

You are cordially invited to a talk on

**South American indigenous languages:
The importance of language documentation**

by

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The official total number of the indigenous population of South America amounts to approximately 13 million, a number that has to be interpreted with some caution. Although many languages have probably disappeared since the first contact with the Spaniards, South America still harbors a great diversity of indigenous language families, much greater than in any other continent. One-third of the world's linguistic diversity is to be found in South America (Campbell 2012) – with 107 independent language families and language isolates out of a total of c. 340 worldwide. This abundance of language families for a relatively small number of extant languages corroborates the hypothesis that many languages have already gone extinct.

In this lecture I will give a broad overview of the current situation of the South American indigenous languages and discuss the importance of language documentation from an interdisciplinary perspective. It will only be in this way that we can contribute to the solution of the so-called *South American Puzzle* and find a plausible explanation for a number of recurring linguistic structures amid global typological and phylogenetic diversity.

This talk will not presuppose prior knowledge on the topic and is particularly apt for students. I would be grateful if you could circulate the information on the talk in your classes.

*Best,
Manfred.*