

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the efficacy of language of instruction in Kenya. It evaluates the nexus between the languages of instruction versus learning in lower primary schools in Kenya. The chapter advances the view that the language of instruction is critical for children to obtain the skills and knowledge that are necessary to advance to higher levels of learning/knowledge/education. Further, we note that these early years are the most critical developmental years. Therefore, education must be concentrated on providing language support to achieve the set goals. The language of instruction not only affects the child's acquisition of basic skills in education but can also help the child in successfully meeting the challenges in their lives. The chapter concludes that an appropriate language of instruction improves the child's opportunities for education access and achievement. In many African countries, the language of power is linked to the language of the colonizer which therefore enjoys high status as many studies (e.g. Bagwasi, 2004; Sonaiya, 2004) have shown. This language is usually the official language and/or language of instruction. It becomes the most important language overshadowing the local languages. In Kenya, a former British colony, English is a high status language, a factor which largely shapes the prevailing language attitudes (Muthwii, 2007; Kioko et al., 2008)