

The Effect of Using Mother Tongue in Teaching and Learning Basic Science in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The cry of poor academic performance in science among primary school pupils, is an issue that needs redress. Language is said to be one the most important features that distinguish human beings from other living things. It is the basis of communication among humans, as teaching and learning depend effectively on the language of communication. There are various languages used in communicating to one another. Researchers in the field of education have carried out several studies which focused on means of finding solution to the problem of poor academic achievement in science among primary school pupils. Some of these studies have dealt with curriculum issues, teaching methods, study habit and so on. But no convincing evidence on the effect of using Mother Tongue in teaching basic science. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of Mother Tongue in teaching and learning basic science in primary schools. Quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. A total of 1037 primary five school pupils were selected for the study using a simple and stratified random sampling procedure. The instrument used for data collection is Basic Science Test for Primary School Pupils (BSTPSP) comprises English and Urhobo versions of 20 items each. Obtained data were subjected to T-test statistical analysis. Results shows that there is a significant difference between English and Urhobo (Mother Tongue) performance among the primary school pupils in Delta Central, Delta State, Nigeria. Conclusion is therefore reached that the use of Mother Tongue has a significant effect on pupils academic achievement when compared to the use of English Language. We therefore recommended that teaching in English language should be properly developed and effective teaching strategies in English be adopted for teaching basic science, as some of the formulae and concepts have no equivalent in the mother tongue. The use of Mother Tongue should also be encouraged as a means of teaching and learning basic science especially in rural areas.