

Endangered languages listing: ABOM [aob]

Number of speakers: 15 (2002).

The existence of Abom was discovered during a 2002 SIL survey in the Trans-Fly region, Western province, Papua New Guinea (Jore and Alemán 2002). It appears to belong to the Tirio family of languages; a wordlist showed lexical similarities of 14%, 12% and 11% respectively to the Tirio family languages Bitur (Mutum), Baramu and Makayam. The Tirio languages are members of the large Trans New Guinea family (Wurm 1975; Ross 2005).

The Abom language is moribund, since it is only spoken by older generations. The language was formerly spoken in a village to the northeast of Tewara village (Bitur language area). However, the village has disbanded and the villagers have moved to the villages of Tewara, Lewada (Makayam language area), and Mutam (Wipi language area). The middle-aged Abom people now use the languages of their adopted villages, and have only a passive understanding of Abom. There are no children that speak or understand the language.

Language resources:

Comparative wordlists for Abom and ten other villages in the Trans-Fly region (161 entries): appended to Jore and Alemán 2002).

References:

- Ethnologue* (15th edition). 2005. Ed. Raymond G. Gordon. Dallas: SIL International.
<http://www.ethnologue.com/>
- Jore, Tim and Laura Alemán. 2002. Sociolinguistic survey of the Tirio language family. Unpublished manuscript. Ukarumpa: SIL.
- Ross, Malcolm. 2005. Pronouns as a preliminary diagnostic for grouping Papuan languages. 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). 15-66. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Wurm, Stephen A. 1975. The Trans-Fly (sub-phylum-level) stock. In Stephen A. Wurm, ed., *Papuan Languages and the New Guinea Linguistic scene*, Vol 1 (Pacific Linguistics C-38). 323-344. Canberra: Australian National University.