

Austral (reo Tuha'a pae)

Austral is an Eastern Polynesian language spoken in the Austral Islands in French Polynesia by about 5,000 people. About 3,000 people speak it as a native language, and another 2,000 speak it as a second language. It is spoken mainly by adults, while younger people are shifting to Tahitian.

Austral is also known as Tubuai-Rurutu, Tubuai, Rurutu-Tupuai or Tupuai. It was originally spoken by the Tubuaian people of Tubuai, the main island in the Austral Island group. The people there now speak Tahitian, however Austral is still spoken on the other Austral Islands of Ra'ivavae, Rimatara, Rurutu, each of which has its own local dialect. Austral is closely related to Tahitian, and the Rimatara dialect is considered a dialect of Tahitian.

Austral alphabet and pronunciation

Vowels

a	e	i	o	u
[a]	[e]	[i]	[o]	[u]
ā	ē	ī	ō	ū
[a:]	[e:]	[i:]	[o:]	[u:]

Consonants (Ga'ivavae dialect)

p	t	m	n	h	v	g	'
[p]	[t]	[m]	[n]	[h]	[v]	[g]	[ʔ]

Consonants (Rimatara dialect)

p	t	m	n	h	v	r	'
[p]	[t]	[m]	[n]	[h]	[v]	[r]	[ʔ]

Consonants (Rurutu dialect)

p	t	m	n		v	r	'
[p]	[t]	[m]	[n]		[v]	[r]	[ʔ]

Consonants (Tupua'i dialect†)

p	t	m	n	h	v	r	'
[p]	[t]	[m]	[n]	[h]	[v]	[r]	[ʔ]

Notes

- In the Ra'ivavae dialect the usual Polynesian rhotic or lateral phoneme has evolved into /g/.
- In the Rimatara dialect /f/ also occurs but is rare and restricted to certain Tahitian loanwords.
- It seems that in the Rurutu dialect there are actually only seven phonemic consonants present. However, /f/ and /h/ can also occasionally occur in variation with the glottal stop.
- In the Tupua'i dialect /f/ - alternating with /h/ in a few instances – was perhaps a later addition to its original consonant inventory due to growing Tahitian influence.

Sources

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- fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langues_australes

Amendments and additions provided by Emanuel Fuchs