

The Role of Parents in Helping to Bring Balance Between Home Language and The Language of Teaching in Early Childhood Education for Literacy Development

Dr.Salmita Matshemo Khumalo

The Independent Institute of Education-CAT Faculty of Education

Abstract

The purpose of language is to facilitate communication. The Constitution of South Africa guarantees learners the right to receive education in the language of their choice. Current research suggests that learners entering school can learn best through their mother tongue and that a second language (like English) is more easily acquired if the learner already has a firm grip of his/her home language. According to the Department of Arts and Culture, a person's language is in many ways a natural possession in which it is used to express hopes and ideals, articulate thoughts, and values, explore experiences and customs, and construct society. The purpose of this study was to investigate how parents can help to maintain a balance between home language and the teaching language in early childhood education (ECE) for the development of literacy. The study followed a qualitative approach and used a case study design. Interpretive paradigm was used gain views of participants on the use of home language at home and at school. Purposive sampling was used to select fifteen parents of Grade R learners to form a focus group of five members. A thematic approach was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that home language plays a vital role in ECE. However, parents lack knowledge of how-to bring balance between home language and the language of teaching and learning. The study concluded that multilingualism should be embraced as a tool for our growing and changing society and the world at large. The study recommended the use of code switching in teaching and learning as a tool to support the home language. Furthermore, it was also proposed that parents should be educated on their role in supporting home language at home.

Keywords: Culture, multilingualism, natural possession, parental engagement, values