

Debunking the Myth of Lack of Vocabulary for Teaching Content Knowledge in Primary Schools: Exploring Terminology for Science in Ekegusii of Kenya

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Abstract

The language-in-education policy to teach in mother tongues at lower primary level is not adhered to by classroom teachers in Kenya due to, among other reasons, lack of content terminology. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that mother tongues can be used to teach science up to the end of grade three, considering the nature of topics for this level and other extra-classroom realities. Our research objectives were to examine the nature and content of science topics and sub-topics from grade one to grade three; examine conceptual and technical terms in grade one to grade three science textbooks; describe the Ekegusii equivalents of these terms; and explain the feasibility of teaching science in Ekegusii up to the end of grade three. The findings are: science topics and sub-topics from grade one to grade three deal with basic knowledge that children interact with on a daily basis; both conceptual and technical vocabulary in grade one to grade three textbooks have Ekegusii equivalents. This implies that Ekegusii can be used effectively as a language of instruction for grade one up to grade three. This suggests that the teaching of science in Ekegusii is achievable.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Teaching science, Primary schools, Kenya

Full text:

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