Why Don’t You Understand?
Dainess Maganda

Language is supposed to be a sound, a voice, a word, a sign that makes the world understand what I am trying to say.

Language is supposed to be the right I have to call anyone with my own voice

But looking back, I see my language is like a child denied of its right to nurse from her own mother

I keep hearing people saying, your mother’s milk is sour, bitter, has no nutrition and makes you unhealthy

Like a one-month old baby, I say with a loud CRY,

WHY DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND?

Why don’t you understand that

There is nothing like my mother’s milk

My language has what I need to thrive AND Shine in this world

The formula, the substitute milk you want me to drink makes me look healthy but it comes at a great price!!!

Yes, the world says I need the formula but my body and my heart knows I need my mother’s milk.

Why don’t you understand this is not easy for me?

Why don’t you understand my language dilemma???

Link to Performance: https://youtu.be/GMRYBEkS68E

Dr. Dainess Maganda is the Director of the African Languages Program at the University of Georgia. Her publications center on language ideologies and on pathways to promote the use of African languages in US schools and internationally. Recent publications include a book, Language and Literature: Vehicles for the Enhancement of Cultural Understanding (2016) and an article, “The Scarcity of Literature Written in African Languages in American Libraries” (2015).