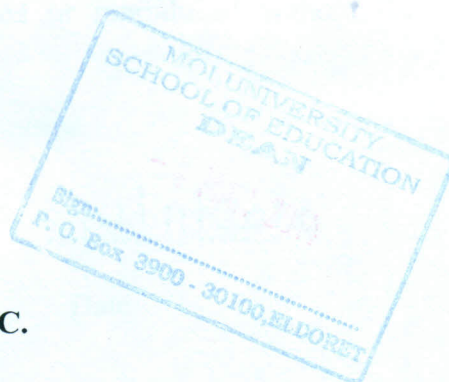


**THE USE OF ORAL LITERATURE IN KISWAHILI IN KENYAN
CLASSROOMS TO ENHANCE NATIONAL UNITY**



BY

KOROSS RACHEL C.

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ABSTRACT

National unity has been an issue of concern in the Kenyan society and this study examined the use of oral literature in Kiswahili in Kenyan classrooms to enhance national unity. The objectives were to examine: the nature of inclusion of issues of national unity and identity in the oral literature topics in Kiswahili textbooks, the extent to which teachers of Kiswahili integrate elements of national unity in their lessons, how the instructional methods that are used to teach oral literature enhance participation, interaction and cohesion among students from diverse backgrounds, the challenges teachers face in their attempt to integrate elements of national unity in the teaching of oral literature and the students' attitudes towards oral literature in Kenya and its role in Kenyan classrooms to enhance national unity. The study was guided by Wenger (2006) theory of community of practice which views learning as an act of membership in a "community of practice". The research methodology adopted was qualitative approach and the research design was survey. Simple random sampling was used to select a total of ten (10) schools in Trans -Nzoia East sub County and 10 teachers who were interviewed. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 10 % of the students who participated in the focus group discussion. Stratified and purposive samplings techniques were used to select 20 lessons that were observed. Observation, content analysis, interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. The analyzed data revealed that: The oral literature content in students' textbooks include issues of national unity and identity, teachers do not integrate elements of national unity in their lesson content, also the instructional methods that were used; which were mainly teacher centered did not enhance student participation, interaction and cohesion while the student centered methods were found to enhance student participation, interaction and cohesion. In addition it was found that: lack of adequate resources, influence of globalization, lack of proper training and in-service courses and lack of teacher commitment are some of the challenges that teachers face in their attempt to integrate elements of national unity in their lessons and that the students' attitudes towards oral literature were positive and the students indicated that the study of oral literature can enhance national unity. The following recommendations were made: Kiswahili textbooks need to be revised so as to integrate more content on national unity, teachers should be encouraged through training and seminars to integrate the elements of national unity in their lesson content since oral literature lends itself well in addressing societal emerging issues, teachers should shift from teacher centered methods to learner centered methods that increase student participation, interaction and cohesion and schools should provide adequate teaching and learning facilities also, parents/ care givers and teachers should ensure that children thrive in their culture, mother tongue and other positive cultural factors should be encouraged despite the fast changes that are brought about by globalization, teachers of Kiswahili should have regular in-service courses in oral literature and lastly, since the students' attitudes towards oral literature were positive, the teaching of oral literature should be emphasized as it is an integral element in the construction of national consciousness.