

Language Factors in the Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary School in Nyeri South District, Nyeri County Kenya

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Abstract

The transition of children from pre-school to primary school is not a single event of change with not just immediate but also, far reaching consequences. Language factors and specifically the language of instruction is a key feature of children's early learning understandings. The study aimed to establish the influence of language factors on the transition of children from pre-school to STD 1 in public primary schools in Nyeri South Sub-county. The study was anchored on the Ecological Developmental Model by Bronfenbrenner (1979) using the descriptive survey design. The target population was all the 56 public primary schools, their head teachers and STD 1 class teachers. A sample size of 18 public primary schools/ head teachers from the 56 targeted public primary schools and 18 STD 1 teachers out of 84 was used. To collect data, interviews were administered on head teachers and questionnaires on STD 1 teachers. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative information from head teachers and STD 1 teachers sampled was organized and described according to study themes. Findings were presented in form of frequency tables and graphical illustrations. The study found out that Kiswahili was the language used for instruction as well as communication, which suggest that vernacular was not used for either instruction or communication. The main challenge faced by teachers in teaching language to STD 1 pupils was the lack of use of mother tongue which interfered with children's ease of communication and understanding. Language factors emerged as barriers to a smooth effective transition process. The study recommended that teachers should adhere to the Ministry of Education's guidelines to have mother tongue as the medium of communication in lower primary to ease transition.

Keywords: Early Childhood Development Education, Language Language factors, Vernacular, Pre-School

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