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Primary School Teachers' Literacy Approaches and Promotion of a Reading Culture for Social-Economic Development in Buwunga Sub-County Masaka District

Despite the Government of Uganda's emphasis on primary school education and the implementation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, the majority of pupils in primary schools do not engage in spontaneous reading activities both at school and at home (Fagil, 2011). According to UNEB (2009), only 57.6 percent of the pupils who sat for PLE examinations in 2010 passed English; this is an implication of a poor reading culture and comprehension skills. Might the poor reading culture perhaps be attributed to the literacy approaches used by teachers? What implications does such a situation have for social and economic development? This study, therefore, investigated the relationship between literacy approaches used by teachers in primary schools and promotion of a reading culture for eventual social-economic development in Buwunga Sub-County, Masaka District. The literacy approaches identified as important for promoting a reading culture and which this research considered are three; namely, teaching reading, exposure to relevant reading materials and finally teachers' positive emotions associated with reading. A cross-sectional case study research design mainly qualitative in nature was used to collect data in July 2013, using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), a questionnaire, interviews and observation methods from a total of 124 respondents. These were selected both purposively and randomly from the targeted population. Data were analysed using Miles and Huberman's content analysis model and presented using tables, figures, verbal narrations and explanatory notes. The study established that: 1) Most pupils in Buwunga Sub-County are not equipped with comprehension and phonemic awareness skills; 2) Lack of relevant reading materials in schools and school management practices of locking the available reading materials in head teachers' offices limit pupils from reading; 3) Teachers are not playing their part as role models in reading by showing pupils the importance of a reading culture or positively associating pupils with reading, which hinders pupils from reading for knowledge accumulation, intellect and innovation for social-economic development. This study concludes that to the largest extent teachers' pedagogical approaches do not promote a reading culture for eventual social-economic development among primary school pupils in Buwunga Sub-County. The study, therefore, recommends use of different teachers' pedagogical approaches in teaching reading, availing pupils with relevant reading materials, and positively associating reading with pupils to equip them with attitudes and skills of reading regularly.

Key Words: Primary School, Teachers, Literacy, Approaches, Promotion, Reading Culture, Social-Economic Development, Masaka District.