

The success of the young learners' ability to manage language and culture transition between the home and early schooling is firmly dependent on the intactness of their language and culture. Irvine and Armento (2001) state that language and culture are so inextricably intertwined that it is often difficult to consider one without the other. A people's first language (native language/mother language) expresses their culture, their livelihood, concerns, fears and aspirations, their whole world of work, play and relations. This fact has serious implications on the African child who finds himself in a learning situation where the language, the content and culture of learning and instruction are European and non-native. Language and context carry their own native speakers experiences and the L2 learner has to battle to reconcile the two and forge ahead in the new school culture and language with their own new world visions. Further because of their unfamiliarity with the new language and culture, the learning situation is, as a result, characterized by abstract learning and this apparently is a contradiction to how primary school children learn and develop. In this light it is imperative that the role and function of the indigenous African popular culture and language have to be recast and refocused upon. This is a concept paper that attempts to unveil and clarify the challenges that the African child has to overcome in the situation where he/she is supposed to carry the burden of a new language and its culture where no bridges exist between the home and early schooling. The paper suggests how native cultures and languages should be used as the context and medium of education of the child from preschool to primary school to ensure that African children are not unnecessarily disadvantaged in their development and self esteem and actualization. critical pedagogy is suggested as one of the vehicles for navigating through the maze.