



Santander International Exchange Bursary Programme

RESEARCH TRIP REPORT

Recipient of bursary: Josep Cru, PhD student at School of Modern Languages.

Date of trip: 29 July-15 September 2011

Expenses

The amount of 1,000 £ of the bursary has been spent on transport from the UK to Mexico: a return trip from London to the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, where the research is being carried out. The total cost of the plane ticket (London-Cancun-London) was 1,036 £.

The fieldwork

Further to two previous fieldtrips, the aim of this trip has been to gather more data through interviews and carry out observation in the field in order to increase the primary sources on which the thesis is being written thesis. Also, I took advantage of the trip to strengthen academic links with various institutions and particularly with the CIESAS-Peninsular, a research centre on social anthropology. That institution will hold a seminar next spring on language revitalisation which Newcastle University is organising with the support of the British Academy.

I have been able to interview a dozen people who are all involved in one way or another in the promotion of Maya in Yucatan. One of the main goals of my research is to analyse the language ideologies expressed by this committed group of people, since my hypothesis is that they may be influential in both the institutional and grassroots language initiatives that are currently being developed in Yucatan to revitalise the Maya language. The interviewees are all knowledgeable, experienced and, and to varying degrees, authoritative voices whose discourses are worth analysing, particularly in view of the fact that there is not a specific institution in charge of devising and implementing language policy in Yucatan. Apart from doing fieldwork, I had the opportunity to attend some seminars of a Maya language course that began at the end of August.

As for the geographical scope of the ethnographic work, most of the interviews have taken place in Merida, the capital city of Yucatan and the place where the main institutions that promote the Maya culture are located but I have been able to travel to other towns and villages, which are listed below, to attend events related to the promotion of the Maya language or to interview people.

This is a summary of the institutions visited and the activities in which I have been able to participate in this last fieldtrip:

- Visiting and interviewing the director of the Academia de la Lengua Maya, Itzamna, Mérida
- Participation in the celebration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples (8 August), Nolo and Tixkokob, organised by Indemaya.
- Visiting and interviewing the director of the Civil Association Popolnáj, Tizimin.
- Visiting and interviewing the director of CIESAS-Peninsular Research Centre, Merida.

- Visiting and interviewing three researchers at the Autonomous University of Yucatan. Social Sciences School and Education School in Merida.
- Visiting and interviewing the coordinator of the Academia de la Lengua Maya, Merida.
- Visiting and interviewing a member of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI), Merida
- Participation in the seminar on Language and Education at the National Pedagogical University (UPN), Merida
- Attending the first ceremony of graduation at the Intercultural University of Quintana Roo (UIMQROO), Jose Maria Morelos.
- Attending the Maya Book Fair celebrated in Merida
- Attending the Seminar on Culture, Identity and Patrimony at the National Autonomous University (UNAM-CEPHCIS), Merida
- Attending a workshop to discuss the new law on Mayan communities of Yucatan in Sotuta.
- Attending the presentation of the National Prize of Literature 2011 in Mexican languages ‘Nezahualcoyotl’ to the Mayan writer Isaac Carrillo in Merida.
- Speech given at the Universidad de Oriente in Valladolid. ‘The sociolinguistic situation in Spain with special mention to the Catalan case’.
- Visiting and interviewing a researcher at the National Institute for Anthropology and History in Merida (INAH).

Apart from all these institutions, I have had a good number of informal conversations with Yucatecans both speakers and non-speakers of Maya which have been most useful to better understand the sociolinguistic situation of the Maya language in Yucatan and the ongoing process of language promotion.

Location of places visited in this fieldtrip



