

The Mayan Calendar: An Ideology Laden and Worldview Changing Discourse

Authors : John Rosswell Cummings III

Abstract : This research examines the discourse ancient Maya ritual practice manifest and maintained through language in a contemporary society as led by a daykeeper— a Maya spiritual leader— with the objective of discovering if the Maya Calendar has an influence on worldview. Through an ethnography of communication and discursive analysis framework, this research examines the discourse of and around the Maya calendar through original research. Data collected includes the ceremonial performance of the Tzolkin ritual, a ritual that takes place every 13 days to ceremonially welcome one of the 20 Universal Forces. During the ceremony, participants supplicate, sacrifice, and venerate. This ritual, based off the Tzolkin cycle in the Mayan Calendar, contains strong, culture-binding ideologies. This research performs a close analysis of the 20 energies of the Tzolkin and their glyphs so as to gain a better understanding of current ideologies in Maya communities. Through a linguistic relativity frame of reference, including both the strong and weak versions, the 20 Universal Forces are shown to influence ways of life. This research argues that it is not just the native language, but the discourses native to the community as held through the calendar, influence thought and have the potential to offer an alternate worldview, thus shaping the cultural narrative which in return influences identity of the community. Research of this kind, on calendric systems and linguistic relativity, has the power to make great discoveries about the societies of the world and their worldviews.

Keywords : anthropological linguistics, discourse analysis, cultural studies, sociolinguistics

Conference Title : ICAL 2018 : International Conference on Anthropology and Linguistics

Conference Location : Dublin, Ireland

Conference Dates : November 19-20, 2018