

## **An overview of the arguments relating to the use of the Mother tongue as language of instruction (LOI) in Science education – the African context**

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Rapid technological advancement and its link to economic development necessitates a situation where all efforts are made to ensure that education is geared towards the provision and promotion of quality Science education. This is particularly critical in primary school as it forms the basis of learning to take place in further levels of education. The use of a language of instruction (LOI) that enhances learners' understanding and promotes critical thinking in the application of subject knowledge in finding solutions to intricate, scientific problems in the Science classroom, is important. It is understood that learning and language are intricately connected as it is through language that learning takes place. Furthermore, learning in a language that one understands best, like the mother tongue or a language widely used and understood, is a significant factor that contributes to an optimal learning and teaching experience. It is evident from literature that this is not the general case in African education where a colonial language is typically used as LOI in many African countries, without much success. This paper provides an exploratory overview of the discussions prevalent in the literature around the issue of the use of the mother tongue as LOI in Science teaching and learning in the African context.