

it is used to translate the verb in Paul's sentence (*ἀπεκδέχεται*, awaits). For the noun that forms the subject of his sentence we have the Tonga rendering *ludunamino*, a very intensive word that seems to rival almost the Greek word itself in its vivid suggestiveness of the outstretched head.

Old Testament translation is still in its infancy where Tonga is concerned, but we should find no insuperable difficulties in translating the various Hebrew words rendered by 'hope' or some synonymous word in the English version. It is interesting to look at these words with some of the points mentioned above in mind. In Hebrew, as in Tonga, it is not possible to draw a hard and fast distinction between hope and faith; cf., for instance, the occurrence of *batach* in Psalm 16 : 9 (My flesh shall rest in hope), quoted in Acts 2 : 26. The primary meaning of *y ch l* (the root of *tocheleth* used in Psalm 39 : 8 and other passages) is 'to await, expect', showing some similarity to Tonga *langila*. Interesting also is the etymology of *tiqvah* (Job 4 : 6, etc.); the root *q v h* seems to have meant originally 'to twist or stretch', and the word would thus be expressive of the tension of expectation: cf. what I have said above about the Greek *ἀποκαρδοκία* and the Tonga *langila* and *dunamina*.

In closing this brief study there comes to my mind an instance in which I have heard the word *syoma* used. I was visiting the local African hospital with an African ministerial colleague, and his last remark to a patient we visited was, *Kamusyoma bulyo*, "Just keep trusting (or hoping)". In his mind, though unexpressed in words, I am sure was the thought of God and of the Christian hope. As I said at the beginning, and I trust have shown in these notes, it is not impossible to 'get across' to our Tonga people something of what that hope means, notwithstanding the fact that there is not in Tonga any one word that could unhesitatingly be included in a dictionary as an exact equivalent of the English 'hope' or the Greek *ἐλπίς*.

Lingala and Tribal Languages in the Belgian Congo

John F. Carrington

Some weeks ago I had to look for nails and screws in the station store here at Yalsmba and curiously opened a large wooden chest left by earlier missionaries. It was full of New Testaments. Students, scholars and other folk on the station and in surrounding villages are constantly demanding fresh supplies of New Testaments so that I never have enough in the book store to last for any length of time. But these copies were of no use to us. They were published in HESO—the language of a small tribe living around Basoko at the confluence of the Aruwimi River and the Congo—and the present generation here can neither speak nor hear that tongue; they want their scriptures in Lingala, the lingua franca of the area.

The first missionaries to build up Church work in the Yalamba area were faced with a language situation that has few parallels in the Colony—or indeed anywhere else! Grenfell and an outstanding African Christian (Lisasi) founded this youngest station of the Baptist Missionary Society in Congo when it seemed that Basoko would develop into a port of considerable size and an opening into the north of the Colony would be available for evangelistic work. But when the first workers here began to study local dialects so as to choose the most widely known tongue for church and school work, they found that the four villages amongst which the station is situated spoke four quite distinct languages while on the opposite side of the river there were villages speaking three more different tongues! This remarkable state of affairs had arisen because the area in which we live has received migrating peoples from all quarters. The region has been entered by these new-comers within fairly recent times; each group has brought its own language and a sufficient length of time has not elapsed to permit of one of these emerging as a medium of converse for all. The different villages have, however, all adopted the gong (or drum-) language of the Baso people. Thus the decision of the early Yalamba workers to use Heso (the spoken language of the Baso on which their drum messages are based) was justified in that, of the many languages used in the area, it alone might develop as a lingua franca for evangelistic and school work.

But the rapid spread of Lingala up and down the Congo river soon made it clear that Heso could never rival Lingala as a lingua franca in this area. And so later missionaries began to use Lingala on the station and Heso is heard no longer. A comparative new-comer to Yalamba from an area in which a tribal language is used in Mission work, I made an attempt last year in a neighbouring village to interest the folk in the Christian story by reading from a Heso New Testament and leading the singing with Heso hymns. The response was by no means so enthusiastic as my experience of the use of a tribal language elsewhere has led me to expect. When I asked one of our workmen from the village whether his friends would prefer us to take services in Heso he replied: We understand it but it isn't our own language; we all would just as lief hear the message and sing in Lingala.

Probably no missionary would choose to work in a lingua franca where a widely-spread tribal language is available; the latter is often more difficult to learn, but it gains the interest of the people in a way that an essentially 'foreign' language can never do; it has, moreover, a richness of vocabulary and construction, as well as a wealth of 'oral literature' that a language common to several peoples rarely possesses. But Lingala seems to be the only language for practical purposes on many of our central Congo stations where linguistic situations similar to (though perhaps not quite so acute as) that portrayed for Yalamba are to be found.

In his recent article on Congo Swahili (*The Bible Translator*, April 1953) William A. Deans gave an account of the most wide-spread of the four linguae francae in the Belgian Colony. Lingala is the second of these. Its use seems to be increasing, especially in the big centres where,

for many of the children of detribalised Congolese, it is becoming a veritable 'langue maternelle'. One reason for the spread of the language today is its use as the official language in the Force Publique, Lingala being spoken wherever garrisons and army training centres are situated in the Colony.

The language is forcing itself on the attention of missionaries at the present time owing to the demands of school work. It is almost impossible to publish in a language spoken over a restricted area the many class manuals necessary for adequate schooling as demanded by government programmes and inspection. Though a 'return to Heso' might be possible for preaching here at Yalamba, it would be useless for the teacher-training work we are undertaking with students from missions dispersed over an area a thousand miles long. Lingala, however, serves as a medium which all can understand.

What exactly is Lingala? The name of the lingua franca and also a modicum of grammatical form and vocabulary are derived from the language of the Bangala, a tribe living on the banks of the Congo some two hundred miles north of the Equator. The very numerous warriors of the Bangala offered considerable resistance to Stanley when he descended the Congo in 1877; their bravery and courage led him to suggest that they would make excellent soldiers in the early struggle between the Congo Free State and the Arab slavers. The language used by these first members of the colonial army developed into present-day Lingala. It is quite different from the language spoken by the few Bangala remaining in their ancestral area; the original grammatical structure has been considerably simplified (the 'man-in-the-street' hardly uses the system of concords which is so characteristic a feature of most Bantu languages) and large numbers of words have been added from European languages, from Swahili and Kongo (two other 'linguae francae' of Congo) and from the tribal languages in the wide area over which Lingala has come to be used. Another form of the language which has obvious affinities with Lingala is that spoken in the north of the Colony and called Bangala. Independent development has, however, led to these two linguae francae becoming further and further apart, until today it is almost impossible for a Lingala-speaker to understand someone using Bangala. Most Lingala-speaking folk would agree that Bangala is poorer than Lingala in vocabulary and in grammatical structure.

Unfortunately, as so often happens in a lingua franca being used over a wide area, many different forms of Lingala have arisen connected with different missions working in Congo. Missionaries of the Roman Church have attempted to force non-concorded Lingala as heard on African lips into a characteristic Bantu mould, giving the language the concordial system it 'ought to have'. Literature published by the Force Publique (including a fortnightly newspaper that has recently so much increased its circulation that our mail-bags are becoming congested with the copies sent to our schoolboys and station workmen!) shows similar trends, though the spoken word used by soldiers and policemen and by radio announcers in lingua franca programmes is hardly different from the 'man-in-the-street' Lingala. In 1933, the Reverend Malcolm Guthrie

(now occupying the chair of Bantu languages in London University) published a grammar and dictionary of Lingala in which he made a scientific attempt to record the actual language being used by Congolese in Leopoldville and elsewhere. This work was expanded and completed in a further study published in 1939. Guthrie's translation of the New Testament, which many missions of the Reformed Churches are using at the present time, as well as the greater part of our Lingala hymn-book and much of our school material, is based on the language recorded in these books.

The Relationship of Lingala to Tribal Languages in Congo

Lingala is more closely related to Congo Bantu languages than is Swahili. This means that it is an easier language for Bantu-speaking Congolese to learn than is Swahili, with its close affinities to the Bantu languages of East and South Africa. Unlike Swahili, Lingala is a tonal language—which is also the case with most of the local Congo languages; indeed the tonal values of corresponding roots are often identical even though phonetic elements of the lingua franca root are different from those found in the tribal tongue. Readers may be interested in a statistical comparison of vocabulary roots carried out by the writer for several central Congo languages and for the two *linguae francae* in order to obtain an objective estimate of similarities between pairs of languages. A vocabulary of about three hundred of the commonest words used in daily life was chosen and equivalents in common use in the different languages studied were compared in pairs to observe whether the roots were similar. The percentage of similar roots in any one pair of languages was considered to be a rough indication of the similarity of the two tongues studied. The following figures were obtained (figures in brackets show the similarity between Swahili and each of the languages mentioned):

Lingala-Bobangi:	60 %	(19 %)
Lonkundo:	59 %	(26 %)
Lingombe:	45 %	(28 %)
Longando:	45 %	(25 %)
Hesa:	32 %	(21 %)
Lokele:	38 %	(22 %)
Olombo:	37 %	(17 %)
Liangba:	23 %	(13 %)
Mbane:	4 %	(3 %)

N.B.—Mbane is a Sudanic language and is included here for interest to show the almost complete lack of resemblance between it and the Bantu *linguae francae*.

The languages are given in order of their distance from the original 'home' of Lingala, it is clear that Lingala shows a remarkable similarity in vocabulary to Bobangi and Lonkundo—the languages nearest to the area of the Bangala tribe, while other central Congo Bantu tongues, even those furthest away from the Bangala area are still closer to Lingala than to Swahili.

In areas known to the writer where Swahili is the accepted lingua franca, it is rare to find that the missionary can use this language to speak to women and girls. He needs to learn the local tribal language adequately to serve this section of the population. But where Lingala is spoken, women and girls seem to learn the lingua franca as easily and readily as the men-folk. This may not be true of areas outside those in which I have worked, but the relatively simple grammatical structure of Lingala coupled with its close similarity to Congo Bantu languages may explain why it seems to reach more quickly than Swahili all sections of the community.

Lingala as a means of translating Scripture

Lingala suffers from the disadvantages of all *linguae francae* when we examine its use as a medium of expressing the Word of God. There is first of all a marked poverty of vocabulary. The relationship between Lingala and its possible tribal parent is so slender that there is no fund of tribal vocabulary from which to draw for needed words—as can be done in the case of Luba and Kongo, two other *linguae francae* in Congo. Swahili has a far richer vocabulary and also has the advantage of its close association with Arabic for supplying useful elements. Slowly Lingala is acquiring European words, 'bantuising' them to suit itself until the unwary learner hardly recognises the new words: *jelo*, for 'a circle' (French *zéro*), *alima*, for 'straight' (French *alignement*), *bichi*, for 'the river bank' (English *beach*) and so on. Some missionaries would adopt words from their local tribal tongues in order to make good the deficiencies of the lingua franca; this seems to be the only solution in many cases, but it has the disadvantage that people living outside the tribal area thus favoured cannot understand the vocabulary used.

A further drawback to the use of Lingala as a medium for translating Scripture is the poor grammatical structure of the language. Lingala has one and the same form, *na*, for the locative (*na mboka*, 'in, to, at the village'), the possessive (*moto na lingomba*, 'a man of the church') and the conjunctive (*biso na yo*, 'you and I', literally 'we and you'). In cognate Bantu languages these are quite distinct (sometimes the distinction is only tonal but is nevertheless quite definite) so that a new-comer to Lingala finds the sequence of *na... na... na...* unpleasant to hear, difficult to reproduce and conducive of ambiguity. Mark 6:18, for instance, *Ekoki na yo kojala na mwasi na ndeko na yo te*.

A good deal of criticism of the New Testament as we have it has centred on the use there of forms for the past tense that are only heard over a limited area, due probably to the presence in local tribal languages of similar grammatical forms. The result is that African preachers read faithfully the forms printed in the scriptures but reproduce more commonly used and more widely spread tenses when they repeat the passage in their own words.

The tonal nature of the lingua franca offers no difficulties to New Testament readers in Congo. In some few cases it is necessary to mark vowels bearing high or low tones so as to indicate the meaning of the

original word, but usually the context is sufficient to show the correct tones to be given to the symbols of the printed page.

In conclusion we can fairly say that the use of a lingua franca for evangelistic work and for educational purposes is essential in Central Congo where tribal languages are very numerous and only known over restricted areas and further that Lingala, in spite of its poverty of vocabulary and simplicity of grammatical structure, is well meeting the need because of its close similarity to the languages spoken in the area. Plans are being made to co-ordinate and complete work already begun on the Lingala Old Testament so that the complete Bible may soon be available for the Church of Christ in Congo.

The Revision of the Russian Translation of the New Testament

Bishop Cassian

It is now generally known that a revision of the Russian New Testament has been going on in Paris since the beginning of 1951, and the appearance of a tentative edition of St. Matthew's Gospel is a welcome mark of progress.

The structure of the undertaking is as follows. The first draft of the revised translation has been entrusted to me in my capacity as Professor of the New Testament in the Russian Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris. With the permission and blessing of my immediate authorities I have been able to give myself entirely to the task of revision and for the last two years have been living in complete isolation in a little Spanish village where, surrounded by my books, I have been able to work without interruption. My draft translations are discussed in a special Commission for Translation and especially in its Executive Committee. A special Panel of competent representatives of contemporary Russian letters is attached to the Commission to assess the literary side of the work. After being discussed in the bodies just mentioned, the resultant text is communicated to a larger group of consultants scattered throughout the Russian emigration over the world. The tentative edition of St. Matthew, which has just been mentioned, is a result of these wide consultations. The reactions to this edition will enable us to reach the definitive form of the revised text.

In this manner all sections of the Church outside Russia are invited to express themselves about our work before the translation is published. Moreover, a qualified representative of Russian Evangelicals is acting as a member of the Commission and of the Executive. There are also Russian-speaking Roman Catholics amongst the consultants. The first Hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, His Holiness the Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, has shown the keenest interest in the undertaking from its very beginning and given it his warmest blessing.