

Re-Translating the Luvale Bible with a New Perspective: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Mukanda wa Kalunga, the Bible in Luvale and referred to as LUE70 in here, is a work whose translation process developed from as early as 1902. From this early work, other sections of the Scriptures continued to be added from that time up to its completion and publication. However, LUE70 contains some lexical items that are confusing because they do not sound Luvale and are inconsistent with the perceived theme of the Bible. The reason for it is that the earlier translators had very little native knowledge of the language. Through the years, some missionaries have gained more knowledge of the Luvale language since the Bible's publication, and at the same time, some Luvale speaking natives have also gained enough knowledge of the English language to work together to re-translating the earlier work. The targeted texts are those that lack intelligibility between meanings of some Source-Language (SL) and Receptor-Language words, phrases, expressions and sentences. Therefore, to mitigate the inconsistencies, there is the use of the Frames methods which translate meaning by evenly distributing the ideational, interpersonal, or interactional and textual meanings to give a more natural receptor-language rendering to the texts with closeness to the original. The following identified inconsistencies in LUE70 are taken from the Old Testament texts: Pentateuch (Genesis), the Poetry section (Psalms), and the New Testament texts: the Gospels (Matthew), Acts, the Epistles (1 Corinthians 15) and Revelation, and analysed by comparison with the SL text meanings according to context.

Keywords: Mukanda wa Kalunga, Intuition, Christians, Church, Epideictic.

1. Introduction

The existing Bible in Luvale was translated for a Bantu people called Luvale. These people are documented as belonging to the Niger-Kordofanian family of the Atlantic-Congo. Their language is called Luvale, and it is also referred to as Chiluvale, Lovale, Lubale, Luena, or Lwena (Global Mapping International, 2010). In Bantu linguistics, the language is classified as K14, (Guthrie, 1948). About the location of the people themselves and their language, Horton (1949: i) states that “Luvale is spoken principally in the north-eastern corner of Angola, the northwest corner of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), and in a contiguous strip of Belgium Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo).”

2. Brief History of the Bible in Luvale

2.1 United Bible Societies

The Bible itself was published as ‘Mukanda waKalunga’ (United Bible Societies, 1970), and is registered as ‘Luvale Bible R052’. From here on it shall be referred to as LUE70, its UBS code name. The ‘Mukanda waKalunga’ comprises the two sections titled *Tesetamende Yamwaka* for the ‘Old Testament’, and *Tesetamende Yayihya* for the ‘New Testament’. However, the word **tesetamende** in the titles does not bear any meaning in the Luvale mind at all, except for the Luvale word **yamwaka** which means ‘that which is old’, and **yayihya** which means ‘that which is new’. It was translated over a period of several years between 1900 and 1970 when it was published *Ohne Ort* (without place) by The Bible Society of Zambia/Sociedade Biblica Angola.

2.2 Dr Walter Fisher

Before the complete LUE70 was published by the UBS, there already were materials from separate books of the New Testament translated and published elsewhere using orthographies and language structures not obtained in current spoken or written Luvale.

The earliest known copy of a part of this Bible is the Gospel of John which was translated by Dr Walter Fisher and titled “*Livangelo lia Yoano*”. It was published in 1902 by the office of Echoes of Service in London (Fisher, 1902), a religious mission service organisation, based in Bath, UK whose goal was to advance the work of mission globally.

2.3 Mr Albert E. Horton

The prominent figure in the translation of the LUE70 was Mr Albert E. Horton who is recorded by United Bible Societies as the contributor to it (United Bible Societies, 1970). Mr. Horton who lived between 1901 and 1996 served God as a missionary in Angola for over fifty years. His work included translating the Bible into the Luvale language and teaching the Word of God to thousands of believers (EPI, 2017).

This LUE70 translation was done at a time when native speakers of the language did not themselves have adequate knowledge of English and absolutely lacked knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew, the source languages from which it was translated. Therefore, it was not possible for the translators, who themselves were not conversant with Luvale, to have the native linguistic intuition to make a difference between the natural clear ways of speech in Luvale and that of their own language, or that of the source languages.

2.4 The UBS-SIL Paratext Programme

Paratext is a computer programme developed by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the United Bible Societies (UBS). It is a programme with other programmes within it which complement one another to enable the translator to access resources to help access invaluable information in the original languages as well as other translations and lexicons in other languages, especially German, Greek and Hebrew with English definitions.

It helps clarify the disparities between some translated texts within the LUE70 and the source language texts (Greek and Hebrew).

3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF TEXTS

In the following discourse, each identified linguistic item's meaning/s is discussed in turn using the dictionary definitions of the metalanguage, English. Secondly, the meaning of the Luvale translation is compared with the English dictionary definitions using native language intuitive knowledge. Thirdly, the two meanings are compared with the source language meaning to realise their expected and intended message.

3.1 TEXTS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: *Pentateuch – Genesis, and Poetic texts - Psalms*

5.1.1 Genesis 6:18 Hebrew ברית *barîṭî*, a divine promise, a pledge.

HEB - וְהִקְמַתִּי אִתְּךָ בְרִית אֶתְּךָ וּבָאתָ אֵלַי הַתֵּבָה אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְנִשְׂיֵי־בְנֶיךָ אִתְּךָ :

This Biblical Hebrew sentence was translated in English and Luvale as follows, and the translated terms within the English and Luvale are the focus of the discussion:

ASV- But I will establish my *covenant with you*; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives *with you*.

LUE70 - Oloze nanguzamisa **luxiko** lwami **nayove**, kaha naukengila muwato, **nayove**, navana vove vamalunga, napwevo lyove, namapwevo javana vove **nayove** hamwe.

Gloss: 'But I will establish my *promise together with you*, and you will enter the boat, and you and your male children, and your female children, and the wives of your children *together with you*'.

The term **lushiko** ‘a promise’ in LUE70, is the noun form of the verbal root **-shika** which means:

- i) ‘promise to do something’, or
- ii) ‘leave a message of what you wish done after your death’, or
- iii) ‘say you are now leaving’ when embarking on a journey.

In the reflexive form with the infinitival prefix **ku-**, **shika** becomes **kulishika** and means ‘promise one-self’ or ‘promise one another’.

The LUE70 translation of ‘אַתָּה־נַיִוֵב’ is **nayove** ‘with you’, and makes the meaning seem to suggest that the object, ‘you’, is a co-participant in the dispensing of the בְּרִית ‘bərîṭî’, which is *a divine promise, a pledge*. However, the contextual sense seems to suggest that ‘with’ may be dative to mean ‘concerning’, ‘dealing with’ or ‘towards’, rather than ‘together with’ which seems to be implied in both places of the text, at the end of the beginning clause, as well as at the end (וְאִשְׁתֶּךָ) of the selected text.

To better understand בְּרִית ‘bərîṭî’ in its context, it should be considered with the whole clause in which it is:

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבָאֲתָךְ

And I will establish *my covenant with you*

The sense of “I will establish” seems to suggest that the SL meaning of ‘with you’ at the end of the beginning clause can only be ‘concerning’, ‘dealing with’ or ‘towards’, and not ‘together with’. This then removes the object from being part of the making of the בְּרִית ‘bərîṭî’, but a benefactor. Therefore, the Luvale translation ought to be **hali ove** ‘on/upon/concerning you’, or **kuli ove** ‘to you’, and not **nayove** ‘with you’.

However, since the Luvale **lushiko** is a promise to do something, as well as a left-message of what one wishes done after their death, and also the process of saying goodbyes, these meanings seem to distort the intended SL discourse. There seems to be more of a pledge than merely a promise in the SL. And it must be noted that the Luvale have a saying that discredits the concept of ‘promise’: **Fwelela nakuhane, nakushiki nakwongo**, that is, ‘Believe/have faith in one who has given you, than in one who has promised you’. The Luvale are quicker to believe and have confidence in one who swears, utters an oath or pledges than in one who merely promises. In effect, the context in **בְּרִית** ‘bərîṭî’ seems to suggest ‘a divine promise, a pledge’, than a mere verbal promise.

This brings us to the concept of ‘swear’, ‘utter an oath’ and ‘pledge’ as the most probable meaning of **בְּרִית** ‘bərîṭî’. In Luvale, the word for ‘swear’, ‘utter an oath’ and ‘pledge’ has its root in **-shinga**, which means ‘adjure’ (Horton, 1990). And it also appears as **kushingana**, ‘to swear’. On the other hand, when that root **-shinga**, ‘adjure’ is used in the infinitive reflexively, it becomes **kulishinga**, ‘to swear to oneself’. This is the form which means ‘swear’, ‘utter an oath’ or ‘pledge’, and the noun is **lushingo**. Clearly then, we see the subject of the clause “... I will establish my covenant ...,” confirming that the locutionary act is by swearing, uttering an oath, or pledging to another person a **lushingo**, not a promise, or a bilateral agreement.

In conclusion, then, for **בְּרִית** bərîṭî to bear its meaning as ‘a divine promise, a pledge’ of the SL, and translated as ‘swear’, ‘utter an oath’ and ‘pledge’ to vindicate the Luvale way of conceptualisation, the word **kulishinga** or **lushingo** is its most natural equivalent. Thus, the more natural Luvale rendering should be:-

Preferred Translation Oloze **nanguhakako lushingo lwami hali ove**, kaha naukengila muwato, **nayove**, navana vove vamalunga, napwevo lyove, namapwevo javana vove **nayove hamwe**.

Gloss: ‘But I will *put in place my sworn pledge concerning you*, and you will enter the boat, and you and your male children, and your female children, and the wives of your children **together with you**’.

3.1.2 Genesis 9:9; 12:7 - Hebrew זרע ‘zera’

The Hebrew word זרע is translated in LUE70 as **tanga** or **vaka-tanga**. The Hebrew dictionary (Brown, Driver and Briggs, 1906) has זרע, (noun masculine), to mean the following:

- i) ‘sowing’, ‘seed’, ‘off-spring’;
- ii) seed = semen, virile;
- iii) seed = offspring: **a.** rarely of animals, (collective). **b.** of mankind, (collective), which means descendants, posterity; seed of the woman; seed of the patriarchs (esp. Abraham); also means ‘a son’, as involving posterity.

Inter-Textual Comparison

Since the renderings from Hebrew suggest the contexts of ‘seed’, ‘off-spring’, ‘descendants’ and ‘posterity’ in the following texts, then the use of **tanga** and **vaka-tanga** in LUE70 misses the point. The terms **tanga** and **vaka-tanga** are not exclusively blood relatives, but includes people of other linguistic groups who belong to the same clan-type or totem identity. The correct rendering then is **vana** ‘sons’, which means posterity, as should be in the RE-TRANSLATION, appearing as preferred translation below, not **tanga** or **vatanga** as shown in the following two contexts i) and ii) with the inter-textual Greek comparison:

i) **Genesis 9:9 HEB** וְאֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי מִקִּים הִנְנִי וְאֲנִי

This Hebrew וְאֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם was translated into English and Luvale as *and with your seed* and **navaka-tanga yenu**, respectively, in the following:

ASV- And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with *your seed* after you;

LUE70 - KahAmi, talenu, Ami nanguzamisa luxiko lwami nayenu **navaka-tanga yenu** nawa vakumikava,

Gloss: ‘And I, behold. I, I will establish my promise with you and your **relatives** who will follow you’.

Preferred Translation Kaha tala, Ami nanguhakako lushingo lwami hali ove nahali *vana vove vakuvisemunwino* navikakavangizaho

Gloss: ‘And behold, I will put in place my sworn pledge concerning you and concerning **your children** of the generations that follow’.

ii) **Genesis 12:7** הָיָאָה, *thy seed*

HEB - וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזַרְעֲךָ וְאֵת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו: .

ASV - And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto *thy seed* will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him.

LUE70 - Yehova alisolwele kuli Apalama nakumwamba ngwenyi, Lifuci lino nangukalihana **kutanga yove**. Kaha kuze Apalama amutungilileko Yehova lijiko lyakulumbila, Uze alisolwele kuli ikiye.

Gloss: ‘Yehovah made himself appear to Abraham and said to him, This country I will give to **your relative**; And there Abraham built for Jehovah an altar, the One who revealed himself to him’.

Preferred Translation Yehova alisolwele kuli Apalahama nakumulweza ngwenyi, Nangukahana *vana vove* eli lifuchi. Kaha kuze alisolwelele Yehova kuli ikiye, Apalahama amutungilileko lijiko lyakulumbila.

Gloss: ‘Yehovah made himself appear to Abraham and said to him, “I will give this country to *your children*”. And there where Jehovah showed himself to him, Abraham built for him an altar’. Conclusively, in both a) and b), the preferred translation to the specific children, **vana** removes the generalisation of relatives, **tanga/vaka-tanga** in LUE70.

Inter-Textual Comparison

Similarly, in inter-textual comparison, the reference to the same phrases ‘his seed’, ‘thy seed’ about Abraham in the New Testament Greek, there is the term **σπέρμα**. The Greek dictionary describes **σπέρμα** as (a figurative extension of meaning of **σπέρμα**, seed, which is posterity, with emphasis upon the ancestors’ role in founding the lineage - posterity, descendants, offspring (Louw, Johannes P., Nida, Eugene A., 1969), thus:

i) Galatians 3:16 σπέρματι ‘seed’

GRK - τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. οὐ λέγει, Καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐφ’ ἑνός, **Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου,** ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστός.

ASV - Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, “And to seeds”, as of many; but as of one, “And to *thy seed*”, which is Christ.

LUE70 - Kaha jino, jixiko vamuvulukililejo Apalahama natanga yenyi. Kexi kwamba ngwenyi, Nakujitanga, nge kuvuluka jajivuluko, oloze nge kuyimwe kaha ngwenyi, Kutanga yove, yeyi vene Kulixitu.

Gloss: Now, then, the promises were in reference to Abraham and his family. Not him saying, And to families. As though referring to many, but referring to one only saying. To your family, which is this one Christ.

Preferred Translation Jino jishiko vajivulukilile hali Apalahama, nakuli mwaneyi. Kambile ngwenyi, “Nakuli **vana**”, chipwenga nge avulukile vavavuluko. Oloze avulukile umwe ngwenyi, “Nakuli **mwanove**”, ikiye Kulishitu.

Gloss: Now the promises were mentioned for Abraham, and to his child. He did not say, “And to children”, as though being mentioned for many. But he mentioned one that, “And to your child”, who it is Christ.

The Greek possessive phrases in Galatians 3:16 which are equivalent to the Hebrew זֶרַע ‘zera’ are σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ‘his seed’, and σπέρματί σου ‘your seed’, which mean ‘posterity’, with emphasis upon the ancestors’ role in founding the lineage, and means ‘posterity’, ‘descendants’, ‘offspring’. The LUE70 reads **Apalahama natanga yenyi**, which really means ‘Abraham and his extended family’, and then goes on to explain that it did not mean many extended families but one extended family, and that the extended family referred to is Christ. That is confusing, because the word which has been used, **tanga**, does not mean the family in the sense of a person, the spouse and children, or anything to do with one’s posterity, but actually refers to a person and his/her siblings, and his/her parents and the parents’ siblings, or the extended family he/she has at the time of one’s existence. The word in Luvale that would mean ‘children’ or ‘posterity’ is the plural of ‘child’, **vana**.

The direct translation of the Greek word ‘seed’, which is **mbuto**, is polysemous. It can mean the seed of plants to be sown into the ground, or a small plant, or semen from a male animal/human, or the child of a human. In this context, the correct rendering for ‘your children’ in Genesis 12:7 is **vana vove**, and for ‘Abraham and his seed’ in Galatians 3:16, it is **Apalahama nambuto yenyi**. This allows the distinction between ‘seeds’ and ‘seed’ to be made in the latter part of the verse, and putting an optional word-initial capital on ‘Seed’, **Mbuto**, gives the referent as it is later clarified, ‘Christ’.

While **mbuto** in reference to Christ here does carry the basic meaning and intended message of ‘off-spring’ (there is also the thought of ‘semen’), but that same meaning is inherent in **vana** also. Generally, in Luvale, both **mbuto** and **vana** are not used in public with the meaning of semen, just as **kususa** ‘to urinate’ is not used publicly to mean ‘to ejaculate semen’.

ii) Psalm 6

8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil;

for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.

9 The Lord has heard my supplication;

the Lord accepts my prayer.

10 All my enemies shall be ashamed and sorely troubled;

they shall turn back, and be put to shame in a moment.

LUE70

8 Enu **vaka-kuzata** mwakuhenga muvosena, ngufumenu,

Mwomwo Yehova nevu lyehi lizu lyakulila cami, xikaho.

9 Yehova nevu lyehi **kulembelela cami**,

Yehova **mwetavila kulomba cami.**

10 Vaka-kole jami vosena navevwa sonyi nakulizuzukila cikuma,

Navakinduluka munyima, navavevwisa sonyi hakukemwina caliso.

Poetry exemplifies a message through oratory by using all possible skills of persuasion. The form it takes gives power to the speaker to not relent until their audience responds according to their message. And that is why the translation must endeavour to capture the form as well as the message.

To understand a poetic discourse, the condition or situation within which it occurs needs to be established to explicate it. The existing social morals within it are taken into account (the ethos, the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its beliefs and aspirations). This is to account for whether the identified activity within the discourse is an offense against nature that corrupts society and the arts. The 'evidence'—the 'artistic proofs' need to be pointed out. Attention is also paid to the 'arrangement' of the parts of that argument as a feature of the 'form', that is, the genre, including what kind of language has been used (that is the style: a distinctive manner of expression) as well as the syntax. Thus, the text interacts with the audience for the purpose of communication so that the message contained in the discourse is accepted.

Since poetry is essentially *epideictic*, that is, ceremonial and is spoken (and if written, it is meant to be read aloud), it speaks messages that are expressions of rejoicing and exalting in salvation, for example, in the following excerpts from Psalm 6, Psalm 23 and Psalm 29, with some inter-textual comparison to highlight poetry as a literary genre:-

Commentary

In Luvale, **vaka-kuzata** means people who do a job or jobs, and therefore does not mean to perform any kind of task. The appropriate word is **kulinga**, ‘to do’. **Kulembelela** means ‘to beseech’, and therefore not appropriate for the context of ‘plead with’. The appropriate word is **kulemba**, and while **-itavila** may carry the meaning of ‘receive’, the better rendering is **kutambula**. Finally, the phrase for ‘turn back’ as **kinduluka munyima** suggests ‘returning and going behind someone’, while the intended meaning is simply ‘returning’, which is **kukinduluka** without **munyima**.

Preferred Translation

8 Ngufumenu enu vosena **vaka-kulinga** vyavipi,

Mwomwo Yehova nevu lizu lyakulila chami.

9 Yehova nevu **kulemba chami**,

Yehova **natambula kulomba chami**.

10 Vaka-kole jami vosena navevwa sonyi nakulizuzukila chikuma,

Navakinduluka hakuvevwisa sonyi mukatando kakandende.

iii) Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, ***I shall not want***;

2 he **makes me lie down** in green pastures.

He leads me beside ***still waters***;

3 he **restores my soul**.

He leads me in paths of righteousness.

LUE70

1 Yehova Ikiye Kafunga kami, **kangwexi kuhona cumako**.

2 Eji **kunguutamisanga** kumalilo amwila wacimbete,

Eji kungutwalanga kumeya **akuunda**.

3 Eji **kuhilwisanga mwono wami**,

Eji kungutwaminyinangako mujijila jakwoloka halijina lyenyi.

Commentary

The phrase **kangwexi kuhona cumako** for ‘I shall not want’ really means ‘I will not fail to do a thing’. The term for ‘to be in need’ is **kukalikiza**. Therefore, the phrase should be ‘**kangweshi kukalikizako**’. While the phrase **kuutamisa** visualises a sheep resting on its haunches, the picture is that of a person lying down, and therefore, **kusavala** is more appropriate. ‘Still waters’ as **meya akuunda** translates into ‘peaceful water’, not the intended meaning, when it is supposed to be ‘waters that are not turbulent’. Therefore, it should be **meya akunokelako**, meaning, ‘waters where there is rest’. **Kuhilwisa mwono** really means ‘to bring back life’, an unnatural expression in Luvale, but **kuhizumwisa** for ‘to revive’.

Preferred Translation

1 Yehova apwa Kafunga kami, **kangwakalikizako**.

2 Eji **kungusavalikanga** kuulilo wamwila wachimbeta,

Eji kungutwalanga kumeya **akunokelako**.

3 Eji **kunguhizumwisanga**.

Eji kungutwaminyinangako mujijila jakwoloka mwomwo walijina lyenyi.

iv) Psalm 29 בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy array.

LUE70

- 1 Enu **vana vavaka-ngolo**, muvulukenu Yehova,
Muvulukenu Yehova ngwenu, Ali naupahu nangolo.
- 2 Muvulukenu Yehova naupahu walijina lyenyi,
Lifukulenu kuli Yehova muluvaji lwakujila.

Commentary

The Hebrew phrase בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים ‘beni elim’, which is literally ‘sons of gods’ is rendered in English as ‘heavenly beings’. LUE70 chooses to use **vana vavaka-ngolo** which means ‘children of the strong ones’. Elsewhere, the term refers to the righteous human beings as the sons of God. In this case, the concept of power which is inherent in אֱלֹהִים is a figure of speech, a metonym for God. Therefore, a more probable translation from the context seems to be ‘heavenly beings’. Therefore, the re-translation favours **tengeso yamwilu**, that is, ‘created beings of heaven’ which are referred to as ‘sons of God’.

Preferred Translation

- 1 Enu **tengeso yamwilu**, vulukilenu Yehova,
Vulukilenu Yehova upahu nangolo.
- 2 Vulukilenu Yehova upahu uze watela lijina lyenyi,
Lemesenu Yehova muzwalala yakujila.

Summary

Parallelism is the literary feature which is prominent in the poetry section. It shows how poetry as a genre requires to identify and transmit the emotions of the characters within it so that the 'hearers' experience the *persona* of the characters in the text. The Psalms exemplified here offer the experiential relationship of the Psalmist with one he refers to as the God who hears prayer, the shepherd who takes care of him, and himself as a creation that must ascribe glory, strength and worship to this same God. Then, the same is viewed as one who rewards and also lays land desolate when ignored. To emphasise that relationship, parallelism is used.

3.2 TEXTS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: *Gospels, Acts, Epistle, and Revelation*

3.2.1 Introduction

The books of the Bible referred to as the Gospels are a continuation of the interaction of the God of the Old Testament with the people of Israel.

3.2.2 *Matthew κύριος*

The Greek term **κύριος** has been rendered from the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament as substantive, and bearing the meaning 'strong', 'authoritative', so that the following applications are possible:

- i) in a non-religious sense:
- ii) one controlling his own property, or one having legal power (**chilolo** 'village headman/an official');
- iii) one having authority over persons (**mukulwane wamilimo** 'a boss');
- iv) as a form of address showing respect (**mukulwane** 'an elder/older person');
- v) in religious usage:

- a) as a designation and personal title for God ἄγγελος κυρίου (Matthew 1:20) and Jesus Christ υἱὸς τοῦ ἄνθρωπος (John 20:18)
- b) as the translation of the Hebrew *Adonai*, which in public reading of Scripture replaced the tetragrammaton *yhwh*.”

This is a clear case of polysemy. Polysemy within some Luvale words is generally differentiated by tone, Luvale being a tone language. Such instances are only apparent to the reading of homographs, that is, words that are spelled exactly the same but differ in the tone of one vowel. For example, the word **kuluwa** (Ezek. 21:31; Jas 3:2) is pronounced in two different ways. One way is [**k^húluwa**] with the [^h] signifying aspiration of the velar sound, and [**ú**] being High Tone. In this instance, the word is a noun and means ‘an expert at some craft or knowledge’. The other way is [**ku^lúwa**] with word-medial High tone, and it is an infinitive with the meaning being ‘to err’, ‘to be wrong’. Since the orthography of Luvale has never used diacritic marks for the differentiation of such words, and similar ones, in reading, the exercise of reading has led to confusing the meaning of one for the other. However, the problem of polysemy in the Luvale term **mwata** which has been used to translate ‘κύριος’ is as follows is that, first of all, **mwata** is pronounced the same for each of the different meanings assigned to it in every context and, **mwata** in Luvale is always used:

- i) to address an elder brother or another older person than oneself;
- ii) to refer to the uncles, that is, those people of whom one's maternal lineage is composed;
- iii) derogatorily to refer to a bully; and ultimately,
- iv) to refer to the totality of the whole clan, and especially used to refer to the departed spirits of one's maternal parentage upon whom one should call when in trouble, as **vamyata jetu**, that is, ‘our elders’.

In the book of Matthew, none of all the Luvale meanings above have been used to mean the four categories that mean ‘**κύριος**’ from the Greek translations. The four categories are:

- i) **Yehova**: (upper-case in word-initial position), as the name of God (Matthew 1: 20, 22, 24; 2:13, 15, 19; 3:3; 4:7, 10; 5:33; 21:9, 42; 23:39; and 27:10)
- ii) **Mwata**: (upper-case in word-initial position), as a title in Mwata Yesu (7:21, 22; 8:2, 6, 21, 25).
- iii) **mwata**: (all lower-case), where a servant or slave is addressing the master, or a landlord (13:27; 18:25; 26, 27, 32).
- iv) **mwata**: (all lower-case), where a subordinate is addressing Pilate (27:63)

The first category which represents the name of God appears fourteen times in the NT, and for the first time in 1:20 as Yehova, a representation of the Tetragrammaton, as follows:

GRK - ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος **κυρίου** κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων, Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαβὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου.

ASV - But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the **Lord** appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

LUE70 - Oloze ximbu apwile nakuxinganyeka vyumevi, kumana, kuli ikiye kwasolokele kangelo ka**Yehova** hakumulotesa, amwambile ngwenyi, Ove Yosefwe mwanaNdavici, kanda wivwa woma wakumumbata pwevo lyove Maliyako, mwomwo eli lijimo kana nemita linapu lyakuli Xipilitu wajila, xikaho. (Matthew 1:20).

As of the word **mwata** in Luvale, it is never used to mean **κύριος** in the way **κύριος** is defined in the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament above. The equivalent for **κύριος** also in a non-religious sense would be as follows:

- i) **chilolo** - one controlling his own property, an official, or one having legal power, free citizen;
- ii) **mukulwane wamilimo** - one having authority over persons/boss;
- iii) **mukulwane** - as a form of address showing respect, elder/older person.

Nevertheless, the word **mwata** has become a meaningless Christianese, that is, a term adopted by Luvale Christians from an existing concept which has no meaning anywhere close to the intended message, and is used without the understanding meant in the biblical context as in the way **κύριος** is defined in the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament. In LUE70, it is used as a title for where the word **κύριος** appears, but without the meaning of **κύριος** where it should have been **kaka** in Luvale for ‘slave-owner’, or the address for what is considered god, **kalunga** in Luvale. However, in Lunda, a sister language, the [t] in the Luvale **mwata** is nasalised, as **Mwanta** which means ‘a chief’ or ‘a king’ and it is used appropriately there in reference to Jesus as **Mwanta Yesu** for ‘King Jesus’. The Hebrew **adonai** translated into Greek as ‘**κύριος**’ and into English as ‘lord’ is what was rendered into Luvale as **mwata**. However, **mwata** is not a term that carries the same thought or concept of the Hebrew **adonai** for king, which is the proper designation of Jesus Christ. In Luvale, **Mwangana** (Chief, king) is the fitting designation and address. In fact, a slave-owner was addressed as **kaka**, as Luvale people still do to their chiefs, since every Luvale who is not of nobility is a **ndungo** ‘slave’. **Mwata** for **Κύριος** has been used in reference to the Christ as in the following text, instead of **mwangana**, ‘king’:

GRK - Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι, **Κύριε κύριε**, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

ASV - Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

LUE70 - Keshi nge vosena navangwamba ngwavo, Ove Mwata, ove Mwata, vakiko navakengila muwangana wamwiluko, kuvanga ou kaha éji kulinganga mwaya muchima waTata átwama mwilu.

Preferred Translation Keshi nge vosena navangwamba ngwavo, Ove **Mwangana**, ove **Mwangana**, vakiko navakengila muwangana wamwiluko, kuvanga ou kaha éji kulinganga mwaya muchima waTata átwama mwilu.

Inter-Textual Comparison

There is no equivalent translation in Luvale for the name of God, and therefore, it can only be rendered either as a transliteration of the tetragrammaton, **יהוה YHWH**, with a footnote explaining the root meaning of the name, or draw the meaning from Exodus 3:14, 15 to render 'I AM' as **NGWAPWA**. This is where the particle <ng-> is the Bantu First person Personal pronoun 'I', together with **-pwa**, the Bantu equivalent of the English auxiliary 'be' which extends into <being, is, are, was, were>, and transforms into **NGWAPWA** as the name of God which really means 'I ever exist, I will be'. The sense of **κύριος** as **mwangana** 'king' gives the correct designation of Jesus Christ which agrees with that of Adonai in the Old Testament.

3.2.3 ACTS χάρις

χάρις in **ACTS 14:3** as a favourable attitude, in the active sense, of what is felt toward another, that is, goodwill, favour.

GRK - **ικανὸν μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν παρρησιαζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μαρτυροῦντι [ἐπὶ] τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, διδόντι σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν.**

LUE70 - Oloze vaPaulu vaximbwilenga kuze, vahanjikilenga nakumika muli Mwata, kaha Ikiye asolwelenga unjiho **hamazu alikoji lyenyi**, hakuvahana kulinga vinjikizo navyuma vyakukomwesa namavoko avo.

Gloss: But Paul and others used to stay there long, they were speaking with boldness in the Elder, and he himself used to reveal evidence upon the *words of his kindness*, upon giving them to do signs and wonderful things with their hands.

Preferred Translation Chipwe ngocho vakiko vapwile kuze tando yayinene, vahanjikilenga nakumika mungolo jaMwangana, Ou asolwelenga unjiho **hamujimbu wenyi walikoji**, hakuvahana ngolo jakulinga vinjikizo navikomweso namavoko avo.

Gloss: Even then, they were there a long time. They used to speak with boldness in the power of the King, who used to reveal evidence upon *his message of kindness* by giving them the power of performing signs and wonders with their hands.

The Luvale word **likoji** is what was translated in LUE70 for the Grk **χάρις**. The word bears the meaning ‘kindness’ only. **Likoji** is descriptive of the disposition one has which constrains them to dispense **uselewa** ‘favour’ upon others.

It is agentive, that is, it is that which is exercised by one person towards another, while **uselewa** is objective, that which is experienced as bestowed by someone else. However, **likoji** has been used arbitrarily in the Book of Acts for all contexts of **χάρις** so that hearer hears ‘kindness’ only.

There is no clearly specific contextual meaning attached to each use of the Greek word **χάρις** in the LUE70 translation where it appears in every place as **likoji**. Consequently, the message is distorted. The following is just a sample from all the verses that have **χάρις** translated as **likoji**, meaning kindness. In the **RE-TRANSLATION** below, **χάρις** is applied meaningfully by distributing it contextually according to its several definitions as found in the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, compared with LUE70 where context is ignored.

Inter-Textual Comparison

An inter-textual consideration is that, if **חַנּוּן** by itself only means ‘to find favour’ with men or with God, for example, (Ruth 2:13) where the Holman Christian Bible renders the word from the subjective point of view “you have been so kind to me”, or from the objective point of view of the ASV and ESV “I have found favour in your sight”, then wherever the context suggests this meaning, the word ‘acceptance’ **kwitavila** would be the most appropriate, not **uselewa** as LUE70 has it.

3.2.4 A NOTE ON חַן HEN AND חֶסֶד HESED

In the following OT LUE70, the renderings are for **חַן**, while in the NT they are for **χάρις**. Meanings of the renderings are included, and a suggestion of the natural equivalent is made.

i) *Esther 2:17 HEB* - נְתַשָּׂא־תָּן וְחֶסֶד

LUE70 - The phrase ‘grace and favour’ in נְשָׂא+תָּן וְחֶסֶד (KJV) are rendered as **uselewa nalikoji**, which really means ‘favour and kindness’. But if, as the meaning of grace is ‘to find favour’ חֶסֶד with men or with God, that is, ‘acceptance’ which is **kwitavila**, then the phrase should be “she was accepted”, which would appropriately be **vamwitavilile**. And, if ‘favour’ should be translated correctly, it is **uselewa**, which is ‘the objective state of favour in which one is’.

Preferred Translation

Therefore, the whole phrase “she obtained grace and favour” is re-translated as **vamwitavilile nakuwana uselewa**, and glossed as ‘she was received and she found favour’.

ii) *Gen. 19:19* מִצָּא עֲבֹדְךָ חֵן

To demonstrate that LUE70 has not strictly followed context to bear the intended message, further reference is made to two OT words which are used interchangeably: חֵן *hen* ‘mercy’ which is translated as **keke**, and חֶסֶד *hesed* ‘kindness’ which is translated as **likoji**.

• **Gen. 19:19** מִצָּא אֲבֹדְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְתַגְדֵּל חֶסֶדְךָ

ASV - thy servant hath found **favor** in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy lovingkindness,

LUE70 - *ami ngamba yove ngunawane likoji kumeso ove,*

Gloss: ‘I your servant have found **kindness**’.

Preferred Translation *Ami ndungo yove unangwitavila,*

Gloss: ‘I your servant have been **accepted by you**;

• **Gen. 19:19** חֶסֶד וְתַגְדֵּל חֵן אֲשֶׁר לְחַמִּים **LUE70**’s translation of חֶסֶד as לחמים, ‘mercy’ which is **keke**

ASV - thou hast magnified thy **lovingkindness**,

LUE70 - *unangusolwela keke yove,*

Gloss: ‘you have shown me your **mercy**’

3.2.5. EPISTLES

1 CORINTHIAN 15:40-41: *σώματα* (*bodies*)

Among the several definitions of **σώμα** listed in the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, the following are the relevant ones to this reference:

- i) the living body of a human being or animal;
- ii) the dead body of a human being or animal;
- iii) by metonymy, persons valued impersonally as bodies for serving, that is, slaves;
- iv) the distinctive form of created things, as plants, and sun, moon, or stars.

GRK - καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια:

ASV - There are also celestial *bodies*, and *bodies* terrestrial:

LUE70 - Kuli nawa **mijimba** yamwilu nam**mijimba** yahamavu,

Gloss: ‘There are also *bodies* of heaven and *bodies* of earth’.

Preferred Translation

Kwatwama nawa **tengeso** yamwilu, **natengeso** yahamavu.

Gloss: There are also *created things* that belong to the heavens, and *created things* that belong to the earth.

Therefore, since ‘body’ in Luvale is specifically and only in reference to i) the living body of a human being or animal; and ii) the dead body of a human being or animal, then the only appropriate rendering is after iv), the distinctive form of *created things*, as plants, and sun, moon, or stars. In this case, ‘created things’ in Luvale is **tengeso**.

The expression “*heavenly bodies*” in the context of both verses 40 and 41 would suggest that the bodies are objects in the heavens that are further explained as the sun, moon and stars. The thought is continued in the next verse in specifically showing that the glory of the heavenly (body) means the glory of the sun, or the moon, or the stars.

Lange *et al* (2008) state both sides of the argument well as follows: “It is not agreed whether the apostle here means the bodies of angels, or heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon and stars.” Bodies of angels is taken to mean ‘bodies found in heaven’, it is claimed that ‘the sun, moon and stars’ are not accepted as ‘heavenly bodies because in the usage of antiquity, the heavenly bodies were regarded by Plato, Plutarch, Galen, and others, as animated beings. Therefore, the rare use of the word **σῶμα**, *body*, denotes a material whole bound together in unity of being, and not inanimate things.

Similarly, the Greek words in this expression **σώματα ἐπουράνια** (bodies, heavenly) are explained as follows:

- i) **σῶμα**, the physical body of persons, animals, or plants, either dead or alive - body (Louw, Johannes P., Nida, Eugene A., 1996a)
- ii) **ἐπουράνιος**, related to or located in the sky - in the sky, celestial,
- iii) **σώματα ἐπουράνια καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια** ‘there are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies’ 1 Corinthians 15:40. For **ἐπουράνιος** as part of an idiom: (an idiom, literally heavenly body, occurring in the NT only in the plural) the luminous objects in the sky: sun, moon, and other planets and stars - heavenly body (Louw, Johannes P., Nida, Eugene A., 1996a).
- iv)

Conclusion

The discourse shows that the comparison is between ‘earthly bodies’ and ‘heavenly bodies’. Earthly bodies include the bodies of people, as well as bodies of plants and animals. Heavenly bodies are the sun, moon and stars. English is wide enough in the meaning associated with bodies to go from people, to anything else on earth, and anything in the heavens.

However, in Luvale, the word normally translated ‘body’ **mujimba**, will have a meaning that includes only humans and animals, but excludes plants and trees, as well as the sun, moon, and stars, as well as angels. The LUE70 reads, **Kuli nawa mijimba yamwilu namijimba yahamavu** ‘*There are bodies of heaven, and as well as bodies of earth*’. This necessarily restricts the meaning to ‘bodies’ of people or animals belonging to earth, and ‘bodies’ of people or animals belonging to heaven.

Since there is this restricted meaning of **mujimba** in Luvale, there is the need to have the correct concept of the idea ‘body’ in its context. Therefore, the term **mujimba** has been widened to **tengeso** ‘*a created being/ thing*’. So, the first part of the verse should read:

Kwatwama tengeso yamwilu, natengeso yahamavu

Gloss: ‘There are also created beings that belong to the heavens, and created beings that belong to the earth’.

By using the expression **tengeso** ‘created beings’ instead of **mijimba** ‘bodies’, the verse includes anything that God created in the heavens: angels, cherubim, as well as the sun, moon and stars.

3.2.6 REVELATION

Revelation 1:7 ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν

GRK - Ἴδου ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. ναί, ἀμήν.

ASV - Behold, *he is coming with the clouds*, and every eye will see him, ...

LUE70 - Ivwenu, **mwakeza namawwi**, kaha meso osena nawakamumona, ...

Gloss: 'Listen, he will come with clouds, and all eyes will see him, ...'

Primarily, the phrases **ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν; οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν; ἐπ' αὐτὸν**, 'he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him', make the reader and hearer visualise the following:

- i) a person together with clouds,
- ii) person with a deep wound inflicted by a long sharp object, and
- iii) the reason for the nations weeping being the presence of a person.

In the first phrase, **ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν**, the person, Jesus Christ, is seen 'coming with'.

The word **μετὰ** is polysemous and bears some such meanings from the Analytical Lexicon of New Testament as:

- a) in the midst of;
- b) of accompaniment, that is, together with, accompanied by;
- c) of close association, that is, be with someone, be on the side of;
- d) as indicating means, that is, by means of, through.

Therefore, what is visualised by the hearer is Jesus Christ *in the midst of clouds*, or *accompanied by clouds*, or *using the clouds as a means of transportation*, that is, being borne by clouds. In any one of the above meanings, the translation of LUE70 is not helped. There, the phrase used is:

mwakeza namavwi, which means,

‘he will come (Remote Future) carrying clouds with him’; or

‘he will come carried by clouds’.

Inter-Textual Comparisons

However, the term **νεφελῶν** may not be the atmospheric object called ‘clouds’, but a reference to a throng, a crowd, as is indicated in Hebrews 12:1 **νέφος** ‘large crowd’ where the crowd is that of witnesses. Therefore, here, many crowds **νεφελῶν** would be more meaningful as referring to heavenly beings accompanying the King. The phrase **mweza** is a combination of the pronominal **mu-** and the verbal **-iza** which gives the sense of definitiveness. And **mayongomena** is multitudes, not just ‘clouds’.

Preferred Translation Ivwenu, **mweza namayongomena**, kaha meso osena naamumona, ...

Gloss: ‘Listen, *he will come with multitudes*, and all eyes will see him, ...’

Conclusion

Conclusively, it has been demonstrated by analysing some selected LUE70 texts in the Old and New Testaments that those particular texts could have been rendered better had there been better knowledge and understanding of the native Luvale in relation to the SL text, together with the present available translation resources. The re-translated sections of the same LUE70 texts clarify the intended meaning of the message contained in those same texts.

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