

## Endangered languages listing: DUMPU (WATIWA) [wtf]

Population of language area: 510 (2003).

The Dumpu (Watiwa) language is spoken in six villages of the upper Ramu river valley, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. The villages are located on either side of the Ramu (Madang-Lae) Highway, close to the Dumpu cattle station. The population of the language group in 1997 was estimated as 360. Speakers of the language preferred the name Watiwa (Dumpu is the name of one of the six villages). The language is a member of the Rai Coast branch, Madang subgroup of the Trans New Guinea phylum (Z'graggen 1975; Pawley 2005). Watiwa is accusative type, with SOV ordering, and distinguishes singular, dual and plural number.

A 1997 SIL survey (Troolin and Keilah 1998) found Tok Pisin has replaced Watiwa as the main medium of communication in the three villages surveyed. Adults used more Tok Pisin than Watiwa in all domains, including communicating with their spouse. However, Watiwa was used as a "tok hait" (secret language) when visiting Madang, the nearest large town. Children used Tok Pisin almost exclusively except when communicating with their grandparents. Parents said it was important their children know the vernacular; however they also expressed little concern that their children mostly used Tok Pisin. If present trends continue, the language will no longer be spoken in a few decades.

### **Language Resources**

Wordlists taken 1964 (92 entries) and 1969 (170 entries): held in SIL technical library, Ukarumpa; also 1997 (170 entries): appended to Troolin and Keilah 1998.

### **References:**

*Ethnologue* (15th edition). 2005. Ed. Raymond G. Gordon. Dallas: SIL International.

<http://www.ethnologue.com/>

Pawley, Andrew. 2005. The chequered career of the Trans New Guinea hypothesis: recent research and its implications. In Andrew Pawley, Robert Attenborough, Jack Golson and Robin Hide, eds. *Papuan pasts: cultural, linguistic and biological histories of Papuan-speaking peoples* (Pacific Linguistics 572). 67-107. Canberra: Australian National University.

Troolin, David and Marie Keilah. 1998. Watiwa contact report [Ethnologue code – WTF]. Unpublished manuscript. Ukarumpa: SIL.

Z'graggen, John A. 1975. *The languages of the Madang district, Papua New Guinea* (Pacific Linguistics B-41). Canberra: Australian National University.