

EXPLORING THE SOURCES OF MOTHER TONGUE DIALECT RELATED WORDS IN THE SOCIETY: FOCUS ON WOLAITA LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study to investigate the causes of mother tongue dialect related words /variation in the case of Wolaita Language in Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia. The total participants of the study were forty (40). Two instruments i.e questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data analysis method to find research results. Therefore, the study disclosed that geographic variation and diversity in social relationship were the causes of mother tongue dialect related words. It also clearly stated that trade transactions, less emphasize towards mother tongue instruction were also some of the causes of mother tongue dialect related words. Hence, it was recommended that in order to mitigate dialect related words /expressions in mother tongue, all concerned bodies especially the educated ones and officials like Zone and district culture and tourism departments should work more to standardize Wolaita language.

KEYWORDS: *Dialect Related Words, Diversity, Geographic Variation, Migration, Mother tongue*

INTRODUCTION

A language is a social fact, a kind of social contract. It exists not in an individual, but in a community (Bauer, 2007, p.3) as cited by Trisna Dinillah (2016). A language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. Language is as social product with many functions in order to be used maximal by human being in communication and interaction with each other. According to Brown (2007, p.6) as cited by Trisna Dinillah (2016) language is acquired by all people in much the same way, language and learning both have universal characteristics. Language is many things; it can be a system of communication, a medium for thought, vehicle for literary expression, a matter for political controversy, a catalyst for nation building (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky, 1989: 1 in Imansyah, 2008: 1).

According to Akhtar (2015) the definition of dialect seems to shed more light on the true meaning of the word, 'Linguistic system considered in relation to the group of several derivatives of a common trunk.' This naturally infers that other linguistic systems derive from a common source and these are dialects. The definition of dialect seems to shed more light on the true meaning of the word. It further elaborates that it has a geographical limitation without the existence of considerable differentiation with others which also derive from the same origin. Until this point this definition seems agreeable. Finally the last definition explains that a 'dialect is a linguistic system which has not achieved the social category of language and it is parallel to another Akhtar (2015).' In this case, we should wonder whether the 'category of language' is only based on its 'social' nature.

The causes of mother tongue dialect related words may be many especially with regard to Wolaita language. The climate of Wolaita Zone was divided into Dega (highland), Weynadega (middle land) and Kola (low land) and these climates were found in different geographical locations and social phenomenon. Thus, the origin of Wolaita language dialect related word and variation might be due to different geographic location and different social integrity.

Although all native Wolaita language speaking people understand each other within different geographical and social locations, there are some communication barriers as they articulate one word differently. In the words of Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998: 27), 'Geographical factors play a role in the development of dialects, not because of topography per se, but because rivers, lakes, mountains, valleys, and other features of the terrain determine the routes that people take and where they settle.' Topographical conditions steer migration and settlement patterns and the inaccessibility of an area fosters linguistic differentiation once an area is permanently settled (cf. also Trudgill 2003).

Almost no research was conducted in sources of dialect and dialect related words. Therefore, the main emphasis of this study was to explore the sources of dialect related words with special reference to Wolaita Language.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to investigate the causes of mother tongue dialect related words /variation in the case of Wolaita Language in Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Both qualitative and quantitative research design was employed to attend the intended objective of the study due to the nature of the research and it was worthy to use two of them so as to obtain sufficient information from the research subjects.

Description of the Research Place

Wolaita is among 56 Nations and Nationalities in Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR) commonly known by its indigenous culture, beliefs, traditions, rituals, civilization and social identities that define them and make them distinct from other people in Ethiopia. Wolaita has its autonomous zonal administrative structure having fifteen Woredas and five city administrations. The Zonal city of Wolaita (Sodo) is located 330kms from Addis Ababa and 160 kms from the Regional capital, Hawassa. Therefore, the research was conducted in two weredas i.e. Humbo and Sodozuriya.

The Research Population

The study was emphasizing on exploring the causes of mother tongue dialect related words in the case of Wolaita language in Wolaita Zone. Accordingly, the study was conducted at two districts i.e. Humbo and Sodo Zuriya. The study population were local elders, secondary school teachers and students, district culture and tourism office as well as those who were selected by nomination from various areas of Wolaita Zone.

Sampling Procedure

As mentioned above the main targeted areas of the study were Sodo Zuriya and Humbo district. Besides to this, some resourceful individuals were selected by nomination (snowball sampling) from various areas of Wolaita Zone. The two

districts were selected purposively by taking in to account that they were districts with different weather conditions i.e. Dega (high land) and Kola (lowland) respectively. In addition, highland and low land people sometimes speak differently and this helped to identify language variations and its impact on communication. Hence, from Sod oZuriya districts one schools i.e. Hidase secondary school was selected purposively by taking in to account easy access to the areas and from Humbo district one school (Humbo Tebelat) was selected similarly. From each school of both districts, 4 students and 4 teachers were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Hence, the total participants of students were 8 and the teachers were also 8. Again, from two districts 4 culture and tourism office experts were selected purposively for the study and 10 educated local elders were selected similarly so as to gain better data. 6 key informant interviewees were also selected from various areas of Wolaita Zone by using snow ball sampling technique so as to involve anyone who can give rich data to the researcher. Snowball sampling participants were 4 and Accordingly, the total number of research subjects were 40 i.e. (8+8+ 4 + 10+ 6+4).

Data Collection Instrument

In order to attain the intended objective of the study, the researcher used two instruments: questionnaire and key informant interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis method so as to arrive at the research results. The data collected by questionnaire was analyzed using quantitative method of data analysis using frequency and percentage and the data collected by interview was analyzed qualitatively in the form of narration or in the form of text and then the information were triangulated to obtain the holistic picture of the study.

DATA DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Table 1

No	The sources of Mother Tongue (Wolaita Language) Dialect related Words in the Society.	Respondents percent %		Remark
		No	%	
1.1	Geographic variation	-	-	
1.2	Diversity in social relationship	3	7.9%	
1.3.	Migration from place to place	-	-	
1.4	Trading activities	-	-	
1.5	Less emphasize towards mother tongue (Wolaita language) standardization	1	2.63%	
1.6	Language exchange with adjacent communities apart from Wolaita Zone	2	5.26%	
1.7	Mixing of mother tongue (Wolaita language) with other languages.	3	7.9%	
1.8	All can be the sources of mother tongue dialects	29	76.3%	

As can be seen from the above table-1 item 1.2 about 3(7.9%) responded that diversity in social relationship can be the source of mother tongue (Wolaita language) dialect related word and about 1 (2.63%) of the participants answered that less emphasize towards mother tongue (Wolaita language) standardization is the source of mother tongue (Wolaita language) dialect related words. Again, 2(5.26%) of the respondents replied that language exchange with adjacent

communities apart from Wolaita Zone could be the cause of mother tongue(Wolayta language) dialect related and 3(7.9%) of the respondents answered that mixing of mother tongue (Wolaita language) with other languages can be the source of mother tongue dialect related words. However, in table 1 item 1.8, the majority of the respondents 29 (76.3%) answered that all items mentioned in table -1 are more probably the sources of mother tongue dialect related words. Hence, all of the above can be the causes mother tongue (Wolayta language) dialect related words..

The interview data also shows almost similar result for the item which says the sources of mother tongue dialect related word. Some are said the following:

Wolaita Language (Mother tongue) dialect related word can be can be caused by the movement of people from one place to another and because of this language variation will occur to some extent. Apart from Wolaita Zone, there are neighboring zones like Dawuro, Quca, Gamo and Gofa and these areas have language switching with Wolaita people and because of this geographic differences Wolaita Language dialect related word and expressions can occur (p1,p5,&p6). According to me diversity in social relationship, trade transactions, un standardized language and un necessary coinage as well as mingling Wolaita language with English and Amharic and other languages are possibly the causes of mother tongue (Wolaita language) dialect related word (P2,P3&P4).

From the above interview data we can understand that trade activities, migration and mixing Wolaita language with other languages are the sources of mother tongue (Wolaita language) dialect related words.

Based on the data found from both questionnaire and key informant interview, it is possible guess that geographic variation, diversity in social relationship, trade transactions, less emphasize towards mother tongue instruction, language exchange with adjacent communities apart from Wolaita Zone and mixing Wolayta language with other languages like Amharic when speaking were possibly the sources of Mother tongue(Wolaita language) dialect related words.

CONCLUSIONS

- Based on the above research outcome the following conclusions were made.
- The study disclosed that geographic variation and diversity in social relationship were the causes of mother tongue dialect related words.
- The study clearly stated that trade transactions, less emphasize towards mother tongue instruction were also some of the causes of mother tongue dialect related words
- Language interchange with adjacent communities apart from Wolaita Zone was some of the causes of mother tongue dialect related words.
- The research findings also shows that mixing Wolayta language with other languages like Amharic when speaking were possibly the sources of Mother tongue(Wolaita language) dialect related words.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

In order to mitigate dialect related words /expressions in mother tongue dialect, all concerned bodies especially the educated ones and officials like Zone and district culture and tourism departments should work more to standardize

Wolaita language. The problem of language standardization is one the sources of dialect related words and it needs much effort.

The confusing words and expressions should be identified carefully and training should be given on them through radio program and face to face. In addition to this, panel discussion should be made between people representatives from all Wolaita Zone by the stake holders and so that it is possible to reduce the prevalence of the problem.

Mobilization should be made to the people who were isolated due to geographic variation so as to use the most common words and expressions. This reduces the occurrence of dialect related words and expressions and the probability of using standardized words and expressions will be increased.

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