

# Wayuunaiki

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- Language, name: Goajiro, Guajira, Guajiro, Uáira, Guahiro, Waiu, Wayu, Wayúu, Wayuunaiki.
- Linguistic family: Arawac, Maipurean, Northern, Maritime, Ta-Maipurean.
- Spoken by the ethnic community called **Wayuu**.
- Territory, where spoken: Guajira peninsula, Caribbean coast. **La Guajira** Department in Colombia, and in the Venezuelan Paéz district in the state of **Zulia**.
- This territory is characterised by dry and hot weather, with long dry seasons and nowadays with and arid and meagre land → Big lack of water and food.



**Location of La Guajira peninsula**



**Presence of the Wayuu people in the Guajira Peninsula**

- There are **two dialects**: “arribero” and “abajero”, they correspond to a territorial division → Upper Guajira and Lower Guajira.



**Wayuu territory**

- Number of speakers: **400,000** approx. In Colombia 144,003 (1997 census). In Venezuela 293,777 (2001 census).
- 45% of the population in La Guajira, 11% in Zulia dept.
- Other languages spoken by the Wayuu: Spanish, Typology of Wayuu: VSO, agglutinative system.
- Writing system: Latin alphabet.

- In Colombia the constitution of 1991 recognize the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation and admits the linguistic and religious diversity of the country and the obligation of the State to protect its cultural heritage (Art. 7, 8, 10, 72).
- In Venezuela (99): The official language is Castilian. The indigenous languages also are official for the indigenous people and must be respected in the territory of the Republic.
- In Colombia, state entities generate normative nets that manage projects and actions that care about the legislation and indigenous policy, territorial legislation, health programs, formal education and administration of sources. → these projects don't reach the Rancherías. Eventually, they are control mechanism.

- There are plenty of studies of Wayuunaiki mainly focused on the grammar description, but also related to sociolinguistics, historical linguistics and discourse analysis.
- The first anthropologist studies were by the Venezuelan **Alfredo Jahn** in 1927.
- The Wayuu Taya foundation created the first technical dictionary in Wayuu. Also, the first dictionary of this kind in a indigenous language
- Existance of a bilingual newspaper in Venezuela and Colombia called *Wayuunaiki*.
- Translation of Hundred Years of Solitude of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, born in Riohacha.

## **History of the Wayuu and their language.**

- The Waayuunaiki has its origins in the stock Arawak (in the Amazonas) approx. 5,000 and 3,500 ago. The Arawak expanded from the heart of the Amazonas to the periphery.
- The linguistic roots of the Arawak languages start in the Orinoco and Negro river in the Venezuelan and Brazilian Guyenne.
- This explains why the Wayuunaiki has relation with the Tupi languages, spoken in the Amazonas, and by the Plata river.
- The Wayuu are basically shepherds who live in small communities called Rancherías.



**Area where the Arawak languages were originated**

## Domains of use of the language today

- Usage of Wayuunaiki in private domains and within the Rancherías.
- Increase of the usage of Spanish in the Rancherías due to the contact with other societies.
- Big input in Spanish in big cities, where the trade actions take place.
- Usage of Spanish in the school, hospitals and in catholic ceremonies.
- Usage of Spanish by some Wayuu who are employees in the cities and move there.
- Television, radio and internet.

# Shifting

Different factors that cause the shifting:

- Contact with a Spanish monolingual speaker or a context where the predominant language is Spanish.
- The desire to get social recognition → use of the language that has more prestige.
- In the city some deny the knowledge of Wayuunaiki.
- Some think that denying that they belong to the Wayuu will give them economic or social profits.
- The parents prefer to talk in Wayuunaiki to their children, but there's an interest in learning both systems.

## Education

- Since the 80's there's bilingual education in the primary school following an educative model designed by the Educative Centre Kamüsüchiwo'uy with the financial support of the Government.
- The teachers are Wayuu and from other ethnicities.
- They only use Wayuunaiki as a communicative instrument.
- The secondary schools are in the cities where there's no wayuu teachers and the majority of the students speak in Spanish.
- There's not schools in every Rancheria.

## Overall grade of endangerment/vitality according to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger:

- **Unsafe (4):** Most but not all children or families of a particular community speak the language as their first language, but it may be restricted to specific social domains (such as at home, where children interact with their parents and grandparents).

- **Proportion of speakers within the overall population** → 5 Safe: All the Wayuu people speak it.
- **Intergenerational language transmission**: 5- Stable yet threatened.
- **Domains of language use**: 4 Multilingual Parity: There's diglossia. Also, 3 Dwinling domains: parents begin to use Spanish at home.
- **Response to new domains and media**: 2 Coping: The language is used in some new domains.
- **Availability of material for language education and literacy**: 4: Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.

- **Governmental and institutional attitudes and policies:** Differentiated support (4): The Wayuunaiki language is protected, but the government encourages them to use it in private domains.
- **Community members' attitudes:** All members value their language and wish to see it promoted. (4): Most of them have a positive attitude towards the Wayuunaiki. The language may be seen as a key symbol of group identity.

## Origins of the bilingualism – Why the language is endangered now?

- The number of bilingual people has increased. Only the 30% are monolingual.
- Factors that promoted the bilingualism.
  - Post colonialism → Christian missions
  - Trade relations
  - Relations with the administration
  - Jobs in the city
  - Migratory processes

The children first acquire Wayuunaiki, some also get Spanish stimuli at home. At school all learn Spanish.

The nowadays environmental situation puts in risk the Wayuu people lives.



erü



iráma



kaláira



marimonta



kóokooche'et



püsíchi



mapá



waléket



wuchíi



kalékale



shóoti



chünü'ü

# Interesting links

- Video: Fighting for access to fresh water

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcF\\_puGBdmM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcF_puGBdmM)

- Video: The survival of Wayuu people

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rs6cGKx6Kdo>

- Video: Wayuu, general cultural information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkVS7i13QCs>

- Website to learn basic Wayuunaiki

<http://www.native-languages.org/guajiro.htm>

- Wayuu children singing

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTlj\\_Vc3Gco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTlj_Vc3Gco)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCOkp34z7HA>

# References

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[http://www-01.sil.org/americas/colombia/pubs/WayuuDict\\_45801.pdf](http://www-01.sil.org/americas/colombia/pubs/WayuuDict_45801.pdf)
- Ethnologue  
<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/guc>
- Sociolinguistic situation of Wayuunaiki: Ranchería El Pasito.  
<http://www.bdigital.unal.edu.co/5275/1/448197.2011.pdf>
- Lenguas de Colombia  
<http://www.lenguasdecolombia.gov.co/>
- Biblioteca Luís Arangel Arango  
<http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/antropologia/amerindi/guajiros.htm>
- Wayuú-Taya Fundation  
<http://wayuutaya.net/>
- Article about the Rancheria river.  
<http://www.aporrea.org/ddhh/n267082.html>
- Article about the publication of Hundread Years of Solitude  
<http://190.9.33.193/cien-anos-de-soledad-podria-publicarse-este-ano-en-lengua-wayuunaiki/>
- Sample of greetings  
[http://babelang.free.fr/community/lessons\\_read.php?lang=wayuu](http://babelang.free.fr/community/lessons_read.php?lang=wayuu)
- Wikipedia  
[http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas\\_de\\_Venezuela](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas_de_Venezuela)  
[http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas\\_de\\_Colombia](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenguas_de_Colombia)