

Grade 5 Learners' Geographical Knowledge in English

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ABSTRACT The aim of the paper is to investigate Grade 5 learners' geographical knowledge regarding the selected prescribed concepts they had to learn through the medium of English which is their third additional language. The paper also assessed the learners' awareness of these concepts in their primary language which is Tshivenda. The research was conducted among 100 South African learners from the Thulamela Municipality, Vhembe District within the Limpopo Province. A questionnaire was administered to collect data on whether the learners possessed a conceptual awareness of the geographical terms prescribed for Grade 5 learners. The results revealed the majority of the learners (91%) were not conceptually aware of the four geographical concepts of the twelve in Tshivenda, their mother tongue. Most of the learners knew geographical concepts (directions) better in English than they did in Tshivenda. The assumption being that they came into contact with these concepts at school where they learnt English and concepts at the same time. The conclusion drawn from the study was that although learning through the medium of English is considered difficult, learners in this study were able to acquire concepts and the English language simultaneously.