



2005 Update

Партнёры по развитию национальных языков
 Partners in Language Development
 Faire équipe pour mettre les langues en valeur
 Colaborando en el desarrollo de los idiomas autóctonos
 语言发展合作伙伴
 مُساهمون في تطوير اللغات واللهجات المحلية

Language Development Advances

As an international organization concerned for the needs of ethnolinguistic minority communities, SIL celebrates the many advances in language development experienced around the world in 2005. Some were subtle and quiet while others have such a broad impact that generations to come will benefit from them. In the next few pages these reports illustrate SIL's involvement through:

- linguistic research
- language assessment surveys
- higher levels of literacy training
- advances in newly-developed computer software

One significant instance I'd like to personally highlight was the adoption by the International Phonetic Association Council of a new phonetic symbol to represent the labiodental flap sound used in more than 70 languages in Africa. Proposed by Dr. Kenneth Olson, SIL's Associate International Linguistics Coordinator, the symbol is the first added to the International Phonetic Alphabet in twelve years.

A representative of the Mono people in north central Africa responded to the news in this way:


"Permit us to take this opportunity to thank you for all the efforts you have made to give us news on Dr. Kenneth Olson's continuing research to establish a special phonetic symbol. For us, it is a joyous subject. We confirm to you that it is a very important moment for the intellectual speakers of Mono.

The impact is a complete alphabet which will allow the Mono people, and those who are interested in the language Mono, to write it perfectly and completely. It will particularly not be forgotten that the scientific world is challenged too with the responsibility to make people aware of this novelty."

Whether through advocacy, research or training, SIL is privileged to serve alongside linguistic minority groups such as the Mono people as they seek to preserve their language and cultural identity as well as to connect more effectively with the wider world.



John Watters congratulates Ken Olson on the newly-accepted phonetic symbol.



John R. Watters, Ph.D.
Executive Director



“The advantage of this course is that participants can get it in bits. They were able to get the introduction part of it, go back and utilize their skills, then come back again and get some more.”

*—Course host, Mr. Cyrus Murage, Director
The Centre for Literacy and Language Development*

Advanced Literacy Training Course: 2005 Phase Two of Three

Twenty-five African men and women with considerable experience in literacy programs in five countries reunited in September 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya, for phase two of advanced-level literacy training. Most participants are already leaders in literacy, and their programs serve 165,000 learners.

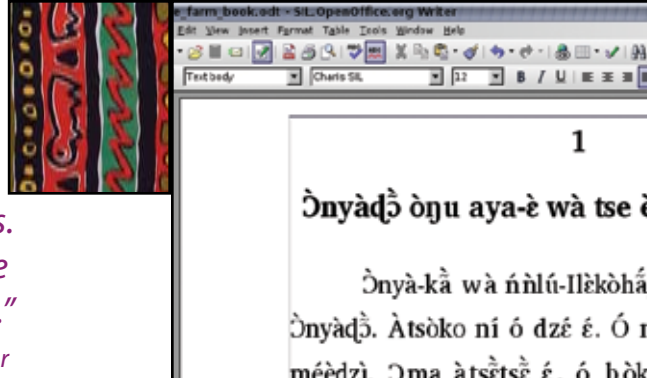
The three-year course consists of four-week sessions held each September. The curriculum strengthens theoretical foundations and builds technical skills for literacy consultants and national or regional literacy program coordinators.

Course content covers various aspects of literacy programs: African case studies, writers’ workshops, transfer literacy, the value of mother tongue and multilingual education, cross-cultural issues, as well as orthography design and dialect consideration.

Designed to adapt to the participants’ challenging schedules, the course allows time to assimilate and apply the new knowledge to their own literacy programs throughout the year. One participant reported that the previous year’s training had enabled him to assist in testing the orthography revision of his own language.

Sharing experiences and ideas is a favorite feature of the course. Although the class schedule and homework are intense, participants meet for evening sessions with colleagues from their home countries. Each participant builds consultant skills by taking a turn leading these sessions as well as occasionally teaching during class-time.

Three experienced SIL literacy consultants teach this course series. Two participants from Burkina Faso and two SIL consultants are working together to translate the course materials into French for a similar future course in Francophone Africa.



*A community development book
in the Ifè language of western
Africa is displayed with
SIL.OpenOffice.org.*

SIL releases Open Source Font Software

In November 2005, SIL announced the release of its breakthrough font-rendering software for free use and open-sourcing at the World Summit on the Information Society. This technology allows lesser-known languages with complex scripts to be written and published. While speakers of most major languages have access to a wide range of computer software applications, speakers of ethnic minority languages must often use software that does not include all symbols needed to write their languages.

SIL’s Open Font License (OFL) Version 1.0 provides the needed legal framework for worldwide collaborative development—the sharing and creative improvement of fonts and related software—that will graphically support more languages. Font authors can now release their work under a common license that allows bundling, modification and redistribution.

*“We are closer than ever to the day when
all languages will have a digital voice.”*

—Dennis Drescher, SIL Technical Services

International Seminar on Literacy in Indonesia

SIL’s International Literacy Coordinator Pat Kelley and Filipino literacy consultant Lynne Pina gave plenary addresses on various education issues facing multilingual communities at an international literacy seminar held in Indonesia. The Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) hosted the event in September 2005 to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Located in Java, Indonesia, UNNES has a long-standing commitment to literacy and teacher education.

The seminar’s theme, “Building a Nation through Literacy Education,” raised awareness about the importance of language education—beyond traditional literacy skills—to survival in modern and global communities. Some topics addressed were: literacy as a prerequisite for nation building, literacy in multilingual communities and literacy in relation to literature.



*Indonesian children read
a newly-printed book in
their mother tongue.*

Symposium on Multilingual Education in Bangladesh

Communities throughout Asia are establishing multilingual education (MLE) programs to help develop and protect local languages and cultures. SIL-Bangladesh cosponsored the Symposium on Multilingual Education in Bangladesh with UNESCO-Bangladesh and UNICEF-Bangladesh.

Representatives from ethnolinguistic communities in Bangladesh interacted with local development and education practitioners. Reports underscored the fact that most successful MLE programs are those that support the human rights of ethnic minority communities—including the right to quality education.



*Sustainable multilingual
education is achieved when
communities work together.*

*Literacy
consultant
from Ghana,
George Maalug
Kombian,
(center) assists
colleagues
discussing
course
materials on
his personal
computer.*



Fighting Avian Flu With Literacy

In service to local language communities, SIL literacy workers and health professionals in Asia have created a booklet describing the potential dangers of Avian Flu. Since ethnic minority communities are especially at high risk for this deadly disease, they need this vital information in a language they understand. The booklet, *Avian Flu Risk and Prevention*, communicates life-saving information that can easily be translated into various languages.

SIL field personnel experienced in producing health and literacy materials created generic line-drawing illustrations that can be used for various ethnic groups around the world. Materials in several languages are available for downloading from SIL's website. These include a fact sheet, the booklet with illustrations, a text-only booklet plus the individual illustrations.

http://www.sil.org/literacy/materials/health/avian_flu



The easily-translated booklet about Avian Flu contains many line drawings.

The Crown Princess of Thailand, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, presents an award in recognition of SIL's service to SIL President Carolyn Miller. [file photo]



Carolyn P. Miller reelected SIL President

In 2005, the current president of SIL International, Carolyn Miller, was reelected for a third consecutive three-year term. She has served on the SIL Board for 13 years. President Miller's roles within SIL have involved language project work, consulting, and teaching at Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand. She and her husband John have worked with SIL for over 42 years and have lived in Viet Nam, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Dr. Nuryanto, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Mr. Gammon, SIL Indonesia, extend the partnership until June 2010.



SIL Signs Five-Year Agreement with Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs

The Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs (DEPDAGRI) and SIL representatives in Indonesia signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2005, extending the partnership for another five years. SIL Indonesia has participated in a productive partnership with various offices within DEPDAGRI for ten years.

With over 700 languages, Indonesia is one of the most linguistically rich countries in the world. Together, DEPDAGRI and SIL have enabled language-based development programs to succeed in five provinces across the archipelago. In response to the devastation caused by an earthquake and tsunami, DEPDAGRI and SIL also collaborated to provide disaster relief for residents of Nias Island.

Fifth International Language Assessment Conference

SIL International hosted the fifth International Language Assessment Conference (ILAC) in 2005 where 140 specialists from research organizations and several graduate students attended. The conference provided a venue for collaboration between language program strategists and language surveyors. Presenters addressed current language concerns and societal and literacy assessment theory and methodology. Surveyors were also trained in advanced survey skills.

Language research and documentation are SIL's core contributions to the world's understanding of languages. In 2005, more than 80 fulltime SIL researchers evaluated language vitality, multilingualism and sociolinguistic similarity between selected neighboring languages and language varieties—laying a foundation for language development.



As a leader in language research, SIL has surveyed over 2,500 languages, contributing significant data published in the *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*.

Framework of Languages

SIL language surveyors visited five Opao-speaking communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 2005 and collected sociolinguistic data that indicated the language is thriving even in a multilingual context. This active language use was also evidenced by decisions Opao teachers and community leaders made during an SIL-led Alphabet Design Workshop a few years earlier, where they agreed on the alphabet to use in their schools.

Ten years ago the PNG government began its Education Reform that allows teachers to teach the first three grades in any of the nation's 800+ languages as a transition into English, the national language of instruction.

During the last six years, SIL in PNG has worked alongside ethnolinguistic communities to formulate initial alphabets for 108 languages. The PNG Department of Education sponsored this initiative with funds from the Australian government.



A map of the Opao-speaking communities is sketched in the sand.

Virtual Museum of Mexico's Languages

In 2005, SIL Mexico launched an Internet virtual museum highlighting many languages of Mexico. A visitor to the sight can click on "Sounds of Mexico" and hear audible examples of several languages. Another topic to explore, "Fun With Words," has a section titled "Expressions of the Heart" that features an interactive quiz where browsers can discover unique idioms in Copala Trique, a language spoken in Oaxaca.

Other topics include: "The Riches of Mexico's Indian Languages," "Grammar—How a Language Holds Together," and "Writing Systems and Literacy" which includes examples from ancient Mixtec to current orthographies.

<http://www.sil.org/mexico>

Mexico is the home of over 150 ethnic minority languages.



SIL International

7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236-5629 USA
Phone: 972 708-7400
Fax: 972 708-7350
E-mail: info-sil@sil.org
Web: www.sil.org

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SIL International is a faith-based nonprofit organization dedicated to facilitating language development within minority language communities through linguistic research, translation and practical service.

As a nongovernmental organization, SIL has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

SIL offers training in applied linguistic fieldwork at many institutions around the world. Course topics include phonetics, phonology, grammar, linguistic research, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, literacy, translation and program planning.

SIL operates on contributions from individuals and organizations interested in various aspects of language development. Major contributors include affiliated member organizations of Wycliffe International.

SIL makes its services available to all without regard to religious belief, political ideology, gender, race or ethnic background.

Language Statistics

Languages spoken in the world	6,912
Languages in which SIL has worked	1,800 (1.2 billion speakers)
Active language programs with SIL involvement	1,294 (300 million speakers)
Active literacy programs with SIL involvement	over 1,000
Number of readers trained through SIL programs	over 2 million
Active SIL personnel	5,000
Countries of origin of SIL personnel	over 60
Published academic works by SIL personnel	23,600

These statistics offer the most current estimates available.

For more about SIL International, including audited financial statements, visit our website: www.sil.org

For language-related resources and software, visit: www.ethnologue.com