Abstract

The paper very briefly reviews the literature on second language medium of instruction and educational achievement. Classroom discourse data from English, Kiswahili and mother tongue mathematics lessons, and from lessons where code switching occurred are presented. The paper argues that regardless of the medium of instruction, a transmissive model of teaching and learning predominates. The paper underlines the importance of teacher education programmes that are based on the realities of the local situation, and that develop the teachers’ awareness of the impacts that their way of talking and organising learning opportunities have on how pupils learn.