøl	syllable
dwøl	sound, word
cät-bäät pwöc	reflection
dwør – yi-ngeth	phoneme
göörö mano cïp dwøl	vowel letter
göörö mano cung dwølli ree	consonant letter
göö wøk	graduate
gööny wøk	graduation
nyi-göörö	allograph
päärö	test, examination, experiment
jöör kwany gïrpiny	skill
göör	writing
cwiiri apaar	decade
cwiiri ma dïpa	century
cwiiri ma kuma	millennium
cwiiy dipë apaar ka abïngween (cwd 19)	nineteenth century (19th)
göör	education
göör mar øt jwøk	religious education
göör mar bäät-piny	secular education
ogöödö	educated
øt göör	school
øt pwöc	classroom
dipööy	teacher
pwöc	teaching (lesson)
jap pwöc	teaching materials
jap jøl pwöc	teaching aids
wëëlö	book, field of study, subject
wëël pwöc	text book
wëël nyilaar göör	student's text
wëël bwøth dipööy	teacher's guide
nyuudhö	demonstration
nyooth	demonstrate
pät	analyse
peer	elaborate
nyuudhi	example, specimen
pwönynyö	educate, teach, advise
wïnynyö	listening
cäänö	speaking
kwäänö	reading
kwänynyö	knowledge (education)
ngäc	to know

Riddles

Riddle is one of the ways of making students understand environments, objects and themselves. Their understanding is metaphorical as human body and other objects are extended to less familiar concepts and objects. In Anywaa, a riddle is called ogwanynyangø 'what object/thing?' If a respondent fails to answer the riddle, the challenger says, Duu dhääa 'Bring back my cattle' and the respondent, who has become unable to answer the riddle, says Dhääï øøgø nø 'Here are your cattle, then!' So, the challenger says, Naa dwøng a dwøng ee' I'm older than you are as you failed to answer the riddle'. Here are the most common riddles in Anywaa metaphorically taught to primary school students.

1 Ge neeta nyengngi ko owänni.

'Two half brothers facing each other.'
Answer:ageel løøga ka ageel løøi
'two opposite sides of a river'

2 Dïngääe öörö; yie cwiir

lit.It is back is dry season, but its stomach is rainy season.
'Its outer part is dry season, but the inner part is rainy season.'
Answer:akööya 'water pipe'
LOCATION or ENCLOSED AREA IS HUMAN STOMACH.

3 Naa pøna nyaare, aana joo piny.

'WhileI was about to pick its child, it pulled me down.'
Answer:läängö 'nabaq tree'
'Atree'
The response relates to the conceptual metaphor, A FRUIT IS A HUMAN CHILD.

4 Cør kany cør kany, thare odadø.

'It goes here and here with its flat butt'.
Answer:lïlmuw: 'needle'
A NEEDLE'S EYE IS A FLAT HUMAN BUTT.
SEWING IS MOTION.

5 Kïc bele no othøw.

'It tastes honey only when it is dead.'
Answer:liec/lie-bat
'ivory bracelet'

While wearing and ivory bracelet, wax is put inside so that it becomes easy for girls to put in their hands and remove as the inner part of the jewelry becomes smooth.

Abbreviations and symbols

con	connective
foc	focus
fut	future tense
lit	literally
loc	locative
obl	oblique case
pf	perfective
pas	passive voice
pl	plural
prog	progressive aspect
pst	past tense
sg	singular
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
<>	letter, spelling
[ ]	pronunciation
´	high tone
`	low tone
-	mid tone

9 Gendered expressions in some Ethiopian languages

Baye Yimam

Introduction

Sex is a biological feature that distinguishes humans, and other mammals, as either male or female mainly on grounds of hormonal differences and physical features such as body size and shape (Grossman, M. & Wood, W. 1993; Wodak, R. 1997). Males have testosterone, whereas females have estrogen. In general, males have hairy bodies, nipples, angular faces, and broad shoulders, whereas females have breasts, clean, (hairless) body, an oval face, broad hips, and narrow shoulders. Through physical attraction and sexual union, the two sexes produce male or female offsprings, which they raise with the mother breastfeeding, paying close attention, showing passion and compassion, and the father protecting during the tender years of infancy and babyhood. As a result of physical contact during this initial and crucial period of parenting, babies tend to develop a sense of affection more towards their mother than to their father who may spend relatively less time with them as their roles of providing supplies and ensuring safety and security often keep them away from home and family. Such role differences in parenting emanate from the biological dispositions of the two sexes but then develop into socio-cultural categories and division of labor where females take the specific responsibilities of mothering, nursing, and catering at home, whereas males play the roles of fathering, providing supplies, and ensuring safety and security, both of which are off-home engagements in less developed, less-literate, and rural communities such as those considered for this study.

Unlike sex, gender is a socio-cultural construct (Tannen, D. 1990; Roza, T. 2009) which grammars of languages reflect as masculine and feminine, neuter, etc., often overriding the biological attributes of maleness and femaleness. Offsprings get oriented into becoming boys and girls mainly through the socio-cultural process of fathering and mothering, which male and/or female parents and others close to them practice as a matter of individual and collective responsibility of child-rearing. Fathers ensure that boys grow with the essential physical and psycho-social attributes that go into their making as well-bred, fully accepted, and recognized members of society, in which they are expected to assume structural positions with associated roles and

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responsibilities. The positions can be inherited or acquired through success in economic activities such as hunting, farming, trading, manufacturing, etc., depending on the society's level of development, mode of production, and socio-cultural values that govern relationships, in general. Some such activities are domestic and are often associated more with females than with males, because, as stated earlier, the latter are engaged in the off-home roles of production of supplies and protection of security. Children take up this same set of responsibilities and practice them in different social domains and contexts, which their language use reflects.

Males are not only major sources of supplies; they are also chief decision-makers on their use (Postl, 1991; Lakoff, 2004; Spender, 1990). This is a role that comes from their high power position within the family structure, and depending on their level of economic success, across sections of the society in which they stand high and enjoy special privileges (Cameron, 1997:49; Lakoff, 2004). Their power often gets punctuated with rituals, whereby the beholder gets recognized and is subsequently addressed in special terms of respect and reverence.

As stated earlier, the scope of power may cover the family and sections of the society in both of which relationships between those in high and those in low power positions are one of dominance and subordination, which the language reflects in the choice of felicitous expressions and terms of address which those in low power position need to practice in any formal discursive event they have with those in a high power position. Viewed from such a structural perspective of asymmetric and conflicting power positions, relations, and forms of realization, language gets a sociological definition as an expression of power, and this supersedes its conventional linguistic understanding as a means of communication (Lakoff, 1973, 2004; Fairclough, 2015), with little or no hint to its substantives.

The differential power positions and asymmetrical representation of the two genders have led to stereotypes that define their communicative behavior. In this regard, it is claimed that women

(a) talk more than men,
(b) talk to one another more than men,
(c) use more formal language than men, and
(d) do more gossiping than men.

Put simply, women talk and gossip a lot, and in such social practice, they use formal language and engage with one another more than men do (Eckert & McConnel-Gint, 1992:9; Coates, 1996). In contrast to this, it is assumed that men talk

(a) more comfortably,
(b) interrupt more in conversation,
(c) curse more than women, and
(d) respond less to women's talk.

In short, men speak with ease, interrupt anytime, curse, and pay little or no attention to women's talk.

Such stereotypes emerge from the conflicting socio-cultural power positions of the two genders more so than from the biological differences between the two sexes male and female. Men's higher power position contributes to their relaxed communicative behavior, while the degree of uneasiness in women's talk or gossip and the feeling of comfort and control in male's direct speech suggest that the relationship between the two genders is one of subordination for women and of empowerment and dominance for men. In such differential and conflicting power relations, it is not unusual for the subordinate to feel uneasy or intimidated, use more formal diction, and form solidarity with others of the same kind to cooperate and talk or gossip about their plight (Holmes, 1997; Tannen, 1990). Men have little or no reason to feel and behave this way in their discursive practice as they are in command, and hence talk relaxed, move with their head up, and enforce their will unimpeded (Eckert & McConnel-Gint, 1992).

Language as an expression of power may have a lexicon that is broadly dichotomized along with the biological and socio-cultural roles of the two sexes and/or genders. Males' lexicon consists of vocabulary that refers to outdoor activities such as production, possession, protection, and the necessary tools and gadgets used. Thus, lexemes of hunting, fishing, plowing, sowing, mowing, and harvesting are ubiquitous in males' more than in females' speech, whereas lexemes of largely household chores such as grinding, baking, cooking, spinning, knitting, cleaning, and so on, and their associated tools are statistically significant in theirs than in males' diction. Tools that males use in their activities rarely get into their hands, and their expressions into the tongues of females in traditional societies such as those considered in this study, for example. In such societies, a lady found in public with a dagger in her hand would be eyed and judged as unwomanly and disgraceful to her spouse, if she would, indeed, have one. The likelihood for such tomboyish act and behavior is to remain unwed, and if wed, for the marriage to last short as it casts a shadow of threat on the man, who is socially expected to be in command by the virtue of his high power position. On the other hand, a male person found with a tool, such as a ladle in his hand, which is associated with women's indoor activities, or heard uttering words closely associated with their (women's) behavior, is equally judged as unmanly, effeminate, and ill-bred, because it is unbecoming of a male person to use such tools and terms.

The general pattern of gendered language use is evident from the following proverbial expressions of Koreette, one of the languages considered for this study.

maa-ša	Maylena	asan-sa	aylena
female-with	Scraper	male-with	hoe

'A scraper is to a woman as a hoe is to a man'

In this and many other traditional societies of Southwest Ethiopia, a hoe is a major tool for men in the planting of *ɨnsət* 'false banana' a staple food plant, and a scraper is a major tool for women in the extraction of pulp from the plant and in the processing of it into daily meals. The two tools represent the two genders and their division of labor as producer and processor of food, the former largely off-house, and the latter an in-house engagement.

Social organization, power, and language use in Southwest Ethiopia

In line with the above general introduction to gender-based language use, I turn now to a description of specific speech behavior of the language communities mentioned earlier. This is done in four sections, the first of which is the above introduction. The second concerns the social organizations of the language communities and the power relations between the two genders. Section three presents samples of gendered expression rooted in a set of themes, whereas section four winds up the description with a summary. The data come from field notes, observations, in-depth interviews, and elicitations from native speakers.

The languages considered for this study are Wolayitta, Gamo, Dawuro, and Koreetee[1] from Omotic; Sidama and Gedeo from Cushitic; and Amharic and Tigrigna from Semitic, the last two considered mainly for comparative purposes. Amharic is a national mega language with native and non-native speakers amounting to more than 30 million and with the role of a national lingua-franca for the Ethiopian state (Hudson, 1999:97). It has a literary tradition that dates back to the turn of the century and a history of writing since the 16th century using a script that is pre-Christian (Ayele Bekerie, 1997). Except for Tigrigna, which has a relatively long history of writing, the others have been reduced to writing in the last two or three decades with a Latin-based script adopted and adapted to their particular phonological features. They have since been introduced into the school system as medium and/or subject of instruction in their respective localities.

As stated in the introduction, the social structure of the language communities is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal local in the pattern of residence. Their livelihood is based on mainly agriculture, where ownership of land and cattle is a measure of power for males, but rarely so for females, at least until recently. Inheritance is to the firstborn male child. In some of the Omotic and Cushitic groups, widows of departed siblings are inherited by the next of male kin. Ownership of property is strongly male-dominated, and it determines the power positions of the man in the family and beyond. He is, thus, the head of the family and one among the elderly guardians of the community, whereas the rest of the folks in lower positions take orders and listen to advice. Married women come immediately next to (below) their husband, and above other members of the nucleus family. Among polygamous groups, the senior wife has power over the junior ones. The firstborn son of the senior

wife claims precedence over others and assumes responsibility in the absence of the father. In other words, he takes a position higher than even that of his mother.

In this patriarchal and hierarchical social organization, the two genders are asymmetrical in power relations. Those in higher power positions are addressed in honorific terms such as *geta* 'Lord' and *ʔəmməbet* 'Lady' in Amharic, for example, and in personal pronouns and plural number agreement in nouns and verbs. In the language communities of the Ethiopian region in general, power is masculine and plural in its forms of expression. The following are second- and third-person plural pronouns used as expressions of honorificity, alias power, in the languages in question:

		Singular	*Plural*	*Honorific Male/Female*
Amharic	2M	antə	ʔɨnnə-antə	ant-**u**/ʔɨrs-**o**
	F	anči	ʔɨnnə-antə	ant-**u**/ʔɨrs-**o**
	3M.	ʔɨrsu	ʔɨnnə-ɨrsu	ʔɨrs-**aččəw**
	F.	ʔɨrsu-a	ʔɨnnə-ɨrsu	ʔɨrs-**aččəw**
Gamo;	2 M.	neni	hiinte	hi-**inte**
	F.	neni	hiinte	hi-**inte**
	3 M.	ʔiz-i	enti	e-**nti**
	F.	ʔiz-a	enti	e-**nti**
Dawuro:	2 M.	neni		hinte-**ntu** ~ hinte-**ni**
	F.	neni		hinte-**ntu** ~ hinte-**ni**
	3 M.	ʔi		untu-**ntu**
	F.	ʔa		untu-**ntu**
Koreete:	2M.	neni		hin**uuni**
	F.	neni		hin**uuni**
	3 M.	ʔesi		ʔusi/ʔus**ini**
	F.	ʔisi		ʔusi/ʔus**ini**
Wolayitta:	2M.	neeni		ʔ**inte**
	F.	neeni		ʔ**inte**
	3M.	ʔi		ʔe**ti**
	F.	ʔa		ʔe**ti**
Sidama:	2M.	ati		ki**ʔ**ne
	F	ati		ki**ʔne**
	3M.	ʔisi		ʔ**insa**
	F.	ʔise		ʔ**insa**
Gedeo:	2 M.	ati		ha**ʔno**
	F.	ati		ha**ʔno**
	3M.	isi		insi**ʔne**
	F.	ese		insi**ʔne**

The Omotic and Cushitic languages use the same pronominal forms for both plural number and honorific reference, whereas Amharic employs different forms derived from the masculine singular with the prefix ʔɨnnə- for the associative plural number, the suffixes – u or – o for second-person, and -aččəw for third-person honorific reference. In the other languages, the masculine and feminine singulars are independently marked, but this difference

gets neutralized in their plural where the same form is used for both genders. Consider the following paradigm of third-person pronouns.

Dawuro:	3 M.	ʔ-**i**	untuntu
	F.	ʔ-**a**	untuntu
Koreete:	3 M.	ʔ**e**si	ʔ**u**si
	F.	ʔ**i**si	ʔ**u**si
Wolayitta:	3M.	ʔ-**i**	ʔeti
	F.	ʔ-**a**	ʔeti
Sidama	3 M.	ʔis-**i**	ʔinsa
	F.	ʔis-**e**	ʔinsa
Gedeo:	3 M	ʔis-**i**	ʔinsiʔne
	F	ʔes-**e**	ʔinsiʔne

In each pair, the singular masculine is marked with -i and the singular feminine with – e/a, a contrast which is neutralized in the plural where *-in/-t* is used for both genders in all the languages.

In addition to honorific pronouns, all the languages in question use a set of kinship terms for honorific reference of in-laws and others bestowed with power. The following are examples of such terms in Gamo and Amharic, Omotic and Semitic, respectively:

Gamo	Father-in-law	Vocative	Mother-in-law	Vocative
	abonta	abonto	ayinta	ayinto
	godo	‘Lord’	godate	‘Lady’
Amharic:	yəneta	getočč	ʔɨmmete	ʔɨmmete
	‘my Lord’	‘Lord’	‘My lady’	‘Lady’

In Gamo, the honorific terms of in-laws are based on the nouns *abo* ‘father’, *ʔay* ‘mother’, and on the adjective *god* ‘big/great. In Amharic, the term *yəneta* is a reduced form of the genitive phrase *yəne geta* ‘my lord’, from which the initial syllable of the head noun *geta* ‘lord’ is truncated and the remaining encliticized onto the first-person singular possessive pronoun *yəne* ‘my’. *ʔɨmmete* is also a reduced form of the genitive phrase, *ʔɨmm-ə bet-e* lit. ‘mother/lady-of house-my’, ‘my lady of the house’, from which the initial consonant of the noun *bet* ‘house’ gets deleted and the remaining restructured with the possessor pronoun. Such are the expressions of power at the family level where the husband is Lord, and the wife, Lady of the household, and where, at the bottom of the social hierarchy, one finds *aškər* and *gərəd*, ‘servant’ and ‘maid’, respectively, often addressed in singular pejorative terms.

Such differential power relation is also represented in the grammars of the languages where, for example, the verbal and nominal plural number refers to a subject noun phrase that is singular and feminine, but whose referent has the pragmatic feature of power, which stems from the social position of the referent (Zelealem, 2010/11; Baye, 2016). Compare the following examples from Amharic:

Amharic:	1.	(a)	Kasa	mət't'	-a
			K.	come: PF-3MSG	'K. came'
		(b)	Aster	mət't'a	-ǩǩ
			A.	come: PF-3SG-F	'Aster came'
	2.	(a)	Aster ɨnna Kasa	mət't'	-**u**
			A. and K.	Come: PF-**3PL**	'A. and K. came'
		(b)	Ato Kasa	mət'	-**u**
			Mr. K	come: PF-**3PL**	'Mr. K. came'
		(c)	Woizəro	Aster mət'	-**u**
			Lady A.	come: PF-**3PL**	'Lady Aster came'
	3.	(a)	ʔantə bet – **h**		
			you house-2SGM		'You, your house'
		(b)	ʔant-**u** bet -h -**u**		
			You-PL house-		'You Hon.,
			2SGM-PL		your house'

In 1(a) the verb agrees with the subject in person, in (b) it agrees in gender, indicated by the third-person feminine suffix/-ǩǩ/, and in (c) it agrees in number by showing the plural suffix /-u/. This same suffix, (– u), along with the terms *ato* and *woizəro* is used as an expression of honorificity in 2(b) and (c) where it refers to singular subjects of power. Note that the verb in 1(c) agrees in gender with the feminine subject, Aster, by showing the feminine marker – ǩǩ, but in 2(c), where the subject is not only feminine but also one with the pragmatic feature of power, thus requiring the use of a plural number as its expression (Baye, 2016). The phrase Woizero Aster refers to a female person of power and the singular feminine marker – ǩǩ is pragmatically incompatible with the feature of power, which, as pointed out earlier, is plural and masculine across the communities in question.

In other Semitic languages like Tigrigna and Geʔez, for example, the two genders are represented by distinct plural markers in both the nominal and verbal agreement systems. Consider the following Tigrigna examples:

4. (a) hadə məmhɨr məs'iʔ-**u**
one teacher come: PF-3SGM
'One male teacher came'
(b) han-ti məmhɨr-t məs'iʔ -**a**
One-Fem teacher-Fem comePF-3SGF
'One female teacher came'
(c) kɨlʔɨtə məmhar-**an** məs'iʔ -**om**
Two teacher-PL come: PF-3MPL
'two male teachers came'
(d) kɨlʔɨtə məmhɨr-**at** məs'iʔ -**ən**
Two teacher-FPL come: PF-3FPL
'Two female teachers came'

The verbal suffixes – **u** and – **a** in 4(a) and (b) show agreement in gender with the singular subjects. Their plural counterparts are – **om** and – **ən** for the masculine and feminine subjects respectively in 4(c) and (d). However, this opposition gets neutralized in contexts of plural reference made to two or more adult females and one male child together. Consider the following Tigrigna examples:

5. kilʔitə məmhir-**at**-n hadə k'olʔa-**n** məs'iʔ-**om/* ən**
   Two teacher-**FPL**-and one boy -and **come: PF-3MPL**
   'Two female teachers and one male child came'

The compound subject noun phrase which results from the plural feminine and the singular masculine noun requires a plural number agreement, and it is the masculine plural suffix – **om**, not the feminine plural marker **ən,** which is selected for this collective plural reference. In short, the masculine plural overrides the feminine plural, when the reference is to a collective of both genders (Roza, 2009; Baye, 2016).

When a male person of high power position loses his/her power, the pronominal term of address changes from the honorific plural *ant-u* 'you Hon.' as in 3(b), to the singular masculine *antə* 'you' as in 3(a), and then to the feminine singular *anči*, which refers to a further down-stepping in a power position and hence to a diminutive social status and terms of address/reference. The verbal agreement reflects this gradual down-stepping in the power position in the manner shown in (6).

6. (a) Ato Kasa mət' – **u**
   Mr. K. come: PF-3PL 'Mr. Kasa (Hon.) came'
   (b) Ato Kasa mət' -**a**
   Mr. K. come: PF -3SGM 'Mr. Kasa came'
   (c) Kasa mət' -**ačč**
   K come: PF-3SGF 'Kasa (Dim) came'

In 6(a), the verb shows plural agreement with the subject to show that it has the feature of power. In (c) the verb shows agreement in gender which is feminine, though the subject is male and the gender is masculine, the feminine agreement shows that the male and the masculine subject are diminutive and effeminate in terms of power[2] and psycho-physical strength. In short, masculine gender and plural number represent power, whereas feminine gender and singular number express either total absence or presence of a diminutive power position.

Thematic gendered expressions

Given the patriarchal nature of the social organizations of the language communities concerned, the asymmetrical power relations therein, and the

lexical dichotomy described in the preceding section and in (3.5) below, it is proper to ask whether or not there is also a significant gender-based difference in expressions in domains of specific themes and contexts of communication that define the speech behavior of the two genders vis-a-vis their power positions. In line with this, expressions of the theme of empathy are considered first.

Gender and expressions of empathy

In all the linguistic groups, women, especially, mothers, use more expressions of empathy than do males and spinsters. The contexts of situations that call for such expressions include unfortunate incidents, illness, and untimely death happening to loved ones and other close acquaintances. The following are examples of such expressions:

Gamo:	7(i)	(a)	ta-na ekka /wod'a me -to be: dead	'May it be me the one (to be) dead'
		(b)	ta-sa me-to	'May it be me, the one to whom this should happen'
		(c)	ta-na daccˇo me-to be: hit	'May it (something) hit me, instead of you'
Dawuro:	(ii)	(a)	ta-sa me-for	'May it be for me that this happen . . .'
		(b)	ta-na dəccˇ me-to be: hit	'May it hit me'/'May I be hit instead . . .'
Wolayitta:	(iii)	(a)	ta-ssi gido me-for become	'May this happen to me/ become of me'
Koreetee:	(iv)	(a)	ta wodʔuwa me be: dead	'May I be dead'
		(b)	guddo ta suut'e ʔušuwa spirit my blood drink 'May the spirit sip (drink) my blood instead of yours'	
Amharic:	(v)		ʔɨne liddəfa I be: fallen face down	'May I get fallen face down instead of . . .'

All the expressions are examples of selfless motherly compassion and sacrifice that one wishes to pay for the safety and well-being of others in general,

and loved ones in particular. Such expressions of desire to self-sacrifice are uttered exclusively by (senior) women in situations and contexts of sudden stumbling or falling while one is strolling, walking, or traversing. It would be considered unmanly for a male person to use such statements of empathy in any such context because that would be against one's sense of power and pride. Instead, one would use expressions that reflect audacious courage such as those described next.

Gender and expressions of valor

Broadly speaking, in the Ethiopian context, valor is to man as empathy is to woman. In all the language communities considered, men use utterances as expressions of brute courage and invincibility uttered in moments of danger or imminent threat, such as when one suddenly slips and loses his balance and gravitates to a fall, or encounters an arch enemy out of the blue. In such instances, one reacts by making utterances like the following in a brisk, loud voice and collects himself for abrupt action.

8.	(i)	Dawuro:	abbo attuma naʔawu male person's son 'I, son of a brave man' 'brave one'	
	(ii)	Gamo:		
		(a)	ʔolai-tan-e brave-me-M.	'I, the brave/the male/the courageous one'
		(b)	ʔaddaz wod'a male killer	'Killer of man (male)!'
	(iii)	Wolayitta:	abo attuma naʔawu male person son	'I, son of a male (person)' 'brave one'
	(iv)	Amharic:		
		(a)	zərraf! wənd-u! Hurrah male-one	'Hurrah! The male one!'
		(b)	yə – ambəssaw gɨlgəl! of-lion cub	'Cub of a lion!'

In all the above examples, reference is made to male beings, such as fathers, and wild animals like lions, which symbolize brute power. A man in any such unexpected turn of events would not dare mention his mother's name because women, and females in general, are believed to have no power that one could wish to solicit as a fallback in times of danger. Power resides only in males, fathers, or in their metaphoric extensions, wild animals like

lions, which are iconic of sheer force. A man may refer to his mother as a respite when, and only when, he is totally exhausted from a long day of arduous hard work. In such contexts of physical exhaustion, mention is made to the mother, and this seems to have its root in the religious tradition of compassion attributed to the Virgin Mary, whose intercession is highly solicited during a woman's ordeal of labor pain during childbirth (Baye, 1988). Hence, a man may feel relieved and refreshed from his state of exhaustion, by yawning and moaning over the phrase: 'Oh! my mother'. This sense of relief is associated with the compassion of mothers just as a highly spirited sense of valor is attributed to the prowess of fathers. Consider the following Amharic expressions:

9.	Amharic:	ʔɨffoy	ʔɨnnat-e
		Oh	mother-my

With such expressions of physical exhaustion, the man of valor hangs on to a woman's compassion and care, suggesting a complementary relationship between the two features, valor and compassion, and of the two genders, the brute in males and the empathy in females. But then there are times, though infrequent, when females' motherly compassion turns into utter ruthlessness with a woman – not a mother – seething in anger and envy, desperately and vengefully stabs to death her infidel husband in his deep sleep. Hence, the saying in Amharic:

10. kə -wənd wənne, yə-set č'ɨkkane
    from-male valor of-woman brute
    'Brute in a woman is more dangerous than valor in a man'

And such a woman is referred to by other women with the masculine term *wənd!* 'male!' which is a synonym for bravery. However, such a woman is bound to be subject to denigration, which is described next.

Gender and expressions of denigration

Like in any other society, marriage is very highly valued among the speech communities of the languages in question. It is a means of identity construction and maintenance and/or continuity of a social construct. In the societies in question, marriage is arranged by parents, mainly fathers, with or without the knowledge and/or consent of the would-be couple. The main issue in such an arrangement is economics – the amount the groom can, and should, pay in cash or kind to the parents of the bride. A girl has to attract and fetch a good sum as bride price to her parents and get married while still young, demure, and ready to copulate. Failure to do so would lead to denigrating remarks like the following from all corners; it is disheartening to both

parents, and others concerned, when their daughter fails to get married at her prime age.

11. (i) Dawuro:
(a) ha ek'a attana
This ever standing
'This one who has remained standing/unmarried'
(ii) Amharic:
k'omo k'ər
Having: stood ever remaining
'Ever remaining standing/unmarried

The expression 'ever remaining standing' has the implied meaning that a girl should get married soon and get to bed instead of standing alone or remaining single. It is a disgrace to parents when their daughter remains unwed, even worse when, and if, she gave birth to a baby while still single. She may be able to raise her baby single-handedly, but still, the negative attitude of society towards single parenting, and particularly towards a male child being raised by only his mother is discomforting especially for males. It is believed that such a male child would lack all the essential attributes a man is expected to have and to show throughout his life. A person lacking in such qualities as valor is addressed in pejorative utterances like the following:

12 (i) Dawuro:
imač'č'awa diččowe !
woman raised
'This one! Raised by woman'/'Son of a woman'
(ii) Amharic:
yə – set lɨǰ
of-woman son 'Son of woman'
(iii) Wolayitta:
mač'č'a asay diččido-ge
woman person raise -Foc
'One raised by woman',/Son of woman'

The interpretation of such belittling remarks is that the addressee may have all the attributes of a woman and little or none of a man. Most importantly, he would lack valor, endurance, and stamina, which are believed to be the hallmarks of a well-bred male person in the eyes of all males. In short, such a person would be considered weak like the woman who has raised him in a manner, like a mother like a daughter.

On the contrary, it would not be a problem for a girl to be raised only by her mother because such a girl would have more of the essentials of a woman and less of those of a man. However, if such a girl behaves in a manner that

is unwomanly and tomboyish, that would lead to denigrating expressions like the following:

13. (i) Dawuro:

(a) imač'č'awa diččowe
Woman raised
'This one! Brought up by woman?'

If such a girl or woman stumbles over something while moving about, male onlookers would take that as a sign of a reckless boy-like manner of movement which is characteristic of a girl lacking control in her upbringing, and even worse lacking in the sobering effects of circumcision, which is practiced across all the speech communities in question. In other words, such manner of movement and behavior by a girl is believed to be symptomatic of being uncircumcised, and of her wanting sex. Hence, expressions like the following are not uncommon.

(b) Ha k'as's'araa k'ela bennanna
This circumcision without being circumcised
'This, the uncircumcised one!'

The social expectation is that a girl should walk with care, causing no hush or crash, which is possible if only she would keep her eyes on every step she makes without glancing sideward in want of a possible bedfellow.

Such statements imply that a child, male or female, should be raised with the gender-based values of society, with boys behaving like males and girls like females. A girl raised only by a mother may tend to play the role of a substitute father and behave in a manner that is domineering to everyone, male or female. Such a girl is likely to remain unmarried for no man would want her for a wife. And a father makes it a point in his expressions of blessing that his son would get a girl who would bear him many children, preferably sons, and manage the household in a manner that is both womanly and motherly. This reduces a woman's role to procreation and management of supplies produced and controlled by the man of the house – the husband.

Should a man get married to a lady who is assertive or domineering, he would feel servile to her whims, and in such a relationship the term of address or reference to such a wife would be in the masculine as in the following Amharic expression by an overpowered and pinned-down husband trying hard to be in control by punching hard and uttering the following,

14. ant wədəl agňiččə-h -allə-hu
You voluptuous get-2MSGO-Aux-1SG
'You voluptuous one! I have gotten you!'

The expression here is in the masculine because of the woman's feature of dominance, which is characteristic of a male person, and rarely so of a female, who is raised by only a mother and hence lacks paternal control. As pointed out earlier on, parental desire is for their daughter to get married to a young man of valor and their son to get a girl of empathy for a wife. This is stated in expressions of blessing, which are considered next.

Gender and expressions of blessing

In all the language communities considered, individuals are blessed for the good things they do towards the well-being of others, by organizing festive events for the poor and the needy. The invitees respond to such an act of benevolence by blessing the host in person and public. The blessing expressions are gender-specific, and they focus on body parts such as the arms, legs, knees, breast, uterus, chest and forehead, and so on. Those which are female-specific include the following:

15. (i) Koreete:
    (a) naʾe Yeluwa
    son deliver
    'May you give birth to a male baby'
    (b) ne d'antsi suuzutu waye
    your breast blessed be-it
    'May your breast be blessed'
    (ii) Dawuro:
    (a) mas's'opa məlo
    breast be blessed
    'May your breast be blessed'
    (b) sus's'oppa məlo
    womb/uterus be blessed
    'May your womb be blessed'
    (iii) Wolayitta
    Ne ʔuloy ʔanǰǰetto
    Your stomach blessed: be
    'May your stomach (womb) be blessed'

16. (iii) Amharic:
    (a) mahs'ən-iš yi-lemlim
    womb-your it-be: fertile
    'May your womb be fertile'
    (b) kind-iš-in kə – k'urt'mat, dərət-iš-n kə-wigat yə-t'əbbik'-iš
    arm-your from-rheumatism chest-your from-piercing
    it-protect-you
    'May He (God) protect your arm from rheumatism and your chest from acute chest pain'

The references of such expressions are to body parts that are necessary for the procreation, production, and processing of food. The blessings are expressions of desire for the organs to remain functioning well so that more children are born and more food is produced and prepared for more festive occasions to come by for the needy to enjoy and give their blessings to their benevolent host (Baye, 1988).

An act of blessing is the exclusive right of the elderly male more generally, who is believed to have the power to bless and also curse with efficacy, and less often of the elderly female. The young may express simple gratitude for the good things done for them, but they cannot bless or curse with effect since they lack the power that the elderly have acquired over the years through age and experience, both contributing to wisdom which is a form of social power. Note that the expressions refer to the themes of fertility for women and productivity for men. The former is for the uterus to remain fertile, and the legs and arms to remain strong for the production and processing of food and drink and for ensuring safety and security. The forehead is believed to be a symbol of good fortune if one is blessed, and of ill fortune, if cursed. The referents are by and large male benefactors who are the major forces of production and sources of income and power in the communities considered. Akin to blessing, and also of empathy, is endearing, a theme of positive relationship which is considered next.

Gender and expression of endearment

Endearment is a speech act that, like empathy, is characteristic of women more than men. An endearing expression is inclusive and loving which reflects a relationship that is very close and intimate. In the speech communities concerned, there are lexemes and/or morphemes that are genitive possessive in form but also endearing in function. Such forms are used by mothers, and the referents are younger members of the family or the community at large. Consider the following examples from Gedeo and Amharic:

Gedeo

17. (i) (a) an-ke **finna-yyoo**
child-Mas. **gift** –my
'Oh! my gift son'
(b) an-t'e **finna-yyoo**
child-Fem. **gift**-my
'Oh! my gift daughter'

Amharic:

18. (a) hod[3]-ɨyyə
stomach-END
Lit. 'My stomach' 'My beloved one'
(b) get- ɨyyə
master-END
'my beloved lord/master'

Whereas mothers use such endearing terms as *finna-yyoo* 'my gift' to express love, affection, and intimacy, fathers employ the ordinary referential terms *an-ke* 'son' lit. 'child-mas.' and *an-t'e* 'daughter' lit. 'child fem.' in the same context. Such expressions are indicative of the difference between the two genders in the degree of affection towards intimate and passionate relationships and the frequency of use of emotive expressions of inclusion, contra denigration, and cursing considered elsewhere (Baye, 2013). A male person is expected to love but not to show it in public by using such terms of endearment. At the personal level, a husband may use the term *giiran* 'fire' about his wife whom he considers the source of warmth and comfort for him and the entire family. Consider the following expressions from Gedeo:

19.	Husband:	(a)	an-t'ee	giiran	
			My-Fem.	fire	'my wife'
	Wife:	(b)	an-kee	aroˀon	
			My-Mas.	head of the house	'my husband'

The expressions focus on the services which a wife provides by being a source of warmth and comfort for the husband, whom she addresses as 'head of the house', an expression of recognition of the roles he plays as a provider of supplies and protector of safety. The belief across the communities in question is that a home feels ice-cold and dead silent like a grave without a woman around, and it feels bare and barren without a husband present, as attested in the following expressions from Wolayitta:

20 (a) ʔaaya bayinna keettay ʔona
Wife without house desolate
'A home without a wife is desolate/in hospitable'

(b) ʔaaw bayinna miit'ay kayye
Husband without compound exposed: be
'A house (and its compound) is exposed to danger with a husband absent'

These are expressions of recognition of roles that a man and a woman play to make their home warm and safe. Beyond such expressions of implied recognition of roles, the couples dare not address each other and their in-laws by their given names, particularly during their heydays of marriage. In some of the societies, this prohibition or taboo extends until the birth of the first child, whereas in others it may last throughout the marriage. Until her first childbirth, the young wife may address her spouse by the second singular 'You', and after the birth of a baby, she may address him as 'father of *X*', where *X* = name of son or daughter.[4] The young husband also uses the pronoun 'You' in the singular to address his wife and in honorific pronouns to address his father and mother-in-law. But for the young wife, there are more stringent conditions of honorific use which involve modifications of given names of in-laws, a

tradition known as Ballisha among the Sidama, for example, where the young lady has to replace the first consonant or vowel of the initial syllable of the name of her in-laws by a different consonant. Consider the following names from Sidama.[5]

	Given name	**Ballisha name**
21.	Worrak'o	Sorrak'o
	Bak'ala	Sak'ala
	Wakilo	Sakilo

The consonant used as a substitute is /s/; if a given name begins in /s/, it is replaced by /š/. Such modifications of names have a tint of honorificity, alias power with or without the relation between the parties being necessarily endearing or hostile.

In addition to modification, the young woman has also to know pairs of words, with the felicity value of [+HIGH] and [-HIGH], and use those which are [+HIGH] in her interaction with her in-laws. The following are samples of such pairs of forms for the same object.

	[-HIGH]	[+HIGH]	Gloss
22.	ʔado	gurda	'milk'
	Siito	šaačč̌o	'calf'
	Safe	dagude	'type of pot'
	Hoga	wek'iič̌č̌o	'leaf of false banana'
	Mada	basara	'meat'
	Hayišš	meč'č̌'a	'to wash'
	t'uura	gajja	'to make'
	Waa	t'aso	'water'
	got'ano	ʔuššič̌č̌o	'sleep'
	mat'ine	t'eame	'salt'
	Buuro	ʔeseeč̌če	butter
	baato	ǰiič̌ča	'ox'
	Dagunčo	nek'k'ič̌č̌	'leopard'
	Tušš	ʔusuraančo	rope
	Magano	ʔereno	God

Such use of duplets has implications for vocabulary acquisition in that girls, and only them, have to know not only the general meanings of words but also the power contexts of use of felicitous duplets of high and low value (Ehrlich, 1997, 2004:309).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to make a pragmatically oriented description of gendered expressions in some selected Ethiopian languages of Semitic,

Omotic, and Cushitic origin. The description focuses on expressions rooted in a set of themes that includes empathy, valor, denigration, blessing, and endearment. These are themes that reflect social relationships of inclusion, subcategorizing empathy, blessing, and endearment on the one hand, and exclusion comprising valor and denigration on the other.

The social relationships reflect the organization of the language communities which is patriarchal, and hierarchical, and the pattern of residence is patrilocal. Their livelihood is based on farming where ownership of land and livestock is a measure of power for males more so than for females, whose major role in the management of the household contra males, whose responsibility ranges from ownership of the property to production of supplies and protection of safety and security. These roles are sociological and they override the broadly defined biological role differences of the two sexes as 'male' and 'female', which are grammatically re-categorized as masculine, feminine, neuter, common, gender, and realized in lexical and/or affixal forms.

In most of the languages of the region in general, the two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine, are marked by separate morphemes and in only a few cases by a single morpheme marking only the feminine, leaving the masculine as the default or the unmarked. In addition to biological and grammatical categories, gender is also socio-culturally conceptualized and linguistically represented in terms of power positions that individuals acquire or assume in the hierarchical social structures in which they discharge bio-social roles and responsibilities. Their position is determined by their ownership and control of land and livestock which, in all the communities considered, is by and large male-dominated, and by the virtue of which, males assume higher structural and power positions than females. This is most visible at the level of the family structure, where the male (husband and/or father) has a higher position than the female (wife and/or mother), and the elder sibling has precedence over younger members of the family.

This asymmetrical power relation is reflected in the pattern of language use practiced by those in lower positions who address the ones higher up with special terms of honor and respect in any formal discursive event. Those in higher positions stand as icons of courage, characteristically a distinctive feature of males, and empathy that of females, whose diction of compassion for those of their likes put them as a distinct social construct. The biological terms 'male' and 'female' acquire sociological definitions as 'man' and 'woman', whose referents may pair up as 'husband and wife' procreate offsprings whom they raise in their likes and manners with bio-social and cultural roles. The ideal manner is where offsprings are raised in the folds of parents living together, showing and sharing compassion, and ensuring protection, and provision of supplies.

A child, male or female, raised by either of the two parents is subject to denigration as weak and effeminate if a boy, and tomboyish and outburst if a girl. The communities cherish a tradition of parenting where each parent plays the role of modeling the offsprings in their like – boys growing manly, and girls womanly and motherly. The language use reflects this diglossic situation in

the sense of Ferguson (1976), where lexemes are associated with [±POWER] features and where those which are [+POWER] are selected for discourse with in-laws and others who are high in power positions, such as people who are senior in age, experience, and wisdom acquired over a long period of interaction. In the dynamics of power, it is possible for those who were once in a high position to lose their ground, and with it, its forms of honorific diction, irrespective of the individual's gender, male or female, masculine or feminine. It is possible for women with the feature [+POWER] to be addressed in honorific terms which are derived from the singular *masculine*, and men who have lost their power feature to cease to be addressed in honorific terms. Instead, they may get addressed by a simple singular form, and if they slide down further from their power position, they may get addressed in *feminine* terms such as the second-person feminine singular pronoun, and even less, in the diminutive counterpart, which is belittling. On the contrary, an assertive, and in the eyes of men, a domineering woman of power, can be addressed in the second-person masculine singular pronoun, and such a woman would stand last in the choice for a marriage partner.

The study shows that language as a biological capacity of communication has a sociological role as a means of social construction and expressions of power relations in each social construct such as the family, the community, the clan, and the nation at large. The discourse of male and female, senior and junior, the affluent and the destitute show distinct patterns of lexical and grammatical features reflecting conflicting power positions and social relations characterized by dominance and subordination, where the subordinates use specialized terms of address in any formal discursive event with those who are high in power.

The implication of such patterns of gendered expression has to do with curriculum design, material development, teachers' training, and policy options on language use, promoting and teaching a more neutral and inclusive pedagogy and communicative behavior, introduced into the school system, gradually, evolving into a semi-flat system of language use – a possibility that is less likely to be real in the short term given the rigidly hierarchical socio-economic structure and the asymmetrical male-power politics propagated by all means, including the family, the school, the church/mosque, and the media – all out to sustain it, and all supported by the state. But it is a worthwhile enterprise to raise awareness and gradually deconstruct the fossilized lexical dichotomy in favor of an all-inclusive diction, for which education is a gateway and pre-primary level the first step.

Notes

1 The Omotic and Cushitic languages are part of a project: Beyond Access, a capacity-building project, which focuses on teacher training for early reading, funded by NORAD, whose support I duly recognize. I also am indebted to my resource persons, all of them teachers, males, and females, for the data they provided during my field trips to Hawassa and its environs in the summer of 2017.

2 This may remind one of Hamlet's bitter statement '. . . frailty, thy name is woman . . .', act one, scene two, page 15, a typical male-dominated perception of feminity in 16th- century England.
3 *Hod* 'stomach', *ɨbb* 'heart', and *anǰət* 'intestine/gut' are the locus of love and hate in Amharic. One loves someone from his *X*, or one gets someone out of his *X*, *X* = heart, stomach, etc.
4 In modern urban relationships, endearing expressions are frequent between spouses where a possessive pronominal suffix is used as its expression, as in the following Amharic examples.

(a)Kasa-yye K. – my 'My dear Kasa'
(b)Almaz-ye A. – my 'My dear Almaz'

5 There is a similar tradition known as *lagu* among the Oromo, where personal names of in-laws are modified by changing the initial consonant of the initial syllable of given names.

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10 The prevalence of gender bias in early childhood English and Amharic language textbooks

Abebech Gutema Murra

Introduction

Located in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is an ancient country of over 3,000 years. With regard to education, documents show that writing began 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. As well, until Western modern education came to the surface, traditional education has been present since the arrival of Christianity in the country. The purpose of the church education was to provide religious education and to promote doctrine. Throughout its history, the church enabled the country to develop its own script, which made it the only country in sub-Saharan Africa (Tilahun, 2020). Therefore, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church has contributed much in the religious, social and education life of its people.

With regard to formal Western-style education, it was introduced to Ethiopia in 1908. As studies indicate, at that time, only a few local students, predominantly boys, received formal schooling. According to Teshome (2003), although, formal education had been threatened and dropped from 37% to 21.7%, during the Durg regime, following the formation of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991, a new education and training policy was announced three years later.

This policy stated that the mission of education in Ethiopia was to achieve present and future national economic and social development goals. The policy recognized that one of the major problems within the Ethiopian educational system was the inequality of educational opportunities for girls, particularly those living in rural areas. The policy promised that special attention would be given to females in education. The government also issued the Education Sector Development Program Action Plan (ESDP) in order to translate this policy into action.

Nonetheless, even though the government has shown a special commitment to improve access to education for all in general, and female children's access to education in particular, the area of early childhood, which is the most crucial in a child's development, has been a totally forgotten sector until the Ethiopian government's 2010 ECCE Framework emerged. This framework has been an important advance in policy development for the youngest children.

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As in Orkin, Abebe, Yadete, and Woodhead (2012), the Ethiopian government designed this national framework for ECCE, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which also includes ideas from many innovative low-cost programs in the rest of Africa. The development of the ECCE Framework has been a comfy policy advance. The goal of the government was not only to continue to regulate the private sector and NGO providers but also to begin to offer low-cost alternative ECCE programs using two approaches: one is enabling government primary schools to provide preschool services (O class), and the other is asking teachers to train grades 5 and 6 children to lead child-to-child programs, focusing on pre-school-age children in their communities.

According to the Ministry of Education (2010a:21), the national Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for pre-school, which covers children from the ages of four to six, was only 4.2 percent in 2008/9. Nevertheless, though minimal, the GER for this age group has improved to 5.2 percent in 2010/11, which, on the other hand, is much lower than the sub-Saharan African rate, which rose from 12 percent in 2000 to 17 percent.

Nonetheless, there have been challenges in trying to deliver the potential services of ECCE, as resources are scarce and government engagement is also limited. Because of this, according to Woodhead (2009), there is heavy reliance on the private sector, whose pre-schools are a replica of primary schools.

In 1992, after the end of the civil war, nearly four in five children were out of school. By 2009, the number of primary schools increased by 140 percent. Even so, as in many other African countries, numerous ongoing access and quality challenges affect primary education, which in turn impacts the achievement of learners at the ECCE and primary settings.

Among the challenges that limit access and achievement in education, previous studies identified gender bias as the main cause. To that end, this study has examined the ECCE settings, if gender bias is still rampant and still affecting the teaching-learning process, by means of survey of the two language (Amharic English) textbooks and focus group discussion.

Bias

Females in almost all social life and activities are treated not only differently but also as others. The discriminations spring from two sources: the school and home environments. Stanworth (1988:16) says, "boys and girls – even in similar family, social class, or school – inhabit, to some extent, separate social worlds."

According to researchers like Evans (1994) and Sunderland (1994:55–56), "women constitute half of the world's population, perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and own one-hundredth of the world's property." Likewise, Munroe (2006:13) also says, "The woman has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and manipulated for thousands of years. As a result, she has been and is being abused in societies throughout the world."

As can be seen earlier, though minimal improvements have been observed here and there, women, who constitute more than half of the world's population, are still under the oppression of the other half. (Please see Evans (1994), Shalon (1971) Munroe (2006), Stanworth (1988), Mlama (2005), and others.)

Comparable with Munroe (2006:17), Warhol and Price (1991:58–67), and Moasor and Sikes (1992:148), Genet (1991:97) also says, "Finally, socialized by patriarchal thinking, many women have developed a withdrawn view about their capacities and potentials in participating in education."

As said by Stanworth (1988), what matters most is that male and female learners are discriminated and treated differently because of their sex differences in schools, where they were supposed to be judged only by their performance. In a society where males are treated as norm elements, it may not be strange for a woman to develop a withdrawn feeling and to doubt her capacity. Othering, according to Dhar (2004:76, 78), is of three kinds: encounter with the other, repression of the other, and forgetting the other.

Bias in textbooks

Most of the language that students will acquire during their schooling will be either from their teacher and/or from their textbook. For this reason, taking into account gender bias is of a significant pedagogical importance when choosing a textbook.

Trecker (1971:251), regarding textbooks, says that many important women are omitted, and even when they are mentioned, they are mentioned as inferior, passive, and dependent on males. They are discussed as though their lives are determined by economic and political trends, and they are rarely shown fighting for anything.

Regarding English language dictionaries, Porreca (1984:705) commented that English language dictionaries, which are the most used reference materials, are also contaminated with these biases and disfavor females.

According to Osaka (2003), there are seven forms of bias in instructional materials:

Invisibility: This is the fundamental and oldest form of bias in instructional materials. In the words of Porreca (1984:706), this is related to omission, which excludes females from the teaching-learning process. Omission, which is much entertained in textbooks, has a significant impact on female learners' performance and achievement.

Stereotyping: This is the most familiar form of bias that assigns a rigid set of characteristics to all members of a group at the cost of individual attributes and differences. An example of such kind of stereotype is gender, which usually manifests itself by discriminating one sex on another and by assigning roles according to sex. Stereotypes cast males as active, assertive, and curious but portrays females as dependent, conforming, and obedient. Spender quoted in Sunderland (1994:193) and Genet (1991) have also proved that it is yet another evidence for the fact that all social life is gendered. Similarly,

Osaka (2003), says that this kind of bias is *shortcuts to bigotry*. Zittliman and Sadker (2003), as well, call this kind of bias *Glib Shortcuts*.

Imbalance and Selectivity: Most of the time, if textbooks at all mention some courageous females' achievements, most of the time, the sacrifices they made, the physical abuse they suffered, and the challenges they encountered are not discussed. The researcher calls this kind of bias *A Tale Half Told*.

Unreality: According to the researcher, textbooks have enclosed a sort of notoriety for they show superficially attractive appearance over unpleasant facts and contentious events.

Osaka,under this topic, says,

> Many researchers have noted the tendency of instructional materials to gloss over unpleasant facts and events in our history. By ignoring prejudice, racism, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, sexism, and inter-group conflict, we deny students the information they need to recognize, understand, and perhaps someday conquer societal problems.
>
> The researcher calls this kind of bias *Rose-Colored Glasses*.

Fragmentation and Isolation: Fragmentation emerges when a group is physically or visually isolated in the text. Most of the time, minorities and/or racial and ethnic group members are isolated from the other group and/or community to interact only with people like themselves. Zittleman and Sadker (2003) say, in such kind of bias, *The Parts Are Less Than The Whole*.

Cosmetic Bias: Cosmetic bias offers an illusion of equity to teachers and students who may casually see the pages of a textbook. But, beyond the photos, the illustrations, and postures, bias persists. The researcher calls this *'Shiny' Covers*.

Linguistic Bias: Language and gender are inseparable for language plays a major role in gender bias. Linguistic bias puts females in an invisible position, and its influence, for example, in the socialization process of children is high, for children acquire and shape most of their identity through language. Most of these affect females' education, which is believed to be the key to equality, freedom, power, and better life.

With regard to linguistic bias, we can show some selected evidences of female-discouraging proverbs from the two instructional languages in focus: Amharic and English.

Destructive Amharic (Ethiopian language) language proverbs

These examples from Seyoum (1986:6–8) can serve as evidence:

- "Minim*set bitawk, bewond Yalk*" (in Amharic)

Meaning: "However knowledgeable a woman may be the final decision rests with a man" (1986:6).

- "*yeset kedash yelole alkash yelewum*"

Meaning: "It is unbecoming for a woman to be a priest, as it is for a man-servant to be a ceremonial mourner over his master's death" (1986:7).

- "Set*lij bemajet wend lij bechilot*"

Meaning: "The woman's place is in the Kitchen, while that of a man is in the court of law" (1986:8)

- "*Set ketemarech beklo ketegebech amel awetach*"

Meaning: "If a woman is educated or a mule is well fed, both will develop a bad habit" (1986:9)

- "*yeset temari yedoro berari yelewm"*

Meaning: "As it is impossible to find a flying chicken, it is also impossible to find a female learner."

Destructive English language proverbs

These proverbs, which are taken from *Sexism in English Proverbs and Idioms*, are evidences that linguistic bias against females is universal.

These examples by Ali and Yang (2018) show that females do not have equal place with men and are always in the accessory position.

- Aman of straw is worth of a woman of gold.
- Ifthe husband be not at home, there is nobody.
- Man,woman and devil are three degrees of comparison.

English proverbs that satire the shortcomings of women about character, for example:

- Awoman's advice is never to seek.
- Awoman and a glass are ever in danger.
- Womenare wavering as the wind.

As can be learnt from these proverbs, linguistic bias not only discourage females from performing and achieving equal with the masculine but also demoralizes them. The researcher underscores saying, "Language can be a

powerful conveyor of bias, in both blatant and subtle forms. Linguistic bias can impact race/ethnicity, gender, accents, age, ability and sexual orientation." The researcher says, *words count.*

Occupational roles

In almost all texts, sexism is again reflected in the portrayal of males and females in occupational roles. Textbooks contain a variety of occupations for men and only a limited and inferior position range of occupational roles for females.

Arnold-Gerrity (1978), quoted in Porreca (1984:706–707), says, "Men were portrayed in four times as many paying occupations as women and that the females were most frequently portrayed in a house-wife-mother capacity, occupied with household tasks and serving their children and husbands." Carroll, as quoted in Sunderland (1994:62), also says, "It is unjust to portray only house wives and future house wives in the textbooks." She further says that "it is unfair to treat them in such a way, when in reality; there are females who do what males are also doing."

According to McCarthy and Houston (1980:109), when children are trained according to traditional sex role stereotypes, the result is discrimination on the basis of sex. Whether the discrimination is conscious or unconscious, it limits choice. Children are trained to fit one role to the exclusion of the other. She further says,

> The traditional expectations in our society are quite straight forward. Females will be wives and mothers. Males will be husbands, fathers, and bread winners. No crossovers are allowed. Children naturally will grow up to be just like their mother and father.

Geston (1979:77) comments on how socialization influences the physical and emotional development of a child, saying, "Every child is born into a family whose social, economic and cultural conditions exercise a strong influence on his/her development in the first six years of life and largely condition his/her physical and emotional growth."

All in all, the occupational roles manifested in textbooks, if ever they include females, will psychologically prepare and limit the female learners to a house-wife-mother capacity.

Illustrations

Illustrations give impressions more than words. Illustrations, which serve to reinforce the textbook on use, are kinds of teaching aid, which not only help quick understanding but also attract readers' attention and concentration. They are often more useful than definition for giving meanings of words.

Regarding illustrations, Kato (1996) says, in textbooks, most of the time females are excluded and even when they are illustrated, they are given inferior position and/or are portrayed as a magnifying mirror for males.

Porreca (1984:705) also says:

> When females do not appear as often as males in the text (as well as in the illustrations which serve to reinforce the text), the implicit message is that women's accomplishments or that they themselves as human beings are not important enough to be included.

As can be learnt from the citations above, when females are excluded or less portrayed, they will be discouraged and what they want to achieve in the future would be restricted. Not only this, but it is also possible that they will psychologically withdraw themselves from the teaching learning process.

Female learners' attitude toward themselves

Self-esteem, according to Averett and Donald (1977), is one of the important psychological variables that has a potential influence on verbal participation and achievement

Brown (1977:352), regarding self-esteem, says,

> A person with high self-esteem is able to reach out beyond her/himself more freely, to be less inhibited and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to her/his ego.

Copple and Bredekamp (2009:151), with regard to this, say, "Children who see themselves as cared about and connected are more likely to feel secure, thrive physically, get along with others, learn well, and feel like part of a community."

Contrary to one of the best learning strategies for better learning, a nonassertive person, according to Brodsky (1988:185), is "fearful of being foolish or rejected and, as a result, acts as timid, cautious and passive."

Taking these reviewed studies as a baseline, this research aims at identifying the major factors that contribute to the prevalence of gender bias in the textbooks in focus, by means of survey of the English and Amharic language textbooks. In addition, to consolidate the findings, 14 randomly selected female and male learners of Geda Robelie Primary School in Adama/Nazareth, Oromia, were taken as samples to assess students' gender views, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and practices through discussion.

Results

The book survey was the major instrument used in this study. Furthermore, students' focus group discussions were also made,

Textbooks

The textbooks in focus were investigated to check whether they contain similar bias. Table 10.1 shows the result.

Table 10.1 A survey of mention of females or males (names, pronouns) in the English and Amharic textbooks

Grades	*Subject*	*Mention of Names*		*Mention of the Pronoun*	
		Female	*Male*	*She*	*He*
One	English	0	0	1	1
Two	English	30	122	13	59
Total	----------	30	122	14	60
One	Amharic	25	158	0	5
Two	Amharic	108	192	10	42
Total	----------	133	350	10	47

Mention of females or males in the English and Amharic textbooks

The result suggests that the already discussed bias in the review literature part of this paper is extant in these textbooks also. In the grade 1 Amharic textbook, females are mentioned only 25 times while boys are mentioned 158 times. The ratio is 6.32:1, in favor of boys. In the grade 2 Amharic textbook, males are mentioned 192 times while females are mentioned only 108 times. The ratio is 1.8:1 in favor of boys.

In grade 1 English textbook, no name is mentioned. In grade 2 English textbook, males are mentioned 122 times while females are mentioned only 30 times. The ratio is 4.1:1 in favor of boys. With regard to mention of the pronouns she/he, in grade 1 English textbook, both males and females are mentioned only once each. Nevertheless, in grade 2 English textbook, the pronoun 'she' is mentioned, 13 times, but the pronoun 'he' 59 times. The ratio is 4.538:1 in favor of boys.

Likewise, in grade 1 Amharic textbook, the feminine pronoun 'she' is not mentioned at all, but the pronoun 'he' is mentioned 5 times. Similarly, in grade 2 Amharic textbook, the pronoun 'she' is mentioned 10 times and the pronoun 'he' 42 times. All in all, the ratio is 5:0 and 4.2:1 respectively, in favor of boys.

Occupational roles for males and females

Regarding occupational roles, for the males, in both grade 1 and grade 2 Amharic and English textbooks we find more respected occupations: tending

the goat, father, brother, student, teacher, working, jumping, playing football, playing the "kirar," comforter, playing basketball, watching animals, gather firewood, help the woman (4), fishing, winner, goes to church, playing ball, listens, helps in shoe shop, climbing, ride motor, plays football, rows the boat, rides bike (2), rides horse, grandfather, helper, painter, tailor, arranger, lawyer (3), employer, build with blocks, ploughs, counts money, successful farmer, signs a document, built a story house (rich), paid off loan, student, tamed the horse, farmer, "**lion,**" scored three goals, punctual teacher, and so on.

The occupational roles given for females, on the other hand, are: feeding the goat, fetching water, mother (several times), sister (4), grandmother, cook (4), feed (males), sitting on the floor and serving the males, while the males are sitting on a stool eating, mother, takes care of the house, clean, sweep the floor, b**rought to justice, punished,** student, good woman, wash, "**Ape,**" silky hair, and so on.

Illustrations

The illustrations were also examined if they ever contain bias and disfavor females. The result shows that in the EFE grade 1 English textbook, males are illustrated 52 times, while females only 37 times the ratio is 1.4:1 in favor of boys. In one of the illustrations, four women were toiling to feed the males and one of the women was sitting on the floor serving the boy and the father as they are dining. Not only this, in grade 2 EFE textbook, which was also under investigation, males were portrayed 93 times, while females only 47 times. The ratio of this is 1.98:1, as usual in favor of the masculine.

In grade 1 Amharic textbook, males are illustrated 20 times, females only 18 times. The ratio of this is 1.1:1, in favor of males. In addition to this, grade 2 Amharic textbook was also examined. The result then shows that males were illustrated 69 times, while females, only 56 times. The ratio is 1.3:1 in favor of boys. It has to be noted that females were illustrated in less respected roles like sisters, mothers, wives, and the like

Table 10.2 The representations of females and males in the books' illustrations

Grade	*Illustrations*	
	Females	*Males*
1 English	37	52
1 Amharic	18	20
2 English	47	93
2 Amharic	56	69

Students' focus group discussion

The questions were designed to discover views on the attitude of students toward home environment and school environment. The next questions were designed to obtain information about some psychological, social, and educational opinions and attitudes of each child. Students' views and sexism were also investigated by means of discussion.

When asked about each family member's role, all female and male participants reconfirmed the stereotyped gender roles assigned by gender: like, for the fathers, they say, watch TV, play with the kids, stay outside, come late, and so on. and they associated cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for the kids, shopping, baking, and the like with mothers. For sisters, they say that sisters help their mothers in the house. With regard to boys' roles, they say that most boys play outside and help in the house when needed, like going to the shop or fetching water, if they are requested.

With regard to the sexes of their teachers (all teachers are female), they suggested that it would be better if they have male and female teachers in all classes.

Discussion

As reflected in the result, it seems obvious that the category of gender was further divided into two: representation and bias, each of which consisted of male and female subcategories. Based on this, the results were discussed under two main topics:

- Gender and the family environment.
- Gender and the school environment.

Gender and the family environment

The results from students' discussion and the survey verify that the textbooks, the family, and the school hold bias and discriminate females on the basis of sex. Stereotyping, which is the main source of discrimination, is rampant throughout social activities, including the family, which is the most accountable for the socialization of a child.

Results from students' discussion when listing the role of each family member (during spare times) suggest that household tasks are associated with females. This result proved that female learners are restricted to home and tied up with household chores. Males, on the other hand, are relatively free. This is in line with the findings of Genet (1991), Almaz (1990), Evans (1994), Sunderland (1994), and others.

The other item was about sex choice, and the respondents were asked about what sex they would choose if they were given another chance. For this question, all male participants and 4 female respondents confirmed that they would choose the male sex for the reasons that they wanted to be free and did not want to be treated like females.

From these findings, it seems possible to infer that children are trained according to traditional sex role stereotypes and females are victims of discrimination. Whether the discrimination is conscious or unconscious, it limits choice. Females and/or males are not free to do whatever they want, for the traditional expectations in the society are quite straightforward. No crossovers are allowed. This section, then, has reconfirmed what (I myself in previous research) and other researchers like (McCarthy & Houston, 1980; Genet, 1991; Almaz, 1990; Osaka, 2003; Evans, 1994; Sunderland, 1994, and others) have found out (as discussed) in the literature review of this chapter.

Gender and the school environment

As the results indicate, the school environment, which incorporates all stakeholders and other supplementary materials, is another setting where female learners are misjudged, harassed, and mistreated by almost all parties.

As can be observed from the results, the textbooks under investigation are proved to disfavor females with regard to mention of females and males, in the occupational roles assigned to males and females, and in the illustrations.

The result indicates that males are mentioned 472 times in the textbooks and females, on the other hand, are mentioned only 158 times. In general, the ratio is 2.98:1, in favor of males. These findings go in line with the findings of many researchers like Osaka, Millar & Swift quoted in Porreca (1984), and others, who proved that textbooks and other supplementary materials are defective and disfavor females.

On top of all, the problem is not only that males are mentioned more but that in the minimal instances females are mentioned, what matters most is how they are portrayed and how they are treated in the texts. For example,

> In the Grade Two EFE textbook, pages 81–85, the female character is ignored, forgotten, treated as inferior and shown as unimportant in the discussion. This, according to Osaka is Othering.
>
> In lesson nine of the Grade Two EFE textbook, four women are portrayed: cooking, washing and baking "Injera". In the same group, the fourth woman was illustrated, sitting on the floor and serving the two males sitting on chairs, as they are dinning. This kind of bias is called Cosmetic bias for Cosmetic bias offers an illusion of equity to teachers and students who may casually see the pages of a textbook. But, beyond the photos, the illustrations and postures, bias persists.

On the subject of occupational roles, for males, we find the best selected and respected occupations, like lawyer, manager, and so on, even if it is known that females also can do these jobs. On top of all, children who have their mothers working as doctors, teachers, engineers, officers, lawyers, drivers, and so on should see females performing these jobs in the textbooks also.

The occupational roles assigned for females, on the other hand, are mother, sister, caretaker, wife, grandmother, cooking, washing, caring for children and males, and so on. Moreover, while modifiers like obedient, sensible, important, honest, courageous, punctual, successful, and so on are associated with males, brought to justice, punished, "Ape," silky hair, and so on are associated with females.

The result of this is obvious: females are omitted and/or portrayed as inferiors and less important in the textbooks under investigation. These findings confirm what Sunderland, Genet, Osaka, Porreca, Hamner, Zittleman and Sadker, Gaston, Kato, and others have found out.

Furthermore, the results show that the same is true with the illustrations in the textbooks. In the EFE textbooks, males are illustrated 243 times, and females 146 times. The ratio of this is 1.66:1, as usual in favor of males. When females are excluded or viewed in less respected jobs, it has an implication that they are unimportant. This brings a feeling of otherness and lack of belongingness in females in general, and in female learners in particular, as discussed by Dhar (2004), Kato (1996), and Porreca (1984), in the literature review part of this chapter.

With regard to the sex of their teachers (all teachers, at this level, are females), all of the children preferred their teachers to be both sexes. All of the children repeatedly said that they like to have male teachers too.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are made:

- The family system is highly influenced by traditional gender role expectations, and females are expected to perform the household routine and care for children or their younger siblings.
- Although schools seem to serve both sexes equally, the traditional gendered view and the various kinds of biases are reflected all through the textbooks and teaching-learning process.
- The discrimination between females and males that the family, the school, and society at large practices has been accepted as normal by female students (when they show their agreement on household tasks as the responsibilities of females, etc.).
- The unbalanced portrayal of females and males in the teaching materials and the stereotyping and narrowness of female roles in the text directly or indirectly affect not only females' education but also their future life. This psychologically limits and prepares female learners for a housewife and mother capacity only.
- As is evident from the results, females in general, and female learners in particular, are omitted or treated as others, as inferior, and/or as magnifying mirror for males in all of the investigated textbooks.

Recommendations

- Continuous gender awareness trainings must be provided for textbook writers and teachers in order to address the deep-rooted stereotype gender view and practices.
- Female and male students should also acquire continuous awareness on the critical issue of gender bias to bring sustainable and positive results.
- Mainstreaming gender in the teaching-learning process and furnishing gender normalization centers in schools and immediate society are vital to address the issue of gender bias.
- The existing grade 1 and grade 2 Amharic and English language textbooks need to be replaced with other gender bias-free textbooks.

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Postscript

Ethiopian education has undergone periods of transition with little or no significant socio-cultural transformations being realized. The evangelic and political expansion of the Orthodox north to the south central, east, and west resulted in turning Judaic temples into teaching centers of the Christian and/or Islamic faith, reproducing Geez and Arabic scriptures through translations, commentaries, and fresh compositions of various service books. This makes Ethiopia one of the earliest to transition from orality to literality. However, the level of literacy achieved is considered not one of the best. Clerics who were highly mentioned were only perceived as good at reciting the exegesis from memory, a result of continuous repetition and learning by 'heart', but not for making logical connections between concepts, and/or associations of forms or referents. The tradition produced generations of people still spellbound by orality. As a consequence, only a few people could earn a living by writing, and this skill was eyed with suspicion as something almost occult.

One characteristic feature of the curriculum was that all lessons began with the identification of graphemic symbols of sounds, and the syllables were organized in seven orders with the total making a syllabary (fidəl). Specifically, the sixth syllabary order represents consonants, and the remaining orders are combinations of consonants and vowels. This sixth order is where learners identify the symbols in a teaching-learning process which is both rhyming and rhythmic. A priestly head teacher selects assistants from among the senior learners to tutor the more junior students, and the latter to lead beginners into the mastery of the syllabary. The priest's job is to oversee the whole activity with corrective steps by word of mouth and/or punitive actions of whipping the inattentive or the unruly. Learners who have identified the 231 graphemes move on to reading a text from the epistle of John, the Evangelist. They read each grapheme of every text word aloud. When approved by their tutor, they move on to reading connected graphemes of words in falling intonations and elongated vowels. At the next level, they take entire words structured to form phrases, which they read in rising intonations, and finally phrases embedded in other phrases, which they also read with high speed and still higher intonation.

Mastery of reading scriptures at such successive levels with increasing speed and varying rhythm entitles many to become priests, and just a few

to undertake higher learning of poetry, music, and hermeneutics. The best among them composes all types of poetry and reproduces existing codices by copying and making commentaries. The writing is on parchments, the production of which requires rigorous apprenticeship with a skilled bookmaker. The result is a huge collection of manuscripts now found in the custody of big monasteries and high-ranking personalities. Ethiopia, the land of one of the earliest literary productions, has had no central archives until recently; thus, a large number of highly significant heritage manuscripts and other artworks have landed in foreign libraries and museums.

The import of the above is to illustrate that reading was linguistic at its core. Phonemes, syllables, and morphemes constituted its content, along with an overlay of rhymes, rhythms, and intonations. This is lacking in semi-secular schooling where reading takes the whole form with little or no heed to its internal constituents and patterns of organization. This content and method approach were imported with foreign languages like French, English, and Arabic as subjects and/or objects, and the aim was to produce translators, administrators, and clerks for the nation's budding bureaucracy. Geez, which was the language of instruction, and Amharic, the meta-language, became school subjects, leaving room for French as a medium of instruction. The content had elements of morality and patriotism superimposed by a thin layer of 'modernity', thus a chilling effect on the indigenous form and content of schooling. This continued until the end of the Second World War in 1945, at which point English replaced French, perhaps as a homage to Britain's post-war role in the Ethiopian politics of independence and restitution. Learners had graded readers and primers in English, and stories of local content and color in Amharic. In both languages, there was reading practice, vocabulary development, handwriting, and composition – each taught as independent subject.

High reading speed with full comprehension and writing with meticulous letter accuracy became the hallmarks of scholarship. However, this was often sneered at by the school for being pedantic and elitist. Professions demonstrating such scholarship, including engineering, artisanship, and craftsmanship, were not much appreciated.

In 1955, a constitutional amendment declared Amharic as the official language of the empire state of Ethiopia. Eight years later, it replaced English as a medium of instruction across all elementary schools, throughout the empire, including Eritrea, where Tigrigna and Arabic were in use until the dissolution of the federation. This fueled the budding nationalist movements, which along with other political and economic discontents and semi-organized local oppositions, brought the imperial establishment down. Then, the military that took power in 1974 made significant reforms in the recognition of languages of Ethiopia. It introduced 15 languages as mediums of functional literacy while maintaining Amharic for primary education and as the working language of the nation.

Access to education reached an all-time high during this period of military rule, with new schools in almost every village where there was a peasant

association to oversee school safety and security. The elitist education of the imperial era became massive in enrolment. The high level of reading scores during the preceding period started to decline. The war economy could not respond to the increasingly high demand for the production of appropriate readers and primers of local content and color as in the preceding period. The best the government could do was assemble excerpts from ideologically motivated socialist literature as reading materials, and these had to be shared with three or four other students. Due to large class sizes, poorly ventilated classrooms, an uninviting school environment, poor teacher pay, and low incentive schemes, teaching became a job of last resort. The students completing elementary school could hardly read with a sense of what they were reading or write with legibility. The situation continued until the fall of the military government in 1991, and an era of ethnic nationalism unfolded. The new government introduced several reforms, including three that involved curriculum, language, and script.

In a transitional charter, the new government declared that elementary education would be conducted in mother tongues written in the Latin script as against the Semitic languages already written in the Geez script. Elementary education also became the jurisdiction of the regional governments. They introduced the mother tongues and/or school subjects wholesale with practically no training of teachers in the mother tongues, or preparing teaching materials, readers, grammar, and dictionaries in the new (Latin) script. These were challenges facing both the federal and the regional ruling elites, and it was a task that no one could tackle easily. To address this situation they chose to translate everything from Amharic into Latin scripts. Texts were translated in tandem, and anyone with a high-school certificate was allowed to teach reading and writing in the Latin script. The outcome was an ever-decreasing level of reading and writing. The transfer across scripts had negative impacts, leading to poor reading and spelling skills.

The whole enterprise ensured access to education with little or no meaningful success in relation to learners' behavioral change and cognitive capacities. This was the genesis for the project Beyond Access, which set out to look into the past and then create a new vision into the future of teacher training, curriculum design, material development, home-classroom linkage, felicitous language use, humane student-teacher interactions, and learning assessments.

Throughout the history of education, the school and the home have had three things in common, namely, the absolute power of the father in the family and the absolute authority of the teacher in the classroom. Both the home and the classroom were impoverished in materials that could stimulate the mind of the learner. In both the home and the classroom, the language of interaction has not been in the best of felicitous diction. Education is not only what one delivers but also how one delivers it. The latter is as essential as the former in cultivating the creative potential of the mind and the executing capacity of the body.

Baye Yimam

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