

2 Kirikiri and the Western Lakes Plains Languages Heljä and Duane Clouse

level superstock, Trans-New Guinea phylum. These languages, with population figures and dialects, are as follows.

Central Lake Plain Family		Turu Family	
Sikaritai	800	Turu	1000-1200
Eritai	425	Turu	
Papasena	400	Iau	
Doutai	335	Foi	
Biri (Biritai)	250	Edopi	750
Kai	250		
Duvle	200		
Obokuitai	125-150		
Kwerisa	60		
Waritai	?		

Silzer and Clouse (1991) include the three westernmost languages in the Awera Group of the Geelvink Bay Phylum.

Awera Group	
Rasawa	200
Awera	100
Saponi	10

Between these two groups are three Papuan languages which are listed in Silzer and Clouse (1991) as 'classification unknown'.

Classification Unknown	
Fayu	400
Fayu	
Sehudate	
Tause	350
Tause	130
Weirate	120
Deirate	120?
Kirikiri	250
Kirikiri	
Faia	

Recently, Clouse (1993) has reclassified all the WLP languages as belonging to the Geelvink Bay Phylum, Lake Plain superstock as follows.

Tariku Stock	Awera Stock
Tause Family-level isolate	Saponi Family-level isolate
Duvle Family-level isolate	Awera-Rasawa Family
West Tariku Family	Awera
Fayu	Rasawa
Kirikiri	
Central Tariku Family	
Edopi	
Iau	
East Tariku Family	
Doutai	
Waritai	
Kai	
Biritai	
Obokuitai	
Sikaritai	
East Lake Plain Family ¹	
Kwerisa	
Papasena	

Until recently, little has been known about the WLP languages. Since 1980, however, linguistic research of varying degrees has been done in many of these languages. We began linguistic research in the Kirikiri area in 1989.

Some of the conclusions of this paper must be regarded as tentative at this stage. For most of these languages we had only written phonetic transcriptions and do not know how these transcriptions compare to our own in regard to their exact quality.² We have also reanalyzed some of the published data to make it more uniform and to make common patterns visible.

2 Consonant System

All WLP languages apparently share the six consonants shown in Chart 1.

¹ Kwerisa and Papasena may be members of the East Tariku Family.

² Data from the less accessible areas of the Wapoga River area, Awera, Faia, Sehudate, Weirate and Deirate, consist of only 150-200 word wordlists. Data for Iau, Obokuitai, Sikaritai and Doutai come from published analyses. The rest of the data is from working notes.