

SECTION II

Some Aspects of the Grammar and Phonology of Akawaio and Arekuna

The Akawaio and Arekuna languages are very closely related linguistically. They have so many linguistic properties in common that in many cases conversations can be carried on between monolingual Akawaios and Arekunas with near-perfect intelligibility. The linguistic differences between the languages are mainly at the phonetic level (i.e. in the sounds used by speakers) but there are some grammatical differences as well. Below we present the sounds used in Akawaio and Arekuna and also some of the grammatical characteristics of these languages. No attempt will be made in this work to present full linguistic descriptions. Many details and finer distinctions will be suppressed in the interest of brevity and simplicity.

(a) The Sounds of Akawaio and Arekuna(i) The Vowels

Phonetic Realization	Guide to Pronunciation	Spelling	Occurrence in Akawaio	Occurrence in Arekuna
[i]	as in <u>beat</u>	ii	+	+
[ɨ]	as in <u>beat</u> pronounced with the tongue a bit lower in the mouth and its central area (rather than its front) raised towards the front of the hard palate.	ɨ	+	+
[ɪ]	as in <u>bit</u>	i	+	rarely
[e]	as in <u>bait</u>	ee	+	+
[ø]	as in <u>bait</u> but with the lips slightly rounded and the tongue slightly retracted towards the centre of the mouth.	ö	+	+

Phonetic Realization	Guide to Pronunciation	Spelling	Occurrence Akawaio	Occurrence Arekuna
[ɛ]	as in <u>bet</u>	e	+	+
[a]	as in <u>bat</u>	a	+	+
[ɔ]	as in <u>not</u>	o	+	+
[o]	as in <u>note</u>	oo	+	+
[ʊ]	as in <u>put</u>	u	+	rarely
[u]	as in <u>pool</u>	uu	+	+

The following diphthongs (i.e. two-vowel combinations uttered as single nuclei of syllables) occur in Akawaio and Arekuna: [aɪ], [aʊ], [ɔɪ], [ʊɪ], [ɪi], [ei], [ɛi], [eu]. Akawaio also has two diphthongs which do not occur in Arekuna. These are [ɛɪ] and [iɛ].

The Consonants

Phonetic Realization	Guide to Pronunciation	Spelling	Occurrence Akawaio	Occurrence Arekuna
[b]	as in <u>bet</u>	b	+	-
[p]	as in <u>pet</u>	p	+	+
[d]	as in <u>dip</u>	d	+	-
[t]	as in <u>tip</u>	t	+	+
[g]	as in <u>go</u>	g	+	-
[k]	as in <u>king</u>	k	+	+
[ʔ]	as in the brief pause in the middle of an English ch- <u>ch</u>	k	+	+
[z]	as in <u>sip</u>	z	+	-
[s]	as in <u>sip</u>	s	+	+
[ʒ]	as in <u>pleasure</u>	zh	+	-
[ʃ]	as in <u>ship</u>	sh	+	-

Phonetic Realization	Guide to Pronunciation	Spelling	Occurrence in Akawaio	Occurrence in Arekuna
[dʒ]	as in <u>jump</u>	j	+	+
[tʃ]	as in <u>church</u>	ch	+	+
[m]	as in <u>money</u>	m	+	+
[n]	as in <u>none</u>	n	+	+
[ŋ]	as in Creole English <u>nyam</u>		+	-
[r]	as in <u>water-rat</u> , but with the tongue flapping against the back of the upper front teeth once. In a more linguistic presentation this kind of sound would be symbolized as [ʀ]	r	+	+
[y]	as in <u>yam</u>	y	+	+
[ʎ]	as in <u>yam</u> but with the tongue shaped very much like it is in the pronunciation of an English [r]. This time, however, the tip of the tongue bends downwards towards the lower front teeth.	y	rarely	+
[w]	as in <u>wipe</u>	w	+	+

Some Phonological Traits of Akawaio and Arekuna

(i) Phoneme Inventory

An examination of the sounds of these two languages shows that both Akawaio and Arekuna have vowel and consonant sounds not found in English and that they lack some English sounds - neither language has the lateral [l], for instance. An interesting fact of Arekuna phonology is that it does not have voiced true consonants (obstruents). There are, for instance, no [b], [d], [g], [v] and [dʒ]

sounds in Arekuna. Akawaio has these latter sounds but neither Akawaio nor Arekuna has [f]. The presence in Akawaio and the absence in Arekuna of voiced obstruents is one of the more striking differences between the languages.

(ii) Word Stress

There is a general tendency for main stress in Akawaio and Arekuna to fall on the second syllable in two-syllable words. In three-syllable words main stress tends to fall on the second syllable and in words of more than three syllables the third syllable tends to attract primary stress. There are, however, many exceptions to these tendencies.

Different stress patterns on the same string of sounds can change their meaning

e.g.

(Akawaio)	kuŋwark	- a kind of ant
	kuŋwark	- dart
(Arekuna)	inna	- we
	inna	- yes

(Primary or main stress is shown by the diacritic ['] placed immediately above the stressed syllable. The unmarked syllable has weak stress).

Vowel length can sometimes change the meaning of identical strings of sounds

e.g.

(Akawaio)	mɔɪ	- little boy
	mɔ:ɪ	- pubic hair
(Arekuna)	a:tʃi	- sister
	atʃi	- infected sore

(The symbol [:] placed immediately after a vowel indicates that it is long).