

THE CUIVA LANGUAGE: GRAMMAR

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LANGUAGE DATA MICROFICHE AM 1

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PREFACE

This description presents the grammatical structure of the Cuiva language, two texts, and a lexicon. The structural analysis was done according to the tagmemic model of Dr. Kenneth L. Pike; the description, however, is presented in a modified terminology.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Esther Matteson and Stephen Levinsohn of the Summer Institute of Linguistics for their help and encouragement in the analysis. Special thanks is due Stephen Levinsohn for his guidance and editing of the manuscript.

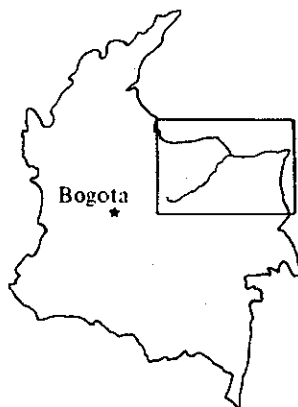
We also wish to thank the many friends in places of authority in Colombia who permitted us to live and work with the Cuiva Indians.

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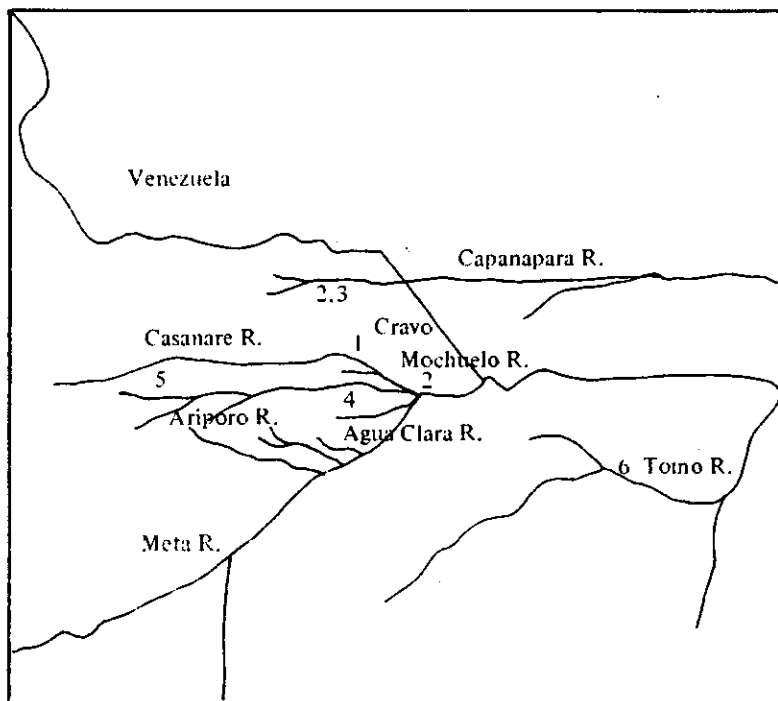
CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Symbols	—iv
Maps	—viii
0. General Introduction	— 1
1. The Discourse	— 4
2. The Episode	— 5
3. The Section	— 6
4. The Sentence	— 9
5. The Clause	— 11
6. The Group	— 17
6.1. The Verb Group	— 17
6.2. The Noun Group	— 25
6.3. The Pronoun Group	— 28
6.4. The Interrogative Group	— 28
6.5. The Adjective Group	— 29
6.6. The Direction Group	— 29
6.7. The Location Group	— 30
6.8. The Time Group	— 31
6.9. The Exclamation Group	— 31
6.10. The Manner Group	— 32
6.11. The Post Positional Group	— 32
6.12. The Indirective Group	— 33
7. The Stem	— 34
7.1. The Verb Stem	— 34
7.2. The Noun Stem	— 40
7.3. The Pronoun Stem	— 44
7.4. The Interrogative	— 45
7.5. The Adjective Stem	— 46
7.6. The Direction Stem	— 47
7.7. The Location	— 47
7.8. The Time	— 48
7.9. The Exclamation	— 48
7.10. The Negative Stem	— 48
7.11. The Adverb	— 48
7.12. The Introducer	— 49
7.13. The Reportative	— 49
7.14. The Onomatopoeia	— 49
7.15. The Embarrassment	— 49
7.16. The Comparative	— 49
8. Morphophonemics	— 50
9. Texts	— 53
9.1. Introduction	— 53
9.2. Text 1	— 53
9.3. Text 2	— 60
10. Cuiva-English Lexicon	— 78
Bibliography	— 105

Map of Colombia



Area Map of the Cuiva Migrations



0. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. Cuiva is a Guajiban language of the *llanos* or plains country in the states of Vichada, Boyaca, and Arauca in the east central portion of Colombia, South America. The Cuiva Indians live by hunting and gathering in the jungles along the Meta, Casanare, and Capanapara Rivers and their tributaries.

The language is spoken by an undetermined number of nomadic groups, and estimates of total population range from several hundred to 8,000. We have had contact with five Cuiva groups or bands: (1) the Pin Menepiwi (the Big River people), (2) the Mayaraxi (the Mayayeros), (3) the Yarawutixi, (4) the Wapiwi, and (5) two groups of Aitowapiwi (Masiguales). All the groups are called Cuiva by the Colombian settlers. There are very slight dialectical differences among these groups. The Cuiva of the Tomo River (6) in Vichada are of another dialect more closely related to Guajibó. For the general location of the above groups see the area map of the Cuiva migrations. The Pin Menepiwi dialect is described here.

The data for this description were gathered during field work under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics from July 1965 to December 1967 and from July 1969 to March 1970. The material was gathered using a monolingual approach, since there were no Cuiva who spoke Spanish. The main informants were:

Waro	(1965-67)	Warawanayo	(1969-70)
Wasimo	(1965-67, 69-70)	Tabsi	(1967, 1969-70)
Sepia	(1966-67; died 1968)		

We are grateful to all the Cuiva Indians for their acceptance of us and their persistence in helping us to learn their language well. Many of them assisted in teaching us their language, both in their semi-permanent village at Mochuelo and when we travelled with them on the Meta and Casanare Rivers.

0.2. Cuiva is described in terms of the following levels: discourse, episode, section, sentence, clause, group, stem, and root. Of special interest are the section and the group. The section has an obligatory response (see Section 3.1). The group includes both word and phrase-like units.

0.3. The Phonemes of Cuiva¹

Consonants

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Voiceless Stops				
unaspirated	p	t		k
aspirated	ph	th		kh
Voiced Stops	b	d		
Nasals	m	n		
Fricatives		s		h
Affricates		ts	tʃ	
Non-syllabic vocoids	w		y	
Vowels				
	Front	Central	Back	
High	i	ɨ	u	
Low	e	a	o	

¹ See Kerr and Berg, 1971.