

The closely related Carib dialects of the coast and the savannahs distinguish six vowels: a, e, i, i (high back unrounded), o, oe (high back rounded). Some bilinguals have begun to write Carib using *ë* for the high back unrounded vowel; the acceptability of both symbols will need to be evaluated. There are seven diphthongs, written aw, ow, aj, ej, ij (or *ëj*), oj, uj to distinguish them from vowel clusters in separate syllables, most of which are separated phonetically by an automatic glottal stop.

Consonants in syllable initial position are obstruents p, t, k, b, d, g, s, and resonants m, n, r (a reverse flap that often sounds almost like an [l]), w, j. Each has a palatalized variant when it follows i, ih, or a diphthong that ends in j. The palatalized variants of r and j differ noticeably from one dialect to another; but regardless of the local phonetic variant the palatalization process is automatic. It is therefore not symbolized.

In syllable final position there is a distinction between three nasals: m, n (which is palatal before pause regardless of whether i or j precedes it or not), and ng. Before consonants the nasal appropriate to the point of articulation of the consonant occurs: mb, nd, ngg.

There is also a consonantal *h* at the end of some nonfinal syllables. Since its relation to normal preglottalization of *p*, *t*, *k* and preaspiration of *s* is somewhat complicated, the details are given here. First, *h* before *p*, *t*, *k* is phonetically a reduction or elimination of voicing of the vowel that precedes the *h*. At times, in free variation with this, *h* is a voiceless fricative [p̥, θ, x] of the point of articulation of the stop that follows. *h* does not occur before *b*, *d*, *g*. Before the resonants *m*, *n*, *r*, *w*, *j*, the *h* is a glottal constriction. Thus *hp* represents [hp] or [p̥p], and *hm* represents [ʔm]. The picture is complicated, however, by the fact that under some conditions of accent *p*, *t*, and *k* are automatically preglottalized, and *s* is preaspirated. This means that in some positions [hp] or [p̥p] represent the sequence *hp*, while *h*a [ʔp] represents merely *p* without *h*. The glottal constriction in such a case does not have the status of a separate consonant, though it resembles phonetically the glottal constriction before a resonant that has the status of *h*.

There is a pitch accent on most words that is recognized as a marked jump upwards in pitch between two syllables. It is symbolized by an acute accent on the vowel of the syllable after the jump, or by a circumflex accent in place of the dieresis if the vowel is *i*: *matapí* 'cassava squeezer', *parí* 'grandchild'. Stress fluctuates from one repetition of a word to the next and is fairly uniform over a word. It is not distinctive and does not need to be symbolized apart from the pitch accent. Long syllables in the rhythmic pattern include those that end in *h*, those that precede *p*, *t*, *k*, and *s* under certain conditions of accent and consonant sequence that also determine preglottalization of the stops and preaspiration of *s*, those that end in nasals, those that contain diphthongs, and a couple of other automatic cases. (If length turns out not to be completely automatic in some dialects, it can be written with a colon following the vowel letter of each long syllable.)

Punctuation includes spaces written at the borders of grammatical words, which correspond closely enough to rhythmic feet that the elements that shift rhythmically from the foot that contains the stem they are attached to into another foot do not need special symbolization in a writing system. Where a fall in pitch with pause is an appropriate reading for the end of a sentence, a period is used; other sentence final punctuation marks may be needed. Comma is reserved for sentence medial points where pause with sustained pitch is appropriate.

#### COASTAL CARIB

Pena:ró iruhpá pó:re uwa:potósan tomandón. Asekáro iwejríkon itopótírikon wota:ró tí:toríkon ja:kó.

'Long ago the old time people lived very well. They all walked into the country when they went hunting.'

Grimes, Joseph E., editor. 1972. *Languages of the Guianas*. Summer Institute of Linguistics Publications in Linguistics, 35. Norman: Summer Institute of Linguistics of the University of Oklahoma. ix, 91 p.