



AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF AND/OR FAMILIARITY WITH THE DIALECTS OF AFAN OROMO AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO STUDENTS' LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The use of students' native dialect in education is argued to enhance the social, cognitive, emotional and linguistic development of learners' in and out of school. Thus, it is said that the varieties of language deserve respect and recognition in schools. In addition, students' awareness and understanding of the different dialects of a language can play a pivotal role in facilitating the students' learning and improving their performance. Hence, it is important to assess whether or not students know the other dialects of Afan Oromo than their own home dialect. With this regard, the main purpose of this study is to describe students' experience of and/or familiarity with the dialects of Afan Oromo. To achieve this purpose, descriptive research design was employed. Besides, questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data from Grade 8 students of four dialect areas. The quantitative data gathered via the closed-ended questionnaire was coded and filled into Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 16.0). Next, different descriptive statistics such as frequencies and cross tabulation were applied to the SPSS data. From the analysis of the data the study come up with different findings. For instance, the majority of the students (75.6%) in both urban and rural schools of the four dialect areas replied that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. Besides, the majority of the students (86.7%) in the four dialect areas reported that they had a chance to speak with and understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. The study also divulged that the majority of the students (70.8%) in the four dialect areas could speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. From the analysis and discussion made the following were concluded. The study revealed that in some dialect areas students achieved the extent to which they reported they had the knowledge of the other dialects of Afan Oromo. This would mean that having the knowledge of dialects was related to the achievement of the students. This would, in tum, imply that using the dialects which are familiar to students is important for the learning and achievement of students. Hence, it could be argued that the use of the dialects familiar to students could provide educational advantages to learners as the variety is intimate to the students.

Key Words: Achievement, Afan Oromo dialects, Education, Students Experience, Understanding, Home dialects , other dialects, Learning,

1. Introduction

There are different varieties of the same language (Wolfram et al., 1999). The language varieties spoken in certain community can be classified as standard and non-standard dialects. The standard dialect is a prestigious, codified variety that has the highest social status and used in formal occasions (Sailzmann, 2007). The non-standard dialect is any variety of language which is not standardized and lacks prestige (Cook, 2003). Sometimes the standards variety is considered as a language, whereas the non-standard variety is considered as a dialect (Downes, 1998).

It is argued that the varieties of a language play an important role in an academic setting. Learning is claimed to be better and more successful when conducted in the variety spoken by students (Cheshire, 2005). Cheshire (2007: 22) further noted, "There is general consensus, in fact, among educationalist and sociolinguistics alike, that valuing dialect in the classroom makes real difference to educational achievement of speakers." Besides, the consideration of dialects in education enhances the social, cognitive, emotional and linguistic development of learners' in and out of school. In addition, students'



awareness and understanding of the different dialects of a language can play a pivotal role in facilitating the students' learning and improving their performance. These necessitate the need to address (or compromise) the different varieties of a language.

Practically selecting and compromising standard and non-standard varieties in different spheres of life such as in education, politics, social, etc., seems complex and controversial (Cook, 2003). However, in most countries, the standard variety has been only used and taught in schools (Cheshire, 2005). The non-standard dialects have been officially unacceptable in schools (Rosenberg, 1989). On the other hand, students go to schools from both standard and non-standard varieties (Cheshire, 2007). Thus, there has been a mismatch between the varieties used at schools and those used at home.

In Oromiya, students also go to primary schools from different dialectal backgrounds (Afan Oromo and its dialects is briefly explained in the next section). The students could have different experience of dialect variations. As a result, the impact of dialectal variations may not be similar for all students. However, there is little empirical research on whether students' have an experience of and/or familiarity with the dialects of Afan Oromo. Hence, it is important to assess whether or not students know the other dialects of Afan Oromo than their own home dialect. With this regard, this study is intended to describe students' experience of and/or familiarity with the dialects of Afan Oromo.

2. Brief Overview of Afan Oromo and Its Dialects

Oromiya is one of the Regional States in the current Federal Government of Ethiopia that is mainly inhabited by Oromo People. Oromo People speak their own native language known as Afan Oromo. Afan Oromo, Oromo Language, is an Afro-Asiatic language, and the most widely spoken of the [Cushitic](#) family. It is one of the major indigenous African languages that is widely spoken and used in most parts of Ethiopia and some parts of the neighboring countries (Mekuria, 1994). Afan Oromo is spoken by 40 percent of Ethiopian population (Kebede, 2009). In Ethiopia, Afan Oromo is spoken as a lingua franca by other people who are in contact with Oromo people. According to Mekuria (1994) and Feyisa (1996), Afan Oromo is used by different nationalities such as Harari, Sidama, Anuak, Gurage, Amhara, Koma, Kulo and Kaficho as a means of communication and trade with their neighboring Oromo people. In connection to this, Amanuel and Samuel (2012:32) stated that "It [Afan Oromo] is also used as a language of inter-group communication in several parts of Ethiopia."

Besides, outside Ethiopia, Afan Oromo is spoken in Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Tanzania (Tilahun, 1993). These make Afan Oromo one of the most widely spoken languages in Africa (Bender, 1976). Afan Oromo has an officially decided writing script known as Qubee, which is based on the Latin orthography (Girma, 2001). Furthermore, it is the most widely spoken language of the Cushitic family. Afan Oromo is spoken in a vast territory of Ethiopia ranging from Tigray in the North to the Central Kenya in the South, and from Wallagga in the West to Harar in the East. In these areas, it is spoken with several dialects (Ali and Zaborski, 1990).

Afan Oromo shows variations based on the geographical areas where it is spoken. Such variations are termed as regional dialects. Different attempts have been made by scholars to classify the dialects of Afan Oromo based on the geographical background of the speakers. The most recent attempt made at classifying and mapping of Afan Oromo dialects is by Kebede (2009). He conducted a detailed study on the genetic classification of Afan Oromo dialects and concluded that there are ten genetic units in Afan Oromo. Among these, six of them are the present dialect areas (i.e., Western, Central, Eastern, Wallo,



Raya-spoken in Ethiopia and Waata-spoken in Kenya) and four of them (i.e., East, South-East-North, North, North-East) are historical genetic units from which the former developed.

Students' awareness and understanding of the different dialects of a language can play a pivotal role in facilitating the students' learning and improving their performance. Hence, it is important to assess whether or not students know the other dialects of Afan Oromo than their own home dialect. With this regard, the main purpose of this study is to describe students' experience of and/or familiarity with the Dialects of Afan Oromo.

3. Research Methodology

This study was designed to describe students' experience of and/or familiarity with the dialects of Afan Oromo in primary educational context. Specifically, the research is intended to investigate and describe whether or not there are the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in the students' community and/or school whether or not the students' speak with and understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects and if students' have the knowledge of the Afan Oromo dialects other than their own dialect. These activities are more of descriptive in their nature. Accordingly, descriptive research design was used to carry out this research project.

Students were believed to provide the data desired for the study. Thus, they were selected as the participants of this study. To select sample for this study, first Regions and Dialect areas where Afan Oromo is spoken were selected purposively because the necessary data for this study was believed to be collected from the two regions. Besides, Afan Oromo spoken in these two regions is classified into four main dialect areas: Central Dialect, Eastern Dialect, Wallo Dialect and Western Dialect (Kebede, 2009). These dialect areas were selected purposively for similar reasons. Then, one zone was selected randomly from each Central, Eastern and Western Dialect Areas but one zone was selected from the Wallo Dialect Area by convenient sampling. Next, Schools in each zone were classified into two (urban and rural) by stratified sampling. The classification of the school into two was made purposively. After schools were classified into urban and rural; one school from each school category was selected randomly. Grade 8 students were purposively selected for this study. Finally, proportional sample was used to select students from each section.

Questionnaire was used to collect data from students. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on the awareness, view and understanding of the participants about Afan Oromo dialects. The qualitative data gathered from questionnaire and interview was organized according to related themes and translated to English. Then, the data was analyzed comparing and contrasting the dialect areas and school locations of the respondents. However, the quantitative data collected via questionnaire was coded and filled into the SPSS. Then, different statistical analyses such as frequency and cross tabulation were applied to the SPSS data. Finally, the statistical results were described and interpreted qualitatively.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Whether or Not there are the Speakers of the Other Afan Oromo Dialects in the

Students' Community and/or School

In addition to knowing and using their own dialects, students may get the experience of the other Afan Oromo dialects directly or indirectly. Consequently, their learning may not be affected for knowing only their own home dialects. One way of getting experience is by communicating with the speakers of the other



dialects who may live in their community and/or school. In this study, an attempt was made to identify if there were speakers of the other dialects in the students' school and/or community. To assess the students' disclosure to the other dialects, they were asked if there were the speakers of the other dialects of Afan Oromo in their community and/or school. The data obtained in this regard is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Whether or not there are Speakers of the Other Afan Oromo Dialects in the School and/or Community of the Students

Item	Dialect Areas	School Locations	Responses						Total	
			Yes		No		Not Sure		No	%
			No	%	No	%	No	%		
Are there speakers of the other dialects of Afan Oromo in your school and/or community?	Central	Urban	29	59.2	-	-	-	-	29	59.2
		Rural	20	40.8	-	-	-	-	20	40.8
		Total	49	100	-	-	-	-	49	100
	Eastern	Urban	28	32.6	11	12.8	1	1.2	40	46
		Rural	27	34.1	14	16.3	5	5.8	46	54
		Total	55	64	25	29.1	6	7	86	100
	Wallo	Urban	19	36.5	8	15.4	3	5.8	30	57.7
		Rural	17	32.7	4	7.7	1	1.9	22	42.3
		Total	36	69.2	12	23.1	4	7.7	52	100
	Western	Urban	31	36.5	8	9.4	6	7.1	45	52.9
		Rural	28	32.9	11	12.9	1	1.2	40	47.1
		Total	59	69.4	19	22.4	7	8.2	85	100



Responses

As shown in Table 1, 29(59.2%) urban school students and 20(40.8%) rural school students in the Central Dialect replied that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. In the Eastern Dialect, 28(32.6%) urban school students and 27(31.4%) rural school students reported that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. However, 11(12.8%) urban school students and 14(16.3%) rural school students said that there were no speakers of the other dialects in their school and/or community.

In the Wallo Dialect, 19(36.5%) urban school students and 17(32.7%) rural school students responded there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. Nevertheless 8(15.4%) urban school students and four rural school students stated that there were no speakers of the other dialects in their school and/or community. Besides, 31(36.5%) urban school students and 28(32.8%) rural school students in the Western Dialect replied that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. However, 8(9.4%) urban school students and 11(12.9%) rural school students reported that there were no speakers of the other dialects in their school and/or community.

The data in Table 1 revealed that the Central Dialect students get more opportunity to share an experience on the dialects of Afan Oromo than the students of the other dialect areas. However, there were no major differences in the response of the Eastern, Wallo and Western Dialect Areas. Besides, the study disclosed that in the Central Dialect the number of the urban school students who replied that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects was greater than the rural school students. This confirms the assumption of the study. It was assumed that the urban school students may have more exposure to the speakers of the other dialects and could get experiences of dialects more than the rural school students. However, in the Eastern, Wallo and Western Dialect Areas the number of the urban and rural school students who said there were speakers of the other dialects in their school was almost similar. This disagrees with the premise of the study.

In general, the majority of the students (75.6%) in both urban and rural schools of the four dialect areas replied that there were the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. This may mean that the students had a good opportunity to share an experience on the Afan Oromo dialects. This in turn, could help students' to have an awareness and understanding of the different dialects of Afan Oromo that may facilitate the students' learning and improves their performance. Below is the students' understanding of the other Afan Oromo dialects.

4.2. Whether or Not the Students' Speak with and Understand the Speakers of the Other Afan Oromo Dialects.

Students who replied there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their community and/or school were further asked if they could speak with and understand the speakers. Their responses are indicated below.

Table 2: Whether or not the Students can speak with and understand the Speakers of the Other Afan Oromo Dialects



		Yes		No		Total		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	
Can you speak with a and understand other dialect speakers in your school and/or community?	Central	Urban	26	53.1	3	6.1	29	59.2
		Rural	20	40.8	-	-	20	40.8
		Total	46	93.9	3	6.1	49	100
	Eastern	Urban	18	32.7	10	18.2	28	50.9
		Rural	24	43.6	3	5.5	27	49.9
		Total	42	76.4	13	23.6	55	100
	Wallo	Urban	18	50	1	2.8	19	52.8
		Rural	15	41.7	2	5.6	17	47.2
		Total	33	91.7	3	8	36	100
	Western	Urban	27	45.8	4	6.8	31	52.6
		Rural	23	39	5	8.4	28	47.4
		Total	50	84.8	9	15.2	59	100

As can be seen in table 2, 26(53.1%) urban school students and 20(40.8%) rural school students in the Central Dialect said that they could understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. In addition, 18(32.7%) urban school students and 24(76.4%) rural school students in the Eastern Dialect reported they could understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. However, 10(18.2%) urban school students and three rural school students felt that they could not understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects.

In the Wallo Dialect, 18(50%) urban school students and 15(41.7%) rural school students replied that they could understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. Besides, 27(45.8%) urban school students and 23(39%) rural school students in the Western Dialect thought that they could understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. But, four urban school students and 5(8.4%) rural school students could not understand the other Afan Oromo dialects speaker.

The data presented in table 2 disclosed that the urban school students in the Central, Wallo and Western Dialect Areas get more chance to speak with the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects than the rural school students. This result confirms the assumption of the study. It was assumed that urban school students could get more experience of dialects and their understanding of dialects would be better. However, in the Eastern Dialect the rural school students get more opportunity to speak with the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects than the urban school students. This is contrary to the premises of the study.

Besides, the study indicated that the Central and Wallo Dialect Areas the students' understanding of the other Afan Oromo dialects was better than the students of the other dialect areas. However, the understanding of the Eastern Dialect students was less compared to the students of the other dialect areas. The data also revealed that the majority of the students (86.7%) located in the urban and rural schools of the four dialect areas had the chance to speak with the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. This may mean that the students had an experience of the other Afan Oromo dialects. This would, in turn, facilitate the students' understanding of the Afan Oromo dialects used in the textbooks and National Exams.



4.3. Similarities between the Respondents’ Home Dialects

Student’s friends and/or classmates are part of a community from which learners can get the experiences of different things in life including languages and/or dialects. It is considered that if students speak the same language with their friends and/or classmates, but differ in their dialects, the learners can get the experience of dialects from each other and develop their knowledge of the various dialects of a language. This will, in turn, facilitate students’ understanding of the dialects used in the textbooks and National Exams. Having the experiences of the other Afan Oromo dialects could also minimize the possible challenges that the learners may encounter in their learning due to dialect differences. In this study, an attempt was made to point out the similarity of the dialects used by the students with their classmates’ and /or friends’ home dialect. Table 3 displays the data obtained in this regard.

Table 3: The Similarity of Students’ Home Dialects with their Friends’ Home Dialects

Item	Dialect Areas	School Locations	Responses							
			Yes		No		Not Sure		Total	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Is your classmates and friends’ home dialect similar to your own dialect?	Central	Urban	26	53.1	3	6.1	-	-	29	59.2
		Rural	17	34.7	2	4.1	1	2	20	40.8
		Total	43	87.8	5	10.2	1	2	49	100
	Eastern	Urban	24	27.9	7	8.1	9	10.5	40	46.5
		Rural	34	39.5	10	11.6	2	2.3	46	53.5
		Total	58	67.4	17	19.8	11	12.8	86	100
	Wallo	Urban	22	44	3	6	3	6	28	56
		Rural	15	30	3	6	4	8	22	44
		Total	37	74	6	12	7	14	50	100
	Western	Urban	27	31.8	9	10.6	9	10.6	45	52.9
		Rural	26	30.6	11	12.9	3	3.5	40	47.1
		Total	53	62.4	20	23.5	12	14.1	85	100

Table 3 depicted that 26(53%) urban school students and 17(34.7%) rural school students in the Central Dialect said that their home dialect was similar to home dialect of their classmates. But, three urban school students and two rural school students stated that their home dialect was different from their friends’ home dialect. In the Eastern Dialect, 24(27.9%) urban school students and 34(39.5%) rural school students said their dialect was similar to the home dialect of their friends. However, 10(11.6%) rural school students reported that their home dialect is different from their friends’ home dialect.

In addition, 22(44%) urban school students and 15(30%) rural students in the Wallo Dialect said their home dialect was similar to their friends’ home dialect. But three urban school students and three rural school students reported that their dialect was different from their classmates’ home dialect. In the Western Dialect Area, 27(31.8%) urban school students and 26(30.6%) rural school students replied that their home dialect was similar to the home dialect of their friends. However, 9(10.6%) urban school students and 11(12.9%) rural school students stated that their home dialect was different from the home dialect of their classmates.



Therefore, it can be said that the majority of the students (73%) in the four dialect areas had similar home dialects with their friend and/or classmates. However, a limited number of the students (16.4%) had different home dialect from their friends. This may entail the students having a dialect different from their friend may get a chance to share an experience on dialects from their friends. In the next section, students' knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects is presented.

4.4. Whether or not Students know the other Dialects of Afan Oromo

Students were also asked whether or not they have the knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects than their home own dialect. Table 4 depicts the summary of the students' response.

Table 4: Students' Knowledge of the Afan Oromo Dialects Other than their Own Dialect

Item	Dialect Areas	School Locations	Responses							
			Yes		No		Not Sure		Total	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Can you speak and understand (Know) another dialects of A/O other than your own home dialect?	Central	Urban	21	42.9	7	14.3	1	2	29	59.2
		Rural	15	30	4	8.2	1	2	20	40.8
		Total	36	73.5	11	22.4	2	4	49	100
	Eastern	Urban	22	25.3	16	18.4	2	2.3	40	46
		Rural	22	25.3	20	23	5	5.7	46	54
		Total	44	50.6	36	41.4	7	8	86	100
	Wallo	Urban	22	42.3	7	13.5	1	9	30	57.7
		Rural	16	30.8	6	11.5	-	-	22	42.3
		Total	38	73.1	13	25	1	9	52	100
	Western	Urban	32	37.6	13	15.3	-	-	45	52.9
		Rural	26	30.6	11	12.9	3	3.5	40	47.1
		Total	58	68.2	11	28.2	3	3.5	85	100

Table 4 shows that, 21(42.9%) urban school students and 15(30%) rural school students in the Central Dialect replied that they had the knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects. However, 7(14.3%) urban school students and four rural school students reported that they could not speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. In the Eastern Dialect, 22(25.3%) urban school students and 22(25.3%) rural school students thought that they knew the other dialects of Afan Oromo. However, 16(18.4%) urban school students and 20(23%) rural school students said that they could not speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo.

Besides, 22(42.3%) urban school students and 16(30.8%) rural school students in the Wallo Dialect reported that they knew the other dialects of Afan Oromo. Nevertheless, 7(13.5%) urban school students and 6(11.5%) rural school students said that they could not speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. In the Western Dialect, 32(37.6%) urban school students and 26(30.6%) rural school students replied that they knew the other dialects of Afan Oromo. However, 13(15.3%) urban school students and 11(12.9%) rural school students responded that they could not speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo.



From the data presented in table 4, the following points could be said. The majority of the students (70.8%) could speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. It was also revealed that there were variations in the students' ability to speak and understand the other Afan Oromo dialects. For instance, the data disclosed that the knowledge of the Central, Wallo and Western Dialect students was almost similar. Nevertheless, the knowledge of the students in the Eastern Dialect was less compared to the students of the other dialect areas. The study also divulged that the urban and rural school students' knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects differs. For instance, the urban school students in the Central, Wallo and Western Dialect Areas reported that they knew the other Afan Oromo dialects more than the rural school students. This finding appeared to confirm the assumption of this study. Nevertheless, in the Eastern Dialect there was no much variation between the urban and rural school students on their knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects. This result appeared to disagree with the assumptions of the study.

Furthermore, the students' knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects was compared with students' achievement on the National Exams of the 2004(E.C) to see if there is any correlation. The comparison revealed two findings. The first result was that in some dialect areas students achieved the extent to which they felt that could understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. For example, about 73.5% of the Central Dialect students said that they understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. Similarly, the analysis of the students' results (See Table 20.1 on Appendix 10.1) disclosed that about 74.6% of the Central Dialect students aggregately achieved $\geq 50\%$ on Afan Oromo, Biology and Geography National Exams of the 2004 (E.C). The comparison revealed that the students' knowledge of the other dialects was related to their achievement. With this regard, Solano-Flores and Li (2006) reported that students achieved better on the Exams administered in the variety they are familiar with than the other variety.

In the other dialect areas, however, the students' knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects and the students' result of the National Exams do not go together. For instance, about 73.1% of the Wallo Dialect students and about 68.2% of the Western Dialect students said that they could speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. However, about 42.8% of the Wallo Dialect students and about 89.1% of the Western Dialect students scored an aggregate result of $\geq 50\%$ on Afan Oromo, Biology and Geography National Exams of the 2004(E.C). These results show that the Wallo Dialects students achieved less than and the Western Dialects students achieved more than the extent to which they reported they had the knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects. These two evidences disclosed that the students' knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects and their achievements on the National Exams was not related.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The result of data analysis revealed the majority of the students (75.6%) in both urban and rural schools of the four dialect areas replied that there were speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects in their school and/or community. This may mean that the students had good opportunity to share experiences on the dialects of Afan Oromo. Besides, the majority of the students (86.7%) in the four dialect areas reported that they had a chance to speak with and understand the speakers of the other Afan Oromo dialects. This may mean that the students had an experience of the other dialects of Afan Oromo. But, the responses of the students tend to vary according to their dialect areas and school locations. For instance, students of the Central Dialect (93.9%) and the Wallo Dialect (91.7%) thought that their understanding of the other Afan Oromo dialects was better than the students of the other dialect areas.

Besides, the majority of the students (70.8%) in the urban and rural schools of the four dialect areas felt that they could speak and understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. Besides, the study revealed that in



some dialect areas students achieved as much as the extent to which they reported they had the knowledge of the other Afan Oromo dialects. For example, about 73.5% of the Central Dialect students said that they could understand the other dialects of Afan Oromo. Similarly, the analysis of the students' achievement divulged that about 74.6% of the Central Dialect students aggregately achieved $\geq 50\%$ on Afan Oromo, Biology and Geography National Exams of the 2012. This would mean that having the knowledge of dialects was related to the achievement of the students. Hence, it can be argued that using the dialects familiar to students could provide educational advantages to learners as the variety is intimate to the students.

The analysis of data revealed that about 73% of the students in the four dialect areas had similar home dialects with their friend and/or classmates. However, a limited number of the students (16.4%) had different home dialect from their friends' home dialect. This may entail that the students having a home dialect different from their friend may get a chance to share an experience on Afan Oromo dialects from their friends.

From the analysis and discussion made the following were concluded. The study revealed that in some dialect areas students achieved the extent to which they reported they had the knowledge of the other dialects of Afan Oromo. This would mean that having the knowledge of dialects was related to the achievement of the students. This would, in turn, imply that using the dialects which are familiar to students is important for the learning and achievement of students. Hence, it could be argued that the use of the dialects familiar to students could provide educational advantages to learners as the variety is intimate to the students.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Afan Oromo dialects study should be given a separate section in Afan Oromo textbook. It is noted that having the awareness of the dialects of a language is important in facilitating the achievement and learning of students and in developing their language as well. Hence, dialect study should be given a separate section in Afan Oromo textbook and it should be part of language study. Particularly, students should learn dialects and their equivalent words in different areas as a lesson in Afan Oromo. Besides, variations in dialects should be encouraged in schools to show the richness of the language.

5.2. The dialects of Afan Oromo should be fairly represented in the textbooks and National Exams: In this study it was revealed that in some dialect areas students achieved the extent to which they reported they had the knowledge of the other dialects of Afan Oromo. This finding would suggest the necessity to consider dialects while preparing the textbooks and National Exams. Thus, there should be fair representation of Afan Oromo dialects while preparing textbooks, National Exams and other reference materials. In addition, textbook and Exam writers should look for words almost having similar realization in the four dialect areas. They should also put optional word in a bracket if they think that the word can be difficult for students. Furthermore, the textbook and Exam writers should provide glossary at the end of the textbook where list of words with their equivalent words in different dialects is given.

5.3. Training should be given to the textbook and National Exam writers generally on the role and contributions of dialects for the learning and achievement of students and how to select dialects for instructional purpose in multidialectal society. Specifically, the textbook and National Exam writers should be given detail training on the dialects of Afan Oromo and how they should select the Afan Oromo dialects



for textbooks and National Exams. By doing so, it is possible to raise the awareness of the writes on the selection of dialects for textbooks and National Exams writing.

5.4. It is also important to provide training and orientation for teachers in the areas of language and language diversity in general, and Afan Oromo and dialects of Afan Oromo in particular. Besides, they should learn the linguistic features of Afan Oromo dialects and how to address Afan Oromo dialectal variation in the teaching learning process. The issue of Afan Oromo dialectal variations and addressing dialects in education should be part and parcel of teacher trainings. Teachers should learn about dialects before they start the actual job of teaching. They should have clear understanding about dialects and should have the knowledge about potential problems that may be caused due to dialects and their solution. Hence, dialects in general and Afan Oromo dialects in particular should be among the courses in teacher training and in-service teacher training

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