



RECOVERING VOICES

Seminar Series in
Endangered Languages and
Indigenous Knowledge

Eduardo Rivail Ribeiro

Instituto Nimuendajú (<http://www.nimuendaju.org>). PhD, University of Chicago, Linguistics.

Friday 6 December 2013, 3:30 PM
NMNH, Rose Room

***Language and gender in an Amazonian society:
male and female speech in Karajá (Macro-Jê, Brazil)***

Karajá, an indigenous language from Central Brazil, shows differences between female and male speech to a degree that is not found in other Brazilian languages. These differences, first mentioned by Ehrenreich (1891, 1894) and studied more recently by Fortune & Fortune (1975) and Borges (1994, 1997), can generally be accounted for by regular phonological rules. As in Koasati (Haas 1964), female speech can be considered as more conservative, male speech being characterized, in general, by the deletion of a velar stop occurring in the corresponding female speech form. This talk presents an up-to-date description of the differences between female and male speech in Karajá, taking into consideration for the first time data from all four dialects of the language and approaching facts that were not mentioned in previous studies. Social correlates and possible scenarios for the diachronic origin of such distinctions will also be discussed.



A collaborative initiative of National Museum of Natural History,
National Museum of the American Indian and the
Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.