

THE EMORY PROGRAM IN LINGUISTICS

PRESENTS A TALK BY

CLAUDINE CHAMOREAU

FRENCH NATIONAL CENTER FOR
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



“A community-based research project in Pesh, a severely endangered Chibchan language.”

Pesh is the northernmost of the sixteen living Chibchan languages and the only one spoken in Honduras. Pesh is classified as an isolate in the Chibchan family as it is the sole language that does not belong to Core Chibchan. Pesh is little described, possibly due to the difficulty of physical access to the region. Pesh is severely endangered, as it has roughly 470 speakers, of whom 80 percent are more than 60 years old. In other words, intergenerational language transmission has almost ceased to exist.

The aim of this talk is twofold. First, I will present the sociolinguistic background of Pesh, in particular the situation of endangerment, describing the major factors for evaluating the gradual loss of vitality of the language in different communities where Pesh is spoken.

Second, I will describe my community-based research project (funded by a major documentation project of the HRELP). Generally community-based research is defined as that conducted by, for, and with the participation of community members. I will illustrate this type of methodology with two examples that come from workshops organized in the community. In the first example, I will describe how people interested in literacy and in language teaching told short stories for building literacy, something that is sought by members of the community. In the second example I will show how during the workshops we explored texts that we recorded. Our understanding of how the topic marker =*mà* works in Pesh grew out of work done in these workshops.

This event is co-sponsored by
the Emory College Language Center



THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016 @ 4:00PM
WHITE HALL, ROOM 101

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.