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One Nation, Many Borders: Language and Identity in Mayan Guatemala and Mexico

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Degree Year

2012

Document Type

Thesis

Degree Name

Bachelor of Arts

Department

Anthropology

Advisor(s)

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Keywords

Spanish, Maya, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, Guatemala, Language ideologies, Code choice, Ethnolinguistic identity

Abstract

This paper explores language ideologies, code choice, and ethnolinguistic identity in Maya-dominated areas of Mexico and Guatemala. As the Maya, or Pan-Maya, Movement has grown in scope and force since the 1980s, particularly in Guatemala, possessing a "Maya" identity has become defined in new ways. Since Mayan languages are still spoken with a strong degree of vitality in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula and the western highlands of Guatemala, examining Maya identity through beliefs about, and use of, indigenous languages and Spanish is a particularly useful focus. In comparing Maya peoples' beliefs and identities in each of these regions, this paper argues that Maya identity is highly dependent on the historical, political, and cultural context in which it exists.

Repository Citation

Peckham, Anna Caroline, "One Nation, Many Borders: Language and Identity in Mayan Guatemala and Mexico" (2012). *Honors Papers*. 369.

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high concentration of the Mayan ruins that exist in Central America. On the current world map, the Maya Civilization encompassed areas around southeastern Mexico, the entirety of Belize and Guatemala, and western regions of El Salvador and Honduras. The collective group of the Maya people gave rise to one of the greatest ancient civilizations, the Maya Civilization. Arguably, the most notable thing about the Maya Civilization was their hieroglyph script. The script they used was the most advanced of their time. Other things that have marked the Maya Civilization as unique include art, mathematics, astronomical systems, and calendar systems. In their development They still speak their native language and keep many ancient customs, like making sculptures from local clay and paint. They combine Catholicism with their native beliefs in surreal and imaginative folk art. Purépecha are also called "Tarascans" or "Tarscos", and "Porhé." The ruins were located near the Mayan Museum of Mexico. The uncovered city includes 54 acres of pyramids, plazas, Mayan ball courts, and stone slabs engraved with various inscriptions. Among the 15 pyramids found, one stands 75 feet tall. The city is 75 miles west of Chetumal in the southeastern region of the State of Campeche on the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, and is named Chactun, meaning "Red Stone" or "Great Stone."