

## Title: Questions of Language Awareness Raising in Rangi Literacy

Abstract [4 paragraphs]:

With rising international support (e.g. the 1993 UN "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities"), the last few decades have seen a steep increase in vernacular literacy among the almost 7000 languages worldwide. Most of these languages are spoken by comparatively small communities of less than one million speakers, like the Rangi of Northern Central Tanzania, one of around 120 languages in that country. Literacy efforts in Rangi have been ongoing since 1998 under the auspices of SIL International (<http://www.sil.org>).

This talk will investigate aspects of language awareness raising, especially the question which features of their mother tongue aspiring Rangi writers are becoming aware of as they develop their own writing styles. This is considered to be an important step in training Rangi writers as most if not all of them have learned to read and write first in Swahili, the national language of Tanzania. Consequently, when now writing their own language for the first time in their lives, they map their Swahili literacy skills onto Rangi which impedes a natural and full-fledged use of their mother tongue in writing.

The data for this investigation consists of a subset of a larger corpus: 23 of 107 texts collected during the first four writer's workshops conducted in the Rangi literacy programme. Each of these texts exists in two versions: a draft version which each author produced at the start of the workshop, and a revised version which was produced at the end of the workshop. As both versions of each text are compared clause by clause, a kaleidoscope emerges of those stylistic features which the authors deem worthy or necessary to be changed. Future training for Rangi writers will have to pay attention both to those areas where such changes across authors intersect thus giving evidence of potential consensus, and to those where uncertainty about the direction of change seems to prevail. Interviews with literacy supervisors and editors, all of them Rangi mother tongue speakers, complement the findings.

This talk will report particularly on three areas: the discourse marker 'maa' (which has been considered problematic by Rangi writers from the start of the literacy programme), the interaction of tense-aspect forms, and participant reference. In conclusion, implications for training vernacular authors will be summarized.