

PHONEMES OF THE GUARANÍ LANGUAGE

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0. INTRODUCTION

Bolivian Guaraní is the language of some 15,000 Indians located in the south-eastern part of the country. According to an estimate based on the comparison of word lists, the Guaraní of Bolivia and that of Paraguay are less alike than Spanish and Portuguese.

There are three main areas of Guaraní in Bolivia, differing geographically and linguistically — the eastern, central and western. The eastern area is that of Iso, where the people live along the course of the River Parapetí. The central and western areas lie in the foothills of the Andes between the River Grande to the North and the River Pilcomayo to the South. Linguistically the eastern and central areas are similar, and differ somewhat from the western area, possibly due to the fact that the latter area is separated from the others by several foothill ranges of the Andes.

The data on which this paper is based were collected during a period of residence of approximately two years in the village of Caraguatarenda, located in the central dialect area on the road between Camiri and Santa Cruz, about 100 kilometers from Camiri.

1. PHONEMES

There are fourteen consonant phonemes: /p t k ʔ r g^w ɸ s ɕ h m n ñ ŋ/.

| | Bilabial | Alveolar | Alveo-pal. | Velar | Glottal |
|-----------------|----------|----------|------------|----------------|---------|
| Voiceless stops | p | t | | k | ʔ |
| Voiced stops | | r | | g ^w | |
| Fricatives | ɸ | s | ɕ | | h |
| Nasals | m | n | ñ | ŋ | |

There are twelve vowel phonemes: /i e a o u i i ē ã õ ù î/.

| | Front | Central | Back |
|------|-------|---------|------|
| High | i ĭ | ɨ ĩ | u ũ |
| Mid | e ě | | o ɔ |
| Low | | a ǎ | |

There is a phoneme of stress: '.

1.1. Consonants

Bilabial consonants are: stop /p/, fricative /ɸ/, nasal /m/: *péru* 'you bring it', *ópa* 'it is finished', *boi* 'quickly', *óba* 'six', *méru* 'fly', *moi* 'snake'.

Alveolar consonants are: stop /t/, flap /r/, fricative /s/, nasal /n/: *téko* 'blame', *íti* 'rubbish', *réke* 'you sleep', *réru* 'you bring it', *osiríri* 'it slips', *sípe* 'hoe', *néko* 'your field', *néru* 'your father', *ǎníra* 'bat', *néti* 'your nose'.

Alveo-palatal consonants are: fricative /č/, nasal /ñ/: *če* 'I', *cépo* 'my hand', *očiríri* 'it melts', *ñe* 'again', *ñéti* 'gnat', *ǎñǎ* 'demon'.

Velar consonants are: stop /k/, labialized /gʷ/, nasal /ŋ/: *kíse* 'knife', *óka* 'patio', *akúti* 'jochi', *gʷíra* 'bird', *ógʷa* 'he buys it', *ɣóte* 'cicada', *ǎɣúña* 'rat'.

Glottal consonants are: stop /ʔ/, fricative /h/: *ópa* 'he falls', *ñepépa* 'firewood', *hésa* 'his eye', *óho* 'he goes'.

1.2. Vowels

1.2.1. Oral vowels

Front vowels are: high /i/, mid /e/: *ípo* 'his hand', *iñatípi* 'his boil', *épo* 'ride!', *egʷáta* 'walk!'.

Central vowels are: high /i/, low /a/: *iñatípi* 'his shoulder', *ibíti* 'hill', *agʷáta* 'I walk', *ópa* 'it is finished'.

Back vowels are: high /u/, mid /o/: *čéru* 'my father', *ibítu* 'wind', *čéro* 'my house', *ópo* 'he rides'.

1.2.2. Nasalized vowels

The nasalized vowels /ĩ ě ĩ ǎ ũ ɔ̃/ correspond in point of articulation to their oral counterparts.

Words showing contrasts of oral and nasalized vowels are: *epúka* 'laugh!', *ēpápa* 'get up!'; *íta* 'stone', *ítã* 'shell'; *ibítí* 'hill', *ibítĩ* 'mist'; *ópo* 'he jumps', *ópẽ* 'it is broken'.

1.3. Consonant allophones

All the voiced consonant phonemes have two allophones — one occurs preceding oral vowels, the other preceding nasalized vowels.

Allophones of /b/ are [b], [b̃]: *ibítí* [ibítí] 'wind', *ibítĩ* [ibítĩ] 'mist'.

Allophones of /r/ are [r], [r̃]: *íro* [íro] 'it is bitter', *irũ* [irũ] 'other'.

Allophones of /g^w/ are [gw], [ɣw̃]: *óg^we* [ógwe] 'it goes out', *óg^wépe* [ɔɣw̃épe] 'he vomits'.

Allophones of /m/ are [mb], [m]: *ōmoái* [ōmboái] 'he erases it', *ōmōái* [ōmōái] 'he scatters it'.

Allophones of /n/ are [nd], [n]: *ōmōnóo* [ōmōndóo] 'he breaks it', *ōmōnōpō* [ōmōndōpō] 'he picks it up'.

Allophones of /ñ/ are [j], [ñ]:¹ *áña* [ája] 'I approach', *áñã* [áñã] 'demon'.

Allophones of /ŋ/ are [ŋg], [ŋ]: *ōmōŋéta* [ōmōŋgéta] 'he reads', *ōñēŋátã* [ōñēŋátã] 'he scolds'.

1.4. Vowel allophones

Vowels preceded by a voiceless consonant occurring before a pause vary from voiced to voiceless.

In words of one syllable which contain only one vowel the vowel is lengthened.

/a ã/ have the phonetic qualities [æ æ̃] when preceded by /ñ/ or when occurring between two front vowels: *ñai* [jæi] 'thornbush', *mĩčĩãẽ* [mĩčĩãẽ] 'child'.

Mid and high back vowels vary from closed to open positions.

2. SYLLABLE PATTERNS AND THE STRESS PHONEME

The syllable patterns which occur are: V, VV, CV, CVV, CVVV: *ópo* 'he rides', *tĩmíáo* 'trousers', *tápe* 'road', *tuPáo* 'church', *KUAE* 'this'.

Except for borrowings from Spanish, there are very few words which contain closed syllables. Such syllables never occur word finally. The only consonant phonemes which occur syllable finally are nasals, and

¹ There is a third allophone of /ñ/ — [ñj] — which occurs only in one word: *añãbẽ* /añãbẽ/ [añãbẽ] 'today'.

there is usually an alternative pronunciation of the word, in which the syllable final consonant is omitted: *túmpã* 'God', *téntã/tétã* 'town'.

Lower vowels followed by higher vowels form ascending diphthongs. A high back vowel followed by any other vowel, a high front followed by low, and a high central followed by high front, form descending diphthongs. Lower vowels followed by higher vowels and preceded by a high front or high back form triphthongs.

The usual position of word stress is determined by the type of syllable occurring finally in the word.

For a final syllable containing a single vowel or descending diphthong, the usual position of word stress is on the penultimate syllable. For a final syllable containing two same vowels, an ascending diphthong, or a triphthong, the usual position is on the ultimate syllable: *tápe* 'road', *ikua* 'its hole', *ósii* 'he runs', *oipfi* 'he grasps it', *ipói* 'it is heavy', *hokuáe* 'that'.

There is a limited number of words in which the occurrence of stress contrasts with that of the usual pattern. Some examples are: *ãmué* 'other', *mókõí* 'two', *oñókuai* 'he commands him'.

Antepenultimate stress is rare.

Examples of stress on the ultimate, penultimate, or antepenultimate syllable are: *kārãmué* 'a long time ago', *kārũmue* 'yesterday', *ĩrãmue* 'on top of it'.

A SAMPLE VOCABULARY OF THE GUARANÍ LANGUAGE

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. man | /kũĩmáe/ | 15. firewood | /ñepépa/ |
| 2. woman | /kúñã/ | 16. ash | /tãnímu/ |
| 3. people | | 17. smoke | /tãtãtĩ/ |
| 4. her husband | /ĩmẽ/ | 18. sky | /ára/ |
| 5. his wife | /hẽmiréko/ | 19. rain | /ãmã/ |
| 6. his father | /tu/ | 20. sun | /kuarái/ |
| 7. his mother | /ĩçi/ | 21. moon | /ñási/ |
| 8. child | /mĩçĩáẽ/ | 22. star | /ñasitáta/ |
| 9. old man | /néçi/ | 23. it thunders | /hiápu ára/ |
| 10. water | /ĩ/ | 24. lightning | /ãmãbéra/ |
| 11. river | /ĩ/ | 25. rainbow | /ñípi/ |
| 12. house | /o/ | 26. day | /ára/ |
| 13. roof | /opitía/ | 27. night | /pítũ/ |
| 14. fire | /tãta/ | 28. earth | /ĩbi/ |

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 29. tree | /i bi ra/ | 48. his stomach | /hie/ |
| 30. its leaf | /ho/ | 49. his back | /iku pe / |
| 31. its root | /hápo/ | 50. his shoulder | /i ñatí ?i/ |
| 32. canoe | | 51. his arm | /i ñi ba/ |
| 33. paddle | | 52. his upper arm | /i ñi báipi/ |
| 34. fish | /píra/ | 53. his elbow | /h ēni báŋa/ |
| 35. his tongue | /í kū / | 54. his hand | /ípo/ |
| 36. his mouth | /i ñú ru/ | 55. his finger | /ip ō ákā/ |
| 37. his lip | /h é me/ | 56. his fingernail | /ip ō ápē/ |
| 38. his tooth | /h ā í/ | 57. his leg | /i?u/ |
| 39. his nose | /í tí / | 58. his knee | /itá ba / |
| 40. his eye | /h é sa/ | 59. his shin | /it im ákā/ |
| 41. his ear | /i ná mi/ | 60. his foot | /ipi/ |
| 42. his head | /i ñá kā/ | 61. his toe | /ip is ā/ |
| 43. his forehead | /hes í ba/ | 62. his skin | /ip í re/ |
| 44. his hair | /i?a/ | 63. his bone | /ik á g ^w ē/ |
| 45. his chin | /h āñ fkā/ | 64. blood | /t ú g ^w i/ |
| 46. his beard | /h ēni bá/ | 65. heart | |
| 47. his neck | /i ñáñu / | 66. lungs | |

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