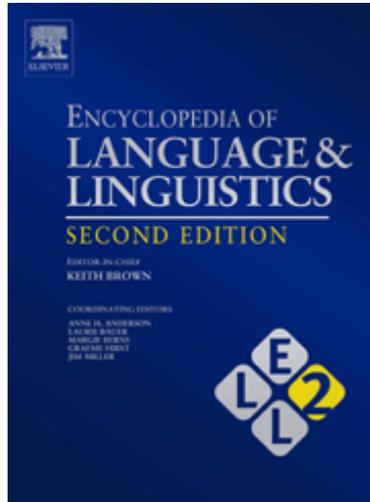


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Cariban Languages

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The Cariban family is one of the largest genetic groups in South America, with more than 25 languages (see [Figure 1](#)) spoken mostly north of the Amazon, from Colombia to the Guianas and from northern Venezuela to Central Brazil (see [Figure 2](#)). Despite the long history of their studies, most Cariban languages are still insufficiently described. The best descriptive works published so far are Hoff (1968, on Karinya) and Derbyshire (1979, 1985, on Hishkaryana). There are good descriptive works on Apalai, Makushi, and Waiwai in Derbyshire and Pullum

(1986–1998); Jackson (1972) gives a brief, but detailed, overview of Wayana. Muller (1994) is a very informative Panare dictionary. Meira (2005) and Carlin (2004) are full descriptions of Tiriyo; Meira (2000), mostly a historical study, contains some descriptive work on Tiriyo, Akuriyo, and Karihona. Gildea (1998) and Derbyshire (1999) contain surveys of the family.

Comparative Studies and Classification

First recognized by the Jesuit priest Filippo Salvatore Gilij in the 18th century (Gilij, 1780–1783), the Cariban family was subsequently studied by L. Adam (1893) and C. H. de Goeje (1909, 1946). After some initial tentative proposals within larger South

| | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 1. GUIANAN | | |
| a. | Karinya (Carib, Galibi, Kali'ña) | 10 000 |
| | Tiriyo (Trio) | 2000 |
| b. <i>Taranoan</i> : | Akuriyo (Akurio, Wama, Oarikule) | 3-4 |
| | Karihona (Carijona) | 5-10 |
| c. | Wayana (Roucouyenne, Urucuyana) | 750 |
| d. | Apalai (?) | 450 |
| e. | Palmella (†) (?) | |
| | Waiwai | 1000 |
| f. <i>Parukotoan</i> : | Hishkaryana (Hixkaryana) | 550 |
| | Kashuyana (Katxuyana, Xikuyana, Kahyana) | 90 |
| 2. VENEZUELAN | | |
| a. <i>Coastal</i> : | Chayma (†) | |
| | Kumanakoto (Cumanagota) (†) | |
| b. | Tamanaku (†) | |
| | Pemong | 5000 |
| c. <i>Pemongan</i> or <i>Pemong</i> <i>Proper</i> : | Arekuna, Kamarakoto, Taurepang | |
| | Kapong | 5000 |
| | Akawaio, Patamuna, Ingarikó | |
| | Makushi (Macuxi, Macushi) | 11 400 |
| d. | Panare | 1200 |
| e. | De'kwana (Ye'kwana, Maquiritare, Maiongong) (?)..... | 5000 |
| f. | Mapoyo (?) | 2 |
| g. | Yawarana (Yabarana) (?) | 20 |
| 3. WAIMIRIAN | | |
| a. | Waimiri-Atroari | 1000 |
| | Waimiri, Atroari | |
| 4. YUKPAN | | |
| a. | Yukpa (Motilón) | 3000 |
| b. | Hapreria (Japreria) | 80 |
| 5. PEKODIAN | | |
| a. <i>Xinguan</i> : | Ikpeng | 350 |
| | Arara | 200 |
| b. | Bakairi | 900 |
| | Eastern Bakairi, Western Bakairi | |
| 6. KUIKUROAN | | |
| a. | Kuikuro | 900 |
| | Kuikuro, Kalapalo, Nahukwa, Matipu | |
| b. | Pimenteira (?) (†) | |

Figure 1 A tentative classification of Cariban languages. (?) = difficult to classify; (†) = extinct (not all listed here). Different names or spellings for the same language are given in parentheses. Dialects are indented under the language name. (Demographic data refer to speakers, not ethnic members of the group; sources: Ethnologue and author's own work).

American classifications (the last of which is Loukotka, 1968), the first detailed classification was published by V. Girard (1971), followed by M. Durbin (1977) and T. Kaufman (1994). Durbin's classification – unfortunately used in the *Ethnologue* (SIL) – is, as Gildea (1998) pointed out, seriously flawed; Girard's classification is limited (14 low-level subgroups); Kafuman's classification is probably the best; it is based not on firsthand sources but on the comparison of other classifications. The proposal in **Figure 1** is the preliminary result of ongoing comparative research. There is some good evidence that Cariban and Tupian languages are distantly related (Rodrigues, 1985); other hypotheses (e.g., Ge-Pano-Carib and Macro-Carib, from Greenberg, 1987) remain mostly unsupported and are not accepted by specialists.

Shafer (1963) was the first attempt at reconstructing Proto-Cariban phonology, but its many flaws make Girard (1971) the real first proposal in this area. The most up-to-date study is Meira and Franchetto (2005). Meira (2000) reconstructs the phonology and

morphology of the intermediate proto-language of the Taranoan subgroup.

Main Linguistic Features

Phonology

Cariban languages have small segmental inventories: usually only voiceless stops (p , t , k , ʔ), one or two fricatives/affricates (h or Φ , s or f or tf), two nasals (m , n), a vibrant (r , often l or $ɾ$), glides (w , j), and six vowels (a , e , i , o , u , i). Some languages have distinctive voiced obstruents (Bakairi, Ikpeng, Karihona), more than one vibrant or lateral (Bakairi, Kuikuro, Ikpeng, Hishkaryana, Waiwai, Kashuyana), or more fricatives or affricates (Bakairi, Waimiri-Atroari, Kashuyana, Waiwai); others have an extra vowel ə (Wayana, Tiriyo, Panare, Bakairi, Pemong, Kapong). Vowel length is often distinctive, whereas nasality usually is not, with few exceptions (Apalai, Bakairi, Kuikuro). Many languages have weight-sensitive

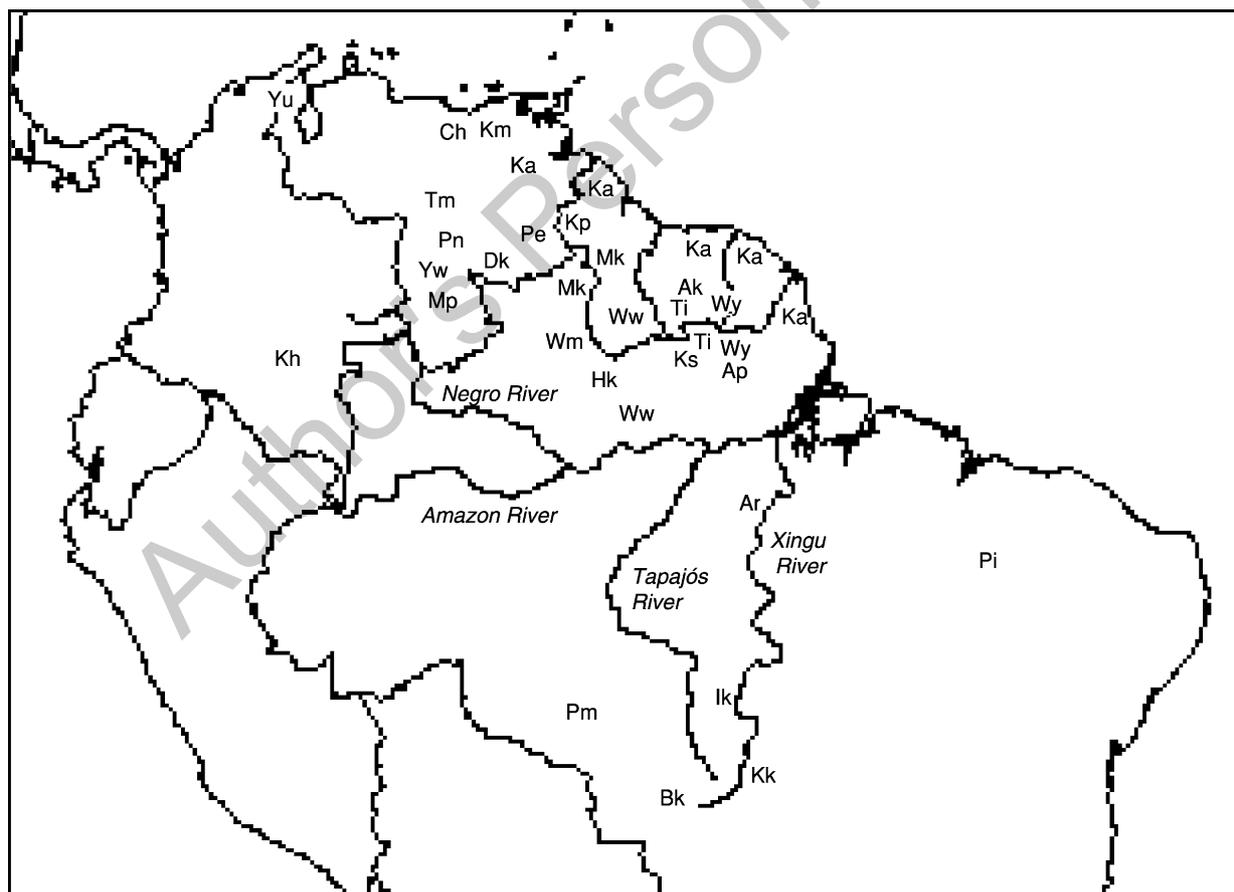


Figure 2 Map of the current distribution of Cariban languages. Living languages in bold, extinct languages in normal type. **AK**, Akuriyo; **Ar**, Arara; **Bk**, Bakairi; Ch, Chayma†; **Dk**, De'kwana; **Hk**, Hishkaryana; **Ik**, Ilkpeng; **Ka**, Karinya; **Kh**, Karihona; **Kk**, Kuikuro; **Km**, Kumanakoto†; **Kp**, Kapong; **Ks**, Kashuyana; **Mk**, Makushi; **Mp**, Mapoyo; **Pe**, Pemong; **Pi**, Pimenteria†; **Pm**, Palmella†; **Pn**, Panare; **Ti**, Tiriyo; **Tm**, Tamanaku; **Yu**, Yukpa; **Yw**, Yawarana; **Wm**, Waimiri-Atroari; **Ww**, Waiwai; **Wy**, Wayana.

rhythmic (iambic) stress (Table 1; Meira, 1998); some, however, have simple cumulative, usually penultimate, stress (Panare, Bakairi, Kuikuro, Yukpa). Morphophonological phenomena include stem-initial ablaut in verbs and nouns and the systematic reduction of stem-final syllables within paradigms (Gildea, 1995; Meira, 1999).

Morphology

Cariban languages are mostly suffixal; prefixes exist also, marking person and valency (the latter on verbs). Some languages (Tiriyo, Wayana, Apalai) have reduplication. The complexity of the morphology is comparable to that of Romance languages. There are usually nouns, verbs, postpositions, adverbs (a class that includes most adjectival notions), and particles.

Possessed nouns take possession-marking suffixes that define subclasses (-*ri*, -*ti*, -*ni*, - \emptyset) and person-marking prefixes that indicate the possessor (e.g.,

Ikpeng *o-megum-ri* ‘your wrist’, *o-muj-n* ‘your boat,’ *o-egi- \emptyset* ‘your pet’). With overt nominal possessors, some languages have a linking morpheme *j-* (e.g., Panare *Toman j-uwə?* ‘Tom’s house, place’). Nouns can also be marked for past (‘ex-N,’ ‘no longer N’) with special suffixes (-*tpo*, -*tpi*, -*bi*, -*tpə*, -*hpə*, -*npə*, etc.; e.g., Bakairi *ũwĩ-bi-ri* ‘my late father’). Pronouns distinguish five persons (1, 2, 3, 1 + 2 = dual inclusive = ‘you and I,’ 1 + 3 = exclusive; the 1 + 3 pronoun functions syntactically as a third-person form) and two numbers (singular, or noncollective, and plural, or collective). The third-person forms also have gender (animate vs. inanimate) and several deictic distinctions (Table 2). To each pronoun usually corresponds a person-marking prefix (except 1 + 3, to which correspond simple third-person markers). In some languages, the 1 + 2 prefixes were lost (Kapong, Pemong, Makushi); in others, the prefixes are replaced by pronouns as overt possessors (Yukpa, Waimiri-Atroari).

In more conservative languages, verbs have a complex inflectional system, with prefixes marking person and suffixes marking various tense-aspect-mood and number distinctions. The person-marking prefixes form what Gildea termed the *Set I* system (Table 3), variously analyzed as split-S or active-stative (e.g., by Gildea) or as cross-referencing both A (Agent) and P (Patient) (Hoff, 1968). In most languages, however, innovative systems have arisen from the reanalysis of older deverbal nominalizations or participials, and are now in competition with the Set I system. Most of the new systems follow ergative patterns, thus creating various cases of ergative splits and even a couple of fully ergative languages (Makushi, Kuikuro, in which the Set I system has been entirely lost). Gildea (1998) provides a detailed account of this diachronic development.

Underived adverbs usually take no morphology other than one nominalizing suffix. There are many postpositions, often formed with smaller locative or directional elements; they can take the same person-marking prefixes as nouns, and (usually) the same nominalizing suffix as adverbs. There are many particles in several syntactic subclasses and with various

Table 1 Rhythmic (iambic) stress: Tiriyo

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Words with only light (CV) syllables, based on the stem <i>apoto</i> ‘helper, servant’ ^a | | |
| <i>apoto</i> | [(a.po):.to] | ‘helper’ |
| <i>m-apoto-ma</i> | [(ma.po):.to.ma] | ‘you helped him’ |
| <i>kit-apoto-ma</i> | [(ki.ta):.(po.to):.ma] | ‘the two of us helped him’ |
| <i>m-apoto-ma-ti</i> | [(ma.po):.(to.ma):.ti] | ‘you all helped him’ |
| <i>kit-apoto-ma-ti</i> | [(ki.ta):.(po.to):.ma.ti] | ‘we all helped him’ |
| <i>m-apoto-ma-po-ti</i> | [(ma.po):.(to.ma):.po.ti] | ‘you all had him helped’ |
| <i>kit-apoto-ma-po-ti</i> | [(ki.ta):.(po.to):.(ma.po):.ti] | ‘we all had him helped’ |
| 2. Words with at least one heavy (non-CV) syllable. | | |
| <i>kin-erachtə-po-ti</i> | [(ki.ne):.(rah).(tə.po):.ti] | ‘he made them all be found’ |
| <i>mi-repentə-tə-ne</i> | [(mi.re):.(pen).(tə.tə):.ne] | ‘you all paid/rewarded him’ |
| <i>m-aitə-po-tə-ne</i> | [(mai).(tə.po):.tə.ne] | ‘you all had it pushed’ |

^aIambic feet are enclosed in parenthesis. Dots = syllable boundaries; hyphens = morpheme boundaries.

Table 2 A typical Cariban pronominal system: Kashuyana

| Third person | Inanimate | | Animate | | Other persons | Sing. | Pl. |
|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Sing. | Pl. | Sing. | Pl. | | | |
| Anaphoric | <i>iro</i> | <i>iro-tomu</i> | <i>noro</i> | <i>norojami</i> | 1 | <i>owi</i> | |
| Demonstrative | | | | | | | |
| Proximal | <i>soro</i> | <i>soro-tomu</i> | <i>mosoro</i> | <i>moʔtjari</i> | 2 | <i>omoro</i> | <i>omjari</i> |
| Medial | <i>moro</i> | <i>moro-tomu</i> | <i>moki</i> | <i>mokjari</i> | 1 + 2 | <i>kumoro</i> | <i>kimjari</i> |
| Distal | <i>moni</i> | <i>mon-tomu</i> | <i>mokiro</i> | <i>mokjari</i> | 1 + 3 | <i>amna</i> | |

Table 3 Cariban person-marking systems

| Conservative (Set I) system: <i>Karinya</i> | | | | | Innovative system: <i>Makushi</i> | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|----------|-----------|
| | 1P | 2P | 1+2P | 3P | (S _A) | | S | P | A |
| 1A | | k- | | s(i)- | ∅- | 1 | u- | u(j)- | -u-ja |
| 2A | k- | | | m(i)- | m- | 2 | a- | a(j)- | -∅-ja |
| 1+2A | | | | kis(i)- | kit- | 1+2 | i- | i(t)-/∅- | -i-ja |
| 3A | ∅-/j- | a(j)- | k- | n(i)- | n(i)- | 3Refl | ti- | t(i)- | -ti(u)-ja |
| (S _P) | ∅-/j- | a(j)- | k- | n(i)- | | | | | |

semantic and pragmatic contents (diminutives, evidentials, modals, etc.; cf. Hoff, 1986, 1990, for the *Karinya* case).

Class-changing morphology is quite rich. Verbs have many nominalizing affixes ('actual' vs. 'habitual' or 'potential' A, P, S; circumstance; action) and also adverbial-ized forms (participial, temporal, modal, etc.). There also are affixes for intransitivizing, transitivity and causativizing verb stems (according to their valency). There are several noun verbalizers (inchoative: 'to produce/have N'; privative: 'to de-N X'; dative: 'to provide X with N').

Syntax

Cariban languages are famous as examples of the rare OVS word order (Derbyshire, 1977), with *Hishkaryana* as the first case study.

- (1) *toto j-oska-je okoje* (*Hishkaryana*)
 man LINKER -bite-PAST snake
 'The snake bit the man.'
 (Derbyshire, 1979: 87)

Tight syntactic constituents are few: most languages have only OV-phrases (only with third-person A and P), possessive phrases (possessor-possessed), and postpositional phrases. There are no modifier slots: 'modification' is carried out by the apposition of syntactically independent but pragmatically coreferential nominals (e.g., *the woman, that one, the tall one, the one with beads* instead of *that tall woman with beads*). Equative clauses can have a copula, but verbless clauses also occur:

- (2) *tubu firə* (*Bakairi*)
 stone this
 'This is a stone.'
 (author's data)

Negation is based on a special adverbial form of the verb, derived with a negative suffix (usually *-pira*, *-pra*, *-bra*, *-ra*, etc.), in a copular clause:

- (3) *isapokara on-ene-pira aken* (*Apalai*)
 lizard.sp 3NEG-see-NEG 1:be:PAST
 'I did not see a *jacuraru* lizard.'
 (Lit. lizard not-seeing-it I-was)
 (Koehn and Koehn, 1986: 64)

Subordinate clauses are usually based on deverbal nominals or adverbials. In some languages, there are finite subordinate clauses (*Panare*, *Tamanaku*, *Yukpa*, *Tiriyo*). The sentences below exemplify relative clauses (in brackets): nominalizations (4) and finite clauses with relativizing particles (5).

- (4) *kaikui ə-wa:ra, [pabko (Tiriyo)*
 dog 2-known.to father
i-n-tu:ka-hpə]?
 3-PAT.NMLZR-beat-PAST
 'Do you know the dog that my father beat?'
 (author's data)

- (5) a. *tfonkai?pe it-etfeti pare* (*Tamanaku*)
 which 3-name priest
[n-epu-i netf]?
 3-come-PAST RELAT
 'What is the name of the priest who has (just) come?'
 (Gilij, 1782: III, 176)
- b. *akef peru [kat amo=n woneta]* (*Yukpa*)
 that dog RELAT you=DAT 1.talk
sa=ne siiw
 thus=3.be white
 'The dog that I talked to you about was white.'
 (author's data)

With verbs of motion, a special deverbal (supine) form is used to indicate the purpose of the displacement.

- (6) *epi-be wi-tə-jai* (*Wayana*)
 bathe-SUPINE 1-go-PRESENT
 'I am going (somewhere) to bathe.'
 (Jackson, 1972: 60)

Lexicon and Semantics

Cariban languages have few number words, usually not specifically numerical (one = alone, lonely; two = a pair, together; three = a few); higher numbers are expressed with (often not fully conventionalized) expressions based on words for *hand*, *foot*, *person* or *body*, or are borrowings. Spatial postpositions often distinguish: vertical support ('on'), containment ('in'), attachment/adhesion, Ground properties ('in open space,' 'on summit of,' 'in water'), and complex spatial configurations ('astraddle,' 'parallel to,'

‘piercing’). Some languages have ‘mental state’ post-positions (desiderative: *want*; cognoscitive: *know*; protective: *protective toward*; etc.). There are different verbs for eating, depending on what is eaten; to every verb corresponds a noun designating the kind of food in question (e.g., Tiriyo *ənə* ‘eat meat,’ *oti* ‘meat food’; *enapi* ‘eat fruits, vegetables,’ *nnapī* ‘fruit, vegetable food’; *əku* ‘eat bread,’ *uru* ‘bread food’; *aku* ‘eat nuts,’ *mme* ‘nut food’).

See also: Brazil: Language Situation; Colombia: Language Situation; Ergativity; French Guiana: Language Situation; Guyana: Language Situation; Rhythm; Rhythmic Alternations; Suriname: Language Situation; Venezuela: Language Situation; Word Stress.

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