

WAIWAI TRANSLATION

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Waiwai is the language of the Waiwai Indians, a very small tribe located in the southern tip of British Guiana. In this article diacritical signs are omitted in the printing of Waiwai words. Ed.

The use of direct discourse

In common Waiwai speech direct discourse is very common; indirect discourse is used only in the third person. When the speaker is referring to what he has said himself or to what the listener has said, only direct discourse is used. Even in the third person, that is, when referring to what another has said, direct discourse is used almost as frequently as indirect.

But early in our study of the Waiwai language we began to realize that direct discourse was used to refer to what was never said. For instance, a thief caught with stolen goods might excuse himself by saying, "But I said, I will take them back to him." We, of course, thought such a one was merely adding lying to the sin of stealing because we knew he had not made such a statement to us. It became evident at times that he had not said this to anyone. Slowly we realized that the thief was quoting what he had said to himself in his own heart, and though that did not excuse the sin of stealing it did make us know that he was not necessarily lying. Thus we learned that the stem *ka* (inflected form *ke*) or *kas* which follows all direct quotations after pause means more than just 'to say' or 'to do' as we had thought. It means 'to think,' and beyond that it refers to all the various types of thought such as 'to believe,' 'to doubt,' 'to be confident,' 'to respect,' etc. according to the context. We later heard such forms as these: *Meyerma nay noro, wika awya*: 'He is far away, I said concerning you;' or 'I believed you were far away.' *Kecehce oyehyun, wika thakwa*: 'My bridge will hold up, I said of course;' or 'Of course I was sure my bridge would hold up.' *Mokuhra nay wikesi*: 'It will not come, I say;' or 'I doubt it will come.'

We also began to realize that there was no proper word in Waiwai for various types of statements such as 'to promise', 'to praise' or 'to deny', etc. The promise or praise was merely quoted and so with the denial, and in each case this direct discourse was followed by the above-mentioned stem. We heard such forms as these: *Kmokyasi men, mika harare*: 'I will certainly come, you said;' or 'You promised to come.' *Kanawa yenpotho okre, nikay*: 'It is a wonderful canoe, he said;' or 'He praised the canoe.' *Arihraro maki weesi, kekne*: 'I didn't take it, he said;' or 'He denied that he took it.'

For various verbal ideas there are proper verbs in Waiwai, but even for these ideas direct discourse is often used, followed, at times, by the proper verb also as a duplicate statement. The direct discourse is apparently more forceful than the proper verb. Example: *Pira, pira*,

kane noro, kanweknero maki kica: 'No, no, he always says; he always disagrees with us.'

Thus in translating Bible passages into Waiwai we have made common use of direct discourse in places where it does not exist in the Greek text for three reasons: so that the translation would be as much like common Waiwai speech as possible, for verbs in the text for which no proper verb could be found in Waiwai and to give directness and force to the translation.

Following are several categories of meaning for which we commonly use direct discourse. Examples are from our translation of parts of the Bible into Waiwai; the English portions of the examples are translated literally from the Waiwai.

1. To bless. *Kirwanhe Kan awakrepermaha kapu, kacoko awirimane komo poko:* '“May God be good and kind to you now,” say concerning those who ruin you.’ Rom. 12:14.
2. To consider an object as having some quality, to believe, boast or confess that something is true. *Takisomsa owi okyo, kane pin me maki ehcoko:* 'Don't be people who say, “I am very wise.”' Rom. 12:16. *Kraysutu yakro karpe taki wasi hara, titkese:* '“Then I will live again with Christ,” we say.’ Rom 6:8. *Ciisusu Kraysutu taki mokye tuhneha, ketawso:* '“Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” if it says . . .’ 1 Jn. 4:2. *Kan yanme kehtopo wihtinoyasi, kane komo amyamro:* '“I know what it is to live according to God's will,” you all are people who say thus.’ Rom. 2:18.
3. To praise, glorify or desire glory. *Kirwanhe matham okre, kesi taki kayaritomo awyaso.* '“Evidently you all are good,” the ruler will say of you all then.’ Rom. 13:3. *Kansa mikham okre, kahraro maki satkene okwe:* '“He is evidently really and wonderfully God,” they didn't say at all.’ Rom. 1:21. *Ocemarontari kerma okyo, kirwanhesa nay Kanham, kachomeso:* 'By means of my lie so that they will say, “God is evidently very good.”' Rom. 3:7.
4. To thank. *Kirwanhe nayham okanin, wikesi:* '“My God is evidently good,” I say.’ Rom. 1:8.
5. To condemn or give judgment against. *Kicicme masi amoro, kachonho merma awya, ero wararma maserha amyamro:* 'Even after saying, “You are bad,” you do the same things yourselves.’ Rom. 2:3. *Ero wa kane komo twaihkapore kra natu, kachonho Kan ya nihtinoyaturmarewa:* "They know the statement of God, “Those who do such things should be put to death.”' Rom. 1:32. *Kicicitho mermana way owi, kiwyaso ketawrmana kropotawso:* 'If we say in our hearts, “Possibly I am still bad.”' 1 Jn. 3:20.
6. To deny a fact. *Kraysutu pinirma mese miki Ciisusu, kane komo:* "Those who say, “That person Jesus is not Christ.”' 1 Jn. 2:22.
7. To promise. *Karpe men kiraseso waypin meroha, kanenho noro kiwyaso:* 'He has said to us, “I will surely make you all to be strong without dying permanently.”' 1 Jn. 2:25. *Wimiyasi taki men awyaso amne, kachonho marha yaronno mera taki nehtikesi kica:* "Then the statement, “I will surely give it to you later,” will become meaningless.’ Rom 4:14. *Ehnara nirasi Kan, wirasi, kache tiwya:* 'God does it without fail after he says, “I will do it.”' Rom. 4:21.
8. To reckon or count. *Tkacho komo yahsiyatawso etapickasapu komo, kwak-resicma, kakra tase, kepemesi thakwa, titkeserha:* "When people who have worked receive goods we do not say, “I am being kind to you of my own will;” we rather say, “I must pay you.”' Rom. 4:4.

9. To call by a title or an attribute. *Aysawyanasa amnaha, mikethana*: "'We are real Israelites," perhaps you are saying.' Rom. 2:17. *Nasemkorma, kane esihnimko yaha kapu*: 'He is one who says of things which do not yet exist, "They are."' Rom. 4:17.
10. To command to do something. *On wara yuwya kacho nasi knewetiri komo, omumuru yosoti pona encoko Ciisusu Kraysutuha*: 'This is his statement for us to obey, "Trust in the name of my Son Jesus Christ."' 1 Jn. 3:23.
11. To respect or be partial to. *Noro yipu mikha kopi, kahraro maki nay Kan kpokoso*: 'God never says concerning us, "He is a very important person."' Rom. 2:11.
12. Explanation of one's own previous statement or interpretation of an unknown term. *Yimtapotachonhirirma mentace, ero way yawa wikesi, pahsa entasapu kweronomacho komha*: 'You all heard his own words, and it is concerning that which I say, "An instruction heard long ago."' 1 Jn. 2:7. *Kakroso nasi Kanha, titkeserha kiwyam, Emanwew, kacho*: "We say, rather, "God is with us," for the word, *Immanuel*.' Mt. 1:23. *On warasa wikeshake, Kan yewetiri owya menasi, owi takitko kenaseso ewetiri komo awyaso*: "This is what I am really saying, "You will see my faith in God, and I will see you that you have faith in God."' Rom. 1:12.
13. Changing indirect discourse to direct. *On wara wikay yuwya, awepamthiri komo men wepemesi miya roroha*: 'I said thus to him, "I will certainly pay back your descendants up to the end."' 1 Sam. 3:13. *Yihyawno mesa wasi owi, kane komo*: 'The people who say, "I am truly in him."' 1 Jn. 2:6. *Okicicir-thorha nero esihrraro maki nasi okwe, ketaw kiwyaso*: 'If we say, "I have no sin at all."' 1 Jn. 1:8.
14. Miscellaneous ideas for which we have used direct discourse. *Kani riwon makisa nay, kacokosahayo*. 'Rather say thus, "God's wrath really exists."' Rom. 12:19. *On wicaki maki noro nihtinoyarha, kahraro maki tasi yuwya*: 'One cannot say of him at all, "He just knows this much."' Isa. 40:28. *Ero ke marha taki ahsipinkano nire Kan, kicici komo se matham, eroi sati me kra taki ehcoko roro, kekne taki Kanha*: "Therefore God let them go, "Evidently you all love bad things; be a lover of such things forever," God said then.' Rom. 1:28. *Pirahatkona, kane pin mero neyukyakne*: 'He answered as one who never says, "But maybe it is not so."' Rom. 4:19. *Nnn,¹ apohana, kahracma sakne Kan ya kacho yentache*. "'Well, I don't know about that," he didn't say thus when he heard the saying of God.' Rom. 4:20.

The use of particles

One of the immediately notable features of Waiwai speech is the frequent recurrence of a great variety of particles. According to their distribution these particles may be divided into two classes: those which occur as a complete expression, i.e., alone, and those which do not occur alone. In our orthography of Waiwai we write as a separate word all particles which occur alone as well as particles which do not occur alone but which consist of four or more phonemes. Particles which do not occur alone and which consist of three phonemes or less are joined to the preceding word.

Each of these two classes of particles may be subdivided into two classes according to meaning; thus we list four classes.

¹This is not a proper word but an indication of meditation or uncertainty, rather like "Er..." in English.

Particles of Class 1

These are always preceded by another word and describe an object or event much as the inflected modifiers do. We list a few examples:

Kraysaturhacma waihyakne kekenhiri komona: 'On the other hand Christ died in our place.' Rom. 5:8. The particle *rha* indicates distinctiveness; it is clear that Christ in his death did something very different from what people in general do. The particle *ema* indicates that the fact was not necessarily the way it was; it might have been different. Thus we express here the thought that Christ died voluntarily which is certainly the thought of the text.

Esihra tan nasi, ekenhiriseka encoko: 'He is not here, look at the place where he was and see for yourselves.' Mk. 16:6. The particle *se* indicates an examination to prove that a fact is true. The particle here makes it clear that the angel was not doubtful that the Lord was risen and invited examination to prove it.

Anari komo 30 me neperwase. 'Other ones bear fruit thirty times as much.' Mk. 4:20. The particle *komo* indicates a group and is necessary to give the plural idea in the word 'some.'

Particles of Class 2

These particles are always preceded by another word and indicate the manner of a statement or its value. Examples follow:

Noro pitho taki ehtati: 'She says to go bring his head now.' Mk. 6:27. The particle *ti* indicates indirect quotation; with commands or requests it has the effect of laying all the responsibility for the command or request onto another person. We feel that Herod, if he had been speaking Waiwai, would have thus laid the responsibility for this request on the daughter of Herodias as he regretted the action very much.

Onoke waray komo makmawa? 'What sort of people...?' Prov. 23:29. The particle *ma* indicates interrogation; it is not obligatory but yet very common in Waiwai speech. The particle *wa* indicates that the person addressed is expected to know the answer to the question. It is common knowledge what sort of people have redness of eyes, wounds without cause, etc.

Ahce poyiro mike on wara? ... On wara kati gihtinopira mayhake? 'Why do you speak thus? ... Or don't you know this, I ask?' Is. 40:27-28. The particle *kati* indicates an alternate interrogation to a previous one. Its use is obligatory in Waiwai speech in the latter of two alternate questions.

Canirma mese onihkatho norohamta: 'It is evidently John whom I beheaded.' Mk. 6:16. The particle *mese* indicates disagreement with another person; apparently Herod was disagreeing with the guesses of other people concerning the identity of Jesus. In the original this is not stated in the text but is implied by the context.

Particles of Class 3

These particles indicate the subjective reactions of the speaker or other actor to the matter expressed. They may express strong feeling like interjections in English, or they may express milder feeling. The Waiwais seem to be always more interested in subjective attitudes than in outward circumstances; particles of this class occur with more than half of all Waiwai expressions. They may occur alone, but all the following examples are given in context to show their use more clearly:

Kirwanhe magham okre, kese: 'Evidently you are very good, they say.' Mk. 7:6. The particle *okre* indicates pleasure which in this case was feigned but, nevertheless, expressed.

Cewnān tumumurosa okwe: 'His only begotten Son.' Jn. 3:16. The particle *okwe* indicates dearness, and it must be included in Waiwai for the expression 'only begotten Son' to mean anything like what it means to God or to us as Christians.

Tpoturesa taki nehtikekne oco Ciisusu ponon: 'Then Jesus' clothes became brilliant.' Mk. 9:3. The particle *oco* indicates discomfort arising from heat or brilliant light. We have never heard a Waiwai react to a brilliant light without the use of this particle; thus we included it here.

Ero ke taki erepokano nirasimko okyo: 'Therefore he does amazing things.' Mk. 6:14. The particle *okyo* indicates surprise and shows that the speaker, Herod, fully felt the amazement expressed by the word *erepokano*.

Itore ekatmira maki takitko nehce kici: 'They just failed to tell the same things.' Mk. 14:56. The particle *kici* indicates frustration. Here it is not the speaker, Mark, who was frustrated, but it was the chief priests and the council who were frustrated in trying to find two witnesses against Jesus. The frustration they felt is clearly implied in v. 55 so that we feel it is not adding to the meaning of the text at all to insert this particle here.

Particles of Class 4

These particles which may also occur alone are sometimes termed ideophones since each one indicates a single event devoid of any idea of mode, tense, voice, or person whether subject or object. They are used almost exclusively in narrative speech, and they become more frequent the more vivid and animated the language becomes. One of these particles may be repeated several times to indicate repeated or continued action, or the last syllable of certain of them may be reduplicated several times to indicate repeated or continued action likewise. Often these particles are followed, after pause, by the inflected verb which indicates the same event or by the verb meaning 'to say' or 'to do.' Apparently the inflected verbs are used to avoid ambiguity in ideas of mode, tense, voice or person which ideas, of course, are derived from the context when the ideophone occurs without the inflected verb. This class of particles is numerous running into the hundreds. Examples follow:

Chow, say, amori poko nanimye: 'Take hold of! rise up! he raised her up by the hand.' Mk. 1:31. The particles *chow* and *say* mean 'to take hold of' and 'to rise up' respectively.

Torowomko taki mokyakne, tere: 'Then the birds came, light down.' Mk. 4:4. The particle *tere* means 'to sit down' or 'to alight.'

Eroinhiri taki kururururu, nemerhace, nemahcice: 'After that they went one after another, they were aroused, they ran.' Mk. 5:13. The particle *kururururu* means 'to go in a line', but the syllable *ru* may be reduplicated more times than we have here according to the will of the speaker to emphasize continued action.

Tii, nititmamyatkene maki: 'Silence! they did not answer.' Mk. 3:4. The particle *tii* means 'to be quiet.'

Pukwow, nesewkormay taki Ciisusu: 'Turn around! Jesus turned around then.' Mk. 8:33. The particle *pukwow* means 'to turn around' or 'to turn over.'

How particles affect the translation

Some particles add a completely new meaning all of their own and are thus necessary at times to complete the meaning of the expression in the original text. Examples follow:

Kapu pokohakwa washa: 'You know that I exist to the full extent of heaven.' Jer. 23:24. The particle *wa* indicates that the person addressed is expected to know the fact expressed. We have used this particle to translate all rhetorical questions such as this since a rhetorical question implies that the person addressed knows the answer well. Thus *wa* is needed to give a complete translation of the expression.

Eromko poko marha amtapotacokoha amin komo yaw aweremetaw roroso: 'Talk about those things every time when you sit in your house.' Deut. 6:7. The particle *roso* indicates persistence or regularity which meaning is not otherwise found in the sentence. Thus the particle is necessary for a complete translation.

Anarimko poko pohnase marha taki kica: 'They also begin to long after other things.' Mk. 4:19. The particle *mko* indicates a group, which meaning again is not expressed elsewhere in the context. The particle is necessary to give the plural idea.

Tuna ratari mokyakne kopi, coycoy wara: 'He came along the surface of the water, step, step.' Mk. 6:48. The particle *coy* (here reduplicated) is an ideophone meaning 'to step' and indicates that Christ was walking over the surface of the water rather than coming in a boat.

At other times particles are used to emphasize a meaning already found in the immediate expression. In some cases this may seem like redundancy, but we feel that it is not violating the rules of good translation to express one meaning two times if such a practice is common in normal speech. Examples follow:

Onoke waray komo makmawa...? 'What sort of people...?' Prov. 23:29. The particle *ma* indicates interrogation, but that the expression is a question can already be seen from the word *onoke* meaning 'who'?

Kayaritomo merosa Kan yehtopo me taki nehtikesi oroto: 'The time of God's being the complete and real king is coming to be now.' Mk. 1:15. The particle *taki* indicates the beginning of an action, but this meaning is also expressed by *nehtikesi* 'it is coming to be.'

At other times particles are used to make explicit a meaning not found in the immediate expression but which is implied by the context, by the teaching of the Bible as a whole or by the knowledge of life as it is. Such particles help greatly in understanding the Bible especially for slow readers who may in the labor of reading one sentence forget the thought of the previous sentence. Such particles make the Bible more interesting for all Waiwai readers. Examples follow:

Anarimko poko pohnase marha taki kica: 'They also begin to long after other things.' Mk. 4:19. The particle *kica* indicates displeasure on the part of the speaker. There is nothing in the above expression besides this particle which definitely says the action is bad, but the next two clauses and the whole parable indicate that Jesus was telling it as something bad.

Nawayakne thakwa taki: 'Then it withered necessarily.' Mk. 4:6. The

particle *thakwa* indicates necessity. The word 'necessity' is not found in the original text, but the fact of the necessity is definitely implied by the previous clause. Thus we add this particle as any normal Waiwai speaker would do.

Pakay taki haramatwahake kopi: 'He must have come back to life.' Mk. 6:16. The particle *kopi* indicates fear. This thought of fear is not found in the expression itself but is implied by the context and from what we know of Herod's life and from the rarity of people rising from the dead.

Tuna ratari mokyakne kopi, coycoy wara: 'He came along the surface of the water, step, step.' Mk. 6:48. Again *kopi* indicates fear, which though not expressed in this verse is expressed in the following verses. Thus we have added the particle here without, we feel, adding anything to the meaning of the original text.

Kimreninhermaha kapu cetapickapore nasi: 'While we are still children somewhat it is good to labor.' Lam. 3:27. The particle *kapu* indicates temporariness. This thought of temporariness is not expressed in the original text, but we all know that being a child is a temporary state. This particle is always included in Waiwai speech when referring to childhood.

Problems

As may be seen from what we have said above, the wide use of particles in Waiwai speech brings up a large problem concerning their use in translating the Bible. It is possible to translate the Bible using very few particles, only those needed to complete the meaning of the text. The result would be comprehensible, but it would not be true Waiwai speech. It would be dull and uninteresting and make the Bible a foreign book. It would be like reading the English Bible in a flat monotone. Any speaker of English, unless he is chanting, will automatically add a whole set of intonational patterns to any Scripture passage he reads. But Waiwai is much less inflected in its intonation than English; the Waiwais depend principally on particles to give the fuller implications which we indicate largely by intonation. In both languages the fuller implications are optionally expressed, but in English the option lies with the reader since intonation is not written. In Waiwai the option lies with the translator only, and what he writes is fixed permanently. The readers in years to come cannot add to or subtract from the implications without changing the written Waiwai text. This imposes the necessity for very careful study of each expression to be sure the implications written in are both correct and complete.

For the sake of correctness it is necessary for the translator to learn the meaning of every particle. This has been a difficult matter for us as the meaning of some of these particles is rather broad and abstract. But even for those particles of whose meaning we are not completely sure we have found the informants usually quick to correct a wrong particle if they understand the implications of the expression correctly.

Completeness of implication is the greater problem. If the informant does not fully understand all the background of each expression, he will not include the full number of particles needed to give the

full implications of the expression. Thus the informants need to know Bible backgrounds very thoroughly, and teaching such backgrounds to them becomes very important. But it can be seen that this makes Bible translation a very slow and laborious process; it may take a half-hour or more to teach all the implications of one expression which may be only a part of one verse. But such laborious teaching bears wonderful fruit in the understanding and often in the lives too of the informants.

If an informant is dull or sleepy he will again not include the full number of particles. To help to wake up a sleepy informant one may suggest the use of several particles to him, and if he concurs he may be asked why he concurs. But it is more important simply to cause the informant to feel the text keenly enough to retell it vividly to the translator. To work up and keep this keenness of interest in the informant takes a good deal of brightness and action by the translator.

BIBLE TRANSLATING IN AUSTRALIA

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The Aboriginal population in Australia is approximately 75,000. Of the possible 500 languages or distinct dialects spoken at the coming of Europeans to Australia¹, there are said to be about 300 still spoken today.² Some of these languages are spoken by groups composed of as few as seven speakers.

Early in the history of "white" settlement in Australia, Bible translating into aboriginal languages was attempted. Nevertheless, after nearly 150 years the complete New Testament has been translated into only two languages, one of these now nearly extinct, and Scripture portions have been translated into approximately one dozen languages.

Historical outline

Last century translations: One of the first translations was the Gospel of Luke in *Awabakal*, a language spoken in the State of New South Wales. This work was done by a London Missionary Society worker, L. E. Threlkeld, and was published in 1827.

About 1850, Archdeacon Günther translated the Gospel of Luke into *Wiradjuri*, another language of N.S.W.

In the eighteen hundreds two other Australian Aboriginal languages received translations. Rev. Geo. Taplin, pioneer of the Point McLeay Mission, in 1864, translated selections from Scripture for the

¹ A. P. Elkin, *"The Australian Aborigines"* (1956 Reprint) pp. 11, 24-25. (Angus and Robertson).

² G. O'Grady, Thesis, *"Significance of the Circumcision Boundary in Western Australia"*, University of Sydney, 1960.