

There is always a sense of sensation when one enters a new intellectual terrain. In this case it is a group of global scholars that work on 'languages' from a post-colonial perspective. Much unlike the ordinary believe I am convinced that internet culture is heading in this direction. Much of the conversations here revolve around the status of the 'non-native speaker' and the problematic status of English as the dominant language of the colonizer.

As so often with US-American conferences, there is a lot of work put in the preparation of the event to get the best international researchers and to arrange their trips. Yet, the event fails to even reach the immediate environment of the university campus itself, let alone the general public. The audience consists of the speakers with a hand full of graduate students and staff of the organizing faculty. This sad situation is made worse by the absence of recording/webcasting equipment. How to overcome this is another matter and asks for a complete re-imagination of the public and the public sphere.

Here some quotes and phrases for those who can deal with zipped material:

"The job of the translation is to make (sensual) sense. Translation requires a sympathy to words on the page. They know better than you do."

"Translation express agreement with the colonizers and are limited cultural artifacts. The aim has to be dialog, and translation can be a modest contribution to collaborative efforts."

"Sometimes I got fed up talking English, it is so easy."

"The word resistance is missing because most of the time we are afraid of resistance and politics."

"If only one zillions of a percentage of the 600 billion dollars spent in Iraq could be spent on the teaching and study of North-American indigenous languages."

"The heart of resistance is poetry."

"When two languages meet, they kiss and quarrel. They achieve a tacit understanding on the common grounds of similarity and convergence, then negotiate, often through strident rivalry and self-preserving altercations, their areas of dissimilarity and divergence." (Niyi Osundare)

Several African speakers warned for the devastating consequences of the abolition of education in the native African languages in the first years of school. A range of African elites forbid the use of local languages.

Warning: marginalization can also happen through benign policies. Most languages die through assimilation, not through the physical extermination of their speakers. Creating archives is the most powerful way to save languages that are in urgent need of disappearing.

“Foreign languages offer no immunity.”

“Our Mother is always our truth.”

There is a lack of confidence that African languages can express complex concepts. The only way to tackle this prejudice is by proving the opposite.

Remember the Against All Odds Conference in Asmara (2000). Remember African self-reliance.

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