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**ABSTRACT**

EMPOWERING the HUMANITIES  
A Focus on Language Studies

Keynote Address

by

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Disciplines in the Humanities have as their object of study the human being as a person. A person is born with a mind and with it language and the faculty of thought. It is this intrinsic ability of languaging and thinking that engenders the growth and development of civilization.

There is no clear cut boundary between disciplines in the Humanities. Instead there is overlapping, specifically in terms of data and methodologies of data collection. This is very well exemplified in linguistics, where overlapping with other disciplines has given

rise to sub-branches such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ethno-linguistics, geo-linguistics, anthropological linguistics, computer linguistics, forensic linguistics etc. , besides the core branches in general linguistics. Apart from this, there are many schools of thought which fall into two major trends, empiricism and rationalism, as a result of rigorous effort in the exploration of ideas. All this has given the linguist a range of choices in the instrument to apply in the course of doing her research.

The importance and relevance of the studies in the Humanities is in the psycho-cultural aspects of the life of the people which can contribute in the building of a national edifice where people can live together in a relatively peaceful atmosphere, and where there is pride in one's heritage and identity. In support of this there must be an awareness of the history of the nation, its treasury of literature, languages and culture. There must also be an awareness of the geo-linguistic and geo-cultural context the nation is in.

Asmah Haji Omar

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