

Handing over Akie texts to the community

As part of our language documentation project “Akie in Tanzania –documenting a critically endangered language” (Karsten Legère/Gothenburg, Vienna and Christa König/Frankfurt, Bernd Heine/Cologne) of the Volkswagen Foundation’s DoBeS initiative, a 115 page collection of texts in this South Nilotic language was recently compiled for the small Akie community.

The manuscript is one of the results that reflect the comprehensive bilingual documentation of a wide variety of speech events which were recorded in Akie in close cooperation with committed Akie speaking community members and colleagues from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), such as Prof. D. Mkude. In compliance with ethical principles that are guiding our research this first written record of the Akie language was made available to the Akie community, when March 13, 2015 UDSM’s Secretary to Council/Corporate Counsel, Prof. P. J. Kabudi, handed the Akie-Swahili text collection over to Bahati Nguyaki of Gitu (Kilindi District, Tanga Region) who was representing Akie people. The UDSM representative emphasized the unique value of the collection which is based on audio and video recordings among Akie speakers in various parts of the vast territory where this traditional hunter-gatherer community is still foraging. Further, he congratulated B. Nguyaki to this achievement and personal contribution which, as the latter responded, instils pride on Akie speakers and even those who are no longer speaking this language for having been empowered in this way. In addition, B. Nguyaki introduced those attending this handing over event to Akie traditional fire-making (by rubbing a hard wood stick on another, see photo).



Bahati Nguyaki and Prof. P. J. Kabudi



Bahati Nguyasi, Prof. P. J. Kabudi and Mkwana 'hembo