

Course Report: Literacy Awareness and Materials Production in New Ireland, PNG

Marianne Fast

A course for literacy awareness, with emphasis on materials production, was held at Ligga, New Ireland Province, from February 14-18, 2005. This course was part of the NALIP program (Niu Ailan Literacy Program). Fifty-seven participants (52 female and five male), two coordinators, three trainers, and six SIL personnel were present. The participants represented the following 15 languages spoken in New Ireland Province:

Siar, Sokirik, Sursurunga, Patpatar, Barok, Madak, Madara, Notsi, Kuot, Nalik, Kara, Tiang, Tigak, Tungag, Lungatan

Course Participants

The prerequisite for this course was the Literacy Awareness Course (NALIP Course #1 or #2). All participants had completed this course either the week before (February 7-11, see appendix) or in August 2004.

Although this course catered primarily to women from the United Church (it was organized by the Women's Fellowship), one participant represented another denomination, while another represented the Education Department.

Goal of Course

The main goal of the course was to introduce the students to materials production in their own languages. In the prerequisite Literacy Awareness Course, each language group had written their alphabet and had written or translated several stories. In this course, participants built on their previous work, learning how to produce various materials that they could use later in their awareness meetings at home.

Classroom and Facilities

Most of the sessions were held in the church building at Ligga. The chairs and tables used were purchased by NALIP with CDS funding. There were enough

Marianne and Leslie Fast translated the New Testament with the Tungag people of New Ireland, then worked with multi language literacy and scripture use projects in New Ireland.

tables and chairs, and the classroom was big enough to comfortably accommodate all the participants and staff. Lunch breaks were two hours long because another group used the classroom between 11:00 and 13:00 each day. The afternoon session continued until 17:00 instead of 16:00 to compensate for the long lunch break. The room was available during most evenings for working on assignments.

The United Church Regional Office Conference Room served as a second classroom facility. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, computer introduction and working sessions took place in this room. Three computers and a printer (brought from the SIL Centre in Kavieng) were available for use during these training sessions. Food and sleeping arrangements were taken care of on site.

Materials Produced

Each student/language group produced (or began producing) the following materials:

1. A **handmade demonstration booklet** made out of one sheet of paper, folded, cut, and stapled or sewn together. They learned where to put the title, the acknowledgements, the page numbers, and a story with illustrations.
2. A second **handmade booklet** with the same format, containing a translation of the text “How to make a book.”
3. A **third handmade booklet** of the same size, containing a story that they had written and illustrated themselves.
4. A **printed shell book**. Each language group translated the shell book “Baby Mosquito,” typed it as a Microsoft Publisher file on the computer, and printed and assembled it. The conference room in the United Church Regional Office was used for this.
5. An **alphabet chart**. Each participant wrote the letters of their alphabet on strips of paper, which were then mounted with wide sticky tape onto a colourful piece of plastic.
6. A **poster** advertising literacy in each congregation/language group.

Other Activities

- About forty Tok Pisin or English shell books (in addition to the ones produced in the course) were sold to the participants. Participants plan to translate these at home, and then come to the SIL house or Literacy house to type and print them later. Another twenty-five shell books were ordered from catalogues and were available for pick-up at the SIL house in the weeks following the course.

- The participants were told that this work of translating and typing/printing books would in future be done in the Literacy House. Each language group was told to appoint a typist who could also learn some computer skills. On behalf of their language group, this person would do the work of typing, layout and printing books in the future, using the resources available at the Literacy House.
- Participants watched the video “Kam Yumi Pul.” The next day there was a discussion about this video. Participants were told that the video or DVD is available for loan at the SIL house.
- Some participants began or continued work on their primers. Of the 15 language groups present, three already had a primer for beginners (Madara, Lungatan, Tungag). Three groups had started writing primers but needed to finish writing the stories (Tigak, Notsi, Tiang). Eight groups wanted to start making a primer (Kara Panamecho, Nalik, Kuot, Sursurunga, Siar, Barok, Sokirik, Patpatar). These eight groups were instructed how to choose key words for each of the sounds of their language, and how to write stories corresponding to each key word. One other language group is working on a slightly different kind of primer (Madak).

Note: Several groups that had been present in the August Awareness workshop, and had started primers, did not come to this course (Kara Ngavalus, Kara Pangeifua, Kara Nonopai, Kara Lemakot, Kara Nalik, Manggai, Madak Notsi and Madak Pinikidu).

- Participants learned how to conduct literacy awareness at home: how to use the materials produced in the course, how to organize awareness sessions, what to say, whom to approach, etc. Each group spent time planning how they would conduct literacy awareness in their area, and presented their plan to the whole group on Friday afternoon.
- The participants went home with the assignment to do awareness in their area with the goal of setting up a literacy committee or board. This committee will be responsible for overseeing future literacy activities in that area. The formation of a committee is a prerequisite for participation in future courses.

Future Courses

1. Materials Production Workshop – April 25-29, 2005

Participants were told that if there was a committee in place, and if they had finished writing stories for their primer, they could come back for a more

advanced materials production workshop in April (April 25-29). At this workshop, not more than five or six language groups can participate due to a limited number of computers and personnel. However, once the literacy house is in operation, all groups should be able to make an appointment with the UC Provincial Literacy Coordinator, John Mokis, to organize a time to get consultant help with the book(s) they are working on.

2. Teacher Training Workshop — May 2-6, 2005

This workshop is only for those who have no other access to teacher training in their area and who have finished producing some teaching materials in their language. The teacher training course will provide training for two types of teachers: those who plan to teach **beginner literacy** (using a primer), and those who plan to teach **transfer and fluency literacy** (using an alphabet chart, shell books, songs, Bible portions or Sunday School books).

Appendix

Report: Literacy Awareness Course Marianne Fast

Niu Ailan Literacy Program, (NALIP), run by the Women's Fellowship of the United Church of the Niu Ailan Region Ligga, February 7-11, 2005

The course opened on Monday afternoon with an introductory session, attended by the staff of the regional UC office and builders of the Literacy House as well as the participants. The first session was held from 15:00 - 17:00 with 20 participants present. On Tuesday, the day started at 8:00 with 35 people attending. By Thursday, the full number of participants (40) had arrived. Also present were two representatives of the Women's Fellowship and 8 staff for the course, consisting of 6 SIL personnel and 3 trainers from New Hanover. A total of 33 hours of training was given. Classes usually went until 16:00.

Participants represented the following 11 languages from New Ireland: Siar, Sursurunga, Sokirik, Barok, Kuot, Notsi, Nalik, Kara-Panamecho, Tigak, Tiang and Tungag. Some had come to a previous awareness course but for most of the participants this was the first exposure to a course of this kind. Of the 40 participants, 35 were female and 5 were male.

We were very thankful to have the use of the tables and chairs for this training session!

The goal for the week was stated as follows:

To equip the participants (representatives of circuits within the UC region) with enough literacy and language awareness to be able to share with their circuits and communities the needs and possibilities for literacy programmes in the vernacular.

The objectives for the course were:

1. Language awareness discussion.
2. Language discovery (alphabet, handwriting skills, translation of word list, creative writing).
3. Introduction to literacy (3 levels of literacy: beginners, transfer and fluency. Demonstration of beginners and fluency lessons).
4. Evaluation and sharing of home situation.

It was felt that the goal was met and that the objectives were reached, as the participants expressed confidence that they could go home and do literacy awareness in their communities.

Because the distance and cost of transportation for the students were so great, it was decided that these participants could stay on for the materials production workshop immediately following this course. (Feb 14-18)

During that course, they will gain greater awareness of the procedures for book production in their language and can incorporate that knowledge into their work of awareness and selection of workers for involvement in future literacy programmes. They will also be able to make a start with the writing of the primer (first reading book for beginning literacy) in their language.✍