

The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2022 - Round 1

Problem 5. Arhuaco things & places (15 marks)

Arhuaco is a language spoken by the Arhuaco people in Northern Colombia, who still live traditionally and use their language widely. It is estimated that of the 8,000 speakers of Arhuaco, 90% are monolingual, with only a minority also speaking Spanish, Colombia's main language. The language is also known by a host of other names, including Ica and Bintuk.



Arhuaco is written here with some special characters, but these are not relevant for solving the problem.

Arhuaco	English translation	Arhuaco	English translation
<i>kʌn gaka</i>	put the stick down	<i>ribru kʌpas</i>	put the book in (e.g., a bag)
<i>ribru pan</i>	put the book down	<i>pratu pan</i>	put the plate down (e.g., on the table)
<i>ribru itšoʔs¹</i>	put the book up (e.g., on bookshelf)	<i>pratu ipan</i>	put the plate up (e.g., on a wall)
<i>masite gaka</i>	put the machete down	<i>urakii sa</i>	put the house down
<i>masite igeika</i>	put the machete up (e.g., on a wall)	<i>aʔni̠ sa</i>	put the rock down
<i>masite kʌgaka</i>	put the machete in (e.g., the box)	<i>aʔni̠ isa</i>	put the rock up (e.g., on a shelf)
<i>pratu tšoʔs</i>	put the plate down (e.g., in drying rack)		

Q 5.1. Translate into Arhuaco:

a) Put the needle down (needle = akusa)	
b) Put the sack of corn up (e.g., on a shelf) (sack of corn = in kintari)	
c) Put the pencil in (e.g., a pencil case) (pencil = rapi)	
d) Put the sword down (sword = oha)	
e) Put the sack of corn down	
f) Put the rock in (e.g., a bag)	

¹ This should actually be *itšo*, but *itšoʔs* is given here for regularity.

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Q 5.2. Write down the correct Arhuaco verb for the following scenarios:

a) Put a poster on a wall	
b) Put down a poster rolled up in a carrying tube	
c) Put a poster rolled up in carrying tube in the cupboard	

Arhuaco men wear very distinctive traditional hats, as you can see in the images.



Q 5.3. Translate into Arhuaco:

a) Put down the hat (hat = tutusoma)	
b) Put the hat on (e.g., your head)	
c) Stand the hat upright on the floor	

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Solution and marking.

Scoring: (max 24)

- Q5.1: 0 points per correct first word and for in kintari [max 12]
 - 1 point per correct part of the last word (the verb).
 - Assume every verb has two parts: direction + classification
 - Parts are separated below by +, and missing parts are shown as _, but + and _ are not expected in the answers!
 - _+gaka = two parts – i.e. the first part may be zero. So if the correct answer is _+gaka, the following both score 1: _+sa, kΛ+gaka.
 - The correct form for (f) is actually *aʔni kΛ+ssa*, but the predictable form is *aʔni kΛ+sa*.
- Q5.2: 1 point per correct verb-part (as explained above) [Max 6]
- Q5.3: 1 point per verb part (as explained above) [Max 6]
 - 0 points for *tutusoma*

Q 5.1. Translate into Arhuaco:

a) Put the needle down (needle = akusa)	akusa _+gaka	[Max 2]
b) Put the sack of corn up (e.g. on a shelf) (sack of corn = in kintari)	in kintari i+sa	2
c) Put the pencil in (e.g. a pencil case) (pencil = rapi)	rapi kΛ+gaka	2
d) Put the sword down (sword = oha)	oha _+gaka	2
e) Put the sack of corn down	in kintari _+sa	2
f) Put the rock in (e.g. a bag)	aʔni kΛ+sa	2

Q 5.2. Write down the correct Arhuaco verb for the following scenarios

a) Put a poster on a wall	i+pan	2
b) Put down a poster rolled up in a carrying tube	_+gaka	2
c) Put a poster rolled up in carrying tube in the cupboard	kΛ+gaka	2

Q 5.3. Translate into Arhuaco:

a) Put down the hat (hat = tutusoma)	tutusoma _+sa	2
b) Put the hat on (e.g., your head)	tutusoma i+sa	2
c) Stand the hat upright on the floor	tutusoma +tšoʔs	2

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Commentary

Arhuaco has different verbs for expressing putting objects in a particular place or position. As well as that, the shape of the object being put somewhere also matters for the type of verb that is used.

In this puzzle, there are three different types of objects with regard to shape, and there is one position used, namely ‘upright’:

Shape	Items	Arhuaco verb for put <u>down</u>	Arhuaco verb for put <u>in</u> something	Arhuaco verb for put <u>up</u> on something
flat	book, plate, poster	_+pan	kʌ+pas	i+pan
long	stick, machete, sword, rolled up poster in tube- shape, needle, pencil	_+gaka	kʌ+gaka	i+geika
3D	rock, house, hat, sack of corn	_+sa	kʌ+sa	i+sa
upright	book on shelf, plate in drying rack	_+tšo?̥s	kʌ+tšo?̥s	i+tšo

As long as items are not understood as upright, it is their shape in terms of being flat, long or 3D that matters. But as soon as an item is clearly put upright, like a book on a shelf, a plate in a drying rack or a hat, then the verb form for ‘upright’ must be used.

The system for Arhuaco verbs that mean “place something” is more complex than this problem’s examples, there are verbs for items that are positioned into a tight-fitting container (like a foot in a sock or a machete in a sheath), as well as verbs for liquids. There are also additional positions which take their own verbs.

References:

Frank, P. (1990) *Ika Syntax. Studies in the Languages of Colombia 1*. Arlington: University of Texas, Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Ika (Arhuaco) (1998 – 2020) Native Languages of the Americas. [website] retrieved from:
<http://www.native-languages.org/ika.htm>