

De-Learning Language at Preschool: A Case of Nepal

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Abstract : Generally, children start verbal communication by the age of eighteen months. Though they have difficulties in constructing complete sentences, they try to make their thoughts understandable to the audience. By the age of 36 months, when they enroll in preschool, their Language and communication skills are enhanced. Children need plenty of classroom experiences that will help them to develop their oral language skills. Oral language is the primary means through which each individual child is enabled to structure, evaluate, describe and to express his/her experiences. In the context of multi lingual and multi-cultural country like Nepal, the languages used in preschool and the communities vary. In such a case, the language of instruction in the preschool is different from the language used by the children to communicate at home. Using qualitative research method the socio-cultural aspect of the language learning has been analyzed. This has been done by analyzing and exploring preschool activities as well as the language of instruction and communication in the preschools in rural Nepal. It is found that the language of instruction is different from the language of communications primarily used by the children. Teachers seldom use local language resulting in difficulties for the children to understand. Instead of recognizing their linguistic, social and cultural capitals teachers conform to using the Nepali language which the children are not familiar with. Children have to adapt to new language structures and patterns of usage resulting them to be slow in oral language and communication in the preschool. The paper concludes that teachers have to recognize the linguistic capitals of the children and schools need to be responsible to facilitate this process for all children, whatever their language background.

Keywords : children, language, preschool, socio-culture

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