

Endangered languages listing: TURUMSA [tqm]

Number of speakers: 5 (2002).

In April 2002, there were only five elderly speakers of the Turumsa language remaining. All of them lived in Makapa village, on the north bank of the Aramia River, Western Province, Papua New Guinea (Rueck, MacKenzie and Alemán, forthcoming). The location was marked “uninhabited” in the maps appearing in Wurm (1975), and some recently published language maps still give this impression. (The Wurm and Hattori maps (1981) correct this.) The Turumsa, along with the Dibiyaso, Bainapi and Doso people, were traditionally nomadic but have settled down in this region. The Turumsa (who settled in Makapa) and the Bainapi (who settled in Pikiwa village) have now adopted the Dibiyaso language.¹

Turumsa is unclassified, although certainly a member of the large Trans New Guinea (TNG) phylum. Its neighbour Dibiyaso was classified in the Bosavi branch of the TNG phylum (Reesink 1976; Shaw 1986). Turumsa seems not to be closely related to Dibiyaso, although they are probably members of the same stock. Turumsa showed 61% lexical similarity on a sample wordlist to Doso (also unclassified), whereas it showed only 19% lexical similarity to Dibiyaso. The consonant inventories of Turumsa and Doso were identical to each other, and very similar to Dibiyaso. Turumsa, Dibiyaso and Doso all have SOV grammatical structure.

Language Resources:

Parallel wordlists for Turumsa (147 entries), Dibiyaso and Doso: appended to Rueck, MacKenzie and Alemán, forthcoming.

References:

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- Reesink, Ger. 1976. Languages of the Aramia River area. *Papers in New Guinea Linguistics No. 19* (Pacific Linguistics A-45). 1-37. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Rueck, Michael J., Bonnie J. MacKenzie, and Laura M. Alemán. Forthcoming. A sociolinguistic survey of the Dibiyaso [DBY] language. Ukarumpa: SIL.
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- Wurm, Stephen A. and Shiro Hattori, eds. 1981. *Language atlas of the Pacific area, Part 1: New Guinea area, Oceania, Australia*. Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities.

¹ Previous literature (e.g. Franklin and Voorhoeve 1973; Reesink 1976; Wurm & Hattori 1981; Shaw 1986) refers to the language spoken by most inhabitants of Makapa, Pikiwa and Bamustu villages as “Bainapi”. However the SIL survey team (April 2002) was informed that Bainapi is the name of the people who live in Pikiwa (the closest village to a mission station when earlier research was done). These people have now lost their original language and adopted Dibiyaso. “Dibiyaso,” which is also the name of the group living in Bamustu, is the language name agreed upon by all speakers.