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## Assessing the Efforts Made by Learners to Prepare Themselves for Grade 10 Mother Tongue (Wolaytato) National Exams: The Case of Four Selected Schools in Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

The objective of the study was to assess learners' effort to prepare themselves for grade 10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exams. The participants of the study were teachers, students, school directors, parents and wereda education experts. Questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion were used as tools to collect the data. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis method were used to conclude that data. Thus, the study approved that students relatively tried to prepare themselves for the national exam by studying in group and pair. However, students did not strive from their bottom of heart to score better result. According to the research findings, students still have irrelevant attention towards mother tongue education and this is one of the factors that affected their result in grade-10 Mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam. Accordingly, it was recommended that the students should give due attention to Mother Tongue (Wolaytato) so as to achieve better result in grade-10 national exam. Wereda Education offices in collaboration with Wolayta Zone education department should carefully follow that grade-10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam is administered according to Mother tongue (Wolaytato) curriculum, textbook and curriculum.

### Article Info

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### Keywords

Achieve, National exam, Students' effort, Wolaytato

### Introduction

According to Zewdu Nigussie (2014) the main goal of education is to transmit knowledge, values, norms and other elements of culture to which individual belong. As an instrument of communication exchange of ideas, language is prime vehicle to this endeavor. Languages play a central role for the acquisition of information, cognitive and personal development. Besides, it is through language that information is acquired, interpreted or expressed whatever the mode of learning is (Marew, 1998) as cited by Zewdu Nigussie (2014). According to some scholars, the current view in

education is that learning is enhanced when learners are given opportunities to talk about ,write about or read about topics in an exploratory or reflective way that assist them in making senses of new knowledge and ideas. Besides, all school subjects will require learners to collaboratively work to describe, to compare, to classify, to sequence etc. In all these efforts, students would be able to use language and learn the content of school subjects at the same time.

According to (Coombs, 1985) as cited by Zewude Nigussie (2014) the quality of education and the learning achievement of the student depend heavily on the

competence, personality and education of teachers. This show the contribution and importance of qualified teachers in enhancing the student`s achievement as well as in attaining the educational objective efficiently. Thus, training a well qualified teachers has a great role to help students score better result in their national exam.

One of the major procedures which provide information for the students learning was national assessment of educational achievement (Thomas Kellaghan, 2004). This means that the effectiveness of students' learning was determined and measured by the national exam. Thus, to be effective in their national exam and to achieve better result, students have to work hard and pay due attention to their lesson.

The main emphasize of this study was to assess the strives made by students prepare them for grade 10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam. The main rationale for conducting this study was the researchers' observation of the students' result in grade -10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam from the record office of selected secondary schools in Wolayta Zone. The students are expected to achieve better result in their native language. However, grade 10 Wolaytato national exam result of the students from the academic year of 2015-2018, shows that students' score was diminishing from year to year. This may be due to various factors like less effort of teachers and students, classroom conditions and school facilities and so on. However, the students were not giving relevant attention to Wolaytato subject so as to pass grade 10 national exam. Almost all students focus on other subjects like English, Amharic, Civics and Geography. The student try their best to score better result in grade 10 national exam, but the problem is they do not give equal tone for Wolayta language and they do not study from bottom of their heart and this is why they score poor result in national exam.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study was to assess efforts made by learners to prepare themselves for grade 10 mother tongue national exams.

### **Materials and Methods**

#### **The research design**

Both qualitative and quantitative research design was used in this study because it was suitable to investigate the significance of national examination with reference

to its curriculum ,syllabus and textbook and the nature of the research also invites the research to use both of them.

#### **Research setting**

The research was conducted in Wolaita Zone which is one of thirteen zones found in SNNPR,Ethiopia. Thus, the research was conducted in four Woredas of Wolayta Zone (DamotGale, Humbo, KindoDidaye, and DugunaFango ). These four weredaswere purposively selected. The reason for selecting them purposivelywas the researchers' belief to get ample information from those weredas.

#### **Research population**

The research was carriedout in Wolaita Zone, SNNPR. The estimated sample population for this study was four Woredas i.e Humbo, Damot Gale, KindoDidaye and DugunaFango. From all these Woredas totally 104 students were selected using purposive sampling technique. This was mainly because the researchers wanted to participate those individuals who could offer rich information. From all weredas totally 8 teachers ,4 school principals, 4 weredas education experts and 8 parents were selected by using purposive sampling technique for study as sample size and this was the research population. Thus, the total population of the study were 128.

#### **Sample size and sampling technique**

The total population size of the study was 128. In order to get this sample, the researcher used purposive sampling techniques for all population. The reason for using purposive sampling is to participate the research subjects who can provide rich information to the study .Among selected four Woredas, one secondary schools from each Woredas were selected purposively by taking in to account its accessibility to the area. From one selected schools in each Woredas, only grades 10 students were selected using purposive sampling so as to get those students who could offer ample data in the research project. From each school in selected Woredas, two sections were selected by using purposive sampling technique. This was based on information about the students that were given by the school principals so as to get adequate information from the students. From each section, 13 students were selected using purposive sampling techniques to involve both genders. Hence, 26 students were selected from each wereda and so that totally 104 (26 x4) students were participated in the

study. Two Wolayta Language teachers were selected purposely from each school in each Weredas. This was to get rich data from the subject teachers. Thus, totally 8 teachers were selected. In addition, 1 school director from each school was selected purposely and so that totally 4 school principals were involved in the study. In each wereda 1 wereda education experts were involved and so that totally 4 wereda education experts were engaged in study. 8 educated parents were also involved in the study. Hence, the total samples were 128 and this was to have ample data from the population.

### Tools for data collection

Three instruments were used to collect data for this study. These were interview, focus group discussion and questionnaire.

### Data analysis

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data analysis method were employed. This was because the data was gathered qualitatively and quantitatively by using interview, focus group discussion and questionnaire. The data gathered by using these three tools were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. During analysis priority was given to questionnaire then interview data to focus group discussion. The data gathered using three tools were analyzed in the form of text and in number in table 1. After that the result of data gathered by using three tools were triangulated.

## Results and Discussions

### 3.1 Efforts made by learners to prepare themselves for grade ten mother tongue national exams on time?

As can be seen from table 1, item 4.1,8 ( 12.5% ) of the respondents replied that studying in group and pair is one of the efforts made by students to prepare themselves for grade 10 mother tongue ( Wolaytato) national exam. Again 7(10.9% ) of the respondents answered that attending the classroom lesson effectively is the efforts made by students to prepare themselves for Grade 10 Wolayttatto national exam. Again, 10.9% of the respondents replied that attempting the past national examination questions to gather with textbooks is one of the efforts made by students to prepare themselves for the national examination and 14.06% of the respondents also said that reading grammar from the text book is one of the attempts made by students for the preparation of grade-10 Wolayttatto national exam. In addition,

properly attending tutorial and make up class affectively is also one of the attempts made by students for the preparation of grade-10 Wolayttatto national exam. However, the majority of the respondents about 10(37.5 % ) replied that students are doing all the above items i.e., students study in group and pair as well as they attend the class lesson effectively. They also attempt the past national examination questions with text book and they also study grammars and properly attend the tutorial and make up lesson effectively.

The above data found from questionnaire shows that students made various effort to prepare themselves for the national exam. However, the data found from interview depicts that students don not give equal tone for Wolaytato subject as that of other subjects like English and Mathematics and other subjects due to perception problem. Let us see some of the responses below

*Students consider Wolayta language as local and do not want to learn it for the sake knowledge, rather they simply learn and study it simply for the sake of passing the exam. They do not study it as equally as that of other subjects( p6,p7,p8,p9,p10,p11)*

*We as a teacher encourage students to prepare themselves for the exam and do different work sheets and national exam questions. We also give tutorial lesson for the students to prepare themselves for the exam. However, students have less interest towards Wolaita language instruction and they do not give attention to the classroom lessons. They even do not want to attend tutorial class and it is a teacher who thinks for them more than they do. Thus, students preparation may not be enough for the national exam (P1,p5,p14&p16).*

The data of focus group discussion shows relatively different results: some of the participants responded that students prepare themselves for the national exam. Students read and do different activities to pass the national exam. They said that for questions related to proverbs we asks teachers and elders to understand it. We also do different questions in textbooks and in past national examination questions to prepare us for the national exam.

Based on the above data found from the interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion, one can assume even if students relatively tried to prepare themselves for the national exam by studying in group and pair, attending the class lesson attentively and

attempting past national examination questions to gather with textbooks, they have still attitudinal problems regarding Wolaita language and they do not give equal

value for Wolaita Language as they do for other subjects like English, Geography etc.

**Table.1** Efforts made by learners to prepare themselves for grade ten mother tongue national exams on time?

No	Items	f	%
4.1.	Studying in group and pair	8	12.5
4.2	Attending the classroom lesson effectively	7	10.94
4.3.	Attempting past national examination questions to gather with textbooks	7	10.94
4.4.	Reading grammars from textbook	9	14.06
4.5	Properly attending tutorial and make up class affectively	10	15.63
4.6.	All	24	37.5

f= frequency

%= percentage

Conclusions and recommendation are as follows:

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made.

As can be seen from the research findings, students relatively tried to prepare themselves for the national exam by studying in group and pair. However, the study clearly indicated that students did not strive from their bottom of heart to score better result.

Attending the class lesson attentively and attempting past national examination questions to gather with textbooks is also some of the ways students used to prepare them themselves for the national exam.

The study also have approved that students still have attitudinal problems regarding Wolaita language and they do not give equal value for Wolaita Language as they do for other subjects like English, Geography etc.

According to the research findings students still have irrelevant attention towards mother tongue education and this is one of the factors that affected their result in grade-10 Mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

The students should give due attention to Mother Tongue (Wolaytato) so as to achieve better result in grade-10 national exam.

Teachers should carefully advise the students to give relevant attention to mother tongue education and should work hard to achieve better result in grade 10 Wolaytato national exam.

Training should be given for teachers in a ways of handing students so as to give due attention to the Wolayta language.

Students should heartily involve in various tutorial and makeup lessons and they also should do various model questions so as to help them in grade-10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam.

Wereda Education offices in collaboration with Wolayta Zone education department should carefully follow that grade-10 mother tongue (Wolaytato) national exam is administered according to Mother tongue (Wolaytato) curriculum, textbook and curriculum.

All stake holders including teachers, parents and the school should work ruthlessly to reshape students' attitude towards mother tongue education to understand pedagogical value of it.

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