

- (e) the phrase 'deliver us from evil?' the same.  
 (f) the word 'amen?' the same.

It would assist my task greatly if you would find it possible to set out, under each of the Arawak words in the text, the literal English meaning of the word.

I realise of course that it is possible that you yourself do not know the language. However, you would have in your congregation, or living nearby, elderly people with whom you could discuss these points and clarify them. I don't think I need to stress the importance of this task so that we may preserve a record of the Arawak language before it is entirely forgotten.

## LEGENDS

I have gathered what I could in my travels and have read what Rev. Brett\* and Mr im Thurn\*\* have recorded. But there must be many others. Do you know any you can tell me? From the old legends much history can sometimes be reconstructed.

## SONGS

Do you know or can you get the words of any of the old songs? Or even what they are about? Songs very often are of great assistance in telling us something about those who sang them.

I look forward to hearing from you with tremendous interest. I only hope you will consider my project a worthy one and give me your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hart

P.S. I will be leaving the above address at the end of July. As this letter will no doubt take some time to reach you and your reply may be unable to reach me before then, you could write to me in care of Dr Harold Drayton, University of Guyana, Georgetown, B.G. and it will be sent on to me.

\* See page 255.  
 \*\* See page 259.

5th July, 1965

Dear Mr Hart,

Thanks ever so much for your most interesting letter. I note that you will be leaving your present address at the end of July but I hope this letter will reach you before then.

I am willing to help you as much as I can in the study of the Arawak language. Your 'Lord's Prayer' I found difficult to follow. I was only able to identify a few phrases, e.g.:

*Yahabo hororo ajiaiko* 'On this here earth'  
*Meberachebeyn dakbotonia* 'Hurry with my rations'  
*Ebebe nebtibidan wakayani odomai* 'They treated us  
 with medicine because they were wicked'  
*Mayora tonba danshi* 'Do not trouble me'  
*Boburwatalide* 'You must write me.'

The rest I could not make out, or *kayada* 'make out'.

Now let me give you a version of the Lord's Prayer:-

*Wa Chinachi aiomung kboniti* 'Our Father native of the heavens'  
*Sareng Bu irt ikbtuan bia* 'Your Name will be kept reverently'  
*Bui'sauka andiate* 'Let Your Kingdom come.'

*B'ansbista anibi bia bororo ajiaiko* 'What You want to be done  
 on earth'

*ambija aiomung jing* 'will be done as in the heavens'.

*B'isbikbate wamung kasakabo mang wa melia* 'Give us day by  
 day our meal.'

*B'odokodate wa maianudusia wauirea* 'Loose us from our debts';  
*wai adokodong amaiamutichirino u jing* 'as we loose them who  
 are indebted to us'.

*Mashiking ba wakbata ikisbidabu olokomuni u* 'Do not give us  
 over into temptation';  
*tomoroa b'oborota wakayabu oreu u* 'but help (deliver) us from  
 evil'

*Isauka, tata okbona, Kalemebi b'amuning odoma*, 'Kingdom,  
 Power, Light you have because',  
*mai'bonoatu bia* 'never to end.'

You can see that there is a slight difference between your version and the one I am sending you.

The word 'Heaven' — the Arawak equivalent is *Atomung* and the word for 'God' is *Adaieti*.

The Arawak word for 'kingdom' — I cannot recall it. The word *tsauka* is used for a condition rather than a place. *Atomungis* is used for 'heaven' — a place, *tsauka* is used for 'heaven' — a condition the good achieve\*.

*Adaieti* 'God'; *Dateng* 'King'; *Arokong* 'Governor'; *Ayudi* 'Chief'.  
 'Bread': 'cassava bread' is *khali*. In the Lord's Prayer *melia* is used. It is the English word 'meal'. The Arawaks adopted it because it suited any kind loaf flour which may be used for making bread.

'Temptation' is *wakhatabu akaishtabu* (evil test) and the meaning is the same as the English 'temptation'.

'Deliver us from evil' — the Arawak is literally 'Help us in our fight against evil'.

'Amen' — Since 'Amen' is not English it is better to use 'Amen' at the end of the prayer. In Arawak the translation would be too involved and clumsy.

#### GENDER

As far as I can make out, Arawak has only two Genders — Masculine and Feminine. In the old legends everything was living. Water was a living thing, a stone was a living thing, a piece of clay was a living thing and each of these things had its particular "spirit". The Masculine usually ends with *t* and the Feminine in *o*, thus 'man' is *waditi* and 'woman' is *hiaro*; 'father' is *tchi* and 'mother' is *oyo*; 'older brother' is *bukechi* and 'older sister' is *tulato*; 'younger brother' is *aukichi* and 'younger sister' is *aukito*; 'boy' is *ilonchi* and 'girl' is *ilonto*; 'nephew' is *munchi* and 'niece' is *wunto*; *rechi* is 'husband' and *raito* is 'wife'; 'manservant' is *sanchi* and 'maidservant' is *santo*.

'This' (man), would be *hibi* (*waditi*); 'This' (woman), *tobo* (*hiaro*) but *tobo* would be used in referring to any animal—regardless of the sex—or thing.

#### ABSTRACT CONCEPTIONS

At the moment I can only think of a very few, e.g. *hamarobu* 'fear'; *biklahabu* 'selfishness'; *usabu* 'goodness'; 'devotion'—(can't remember); *anshibu* 'love'; *kituanbu* 'truth'; *nokanebu* 'sorrow'; *maimabu* 'kindness'; *kaimabu* 'viciousness'.

KEY: *a* as in 'father' or 'fat'

*e* as in 'fête' or 'met'  
*i* as in 'machine' or 'bit'  
*o* as in 'note'  
*u* as in 'boot' i.e. the 'oo' sound

Most of the vowels are short and only a few are long.

I am afraid all this is getting a little too complicated, in the letter — next — I will try to elaborate some more. I sincerely hope this is the beginning of a long and interesting correspondence between us. I am hoping to hear from you very soon.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

John Bennett

238 Park Mead  
 Cranleigh, Surrey

15th August, 1965

Dear Father Bennett,

I cannot tell you how thrilled I was to get your letter and to discover that you have such a grasp of the Arawak language. I have no idea how old a man you are — somehow I never enquired. But my guess would be that you are young enough to have had to consciously set about mastering the language, and if this is so then you are already half way to the decision I hope to persuade you to. How would you react to the suggestion that you should write a little book on the language?

When Captain Williams\* at Kabakaburi told me that you shared his sentiments on the matter of what a pity it was for the old language to simply die out, I was pleased, but I had no idea that you yourself were

\* Of Captain Cecil Williams, Fr Martin Hirst had this to say in his unpublished Memoirs: "Cecil... although Arawak himself [was] brought up by a half-caste stepmother and unable to speak the language. But he had great force of character and was not only fervently devout but an excellent worker. He alone had built a house of painted boards and shingle roof".

to North theory. But I will keep you advised as I go more fully into it. The evidence you have turned up for me is very helpful. But the absence of words for 'mountain' and 'waterfall' in the Arawak language as spoken in Guiana has certainly set me thinking. Clearly the Arawaks in the Greater Antilles must have had words for these things because the mountains there are so lofty. In my country they rise over seven thousand feet and on the borders of Haiti and the Dominican Republic they go up to the height of Mount Roraima (nine thousand). The waterfalls, though mere trickles compared to Kaiteur, are numerous.

What you say about the name for 'maize', *yukotama*, will set me off on quite a chain of enquiry. The Maya, who had developed a high level of civilization, were great traders. But I have not read anything to suggest that their trade with the Antilles was in their own boats. On the other hand, the Arawaks in Jamaica were known to have covered great distances, and they had some pretty big boats. Columbus reported seeing a boat 96 feet long and 8 feet wide. There is a stone carving, found in Jamaica, depicting a boat with a cabin. Bernal Dias who accompanied Cortes, saw "merchants" from Jamaica off the coast of Yucatan. Someone else, I can't find the reference immediately, records their presence off the coast of Honduras. Now the Maya maintained a trading post on Cozumel Island (about 20 miles, I think, off the coast of British Honduras). So it is more than probable that some sort of trading contact had started between the Arawaks and the Maya. But whether this had been of long enough duration for knowledge of the name of a type of corn to have travelled down the chain to South America is something else again. So perhaps the Arawaks took this type of corn with them in a southward migration. This definitely requires further investigation.

The Charles Williams you speak of, is this someone I did not meet or is it the man in the photograph? This is the family whose names I got as Cecil Williams. He is the Captain at Cabacaburi. He it was who told me of your regrets at the possibility that the old language might soon be forgotten. He also told me of his theory of the origin of *Hosororo* (I am not sure if he said it was his theory — come to think of it). He thought it was probably from *u-suruu* in the Warau language in which it means 'dripping water'. Will you do me the great kindness of sending the photograph to him with my compliments. He gave me his address as Cecil Williams, Cabacaburi Mission, Pomeroon River. I don't think he believed me when I told him I would not forget to send him a print of the photo. I will write again as soon as I have something in the way of 'know-how' about writing the book.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hart

EXTRACT from **THE ARAWAKS**, a broadcast by Richard Hart,  
B.B.C. Third Programme, 6/12/65

Though the Arawaks had not developed any form of glyph or pictorial writing, the grammatical complexity and subtlety of their language is such that it could only have reached this stage of maturity over many centuries of usage.

Their verbs are particularly interesting. There is a multiplicity of tenses and moods. For example, there are two present tenses, one more immediate than the other. *Lo sabo* means simply 'he goes'. But *lo sabodo* conveys the meaning that 'he is actually stepping away at the moment'. There are also two perfect tenses, one for something perfected only yesterday or the day before, the other for a more remote perfection. *Da yabababuna* means that 'I walked yesterday or the day before', but if I wanted to say simply that 'I walked' (at some indefinite time in the past) that would be *da yababakuba*.

The form of the verb changes not only with the many different moods and tenses, the choice of the pronoun governing it and the singular or plural. It also changes according to the sex of the subject to which it is related. When a baby boy is born the verb is *carrayai*. But should the baby be a girl, the verb is *caryano*.

There is a rich collection of pronouns, with differing forms according to whether the pronoun is used in isolation on the one hand, or with a verb or in its possessive form on the other. 'He', 'she' and 'we' in isolation are *lhaba*, *traha* and *wako* respectively. But 'he went (yesterday)' would be *lo sabuna*, the pronoun having changed in form from *lhaba* to *lo*. Similarly, 'she will go' is *to sufá*, the pronoun having been reduced from *traha* to *to*. 'Let us walk' is *wa yabadali*, the *wako* becoming *wa*.

In most cases the possessive form of the pronoun is the same as the form used in verb combinations. But the use of the possessive pronoun with a noun has the curious effect of altering the noun, sometimes its ending and sometimes its beginning and sometimes both.

The word for an axe is *barru*. But 'my axe' is *da barrun*. Here the ending has changed. The word for a resting place is *sanuka*. But 'our resting place' is *wa sanuka*. This same word, incidentally, can convey the meaning of a 'state of rest' and is the word used by the Arawaks to translate the word 'kingdom' in the Lord's Prayer. Thus the combination 'Thy kingdom' is translated *Bui sanuka*, the noun dropping its first syllable. But the word for 'tobacco', *wi*, in the combination 'my tobacco' becomes *da julite*, both the beginning and the end of the noun having changed.

Some nouns also change their form according to whether it is a man or woman speaking. If a woman says 'to marry' she says *keretin*. But the same thing said by a man is *keretun*. There are, moreover, only two genders — masculine and non-masculine, all inanimate things being in the same gender as the female.

language and said at that time that she hoped eventually to get some special training in linguistic analysis and then tackle the language again. My colleagues tell me that she is now working at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. It might be worth your while getting into touch with her. Quite apart from anything else, she made a number of films of the Akwaio, and some sixty three reels of tape recordings.

[rest of letter missing—Ed.]

18th March, 1966

Dear Mr Hart,

Thanks for your two letters of 12th December and 1st March. I have been flitting around so much that I find I have left quite a number of letters unanswered. I must say that your letters have certainly stirred up my interest and curiosity in the Arawak language.

Now for some comments on your broadcast—THE ARAWAKS

Para. (2):

*osa* 'go'; *ihbi* 'he' or 'this person' (male);

*ihbi osa*, contracted to *losa* 'he goes'.

*losabo* 'he is going'; *losaboda* 'he is actually stepping away at the moment'.

*yabada* 'uproot', e.g. 'reaping' ('uprooting') cassava, yams, etc.

*yahua* go for a stroll'.

*Dai T*; *Da yaduhuma* 'I strolled' ('walked') yesterday or the day before.

*Dayadukoba* 'I strolled' ('walked') at some indefinite time in the past.

Para. (3):

*karaya* 'born'; *karayai* 'he is born'; *karayano* 'she is born'.

Para. (4):

*ihbi* 'he'; *ihaba* 'him'; *tobo* 'she' (or 'this'); *toraha* 'her' (or 'that').

*wai* 'we' or 'us' or 'our'; *waiho* is used to emphasize *wai*.

*ihbi osabuma*, contracted to *losabuma* 'he went' (yesterday).

*tobo osafa*, contracted to *tosafa* 'she will go'.

*wai yaduali*, contracted to *wa yaduali* 'we must stroll'.

*wai yahuate*, contracted to *wa yahuate* 'let us stroll'.

*wai konate*, contracted to *wa konate* 'let us walk', i.e. 'proceed on foot'.

Para. (6):

*Dai T* or 'my' or 'me'; *baro* 'axe'; (*Dai barong*) *Da baron* 'my axe'.

*wai* 'we' or 'our' or 'us'; *isauka* 'resting place' (?)

*Wai isauka*, contracted to *Wa isauka* 'our resting place' (?)

*Bui* 'you' or 'your' (singular).

*Bui isauka*, contracted to *Bisauka* 'Thy kingdom'.

*uli* means 'oil'; *karaba* 'grease'.

*yuri* 'tobacco'.

*Dai yurite*, contracted to *Da yurite* 'my tobacco'.

Para. (7):

*aika* 'to marry'.

*kereching* 'to have a husband'; *keryung* 'to have a wife'.

*erechi* 'husband'; *traito* 'wife'.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,

John Bennett

15th March, 1966

Dear Rev. Bennett,

At last things are beginning, no matter how slowly, to move. Enclosed are copies of my last exchange of letters with Prof. Glass and of the notes prepared for us at his request by Mr J.M. Aitchison, a lecturer on Dr Denison's staff.

Please don't be discouraged if you find the "International Phonetic Alphabet" unintelligible at first glance. I can make neither head nor tail of it at the moment, but I shall try to see Mr Aitchison and get some assistance towards understanding it so that if you find similar difficulty I may then be able to explain it. So if you too are mystified you should let me know.

15th February, 1974

Dear Dick,

Although I am against excessive speed in any form yet the lure of speed is very strong. It manifests itself in many subtle ways, for example: I regret I cannot do more, heal quicker, read faster, run, etc., etc., Then I think of an engine, the high speed ones wear out faster than low speed ones. I also think of experts: the greater the expert the greater the accuracy—also the greater the mistake.

Thanks for your offer and your suggestion. I think it would be better if the work is done by a professional typist near to you as you could issue minute instructions. As I cannot talk well I am afraid to tell anyone what to do. The other day I asked someone to write out a receipt for me, "for rent received for lot 3". Later on I was amused to read a receipt for "Larine". You see the writer put down what he heard.

It appears that the 'Arawak' dictionary hasn't got nearly all—or should I say most—[of] the words. Some words occur to me in the night. They have developed a horrible habit of intruding themselves when I am in bed. I have written down some but some got omitted because I was too lazy to bother with them. At the time I remembered everything perfectly but when the morning comes I usually find I blissfully forgot the words during sleep.

Anyhow I am sending you the following:-

B *babo*, n, a cavity under a tree root in the water.

*baukili*, n, a swamp, bog, morass.

*biana*, adj., two things joined.

D *dinaso*, n, a bracelet.

K *kakoya*, adv., extremely carefully.

*kamuñchina*, adj., complex and difficult.

*karasa*, v.t, to scratch.

*kamuñchinabü*, n, privation.

L *luküsa*, v.i, involuntary twitching.

*laro*, n, glowing, of a piece of firewood in a dying fire.

*larosa*, v.t, put out the flame so that only the embers remain.

*larosoa*, v.i, the blaze of a fire having gone out by itself leaving

only the glowing cinders.

R *risá*, adv., smartly, agilely.

*roro*, adj., slushy, muddy.

*roroh*, n, slush.

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S *sikurida*, v.t, pinch, squeeze.  
*sipi*, n, alcohol.

T *teletele*, adj., slippery.  
*tokua*, adj., boastful.  
*tokuaka*, v.t, boast.

I am not certain of the grammar of any language. I am not quite sure if a word is an adjective, adverb or preposition—that seems to be my chief difficulty. I have some bits of the English/Arawak meaning with me. I will get them typed out and send the ms. to you. It may prove helpful. I could have sent them now but the words are typed without the accompanying characters—~ etc.

An American anthropologist stayed in our house for one year doing field work for his thesis. He offered to look around for a possible publisher for my dictionary. I told him about you, that I would give you his address—possibly you might write to him. He is Lee Drummond\*, 433 McLeod Avenue, Missoula, Montana 59801, U.S.A.

You are right about the word *pero* that Brett used to mean 'dog'. It is Spanish. But it is used so much by the Arawaks that it is considered an Arawak word. There are many such words, e.g. *buritko*, *baka*, *kawayo*, *kaburita*, *karina*, *arakabosa*, *maseta*—all Spanish but incorporated into Arawak and used as such. There are also a few Portuguese words, like *bakaleau* and *kamiri*; also some Dutch words as well as some English and other words. If you were to pick out all the foreign words you would be left with only a few Arawak ones. The whole thing is getting more and more interesting. As it is with other languages you have to be a member of the tribe—grown up from babyhood to adulthood—to understand the finer points of the language—to say "shbboleth" instead of "sibboleth". Even Brett was not above making mistakes. A child learns to speak a language unconsciously, an adult consciously, often making a mental translation.

I usually take a long time to do anything, the date on this letter will give an indication.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

John

\* See bibliographical references for Drummond on page 268.

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18th March, 1974

Dear Dick,

I feel like a hero. I am sending you some English words with the Arawak (?) meaning. Although the word-list is headed ENGLISH WITH ARAWAK EQUIVALENT, many of the "equivalents" are only approximate.

This word game is getting more and more fascinating. I never thought that I could be beaten by mere words. But I am being beaten often, and I cannot deny it. In my old age I have to study (fateful thought) grammar, especially PARTS OF SPEECH in order to tell which words are Adjectives, which Adverbs and which Prepositions, and how they are identified. But really, I am enjoying the struggle.

Sometimes people say that so and so is the REAL word, the RIGHT word. What they mean is that such [a] word was used in 800 B.C. In point of fact that word was right when it was used, but in the light of present-day usage it is old-fashioned, archaic — like Chaucer's English. As a rule we don't like to change, but change is going on all the time.

In Guyana, many place-names are Amerindian. Of the ten rivers, nine have Arawak names and one has a Warau name. Where I live there are many creeks and places with Arawak, Carib and Akawaiio names. They got these names because of an abundance or a preponderance of certain animals, insects, trees, actions or waters. 'Pomeroon' is a corruption of *Baurroma* (which) is a corruption of *Barau-reme*. *Barau-reme* means 'an extension of the sea'. Some people think that Baurroma is a corruption of *biotroma*. Now *biotromais* cassava prepared in a special way and is used in travelling; it is popular because it is easily and quickly prepared for human consumption, and it can keep for a long time. The exponents of this latter explanation may be correct.

Very few people use the term *waiithi* meaning 'male'; most would say *wajithi*.

Brett did very very well to master Arawak, but (a) he was an Englishman, and (b) he learnt it as an adult. Little mistakes are unavoidable — either by the teacher, the pupil or the printer. As it happens in English so it happens in Arawak. There are some differences which follow no logical reason. You have to be an Arawak person, i.e. born in an Arawak-speaking community, to know the language intimately. There are some things which cannot be explained logically — like something called the Holy Roman Empire, which some unkind person described as "Not holy, not Roman, not an Empire". But I am straying from the point. Many

of the 'r's' in Arawak are heavily rolled, called like if the person had some liquid in his mouth. The sensible thing for a non-Arawak to do is to give the English sound to any 'r'.

Some words are shortened in practice; the first syllable is usually omitted in a certain word, e.g. *wakharobo* means 'now' but *kharobo* is normally said.

*rechi* means 'husband' but *rechi* is normally said.

*akona* means 'walk' but is used, etc., etc., but you have to be one of the people to know the various subtleties. Changes are slight but they are there. In English, because it is more widely used, the changes are faster and more numerous, e.g. I used to know 'transistor' as something that replaced the tube in a radio, but it is quickly coming to mean a 'small radio'. Criticise meant 'assess', now it means 'find fault' and so on and so forth.

It is remarkably good of you to offer to help me further — you have already taken a lot of trouble to help someone you have never met. I never stop marvelling about that fact.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

John

14th April, 1974

Dear John,

Yours of 15th February and 18th March both arrived safely, and I am more than ever lost in admiration at your achievement under such difficult circumstances. I have been desperately busy over the past three months in connection with the reorganization of local government here which has just been completed. On April 1st a new Council replaced four smaller councils in this area, and the same thing has been happening all over the country. I got the appointment as Solicitor to the new Council and have had the problem not only of putting the new Legal Department into shape and finding suitable assistant solicitors and other staff, but also of advising on a hundred and one other things. Meanwhile, the work of the former authority of which I was Solicitor had to continue up to March 31.

Over this week-end I have finished a review of two new books which I had rashly promised to do for the journal of the Caribbean Studies

corrections. I still found that I left out something I wanted to put in. It is a trivial point concerning plurals. When you are speaking of persons, you say for instance: sing. *atchi* 'son', plu. *atchino* 'sons', but you sometimes hear *atchinochi* used as the plural. The *chi* at the end of a plural denotes intimacy. *W'atchinochi* means 'our sons' — a close relationship.

I hope this game of defining words has come to an end, as it was getting difficult and difficult.

We have an interesting (to me) item on one of our programmes. On station GBS on Wednesday evenings, 7.30 Guyana time, a fellow from the University of Guyana\* is conducting a search for Creole Dutch. I never heard any Creole Dutch, or, if I heard it I couldn't identify it.

Life is very interesting, I find I never have to kill time, there is usually so much to do that I cannot do many of the things I would like to do.

I note that you are quite busy. One time you are in England, another time you are in Canada or in the United States or in the Caribbean, doing all sorts of things.

Next year I want to build me a little house, something I can call my own.

How is your family? How are your children getting on? I feel very happy, I don't know for how long this feeling is going to go on. I read TIME magazine and find that the situation in the world at large is not a happy one. This makes me feel a bit uneasy.

Remember (?) me to all at home.  
With best wishes,

Sincerely,

John

To Richard Hart  
— a friend I never met —  
this book is dedicated.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is invariably a precarious matter to thank individual helpers by name because of the possibility of omitting the name of someone who has been most helpful and thereby incurring some cold feelings — quite unintentionally.

I am very, very thankful and grateful to all those people who assisted me in making this word-list. Many of them identified words. Some of them cleared up confusions and some straightened out uncertainties. Some of them did research work, the result of which proved invaluable. All of them gave of their time most willingly. I know that I pestered some people but they were so patient with me. To all these helpers and for all the assistance they rendered I am profoundly grateful.

J.P.B.

#### (Introduction continued)

As many words are long the general tendency is to shorten some words by leaving out a syllable or two in any word that is considered too time-taking to call in full, for instance: *ádarida ariñ* 'an expert runner' is said *adandáriñ* and very often *dandáriñ*. *Ereda áriñ* 'a habitual trapper' is said *eredáriñ*. *Ubuna* 'bone' is said *buna*.

In certain localities a few words are called a little differently but the difference is very slight, like: *abina* or *ibina* means, 'to dance'; *afjidi* or *afjisi* means 'a chief', a head man; *tina* or *chima*, means 'to swim'; *wajiti* or *waditi* means 'male', 'man'; *witua* or *tua* means 'star' or 'year'.

When the Europeans came to Guyana they brought several things with them which did not exist in the whole of America. Therefore the natives called these things by the names the Europeans used and after a time these words became part of the native language. Since the Spaniards came first, and were numerous, and stayed a long time, many of the native words are of Spanish origin. You get words like *pero* 'a dog'; *kauwayo* 'a horse'; *kartina* 'a chicken'; *arakabosa* 'a shotgun'; *maseta* 'a cutlass'. You also

\*Dr Ian Robertson, formerly of the University of Guyana

get words of Dutch origin, like, *Mondakha* 'Monday'; *kokoro* 'cocker'; *pai* 'pail'. Then you get a few words of Portuguese origin, like, *bakaleau* 'salted cod'; *kamuñ* 'cotton thread'.

## Plurals

As a rule *be* is added after a singular noun or pronoun to make it mean 'more than one', for example,

Singular	Plural
<i>loko</i> 'a human being';	<i>lokobe</i> 'human beings';
<i>ort</i> 'snake';	<i>ortbe</i> 'snakes';
<i>yawabu</i> 'a spirit';	<i>yawabube</i> 'spirits';

\* In the plural of some words, *be* may be used or omitted, depending on the context of the sentence. For instance:

Singular	Plural
<i>kudibtu</i> 'a bird';	<i>kudibtu</i> or <i>kadibube</i>
<i>bime</i> 'a fish';	<i>bime</i> or <i>bimebe</i>
<i>koyara</i> 'a deer';	<i>koyara</i> or <i>koyarabe</i>

\* When you are talking about people, you use *no* at the end of the word to form the plural. For example:

Singular	Plural
<i>aichbi</i> 'son'	<i>aichino</i> 'sons'
<i>oto</i> 'daughter'	<i>otono</i> 'daughters'
<i>ichi</i> 'father'	<i>ichino</i> 'fathers'
<i>oyo</i> 'mother'	<i>oyono</i> 'mothers'
<i>wajiti</i> 'man'	<i>wajitino</i> 'men'
<i>biarro</i> 'woman'	<i>biarono</i> 'women'
<i>ilonchi</i> 'boy'; <i>ilon'co</i> 'girl'	<i>ireno</i> 'children'

The foregoing words, *loko*, *ort*, *yawabu*, *kudibtu*, *bime*, *koyara*, are also used to indicate the male and the female of whatever is mentioned.

## Adjectives

These follow a regular pattern:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
	<i>sabo</i> or <i>kebe</i>	<i>wabo</i>

The Comparative or the Superlative is used separately after the particular word: e.g. *firo* 'big'; *firo sabo* or *firo kebe* 'bigger'; *firo wabo* 'biggest'.

## Verbs

Verbs are conjugated in similar fashion, by adding the appropriate ending to a word. For instance let us take the verb *ajia* which means 'speak'

Singular	Plural
1. <i>d'ajia</i> 'I speak'	<i>w'ajia</i> 'we speak'
2. <i>b'ajia</i> 'you speak'	<i>b'ajia</i> 'you speak'
3. <i>luajia</i> (masc.) 'he speaks'	<i>n'ajia</i> 'they speak'
<i>t'ujia</i> (fem.) 'she speaks'	

1. *d'ajiab6* 'I am speaking'
  2. *b'ajiab6* 'you are speaking'
  3. *luajiab6* (masc.) 'he is speaking'
- t'ujiab6* (fem.) 'she is speaking'

1. *d'ajiabti* 'I was speaking'
  2. *b'ajiabti* 'you were speaking'
  3. *luajiabti* (masc.) 'he was speaking'
- t'ujiabti* (fem.) 'she was speaking'
- N.B. *d'ajiabti* 'I was speaking' is a shortened form of *ajiachibti dai*.

1. *d'ajiafa* 'I shall/will speak'
  2. *b'ajiafa* 'you will speak'
  3. *luajiafa* (masc.) 'he will speak'
- t'ujiafa* (fem.) 'she will speak'

1. *d'ajiakka* 'I have spoken'
  2. *b'ajiakka* 'you have spoken'
  3. *luajiakka* (masc.) 'he has spoken'
- t'ujiakka* (fem.) 'she has spoken'

1. *d'ajiabá* 'I spoke'
  2. *b'ajiabá* 'you spoke'
  3. *luajiabá* (masc.) 'he spoke'
- t'ujiabá* (fem.) 'she spoke'

1. *d'ajiabuná* 'I had spoken'
  2. *b'ajiabuná* 'you had spoken'
  3. *luajiabuná* (masc.) 'he had spoken'
- t'ujiabuná* (fem.) 'she had spoken'



1. *d'ajiakobá* 'I had spoken' *w'ajiakobá* 'we had spoken' etc.  
 (in the remote past)  
*buna* at the end of a verb means 'in the recent past', whereas  
*koba* means 'a long time ago'.

1. *d'ajiafabi* 'I shall have spoken' *w'ajiafabi* 'we shall have spoken'
2. *bhafiafabi* 'you will have spoken' *huajiafabi* 'you will have spoken'
3. *huajiafabi* (masc.) 'he will have spoken' *n'ajiafabi* 'they will have spoken'  
*t'ajiafabi* (fem.) 'she will have spoken'

Words that describe relations in a family are precise and specific. For instance

<i>bubechi</i>	'man's elder brother';
<i>okichi</i>	'man's younger brother';
<i>tlilat'o</i>	'woman's elder sister';
<i>okit'o</i>	'woman's younger sister';
<i>orbichi</i>	'man's brother-in-law';
<i>renemalchi</i>	'woman's brother-in-law';
<i>unumat'o</i>	'man's sister-in-law';
<i>orbhat'o</i>	'woman's sister-in-law';
<i>hebe</i>	'old' (person or other animal);
<i>wabado</i>	'old' (inanimate object).

17th May, 1975

Dear John,

I have treated you very badly as a correspondent for many months. Please forgive me. I was quite overcome by your wish to dedicate the dictionary to me. It's a very nice thought, but please postpone final decisions on this as, before we are ready for the printers, there will, I'm sure, be others who will have been more helpful to you.

Neville Dawes passed through London earlier this month and brought these notes for you from the linguistics expert on his staff who has been studying your material. For some reason he thought you lived in Britain, but now that he knows where you are, he is wondering whether he shouldn't send her to Guyana to see you.

It so happens that I am on my way to Jamaica (first time in over 11 years) for two weeks — lectures and a few days holiday. I have made an appointment to see the lady and will put her in touch with you direct.

I hope you will not be discouraged by the tremendous amount of work which (as is apparent from her notes) remains to be done on your drafts before the dictionary is ready for publication. *Nil desperandum!* It took me 30 years to get my book into shape and I still haven't clinched a publisher! If we think in terms of, say, one or two years' more work for you on your draft — that should do it.

Your unseen friend,  
 Dick

P.S. Sent you a copy of Attenborough's book last month.

11th June 1975

Dear Dick,

Thanks for your letter and the notes of the Linguistics Expert. One week later the book by Attenborough arrived. Thank you ever so much for this gift. I read it at once and found it very interesting. I knew Tiny McTurk\* and the Seggars\*\* as well as Dr. Jonest. I know many places described in the book. I admired how all of them lived but most of all I admired Tiny McTurk. He told us that when he was a little child the first language he learnt and spoke was Arawak. Later he learned English, then he became a pilot in the R.A.F. He went to live in the Rupununi District. He owned several outboard motors in various stages of disrepair, but all working and only he could operate them. He could wake up when he liked, go where he pleased and do what he desired. He could drive an outboard or inboard motor, dive a jeep, ride a horse, fly an aeroplane, fish, hunt, shoot with a shotgun or bow and arrow, understand several languages. Many of us admired and liked Tiny McTurk.

\* See page 261.

\*\* See page 264.

† See page 260.

understood. Then there was much rain and much work and the place was slippery and I was afraid — in fact there were a lot of ingredients for making lots of excuses.

We are all affected by the decline in value of money. I just bought 6 lbs. of meat (*abuyá*) for \$6.00. Not so long ago I would have paid 32 cents for the same piece. In my travels I use a lot of gasoline, and I used to buy it at 83 cents a gallon, then it went up to \$1.00, and it stayed there for a considerable time, now I have to pay \$2.65 per gallon and I hear the price will soon go up!

Now to go back to my Arawak dictionary. I note that the linguistics expert studied the words and definitions carefully, as I observed when I went through the "Suggestions re: Format for J.P. Bennett's Arawak Dictionary."

For instance on page 31 there is the word, *risa*, adv. 'more smartly', 'briskly', 'agilely'. This should be: *risa*, adv. 'smartly', 'briskly', 'agilely' (with reference to movement).

This latter is correct and precise.

Again on page 28 *menú* means 'to dabble in'.

On page 30, *ora* means 'to abstain'.

Some of the suggestions are frankly speaking, beyond me, like "verbal roots" on page 26, *mamunika*, v.t. haven't got. This should be, 'do not have'. The linguist points out, "This would seem to contain negative + perfect tense + verb root GET."

I'm afraid I'm getting out of my depth in this sort of thing: as Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* would say, the subject is getting difficult and difficult — at least to me. I should dearly like to meet the linguistics expert in person to clarify many points which I do not understand.

As a result of all this I am beginning to analyse words and phrases in Arawak which I took for granted. Only yesterday I was thinking of the literal English meaning of the word *makuyukoni* which word means 'mischievous'. You speak of a child being *makuyukoni*, meaning, the child is mischievous. In Arawak it sounds correct, but in English, the word means 'earless'. And it sounds facetious. More and more I am finding that a translation can only be approximate. At the same time it can prove very fascinating.

I am beginning to make too many mistakes which shows that I am beginning to tire already.

We've been listening to cricket in Australia. What causes the Australians to be so tough? The fast bowler Thompson seems to be tougher than Andy Roberts. What makes for the stickability in the Australians?

Food? Environment? Doctor's care? Discipline? I am keenly interested

in these things.

Your letters mean a great deal to me, I find them so interesting. I've been reading accounts of travels by Columbus as well as by "A gentleman of the medical faculty." They are incredible. Tell me some more about your West Indian and South American studies.

With best wishes

Sincerely,

John

21st January, 1976

Dear John,

Thank you for yours of December 18th, which crossed mine of December 14th, and for yours of January 8th. I see you have been studying Beverley Hall's notes closely. I too, have now had an opportunity to study them more closely and I can see that there are quite a few points on which you will have to make decisions. I will discuss some of these below.

#### The Introduction and/or Preface

As drafted your introduction deals with the following:

- (a) the letters used, some of the problems of pronunciation, and the marks used to indicate stress, etc.
- (b) the adoption of words from other languages
- (c) the formation of the plural for general nouns and name nouns
- (d) the formation of comparatives and superlatives of adjectives
- (e) the conjugation of the verb *ajia* 'to speak'
- (f) the words for different degrees of brothers and sisters.

Leaving aside the question of whether you should have both an Introduction and a Preface, and dealing under this heading with things that should precede the actual words of the dictionary, it appears that Miss Hall is suggesting that there are some other matters which should be included in the Introduction and that on some of the points you have touched on it would be advisable to say more.

Firstly she is suggesting that the reader should be told something of the history of the Arawaks. This is an interesting suggestion and if you felt that it was one which you should adopt, the problem of where to start would

Barbados. Before that I did some private study for 5 years approximately. I like my work. I like riding a bicycle and have ridden in most parts of Guyana. I also like gardening and even now I do as much as I can — which is not really much, but it gives me a certain amount of satisfaction. I am thankful that I am a happy form of life. I enjoy just being alive. Although at present I cannot do things normally, yet I feel there is much to be thankful for, for example, I feel no physical pain. I derive great pleasure from reading. I enjoy humorous books, but this letter is all about ME. I am beginning to feel uneasy.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

John

8th December 1978

Dear Dick,

I wish you and Mrs. Hart and the children a very Holy, Happy, Peaceful and Merry Christmas and New Year.

Recently a seminar for 'Interior Catechists' was held in the latter part of November. Everything went off quite well. The whole thing lasted about two weeks — all of us had something to do from early morning, when it was still dark, to late in the evening. In theory I am one of the Staff but in practice I cannot do anything physical, except I did manage to eat, somehow, with the others. In the midst of it all we heard about the 'Jonestown Incident' when 914 people died in one day — some were murdered and the majority committed suicide. That put the country, Guyana, in a sombre atmosphere — not a nice thing to happen in one's country.

The very day on which some members of the seminar were going home, I started on my usual monthly trip to the other churches. It was a successful trip and it lasted five days.

At present we are getting a lot of rain and I am inclined to think it abnormal. Do you mean to say all these millions of gallons of water were in the air, floating about somewhere?

I have been reading a delightful book *A Festival of Guyanese Words* edited by John R. Rickford. I really enjoyed reading the various articles — some of them are quite humorous. One chap who rejoices in the name of Wordsworth McAndrew thought the word 'pashuma' came from the

'Posthumus' and refers to a child born after the father's death and because the child couldn't get adequate food and care, grew up in a stunted fashion. This is a rather round-about meaning. The said word *pashuma* (not 'pashuma') is an Arawak word and means 'stunted' and refers to retarded growth. A person or an animal or a plant may look rather puny in relation to age and is described as being *pashima*. *Pashimachi* 'the stunted one' (male); *pashimatho* 'the stunted animal/plant' (male or female or neuter).

In the book, which touched upon some islands in the West Indies, I came across some words and ideas I never knew. These were quite new to me. Some customs and some beliefs were also strange to me. This book made me think some more, especially about the meaning of certain words in a particular language, but not belonging to the said language. For instance, no one ever stops to question what the term ARAWAK means, what language the word belongs to, why the users of the word applied it to a certain race of people. I myself think — this is only a theory — that the word ARAWAK is a Warau word. My reason is, the Warau word for 'cassava bread' is *aru*, and the Arawaks are known as meal eaters because they prepare cassava flour (meal) in various ways as occasion demands, like: *khali* 'cassava bread'; *biroma* 'cassava meal mixed with fish meal, with a dash of pepper and salt, ready to be eaten' — usually prepared for travelling; *komani* 'cassava meal mixed with parched corn — ground'. When ready to consume, add a little cane juice to make a sort of porridge. But I am getting away from **my** opinion of the meaning of ARAWAK. Waraus call Arawaks *Arri-wak*.

One of the subjects at the Seminar was 'Translating Arawak into English'. Here is a translation:-

<i>Wachi, w'ododua Büsibon̄,</i>	Father, we adore you,
<i>Aorodon̄ wa'akü abo Büsibon̄,</i>	Lay our lives before you
<i>Halikawan̄ wai kan̄shin̄da bü.</i>	How we love you.

<i>Jesus, w'ododua Büsibon̄,</i>	Jesus, we adore you,
<i>Aorodon̄ wa'akü abo Büsibon̄,</i>	Lay our lives before you,
<i>Halikawan̄ wai kan̄shin̄da bü.</i>	How we love you.

<i>Yaloko, w'ododua Büsibon̄,</i>	Spirit, we adore you,
<i>Aorodon̄ wa'akü abo Büsibon̄,</i>	Lay our lives before you,
<i>Halikawan̄ wai kan̄shin̄da bü.</i>	How we love you.

Sincerely,

John