

The Garifuna Language

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Garifuna Today

- Around 200,000 native speakers
- Heavily concentrated in Central America
- Official minority language in Belize and Guatemala
- Communities in NYC and Houston



Historical and Social Context

- Origin in the Carribeans
- End of the 1700s: Movement westward
- Language rooted in the arts
- Traditions/history through ancestors



Linguistic Features

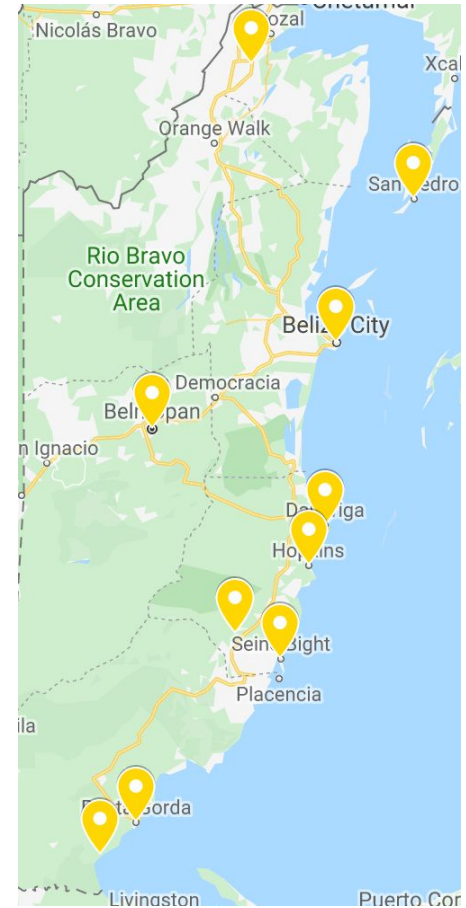
- Arawakan language
 - Prominent language family that originated in South America, migrated throughout the Americas and Caribbean
- Cariban language influence
 - Also indigenous to South America
 - Invaded Arawak territory, resulting in hybrid Arawak-Carib language
 - Men spoke Carib, women spoke Arawak
- 45% Arawak, 25% Carib, 15% French, 10% English, 5% Spanish, misc. African

Linguistic Features

- Incredibly high percentage of loan words
 - Due to history of migration (Spanish) and colonisation (Carib, English, French)
- Affixation
 - alîha = to read
 - liburu = book
 - n-alîha-ña liliburun = I am reading his book
 - l-alîha-ña liliburun = he is reading his book
 - t-alîha-ña liliburun = she is reading his book
 - alîha-ti liliburun = he reads his book

Political Issues

- National Garifuna Council of Belize
- Safeguarding and revitalization through UNESCO
- Preservation of land in Honduras
 - Fighting against large companies to save their culture



Gendered Language

- Language influences
- “Dialect” based on gender

Gloss	Male speech	Neutral speech
man	wügûri	eyé:ri
woman	wûri	hinyá:ru
yesterday	gún̄ya:rû	wûrinawuga
paddle	inéheney	fága:yu
storm	gunúbu	lérowga
land crab	wayúmu	hûrû

Kinship terms		
older brother	ayn	
niece (F)	ibádun	
niece (F)	ibásey	
niece (M)		ibásey
nephew (F)	inándaganu	ibádimu
nephew (F)	inibu	
nephew (M)		inibu
mother-in-law	ímedi	
daughter-in-law		ígeru
brother-in-law	ibámu	
older sister	ítu	
older brother	ibu	
older brother	ibuganya	
older sister		ibuganya

Table 39: Lexical genderlect distinctions

Masculine	Feminine
Wild plants	Domesticated plants and their fruits
Flying insect species	Crawling insect species
Piercing instruments	Cutting instruments
Sun; moon	Star
Body parts; body products	Vehicles
	Buildings
	Containers
	Cloth; garments
	Firearms
	Tree species
	Bird species
	Fish species

Table 10: Semantic gender categories

	singular, male speaker	singular, female speaker	plural
1st person	au	nugía	wagía
2nd person	amürü	bugía	hugía
3rd person	ligía	tugía	hagía

Garifuna in Peril

- One of the first films shot in Garifuna
 - Film is a mixture between Garifuna, English and Spanish
- Historical and current issues within the Afro-Honduran indigenous community
- Low-budget and self-distributed
- Very well received and won several awards:
 - Best Narrative Feature from the Arizona International Film Festival
 - Indie Spirit Special Recognition Award from the Boston International Film Festival
 - Golden Remi for Docu-Drama from WorldFest Houston
 - Audience Choice from the Festival de Cinema Latino American di Trieste

Garifuna in Peril



Questions