

**GENDERED LANGUAGE IN NURSERY CLASSROOM DISCOURSE IN
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN NYAHURURU TOWN, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements
of the Masters of Arts Degree in Applied Linguistics of Laikipia University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any other university.

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Recommendation

This proposal has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family for the healthy pressure they put on me to complete my Degree.

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ABSTRACT

Nursery school education in Kenya is the provision of learning to children before the commencement of statutory and obligatory education, usually between the ages of three and five years. This education is highly interactive and social. Through this interaction, gender differences and roles among learners may occur, creating the need of a gender sensitive approach to the teaching of these learners. Strategies to be employed in the discourse of teaching nursery school learners, in order to sustain a common gender sensitive pedagogy for the creation of gender equality, have not been clearly established. For this reason, this study aimed at identifying and describing the gendered language brought out in nursery classroom discourses, analyzing the discourses of gender used in classroom pedagogy and establishing the effect of the gender related messages on the learners in nursery classroom discourse. Arguments in this paper were guided by Critical Discourse Analysis Theory by Norman Fairclough, which connects language to society through three pillars: ideology, struggle for power and criticality. It was supplemented by Initial Response Feedback (IRF) model of classroom discourse by Sinclair and Coulthard, and the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson. The study took a descriptive research design which examined the use of control acts by learners of nursery school age. The study was based on the observation of learners' activities in nursery school environment that lasted one academic term. Further, this study sought to improve the teachers' and learners' image and values concerning traditional feminine and masculine activities and choice. This helps the children cross traditional gender stereotypes on gender roles. The findings revealed that indeed, influences of gendered texts and gendered roles socialisation are real in the classroom discourse, which has greatly impacted on learners' gender roles identity. The study also established that gender bias is present in our ECD learning institutions, and indeed, child care professionals encounter many barriers to promoting genuine equity for children. By valuing and actively working towards gender equity, the barriers of gender stereotypes and prejudice can be broken down to enable boys and girls to benefit equally from their child care experiences. This research will benefit linguistic research as it encompasses several disciplines, which include linguistic anthropology, conversational analysis, cultural studies, feminist psychology, social linguistics and feminist media studies.