

Indigenous Languages as Cultural Repositories: A Case Study of the Waata and Munyoyaya Communities

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ABSTRACT

In a globalised world and with the uptake of liberalised modes of communication, it is possible for indigenous languages to become extinct. In Kenya for example, a postcolony of the British, our national languages are English and Kiswahili. The social norm has been to associate education, civilisation, and or enlightenment with these two languages and more specifically English. As a result, indigenous cultural knowledge, a preserve of indigenous languages, has been marginalised thereby being exposed to possible loss. Indeed, there is impetus the world over to refocus our attention on indigenous communities, their mode of life, how they deal with human conflict, management of climate change and handling of health matters among others. This paper purposes to demonstrate that archiving indigenous cultural knowledge could be one way of language preservation among other functions. It seeks to show that there is a myriad of ways through which we can (re)member our languages and more specifically the indigenous ones that are at a risk of being forgotten. That, it is possible to mediate between our traditional cultural repertoire and a modern cultural milieu through research in indigenous cultural activities. One of the mainstay of this paper is to argue that there is need to engender archiving of indigenous knowledge through various means such as modern forms of communication vis-à-vis social media or even rap in a bid to debunk the myth that cultural affairs are a preoccupation of historical or anthropological studies.

Keywords: Indigenous Language, Culture, Social Media, Extinction, Marginalisation, Colonialism