

9. The course instructor, too, needs to undertake an intensive investigation of the literary features of the RL *before* he can effectively teach about style and its application to the translation of Scripture. The degree and nature of personal preparation necessary will vary according to whether he is a competent speaker of the language; a competent speaker of (or expert in) a related language; or neither.
10. One way in which an understanding of stylistic concerns can be sharpened and encouraged after an initial training programme is through the concurrent translation approach.

Style may have to do with the optional features of language, but it is an obligatory attribute of any discourse. A text will manifest either a good style, a poor style, neither (i.e. a mediocre style) or both (i.e. a mixed style). Dynamic equivalence translation strives for the best—for the language which “grabs the heart”. Is any less a standard worthy of God’s Word?

RACHEL M. ANGOGO

DIALECT PROBLEMS AND BIBLE TRANSLATION— A CASE STUDY OF A UNION VERSION

Dr. Rachel Angogo is a UBS Translation Consultant trainee, at present studying at Harvard University.

INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world, especially in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Papua New Guinea, governments, educators and missionaries daily encounter problems caused by the multiplicity of dialects/languages spoken within very small geographical areas. Many of these dialects/languages appear, at least superficially, to be mutually intelligible, and because of restrictions of time and money these pioneers have often found themselves having to choose a specific dialect or dialects for immediate literary use.

Economic and political considerations have always played a big role in such decision making. The ideal situation, one in which *all* the dialects can be developed for literary purposes, is always the one that has to be rejected first. Furthermore, developing a few of the dialects for literary purposes is sometimes feared to be detrimental to group unity. In Africa, many such situations have shown that a compromise is usually attempted.

In order to gain maximum acceptance, and to maintain neutrality between politically minded citizens, a synthetic language which accommodates the lexicon and grammar from all (or most) of the dialects may be opted for. In many cases, the creation and application of these synthetic languages ends up as the brainchild of foreign linguists or missionaries; such languages are rejected, or simply neglected, by the people for whom they were intended. If the Bible has been translated into one of these synthetic ‘Union Versions’ it may be objected to on the grounds of its not being natural to anyone. The result is that a great waste of time and money has been incurred, and the results remain unsatisfactory both to the translators and to the target population.

UNION LANGUAGES

Based on findings from studies undertaken by the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the United Bible Societies in Kenya, this paper seeks to discourage the formation of union languages. Firstly, there is evidence that the most profitable approach to providing literary works for people whose languages are closely related, or who have many dialects, is to divide them on the basis of linguistic and sociological surveys. Secondly, attitudes of those people to shared literature must be examined. Attitudes within smaller groups appear to be easier to deal with, especially when there already exist closely similar linguistic and attitudinal perceptions among them.

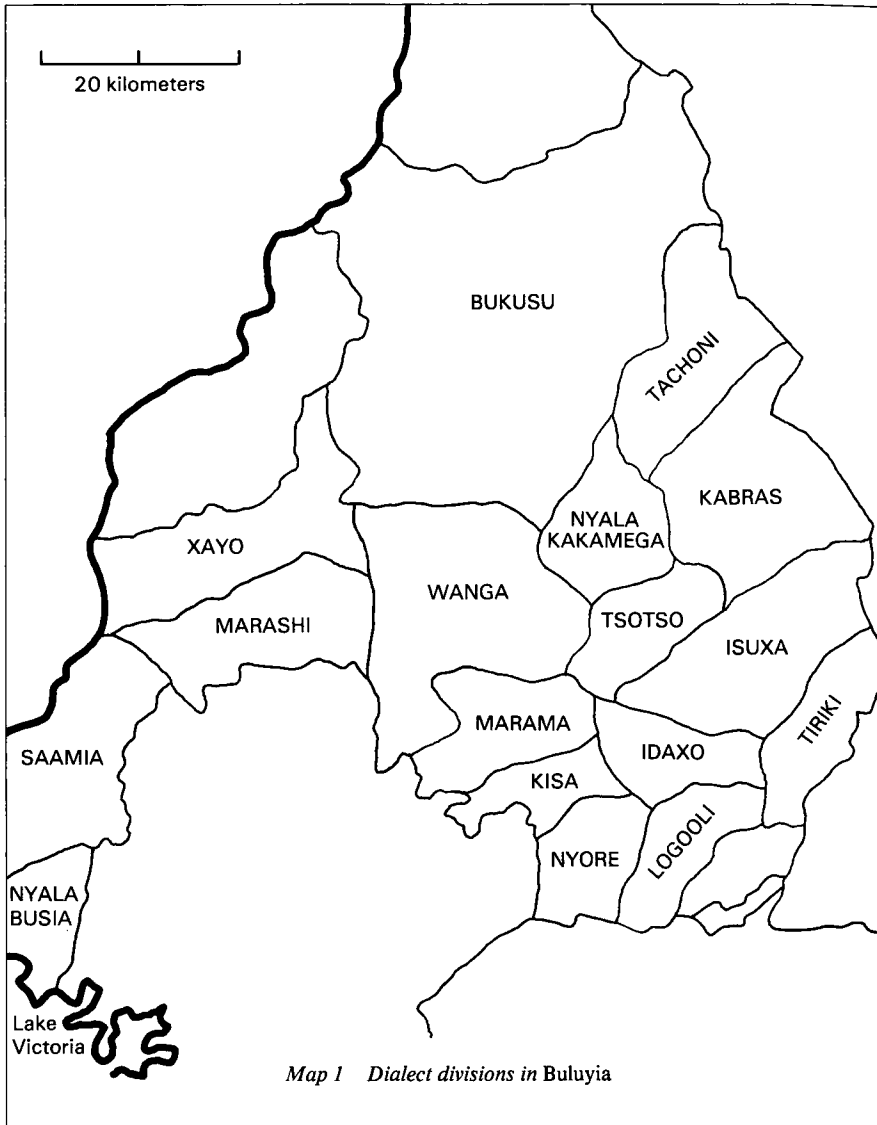
The linguistic survey is valuable because it can determine whether the speakers can adapt to each others' languages easily or not. The attitudinal survey will tell whether people are willing to adapt their own. Thus, having established results at both levels, translations should be made in one dialect and the people who are expected to adapt must know exactly why they are expected to adapt to another language or dialect. In order to illustrate the kind of problems that are caused by dialectally-fragmented languages, a case study of the Oluluyia Union Bible is presented here.

THE LUYIA

The Luyia, or Abaluyia, are a northern Bantu people who inhabit 3,054 square miles to the north-east of Lake Victoria in Kenya and Uganda. According to the 1979 Census, people classified by the Government as Abaluyia constitute the third largest tribe in Kenya. They speak a cluster of related dialects, and live in the western provinces of that country. Speakers of dialects in the same cluster inhabit the eastern portion of Uganda also. The political boundary between Kenya and Uganda cuts through the north-western Luyia dialects in particular, although because of the political régime in Uganda during the time of Idi Amin and after, a large number of refugees, mostly border residents, have crossed into Kenya. Estimates as to the number of Luyia dialects range from 15 to 26. My own judgement, based upon existing documents and from data elicited in the field, indicates that there are seventeen such sub-Luyia dialects (see map 1), the others being either divisions within one of these, or a fragmenting linguistic group whose classification remains to be determined.

Within the Luyia-speaking community there is, at the popular level, an awareness of existing dialect distinctions, although these are not interpreted as being the result of linguistic factors alone. There also appears to be an established set of attitudes which allow members of the dialect groups to perceive themselves as belonging to a single linguistic community (i.e. Luyia), but at the same time as being distinct within it in terms of dialect and, to a much lesser extent, culture. These attitudes are often quite subjective, and may be modified as circumstances affecting the Luyia as a whole alter, or if contrasts are to be made between Luyia and other (non-Luyia) Kenyans. Thus the sense of ethnic unity fluctuates according to circumstances, and according to the nature of in-group/out-group perception.

Attitudes appeared to exist at two levels, both of which were examined. On the one hand, there is the *inner thought* which accepts Luyia linguistic and cultural cohesiveness, and which is based upon actual experience and daily



Map 1 Dialect divisions in Buluyia

intergroup comparisons. On the other hand, there is the *outer thought*, which incorporates subjective ideas about intergroup differences, many of which do not always seem to be factually substantiable, but which are nevertheless believed because of external factors, and group consensus of opinion.

THE TERM “LUYIA”

The Luyia have not always been called by that name. An earlier label applied to the people of Western Province was *Wakavirondo*, though like *Luyia* it is of uncertain origin and not, apparently, an indigenous term. Wagner

(1949:19) records that the inhabitants of the Kenya Coast consider all the natives of Nyanza Province to be Wakavirondo, implying that the term was created and spread by the Arab traders who had contact with some areas of the province before the coming of the Europeans. In order to distinguish the Nilotic and Bantu peoples who both live in Nyanza, the Luyia were referred to as the 'Bantu of North Kavirondo'. The problem is that the term is not simply a tribal or ethnic label, like, for example, Luo or Kamba in the same country,¹ and a Mluyia, on being asked what tribe he belongs to, may not necessarily answer "Luyia" at all. In addition, he may claim not to understand the speech of other groups which are also classified as Abaluyia. This may in fact be true for him; inter-intelligibility among the Luyia dialects varies considerably—so much so that uncertainty still exists as to whether some dialects should be classed as Luyia or not. The Ragoli Bible was well received by Maragoli speakers; its language was also widely accepted by some Bukusu speakers because of a shared Quaker connection, although Maragoli and Bukusu are probably the furthest removed from each other linguistically of all Luyia dialects. In contrast, the 1976 Union Luyia version has had a very mixed reception in all dialect areas.

UNION LUYIA: AN ATTEMPT AT STANDARDIZATION

Before the establishment of the colonial government and the various missions throughout the area, Luyia tribes existed independently, and the question of their unification did not arise. However, both the administration, and the churches which worked in Western Kenya, found that the continual use of separate dialects, within what they perceived to be a single language zone, tended to confuse things. For many reasons, as will be shown, some dialects, even closely related ones, were unacceptable to some groups, while others, even distantly related ones, were accepted.

The suggestion that one dialect might be standardized for use throughout the whole of Buluyia was made as early as 1914. The Quakers, with Emory Rees as their spokesman, vigorously (and rather emotionally) advocated the universal use of Logooli (see map), since, as one advocate put it, it was "more beautiful, and their population greater than that of any other single tribe" (File No. IR, Maseno mission archives). The Church Missionary Society rejected this, arguing instead for Wanga. The chief opponent, the Reverend W. Chadwick, said,

as to the beauty of the dialect, I cannot speak; but as to the importance, I feel very strongly . . . that it is much less *generally representative* than either Kakamega (*sic*, i.e. Isuxa) or Mumia's (Wanga). Maragoli may be the largest single tribe, but I believe that Mumia's and Bunyori (Nyore) together are larger, and they are most similar to each other, and I think I'm right in saying that both Kitosh (Bukusu) and Kakamega would learn Mumia's more easily than Maragoli. Thinking merely of the dialects, my opinion is that Kitosh and Maragoli are, as it were, the furthest apart, and therefore either of the central dialects would be better.

Nothing came out of this debate at that time, and Leech's artificial *Luhanga* was still to come.

¹ As well as *Luyia*, there are in Kenya two other recently-formed tribal cover-names: *Kalenjin*, which has thirteen dialects (van Otterloo 1979), and *Miji-Kenda*, which refers to a cluster of nine dialects on the coast. In a study by Sim (1978) an attempt has been made to establish a similar cover-term for the Kikuyu and Embu dialects, which would be known collectively as the Mount Kenya group, though for linguistic rather than social or political purposes.

In 1924, the Archdeacon of the Anglican Church, W. E. Owen, suggested that Kiswahili might solve these problems:

The difficulties caused by the presence in schools and council meetings of people speaking different dialects of Luyia (might be overcome easily and quickly) by the use of another Bantu language with a rich vocabulary and in which there was already a literature, including the Bible, prayer book and some educational works. This great language, Kiswahili, has been stated to be one of the seven most important languages in the world. (From the unclassified files at the Butere Mission.)

This suggestion was rejected for a number of reasons: for one, the Christian missionaries in East Africa had begun to regard Kiswahili as a language of the Islamic faith, because of its coastal history. Even more significant, probably, was the discovery that it was after all not as intelligible to the Abaluyia as had been originally believed. The Quakers reported that their female members in particular had trouble understanding it. Since some of these people were never going to have any formal education (where they might be taught the language), the use of Kiswahili would hinder, rather than advance, their evangelical work. The Catholics had had one failure already when they tried to use Luganda as their common medium (see Angogo 1980:37) Once bitten, they were reluctant to agree to the use of another non-local language.

Missionaries who had learnt local languages for their work also mounted a protest against the introduction of Kiswahili because they saw its use as a retrograde step. Because of all of this opposition, nothing was done until the 1930s, when a spirit of national consciousness arose in Kenya, whose different peoples began to assert their individual identities. The Luyia speaking groups shared this general feeling (discussed in detail in Angogo 1980:6-7).

At the same time, outside bodies were beginning to show interest in the unification of the Luyia dialects. The American Bible Society, which had already published two Luyia New Testaments (in Logooli and in Nyore) wanted an appraisal of the linguistic situation of these people, especially since they knew that the Luhanga version was in the process of completion. The colonial administration was also beginning to stress the similarities rather than the differences among the Luyia groups, and wanted an easy and economical way to communicate with them as a whole—especially during the war years, when so much information was being disseminated by radio.

The Reverend L. F. Beecher, an Anglican, was assigned the task of working with the central information office to get a radio network started. This was to reach all parts of Kenya, and to make use of the different regional languages. Part of his preliminary work was to make a language survey of the country. His Luyia data came under the heading of 'North Nyanza dialects'. His findings were never published, but it appears that he shared them with the American Bible Society, and helped various missions with their attempts at unification.

In 1941, Archdeacon W. E. Owen, whom we must assume knew of Beecher's work, brought up the question of Luyia standardization before the local Native Council and the District Education Board. He was authorized to convene a meeting between the missions concerned and representatives of the Government. The outcome was the decision to establish the Luyia Orthography Committee, of which Owen was asked to be chairman. Miss Lee Appleby (later Deaconess Appleby) was appointed secretary, and the com-

mittee was given the task of developing a single, unified Luyia.

The committee found its work to be involved and fraught with problems. Initially, the Anglican and the Catholic missions were the only bodies offering moral or financial support, other than the local administrative office. Itebete (1974:97) reports that:

The Church of God seems to have withheld its support for a union testament for some time on doctrinal grounds. In opposition to the arguments for unification and standardization were those which stressed that the Word of God should be understood by local people, and assumed that any unified form would be unintelligible to a large number. There was also, prior to 1942, a certain amount of opposition to any form of experimental translations of the Scriptures.

It did not take long, however, for the Church of God to capitulate and begin supporting the endeavour, even though the dialect they had chosen for their own work, Nyore, was not any of those which were to provide the backbone of the new Union Luyia.

The Quakers withheld their support right to the end. They had their own printing press, and were too involved in their own work to welcome any new projects. It may also have been a factor that they felt that their own dialect, Logooli, was too distinctive, especially phonologically, and would not have been considered in the creation of the new Luyia.

The greatest challenge was to find a compromise which would be acceptable in each of the 17 dialect areas. At no linguistic level are all these dialects similar. The lexicon differs considerably from place to place, and semantic shift has caused even cognate forms to come to apply to quite different concepts (Angogo 1980: 126-139).

With the help of Leonard Beecher, Lee Appleby and her committee decided to adopt the following principles for the formation of a Union Luyia. (Appleby, 1955: 184):

1. The orthography was to be based upon the actual pronunciation of the majority of the Abaluyia;
2. The grammar was to be that of the central dialects (Marama Kisa, Tsotso Wanga) without any attempt to compromise by taking elements from other areas;
3. (And as for) vocabulary, all words in use in all dialects of Luyia were to be accepted.

The first tentative orthography was ready for use by 1944. Then came the task of disseminating it. It appears to have received quite extensive publicity. Appleby (*loc. cit.*) describes how:

articles were printed in the vernacular paper; leaflets were distributed through local Native Councils and schools; a booklet explaining the rules of orthography was prepared, largely for use of teachers, and school text books were published, and small, cheap books on popular subjects.

In 1947, Appleby published *The First Luyia Grammar*, as the culmination of her research in the area. This 118-page treatment dealt with several features, including pronunciation, orthography and grammar, albeit sketchily. Its style was prescriptive and pedagogical, implying that the target audience consisted either of foreigners attempting to learn the language, or that the language in the book was quite foreign to the Luyia themselves. This last evaluation is supported by the fact that during the creation of the Union dialect, the African

committee members who were invited to share their opinions of the progress of the work were often less than enthusiastic to do so, and shied away from participation in more formal meetings (Appleby, 1956 bc). Itebete gives the African's sentiments (1974:97) more clearly than Appleby, in reproducing a conversation held at the time:

... what are white people trying to do?. And although he tried to explain to them what was hoped, one had remarked "Bwana, whose language is it?" and another, more thoughtful, said "Bwana, *go very very slowly* about that kind of thing".

This early resistance to a unionized Luyia seems gradually to have been forgotten, and focus was shifted to the news of a Luyia Bible which Deaconess Appleby and her assistant, Mr. Jared Isalu, had begun translating in 1943. For the translators, this involved a lot of travelling in each dialect area to test the new language, and to gather more lexicon to expand its resources. In all, the Luyia Bible was 32 years in preparation. On January 18th, 1976, the publication finally reached the Abaluyia. At a big gathering at Kima Mission Station (Church of God), Luyia people from all of the dialect areas gave thanks for the new Bible, though sadly without the Deaconess being present (she had finally gone home to Australia after over 40 years with the Luyia).

A year later, reports from Bible House in Nairobi stated that sales of this version of the Bible had dropped to a worrying level. This was determined from a survey which had been undertaken to ascertain the public response to it. Apparently, while most people knew about the new Bible, most preferred not to own one. From those who did have copies, there were complaints about its "difficult" words (i.e. words from dialects other than their own, especially problematical when the word looked the same, but had an unfamiliar meaning). The fewest complaints came predictably from Marama, Wanga and Kisa. The speakers of Tsotso recognized these differences, but seemed to cope with them quite happily. Just a few miles to the south, however, the Isuxa and Idaxo were struggling with them and in general preferred not to have to. The Logooli, already possessing a Bible in their own dialect, showed little or no interest. The north-western dialects, Xayo, Saamia, Marachi and Nyala of Busia, could cope with it more easily, especially in the Catholic and Anglican dominated areas, but the Bukusu seemed to have the most difficulty of all. This was partly due to the attitude of the Quakers (which must also have been a factor in the indifference of the Logooli speakers), but also to linguistic and lexical difficulties: over half of the indexed 'dictionary' at the back of the Bible, which is meant to give translations of the more unfamiliar words, is in fact made up of Bukusu words. The rest of the dialects could adjust to the Union version more or less equally, though perhaps a little less so for the Nyore.

In short, it is the language of the unionized Luyia Bible which estranges its readers. The orthography is reasonably representative of most (though not all) of the dialects, and has been adopted by some people with varying degrees of fidelity for their own private correspondence and similar purposes. Other literary materials have been produced in individual dialects using the orthographic conventions set out in the Committee's handbook. This compromise, such as it is (i.e. using the Committee's orthography but not its language) was the most positive achievement of the whole venture.

REFERENCES

- Angogo, Rachel M. 1980. *Linguistic and attitudinal factors in the maintenance of Luyia group identity*. University of Texas, Ph.D dissertation. (Available from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106—Publication N. 80-21, 392).
- Appleby, Lee 1955-56. "Luyia Old Testament translation", parts 1-4. *The Bible Translator*, 6 (4), 180-186, 7 (1), 25-30, 7 (2), 85-90, 7 (3), 101-103.
- Appleby, Lee 1947; reprinted 1961. *A first Luyia grammar*. Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau. *Ibibulia The Bible in Oluluyia* 1975 London: British and Foreign Bible Society.
- Itebete, P. A. N. 1974. "Language standardization in Western Kenya: the Luyia experiment", in W. H. Whiteley (ed.), *Language in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 87-114.
- van Otterloo, Roger 1978. *A Kalenjin dialect study*. Nairobi: SIL (Mimeo)
- Sim, Ronald 1979. *A sociolinguistic profile of the Mount Kenya Bantu languages*. Nairobi: SIL (Mimeo).
- Wagner, Gunther 1949 and 1956. *The Bantu of Western Kenya*. London: OUP for the International African Institute, 2 vols.

EUGENE A. NIDA

FEWER WORDS AND SIMPLER GRAMMARS MEAN MORE HEADACHES

Dr. Eugene Nida was formerly Translations Secretary of the American Bible Society and the UBS Translations Research Coordinator.

Students of theology sometimes actually breathe a sigh of relief when they shift from a study of Greek to a study of Hebrew; they are often pleased because, even though its words and orthography are so different, everything in the Hebrew grammar seems so much simpler. The paradigms of the verbs are shorter, there are very few prepositions, and even fewer conjunctions. Furthermore, the Hebrew sentences are generally shorter and less involved. After the complexities of Greek, Hebrew seems like an ideal language. Such simplicity, however, can be deceptive.

In the first place, the words of any language always encompass the entire semantic space of a people's experience. Naturally, we no longer have all of the vocabulary used by the Hebrew people in ancient times, since the Old Testament contains only a small part of what would have been the entire language. But we do know that there were only a relatively few prepositions in Hebrew, and these had to do duty for all the relationships that are expressed by a great many prepositions in Greek. The problem is that the various Hebrew prepositions represent so many possible meanings that it is often difficult to determine the precise meaning intended in a given context. The preposition *be*, for example, may be translated into English by *in*, *among*, *within*, *into*, *during*, *while*, *at*, *by*, *with* (in expressions of instrument), *against*, *down to*, *with* (accompaniment), *by means of*, *through* (as instrument), *at the cost of*, *on account of*, *in spite of*, *when*, and *though*. Yet certain other prepositions in Hebrew may also be translated by some of these same English prepositions and conjunctions. It ought to be clear, therefore, that having only a few words to cover a particular domain of human experience does not mean that the task of understanding is thereby simplified.