

redundancy of the text; readers should be able to provide correct answers or answers which mean the same for about 80 per cent of the blanks in a well-prepared text. Although experts differ in their opinion of the usefulness of the Cloze "test", even for testing English texts, it does have the practical use of helping me see how a text varies in difficulty from group to group. Aside from the fact that it is desirable to have some blanks which most of the children will fill correctly, most blanks should serve to show the difference between the children for whom the text has achieved the desired degree of redundancy and those for whom it has not. I consider the feedback from this test to be good, especially when it goes along with information from teachers about comprehension, application to certain age groups and other things.

Conclusion

In the end what I want to say is this: before finalising any text, it is so important to actually test it out with many groups of children. Only testing will insure that the text is suitable for the intended audience. My concern is that we make the best possible texts available to children, because in general, children are the most demanding, curious, observant, quick, honest and sensitive readers on earth.

NOTES

Of birds and beasts: Zephaniah 2.14

In Zephaniah 2.4-15, the prophet delivers oracles against various nations, namely the Philistines (2.4-7), the Moabites and Ammonites (2.8-11), the Ethiopians or Sudanese (2.12), and the Assyrians (2.13-15). These nations represent the enemies of Judah in the west, east, south and north respectively, and also enemies near and far, small and great. The climax of the list is the Assyrians, who were the major power oppressing the people of Judah in Zephaniah's own day, the late seventh century B.C.

The prophet asserts that the might of the Assyrian empire will be ended, and its capital city Nineveh destroyed (2.13). He goes on in 2.14 to give a description of the deserted city, and the wild creatures that live among its ruins. This verse contains several problems of text, vocabulary and translation on which the following notes may offer some help.

RSV begins the verse "Herds shall lie down in the midst of her". In English, the word "herds" refers primarily to groups of large cattle like cows and oxen, whereas the Hebrew word which it translates (*adārim*) includes also smaller animals such as sheep and goats. The normal English term for groups of such animals is "flocks". In ancient times, these small animals were more common and more numerous than large cattle, so some modern English versions such as JB and NEB translate as "flocks" rather than "herds". In order to show that both large and small cattle are included, GNB and NIV mention both "flocks" and "herds". Translators need to be sensitive to the exact range of meaning of words, even in cases like this where nothing of theological importance is involved.

The next line of the verse reads in RSV "all the beasts of the field", with a footnote stating the RSV is following the Targum, an ancient translation in Aramaic. The traditional Hebrew text says "all the beasts of the nation" (see KJV, RV), with *gōy* as the Hebrew word for "nation". The Targum rendering suggests that its translators may have understood the word to be *gay'*, "valley", rather than *gōy*. This possibility is followed by some modern translators, so that JB translates as "valley" and NAB as "hollows". If the traditional Hebrew text is accepted, the word *gōy* may be understood in the sense of "species" as in Proverbs 30.25. The whole phrase then means "every species of beast" (NJV), or as GNB puts it more simply, "animals of every kind". (See also Moffatt, NIV). This interpretation makes good sense in the context and there seems to be no strong reason for departing from it.

The next part of the verse is rendered in RSV "the vulture and the hedgehog shall lodge in her capitals". In this setting, "capitals" are the top parts of the stone columns which supported the roofs of the fine buildings of Nineveh. The prophet is here assuming that the buildings are destroyed, and the columns thrown to the ground so that various creatures could lodge among them, or take shelter during the night. Since the buildings are destroyed, GNB translates with the more general term "ruins".

The main problem here is that the names of the creatures mentioned are very uncertain in meaning, as the RSV footnote indicates. The first term used in the Hebrew is *qā'at*, which is translated "vulture" (RSV), "cormorant" (KJV), "pelican" (RV, JB), "screech owl" (NAB), "horned owl" (NEB), "desert owl" (NIV), and "jackdaw" (NJV). All that can be said for certain is that the *qā'at* is found in a list of unclean birds in Lev 11.18 and Dt 14.17. It is also mentioned as inhabiting deserted places in Ps 102.6 and Is 34.11. This seems to make it unlikely that a water bird like the cormorant or pelican is intended, or a scavenger like the vulture. On the whole, some kind of owl seems to fit the context best, and if a language has a general term for owls, it would be good to use that rather than give a more exact term that denotes a particular type of owl.

The second uncertain word in Hebrew is *qippōd*, which is translated "hedgehog" (RSV), "bittern" (KJV), "porcupine" (RV), "heron" (JB), "desert owl" (NAB), "ruffed bustard" (NEB), "screech owl" (NIV), and "owl" (NJV). This word also occurs in Is 14.23, but its context there does not give much help in identifying the creature intended. The ancient translations support the interpretation of *qippōd* as "hedgehog" or "porcupine", but this meaning does not seem to fit the context very well. As with *qā'at*, it seems unlikely that a water bird is intended, and again some kind of owl seems to be the most probable creature. GNB accepts this interpretation, and translates both *qā'at* and *qippōd* by the single general term "owls". In English, this fits the context very well, as English speakers traditionally associate owls with ruined or deserted buildings. In other languages, some other bird may have a similar association, and if so, it may be best to use the name of that bird. Translators must always remember that in a passage like this, the prophet is writing poetically to create an impression of ruin and desolation. He is not writing a scientific account of the wild life of a ruined city, and if we translate in such a way that the passage sounds like a zoological textbook, then we are mistranslating. Something of this effect can be seen in the NEB rendering of *qippōd* as "ruffed bustard". This

may perhaps be a correct identification of the creature intended, but most English speakers have never heard of such a bird. Its name has no association with ruins, and the translation is therefore completely lacking in emotional impact.

In the third part of the verse, RSV says "the owl shall hoot in the window, the raven croak on the threshold". The problems here concern the Hebrew words underlying the renderings "owl" and "raven". In the first case, the traditional Hebrew text has the word *qōl*, which means "voice" (KJV, RV). Some scholars have suggested that instead we should read the word *kōs*, which means "owl". RSV has adopted this suggestion, as have Moffatt, JB, NEB and NJV. This fits the context satisfactorily; but the change is not really necessary since the word "voice" can readily be understood as applying to the call of the birds mentioned in the previous part of the verse. The traditional text is translated in NAB "their call shall resound from the window", and in NIV "their calls will echo through the windows". GNB also follows the traditional text, but runs this clause in with the previous one, and says "Owls will live among its ruins and hoot from its windows." The term "hoot" in English is used especially of the cry an owl makes. In other languages there may also be terms which describe the calls of certain birds, and if such terms are available for the species named in the previous clause, then they should be used.

The second bird in the sentence is called "the raven" in RSV. The Hebrew text actually has the word *chōreb* which means "desolation" (KJV, RV). The ancient Greek and Latin translations evidently read a different Hebrew word *ōreb*, which means "raven" or "crow", and this possibility is followed by most modern English translations (RSV, Moffatt, JB, NAB, GNB, NJV), and is to be recommended. GNB translates "Crows will caw on the doorsteps." The words "croak" (RSV) and "caw" (GNB) are used in English specially of the cries of birds like crows and ravens, and if similar specific terms are available in other languages, it is good to use them. In areas where houses do not have doorsteps, a more general term like "doorway" would be suitable, as found in NAB and NIV.

The last sentence of the verse reads in RSV "for her cedar work will be laid bare". This sentence is somewhat separate from the earlier parts of the verse, and speaks about the ruin of the splendid buildings of Nineveh. Some scholars believe that the Hebrew words underlying this sentence have arisen by confusion with the opening words of verse 15, which contain similar letters, and that they should be deleted. Moffatt, JB, NAB and NEB all omit this sentence from their translations. Other scholars retain the Hebrew words, but divide them up a little differently from the traditional text, to read *'erez ho'rāh* instead of *'arzāh 'ērāh*. This means "the cedar work has disappeared", and seems to be the reading followed by the translators of GNB, which says "The cedar wood of her buildings will be stripped away". We may note that GNB has made clear two small points here. First, it has stated that "cedar" is "wood", and second, it has stated that this wood was used in the city's "buildings". Many translators will wish to follow this example, especially in areas where cedar and its uses are not well known. In fact, the wood of the cedar tree was highly valued for use in luxurious buildings. It was used for instance in the building of Solomon's temple (1 Kg 6.9, 10) and palace (1 Kg

7.3, 7). When the buildings of Nineveh were destroyed, it was natural that people would take away the expensive cedar timbers to use again elsewhere. This interpretation therefore seems to fit the context well, and many translators may wish to follow it.

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“We” and “I” in 2 Corinthians: a question

In preparing a Bible study on a few verses from this letter, I had to ask myself: When Paul says “we”, who does he mean? Himself alone? Himself and other evangelists? The evangelists and the readers together? Or Christians generally?

Of course, Paul may mean different things in different places, and he may glide from one meaning to another.

The situation may be complicated by the possibility that 2 Corinthians may not have been written as a single letter, but may be made up of parts of several letters from Paul to the Christians at Corinth. However, this possibility does not seem to result in sudden changes between one meaning of “we” and another.

As I read the whole of 2 Corinthians through, first in GNB and then in Greek, two things seemed to become generally clear:

1. That where Paul says “we”, he usually associates other people with himself. Where he means “I”, he says so plainly (see 1.23, 7.3, and especially chapters 10-12).

2. That this letter, perhaps more than any other, is Paul’s defence of himself and other evangelists against attacks by rivals, or by members of the church at Corinth. So “we” normally means “I, Paul, and my fellow evangelists”, except where he clearly indicates a different meaning: as in 1.21 “us (evangelists), together with you, sure of our life (the life of us all) in union with Christ”; 3.18 “all of us”; and probably 5.1 “we (all) know”.

These two ideas need to be tested. In doing this, I should be grateful for the help of readers of *The Bible Translator*, especially those who work in languages which express the two kinds of “we” (sometimes called “exclusive” and “inclusive”) in different ways. It would be useful to have your answers to two questions:

1. In translations you use, or draft translations you are making, is Paul’s “we” ever translated by “I”? (You can tell by comparing your translations with GNB or RSV, which follow the Greek in this respect).

2. In your translations of 2 Corinthians, where are you using “we” forms which include the readers?

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(Readers who may wish to respond to these final two questions should write by airmail to Dr Ellingworth at:

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—Editor)