

Books from Birth as a Language Learning Tool in the Multilingual Background of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Language is considered as a vehicle of Intangible Cultural Heritage. With the extinction of a language the major portion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage also cease to exist. For preservation of language and culture it should pass down to the next generations. Early childhood Native language immersion is recognized as a precursor to developing minds. The Language rich early childhood environments helps to reach peak proficiency and control over the grammatical structure and sounds. Numerous research suggests books as an efficient language learning tool which supports parents and teachers for children's language learning process. In this research, thirty books available from birth to three years in Sri Lanka were investigated. The written language, content appropriateness to the culture, format appropriateness to the child, designated age group was observed. Interviews were conducted with parents to obtain further insight to the ways books are used for children. The findings suggest that all most all the books specifically designed to use from birth in the tested cohort are in English. Even though the picture books are used by Sri Lankan parents to teach native language and other languages, the content are not specifically signify the culture. It is to be conclude that the early childhood focused culture and language bound book publications are lacking in Sri Lanka. The study suggests encouraging native language and multilingual culture specific book publications focusing children from birth.

Keywords: *Early childhood, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Multilingual, Books, Native Language*