

DIE AMERIKAS - VORTRAGSREIHE DES INSTITUTS FÜR ETHNOLOGIE

LEITUNG: PROF. DR. EVELINE DÜRR

Institut für Ethnologie
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18-20 Uhr
Raum 123
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Language and Colonisation: 1492 and the Concept of Language

Abstract

It has been argued that the dominant ideas about language are found in Europe (Gal, 2006; Mühlhäusler, 2018) and that these ideas have their roots in colonialism (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006). It has even been argued that the European colonisers had preconceived ideas about language as autonomous systems in 1492 (Flores & Rosa, 2017; Severo, 2016)- that is, entities that could be objectively described and existed autonomously from their speakers. I propose that, for Spanish, this concept of language is a modern one which did not emerge until the turn of the twentieth century. Using evidence from Amerindian writing systems I show that the concept of language at the beginning of European colonisation was confusing at best and lacking in total homogeneity at worst.

Amerikas

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