

Dr. Chris Corne (1969, 1970, and 1971) sets up the following segmental unit phonemes: *m n ɲ* (here written *ñ*) *ŋ* (here written *ng*); *p t k*; *b d g*; *f s*; *v z*; *l r*; *j*; *i e a o u*, and three nasalized vowels, here written *ẽ ã õ*. When they are followed by the high front vowel */i/*, */t/* and */d/* are strongly palatalized (or even affricated), so that */ti/* = *[tʃi]* and */dimun/* = *[dʒimun]* (15 and 18). In open syllables */e/* = *[e]* and */o/* = *[o]*; in closed syllables */e/* = *[ɛ]* and */o/* = *[ɔ]*. In order to justify this interpretation, however, Corne has to regard vocalic lengthening in preconsontal and word-final positions as an allophone of */r/*, which elsewhere “se réalise comme une continuante dorsale ou uvulaire, légèrement articulée et sans friction.” Thus *[tə:çi]* is phonemicized as */torti/* ‘turtle’, *[lekə:s]* as */lekors/* (27) and *[lasɛ:]* as */laser/* (29); while *pur* ‘for’ (preposition) is distinguished from *pu* (marker of future tense) as in *sa lakaz la a pu pur mua* ‘cette maison sera la mienne’. This seems to be a dangerous procedure if, as apparently is the case, this language contains words having lower mid *[ɛ]* and *[ɔ]* in open syllables without any lengthening. So Corne himself says: “/get, gete/ se réalise [get, gete] ‘regarder’”; and adds: “Mais le timbre de */e/* n’est jamais pertinent.” Elsewhere he says the same thing of */o/*.

Syllable-initial */i/* and */u/* before another vowel are heard as non-syllabic *[j]* and *[w]* (see 46, *lipie*; 53, *lifua*; etc.); while */j/* is employed only in word-initial and intervocalic positions (see 39, *zorej*; 62, *tuje*; etc.).

We are also told that the opposition of nasal to oral vowels before a nasal consonant is neutralized in all positions within the word. In the above list I have, however, preferred to show all nasalized vowels as such; for I cannot help suspecting that a nearly minimal pair like *[kə:n]* (34) and *[kɔ̃n]* (59)—*/korn/* and */kon/* in Corne’s orthography—are distinguished less by the length than by the oral or nasal character of their vowels.

For all the rest, Dr. Corne’s orthography has been followed, though the wordlist itself has been compiled from an unpublished M.A. thesis by M. Kiamtia, a native speaker of the language.