of the core vocabulary contain a root, usually of two, three, or four consonants, to which brief prefixes and suffixes are added, and they also undergo internal vowel change; many of these roots have equivalents in other Semitic languages. Nouns have two genders, masculine and feminine, and two numbers, singular and plural. The verb is inflected in the perfect tense and with prefixes and suffixes in the imperfect tense, like other Semitic languages. Aramaic numerals above two share the common Semitic peculiarity of using the feminine form with masculine nouns, and vice versa.

Literary western Syriac is a clearly defined standard language. The 22 letters of its alphabet represent the consonants of the language. The vowel system distinguishes /a/, /e/, /i/, /u/, and /o/. /l/ and /g/ were not distinctive in this dialect. For an illustration of word formation, consider the word [ri:'] 'head.' Pronominal suffixes may be added to nouns, of which this is a selection: [ri:ʃe] 'his head', [ri:fam] 'our head', [ri:kun] 'your (plural) head'. Various nouns have irregularities; thus, the plural of [bra:] 'the son' is [bra:], the plural of [θa:ta:] 'the sister' is [θa:ta:ta:], and the plural of [θatta:] 'woman, wife' is [neθe:].

The fact that the participle in Aramaic is not used to construct complex sentences with frequent subordinate clauses, as occurs, say, in Germanic, Slavic, or Dravidian, means that Aramaic syntax is very simple compared with that of those languages. The verb usually comes first, followed by the subject and object, and sentences are linked together by conjunctions. The result is a language that is mostly regular and straightforward, with a minimum of verb tenses, no case endings on nouns, and a native script that serves it well.

References

ALAN D. CORRÉ

Arawak

The Arawak language family is the South American language family with the largest number of languages. Geographically, it spans four countries of Central America—Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua—and eight of South America—Bolivia, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil (and also formerly Argentina and Paraguay).

There are about 40 living Arawak languages. The first Native American peoples encountered by Columbus—in the Bahamas, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico—were Arawak-speaking Taínos. Their language became extinct within a hundred years of the Columbian invasion. Spanish—and many other languages—inherited a number of loanwords from Arawak languages. These include widely used words such as hammock, tobacco, potato, guava, and many other names for flora and fauna.

The creation of a 'mixed' language of Arawak/Carib origin in the Lesser Antilles is one of the most interesting pieces of evidence for the history of languages in pre-Conquest times. Speakers of Iñeri, a dialect of the Arawak language now (misleadingly) called Island Carib, were conquered by Carib speakers. They developed a 'mixed' Carib/Arawak pidgin that survived until the seventeenth century (Hoff 1994). 'Men's speech' and 'women's speech' were distinguished in the following way. Women used words of Arawak origin, while men used words of Carib origin and grammatical elements mostly of Arawak origin. The pidgin coexisted with Carib used by men and Iñeri used by women.
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and children; it belonged to both parties and served as a bridge between them. This diglossia gradually died out with the spread of Island Carib to both men and women. As a result, Island Carib, an Arawak language, had a strong influence of Carib with respect to both vocabulary and, possibly, grammar.

The languages in areas settled by the European invaders soon became extinct. Those on the north coast of South America perished first, before 1700. When the search for gold and rubber extended up the Amazon and its tributary the Rio Negro, additional languages succumbed, a process continuing from the eighteenth century to the present day. Sometimes, the Indians retaliated, attacking settlements and missions; but the invaders always returned. Indian rebellions often provoked forced migrations that sometimes ended up in the creation of a new dialect or even language. For instance, in 1797 the British authorities removed the rebellious inhabitants of St. Vincent (an island in the Lesser Antilles) to Belize on the mainland. These were racially a mixture of black slaves and Indians, who spoke Island Carib. This resulted in the creation of a new dialect of Island Carib—known as Central American Island Carib, Karif, Black Carib, or Garifuna—which by the twelfth century had developed into a separate language, now one of the two Arawak languages with the largest number of speakers.

The overwhelming majority of Arawak languages are now endangered. Even in the few communities with over 1,000 speakers, a national language (Portuguese or Spanish) or a local lingua franca (Lingua Geral Amazônica, Quechua, or Tucano) is gradually gaining ground among younger people. The few healthy Arawak languages include Guajiro in Venezuela and Colombia (probably with 300,000 speakers) and Garifuna in Central America (with up to 190,000 speakers). The Campa languages (total estimate 40–50,000) form one of the largest groups of indigenous population in Peru.

Most of the materials on Arawak languages collected during the second half of the twentieth century are by missionary linguists. Their quality and quantity vary. A full description is available for only three or four languages.

The fact that Arawak languages were related was first recognized by Father Gilij as early as in 1783. The recognition of the family was based on a comparison of pronominal prefixes in Maipure, a now extinct language from the Orinoco Valley, and More, from Bolivia. Gilij named the family Maipure. Later, it was renamed Arawak by Daniel Brinton after one of the most important languages of the family, Arawak (or Lukono), spoken in the Guianas. This name gained wide acceptance during the following decades. The majority of native South American scholars use the name Arawak (Arawá) to refer to the group of unquestionably related languages easily recognizable by shared pronominal prefixes such as na- or ta- ‘1sg’, pi- ‘2sg’, pi- ‘you’, and prefixes ka- meaning ‘have’ and ma- meaning ‘not’. A number of scholars, mainly North Americans, prefer to use the term Arawak(-an) to refer to a much more doubtful higher-level grouping and reserve the term Maipuran (or Maipurean) for the group of undoubtedly related languages, which was claimed to be one branch of ‘Arawakan’. Here, I follow South American practice and use the name Arawak for the family of definitely related languages.

The limits of the family were established by the early twentieth century. Problems still exist concerning internal relationships within the family and possible relationships with other groups. Internal classification and subgrouping of Arawak languages remains a matter of debate; further detailed work is needed on both the descriptive and comparative fronts.

The putative studies of ‘Arawakan’ by Esté Matteson, G. Kingsley Noble, and others are deeply flawed. Unfortunately, these have been adopted as the standard reference for the classification of Arawak languages, especially among some anthropologists, archeologists, and geneticists, influencing ideas on a putative homeland and migration routes for proto-Arawakan. The classification found in Campbell (1997) contains a number of factual mistakes and omissions and has to be treated with extreme caution.

Little is known about a homeland for the Arawak family. The linguistic argument in favor of an Arawak homeland located between the Rio Negro and the Orinoco rivers—or on the Upper Amazon—is based on the fact that there is a higher concentration of structurally divergent languages found in this region. This area has also been suggested as one of the places where agriculture developed. This is highly suggestive and corroborated by a few mythical traditions of northern origin found among Arawak-speaking peoples south of the Amazon. The origin myths of the Tarina, in northwest Amazonia, suggest that they could have come from the north coast of South America.

Arawak languages are complicated in many ways. Words can be differentiated by stress in some

| TABLE 1 Pronominal Prefixes and Suffixes in Proto-Arawak |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| **Prefixes**      | **Suffixes**      | **Prefixes**      | **Suffixes**      |
| **Person**        | **Singular**      | **Plural**        | **singular**      | **plural**       |
| 1                 | na- or ta-        | wa-               | -na, -te          | -wa              |
| 2                 | (pi)-             | (pi)-             | -pi               | -hi              |
| 3sf               | ri, ri-           | na-               | -ri, -i           | -na              |
| ‘Impersonal’      | tha-, ru-         | na-               | -tha, -ru, -u     | -na              |

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languages, such as Baure and Waurá (south of Amazonas), and Tariana, Achagua, and Warekena (north of Amazonas). At least two use tones, i.e. pitch differences, to distinguish words—Terena in the south, and Resigar carved spoken in the far northeast of Peru.

Each Arawak language has a few prefixes and numerous suffixes. Prefixes are typically monosyllabic, while suffixes can consist of one or more syllables. Roots usually contain two syllables. Prefixes are rather uniform across the family, while suffixes are not. What is an independent word in one language can be a grammatical suffix in another language. An Apurinã noun maka means 'clothing'—this is where the English word hammock comes from. In Tariana, maka is a classifier for clothing, as in pa-maka ‘one piece of clothing’ (literally ‘one-classifier: clothing’).

Most grammatical categories in Arawak languages are expressed on the verb. Cases for marking subjects and objects are atypical. Tariana, spoken in northwest Brazil, has developed cases for basic grammatical relations to match the pattern in nearby East Tucano languages; cases are also reported for Apurinã.

Arawak languages spoken south of the Amazon ('South Arawak') have a more complex verb structure than those north of the Amazon ('North Arawak'). South Arawak languages such as Amuesha or Carima have up to 30 suffix positions. North Arawak languages such as Tariana or Paciku do not have more than a dozen. Suffixes express meanings that are realized by independent words in similar Indo-European languages, e.g. 'be about to do something', 'want to do something', 'do late at night', 'do early in the morning', 'do all along the way', 'in vain', 'each other'. A typical example from Amuesha, spoken in Peru, shows the complexity of meaning that verbal suffixes can express. In Amuesha, the verb causative-absolute is expressed by the suffix -en-a. For instance, in Baniwa, one says na-kapa 'I see' and na-wasa 'I jump', but na-kapa-ni 'I see him' and nape-ni 'he is cold' (ni refers to 'I' and -ni to 'him'). And 'my hand' is na-kapi.

Some languages have lost the pronoun suffixes; these include Yawalapi (Xingu park, Brazil) and Chamicuro (Peru) to the south of the Amazon, and Bari, Resigar, Malpure, and Tariana, to the north. The term of the first person pronoun 'I' is ta- in the Caribbean (Lokono, Guajiro, Añun, Taino) and nu- in other languages. This is the basis for classification of Arawak languages into Nu-Arawak and Ta-Arawak.

Most Arawak languages distinguish two genders—masculine and feminine, e.g. Paciku amépi-yo 'chief (woman)' (literally 'chief-MASCULINE'), amépi-ye 'chief (man)' (literally 'chief-FEMININE'), Tariana nu-phe-ri 'my elder brother' (literally 'I-sibling-MASCULINE'), and nu-phe-ru 'my elder sister' (literally 'I-sibling-FEMININE'). Gender is not distinguished in the plural. Some languages also have complicated systems of classifiers—these characterize the noun in terms of its shape, size, or function. Tariana and Baniwa have over 40 classifiers, e.g. Tariana pa-da (one-classifier: round) 'one round thing', honu-da (big-classifier: round) 'big round thing', i.e. the suffix -da is a classifier for 'round things' and can be attached to numerals ('one'), adjectives ('big'), etc.


Throughout the Arawak language family, nouns divide into those that must have a possessor (inalienably possessed) and those that do not require a possessor as a must (alienably possessed). Inalienably possessed nouns include body parts, kinship terms, and a few others, e.g. 'house' or 'name'. Inalienably possessed nouns have an 'unpossessed' form marked with a suffix, e.g. Paciku no-tiho 'my face' (literally 'I-face'), tiho-ri 'someone's face' (literally 'face-unpossessed'). Alienably possessed nouns take a suffix when possessed, e.g. Baniwa nu-chinu 'my dog' (literally 'I-dog-possessed').

The overwhelming majority of Arawak languages have a negative prefix ma- and its positive counterpart ka-, e.g. Piro ka-yi 'having teeth' (literally 'positive-tooth'), ma-yi 'toothless' ('negative-tooth'); Bare ka-witi-w 'a woman with good eyes' ('positive-eye-feminine'), ma-witi-w 'a woman with bad eyes, a blind woman' ('negative-eye-feminine'). Most languages have just the numbers 'one' (pa-) and also meaning 'someone, another' and 'two' (api).
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languages, e.g. ikau 'arrive', *pi(du) 'sweep', *po or
*di 'give', *i/yu 'cry', *kama 'be sick, die', *tha
'drink'.

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See also Carib and Cariban Languages

Archeology and Language

The history of related languages is at the same time a
history of societies to which those languages
belonged. When we reconstruct prehistoric relation-
ships among a group of languages, we simultaneously
postulate the historical existence of the societies that
spoke those languages. Since the very beginnings of
linguistics as a science in the nineteenth century, the
problem of the archeological correlates of language
change and dispersal has thus been crucial to the joint
efforts of linguists and archeologists.

It was within the field of Indo-European linguistics
that archeological evidence has been more and more
widely resorted to determine the location of the Indo-
European homeland, the area in which a population
spoke Proto-Indo-European, a broadly defined group of
dialects that later developed into the various Indo-
European languages. The homeland problem can be
stated as follows: there are several reasons for suppos-
ing that the historical distribution of Indo-European
languages is not the original one and that the Indo-
European language family, at some time in its prehis-
toric existence, has occupied a territory far more con-
fined than that of its earliest historically attested
branches; Indo-European languages are thus supposed
to have spread from somewhere to their historical
location in prehistory, invading or occupying areas
where languages not belonging to the Indo-European
family were spoken; some of these relic non-Indo-
European languages are attested throughout Eurasia
(Basque, Tartessian, Iberian, Etruscan, Dravidian
languages), and are surrounded by Indo-European
languages. To some extent, the archeological record can
suggest the sociohistorical conditions under which the
Indo-Europeanization of Eurasia may have occurred.
From the great number of archeological solutions to
the homeland problem, one can select three scenarios
that enjoy wide currency:

(1) The continuity hypothesis. Archeologists have
found that there is a major cultural border
between the steppe cultures and those of

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