

## SYNOPSIS

According to the South African constitution everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institution where that education is reasonably practicable. Contrary to this policy language continues to be a barrier for learners who use English as second language at Higher Education Institution, since indigenous languages have not yet been developed as academic/scientific languages.

Most of the first year science learners at Rand Afrikaans University (Soweto Campus) come from high schools where their instructional language is not the same as the one, which is used at the university. Thus, most of them experience problems with regard to the language that is used in science. If language plays an important role in development of scientific thinking then student will have a problem in understanding, writing, speaking the language used in teaching and learning science.

This research project attempts to identify the problems that students from disadvantaged schools have in the use of language in learning science in their first year at the university. The primary aim of this research is to directly observe the role of language in science education. It considers the language ability, language in textbooks, and the medium of instruction as the situational factors that need careful consideration.

Quantitative research method was used for this research which includes subject, instrumentation, procedures for obtaining data, data analysis, presentation and design limitation. The data was gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and observations of the participation in lectures, tutorials and classical laboratory experiments.

The research report concludes that there is a scope for consideration of more varied approaches to the role of language in science education. The research recommends that there is a need to develop Indigenous languages as academic/scientific languages for use of instruction and to develop student proficiency in currently designated languages of tuition (English and Afrikaans) at higher education institutions.

