

like a zebra moth  
like a buprestid beetle

If names of stones are transliterated it usually is helpful to include a description like the one given in this article or like that found in the glossary of GNB.

A final word of caution. While colour coding does make the text a lot more understandable, it can also bring with it certain problems. First, it lengthens the expression; and second, either the increased length or the nature of the expression may change the focus in the passage, and as a result give unwanted emphasis to what is not really the main point of the passage.

## NOTES

### **Pronouns and full nouns: a case of misrepresentation**

A few years back my colleague and I were busy translating the gospel of Mark into Godie, a Kru language spoken in Ivory Coast, West Africa. We were very concerned about making a good translation, faithful to the original in meaning, true to the patterns of natural speech in the language. We were careful not to use tense markers too frequently, since they occur only sparingly in narratives. We slowed down the rate of introducing new information. And we tried very hard to eliminate any confusion or misrepresentation in the translation. But, as I discovered later, this very concern led us to one of the biggest mistakes of all.

The problem came as we had Jesus interacting with the various other characters in this gospel. *Zozii*, "Jesus", was a human being, and so, like all the other participants, he had to be represented by the human pronoun *ɔ*. As in many West African languages, there was no distinction between "he" and "she". *ɔ* had to be used for male and female, human, and, in the case of Jesus, divine characters. Now here was a possible source of great confusion! So rather than risk any confusion, we decided it would be quite proper to introduce the full noun *Zozii* more times than it occurred in the original or in the French *Bonnes Nouvelles* which we used when working with our African translation helper. When we read translated portions to people, there was indeed no confusion—everybody knew who had done what.

Five years later, I was asked to write a paper on Godie pronouns. The paper was concerned with pronoun categories, remnants of noun class systems, and other linguistic problems. But as I was working, I began thinking about the place and use of pronouns in discourse, and so I went back to old stories I had transcribed—narratives, folktales, other texts—just to see what the rules for the use of pronouns were. As I studied this material, a new question came to my mind. What did it mean when a character was not referred to by a pronoun but by his full name or title—for example, *Zozii*? I was very surprised by what I discovered.

My first discovery was that in Godie, the continual use of a full noun can be a superb means of ridiculing someone. In a folktale about Viper and Eagle, I found that in a given paragraph, the noun "Eagle" was repeated over and over. Eagle had "stolen" Viper's wife and was walking round town in new clothes

boasting about his conquest. Repetition of the full noun to refer to him brought humor to the situation. Eagle's boasting would be short-lived. The audience knew how the story would end. Through study and discussion, I found that Godie wasn't the only African language with such a use of full nouns as a feature of style. Nyabwa, a related Kru language, and Mambila, a very distantly related Benue-Congo language, used full nouns in similarly mocking ways.

My next discovery had to do with who was referred to by pronoun in stories and who was not. I found that only main and important characters have the "privilege" of being pronominalized, while lesser characters are generally referred to by their full noun referents. Thus, in the story of Viper and Eagle, Viper's wife is never referred to by a pronoun. She appears in full noun form four times in a row, but she is of little importance in the story. The only characters who are referred to by pronoun are Viper and Eagle, the main actors.

Another use of full nouns is related to who is "on stage" at any given time. A full noun occurs in the opening position in a new paragraph, signalling a break in the story flow. Thus, in the story of Eagle and Viper, after Eagle has walked around and around, boasting all day, Viper suddenly enters the picture and promises vengeance—in full noun form. All the later references to Viper within the paragraph are, however, by pronoun, since he is the main character (and he is not being made fun of). Thus, the presence of a full noun is highly significant for the reader, as it introduces a main character on stage.

The application of these discoveries to Bible translation is obvious. I shudder to think how readers could have misinterpreted our attempt at making things clearer in Mark. Is Jesus being mocked? Is Jesus *not* a main character? Is this *another* paragraph coming up? Why is Jesus introduced *again*?

For those who think this may be just a feature of Kru languages, or of African languages, I would like to refer to an interesting paper I just heard. In a study on the role of pronouns in Italian conversation, Duranti notes that main characters are referred to by pronoun, while minor characters are not. Perhaps more importantly, he notes that personal pronouns are used "for characters with whom the speaker identifies or empathizes". Not to use a pronoun is to set up a certain "emotional distance". (Manuscript, "Referential and Social Meaning of Subject Pronouns in Italian Discourse".)

I think the message of this is clear. It is important to find out what the use of pronouns and the presence of full nouns suggest in terms of a character's role in the story, and in terms of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. We must not let concern about ambiguity hide the real function of the use of pronouns in discourse.

LYNELL MARCHESE

**"The first day of unleavened . . ." Mt 26.17, Mk 14.12, Lk 22.7**

The addition of the word "bread" to Matthew 26.17, Mark 14.12, and Luke 22.7, in English versions printed after 1600 has introduced contradictions and confusion into the narrative of the last days of Jesus on earth.

Many critics and writers of commentaries have drawn attention to the problems in these verses, although none have directly connected the problems