

Language probably extinct: ARIBWATSA [laz]

Number of speakers: 1 (1985).

Aribwatsa was spoken in the Markham valley of Papua New Guinea by the Lahe people, who gave their name to the present-day city of Lae. It was an Austronesian language, classified as a member of the Busu subgroup of the Lower Markham family. The language had SVO structure, and two sets of inalienable possession suffixes.

Aribwatsa appears in some lists of endangered languages, but is almost certainly now extinct. The last known speaker, a woman named Butoawê, was eighty years old when interviewed in 1985, and not in good health. Members of the ethnic group now speak Bugawac.

Language Resources

Analysis of phonology and grammar (Holzknecht 1997a); Wordlist (Holzknecht 1997b).

References:

Ethnologue (15th edition). 2005. Ed. Raymond G. Gordon. Dallas: SIL International.
<http://www.ethnologue.com/>

Holzknecht, Susanne. 1997a. Aribwatsa: a 'lost' language of the Markham valley, Papua New Guinea? In Stephen A. Wurm, ed. *Materials on languages in danger of disappearing in the Asia-Pacific region no 1* (Pacific Linguistics D-89). 145-163. Canberra: Australian National University.

Holzknecht, Susanne. 1997b. Aribwatsa word list. In Stephen A. Wurm, ed. *Materials on languages in danger of disappearing in the Asia-Pacific region no 1* (Pacific Linguistics D-89). 164-182. Canberra: Australian National University.