



GEOLINGUISTICS AND POLYGLOT STUDIES AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE

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It is my pleasure to make a short address to those of you attending the 2nd International Seminar on Linguistics & Polyglot Studies. As a president of the American Society of Geolinguistics, I feel honored to be allowed to do so. I think that polyglot studies, together with geolinguistics, are both crucially needed at this point in human history. Unfortunately for humans, who possess language and have a means for recording language, distorting and destroying information by means of language is something often too easy to do, especially now with the existence of the internet, which results in causing most of the worst of the misery to be found in the world in which we live today.

Geolinguistics, being the study of the world's language variations for policy making purposes, and polyglot studies, which is, I think, self-explanatory, are the two branches of linguistics that are of most use in protecting the world from the misuse of language in distorting and destroying the information we need to resolve conflict and promote co-existence. Examples of disrespect for languages and ignorance of languages leading mankind into war and ultimate self-destruction abound. It can be seen, for instance, in the present military crisis that now has come to indirectly involve much of the world, where disrespect for language variation may be analyzed as being the ultimate cause of the present conflict and also one of the causes for the inability of people in power to work together collectively for its resolution. For the political leaders of the world's most important nations, it can be argued that ignorance and/or willful disrespect for the language variants of others not belonging to their power bases, has all too often resulted in human tragedy. The cause might be seen as being mainly due to political leaders being both unwilling and incapable of putting themselves into the position of others who do not speak or write those language variants which they are accustomed to reading or speaking. They, thus, cannot easily recognize when they are being lied to and, perhaps more importantly, in the real world of geopolitically motivated national self-interests, they, themselves, though often lying, are unable to lie with sufficient skill, which, for world leaders, is sometimes more important over the short term for national survival than insistent truth-telling.

I believe that each creation that makes up the totality of the universe is unique in the expression of the divinity of which it is constituted. I, therefore, hesitate to fully believe in the theoretical constructs of globalism and universalism. In that the very nature of globalism and universalism is to destroy whatever is local and unique, I do not consider them to be necessarily socially healthy constructs. We should be, rather, seeking out and taking comfort in what is local, what is unique to a particular point in time and space. Moreover, to whatever extent it is possible to do so, we should do so on the basis of knowledge and of good will. For this reason, too, I see both geolinguistics and polyglot studies as being essential

academic disciplines. So, with every desire for a successful conclusion to your conference, I wish you the best that the divinity that is both within you and without you will allow you to achieve during this conference. Thank you.

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