

*NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY*

*METAREPRESENTATION IN CHIDIGO:  
ANALYSIS OF HANGBWE*

*BY  
ANNAH CHITSANGO RAMTU*

*A Linguistic Project Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in Translation Studies*

*JUNE 2003*

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**BY**

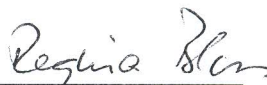
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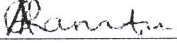
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**June, 2003**

Student's Declaration

METAREPRESENTATION IN CHIDIGO: ANALYSIS OF *HANGBWE*

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other  
College or University for academic credit.

(Signed) 

Annah Chitsango Ramtu

June, 2003

## ABSTRACT

This project is aimed at analyzing *hangbwe*, a metarepresentation marker in Chidigo, which has other markers that seem to be similar with it but are different in a way. My interest in this area was aroused by the awareness that this is currently the concern of many researchers in the Linguistic field. More so the access of guidance and available literature from Blass and the NEGST library. It is important that such markers be studied exhaustively in relation to Relevance, to improve accuracy, clarity and naturalness in the translation work. I will explain with examples the uses of *hangbwe* in relation to Relevance Theory, then compare it with its related markers.

It is my desire that this project will be of help in the discovery of interpretive markers and in the study of metarepresentation as a whole in different languages. I also hope that the results of this analysis will be helpful in confirming the correct usage of such markers in the work of Bible translation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1pl: 1<sup>st</sup> person plural

3pl: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural

1<sup>st</sup> 3sg: 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular

2<sup>nd</sup> 3sg: 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular

1sg: 1<sup>st</sup> person singular

2sg: 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular

3sg: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular

3sg/pl: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular or plural

AVP: Agent Verb Patient

B.T.L: Bible Translation and Literacy

COMP: Complementiser

Fut.: Future

Hab.: habitual

Inf.: Infinitive

Irl: Irealis

MM: Metarepresentation Marker

Nsld.: Nasalized

Neg.: Negative

N-G: Noun-Genitive

PASS: Passive

Pres: Present tense

Pst: Past tense

Rd: Rounded

Rpst: Resent past

S: Sentence

SVO: Subject Verb Object

Unrd.: Unrounded

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Statement of the problem

The problem that leads to this study is the need to discover the linguistic function of Chidigo interpretive use markers.

I would like to analyze Chidigo markers *hangbwe* ‘hearsay’ and other corresponding markers namely *amba* and *ati*, which mean ‘say’ and ‘I hear’. Hearsay refers to what one has heard from another source. Though the Chidigo language has been put into writing, so far not much has been done on its discourse. Most of what has been written is mainly translation apart from the Chidigo stories and an ethnobotany. Thus there is a need to study and discover the meanings and functions of words that could easily be taken for granted.

The markers I will look at in this project have other functions apart from hearsay and it is my desire that these functions will become evident through this analysis.

A successful outcome of this work will help to give correct interpretation and preserve the right meaning of these markers. This will then help in the translation work so that those translating do not fail to bring out the intended meaning.

I am also aware that many linguistic researchers are working on markers of interpretive use in various languages and are discovering many things. Since this has not yet been done in Chidigo, I do not want my language to be left behind. Finally, I am curious to discover the linguistic function of these markers in my language.

In the rest of this chapter I will give, in brief, information on the language and what research has been done as well as what some linguists have said about the topic of interpretive use. In the other chapters we shall see how *hangbwe* functions grammatically and relate it to Relevance Theory. We will also be able to see how *hangbwe* and related markers are used so as to see their similarities and differences.

## 1.2 Literature of the problem

Kempson (1988), editor of 'Mental representation' has several collections of articles from different authors. Among these are Sperber & Wilson (1988, 133-1153) writing on Representation & Relevance, where they explain about descriptive and interpretative representation. They explain that descriptive representation is truth based, describing a state of affairs. They talk about interpretive resemblance as a comparative notion with 2 extremes: no resemblance at all at one end and full propositional identity at the other. Then they say that the principle of relevance differs from every other theory or approach because it is an unexceptional generalization about communicative behaviour. They also talk about echoic utterance and irony, that a speaker could echo positively in approval to the utterance or negatively in disapproval to the utterance thereby disassociating one self from the utterance. The disapproval has ridicule or scorn. Irony gives the implicated opposite of what is said but more so it carries with it an echoic nature. This is because at times irony does not just imply the opposite meaning but can be expressing disassociation attitude to the original use of an utterance. Saeed (1997, 131-133) discusses briefly on evidentiality as a semantic category that allows a speaker to communicate her attitude to the source of her information. It also enables one to qualify a statement by referring to the source of the information. Interpretive markers are usually included in such statements like for instance when one says 'I was informed that he was sick.' There is a marker before the information given 'he was sick.'

Blakemore (1992, 166-171) describes irony as occurring when the intended meaning of an utterance is opposite to its literal meaning. She also talks about interpretive use as a representation of a resembling utterance or thought. Palmer (1986) discusses hearsay markers, which we now call interpretive use markers, listing these under epistemic markers. Palmer says a hearsay marker indicates that the assertion made results from inference or hearing from another source other than the speaker.

Blass (1990) discusses how  $\text{r}\epsilon$  is an interpretive use marker in Sissala. She looks at the uses of 'hearsay' and their grammatical function showing the occurrences of  $\text{r}\epsilon$  in different usage. She also looks at interpretive use and relevance, and the evidence for its grammaticalisation. Noh (2000) has written on metarepresentation, which includes metalinguistic use, echoic use and irony.

Nicolle (2000, 173-188) discusses the interpretive use marker *je* in Swahili and those of Amharic showing their occurrences. Ifantidou (2000, 119-144) also discusses explicatures by looking at the Modern Greek particle *taha*.

Fretheim (2000, 53-86) also discusses propositional attitude showing that a particle encodes intimation to the hearer to embed propositional content expressed in the conditional clause. In this way he explains about higher-level explicature.

Blass in Andersen and Fretheim (2000, 39-52) writes on particles, propositional attitude and mutual manifestness. She mentions markers like *ja* in German, 'after all' in English, *ma* in Sissala, and *mana* in Hausa as markers indicating mutual manifestness, which is a type of evidential. She then shows their function on higher-level explicature.

Thus markers of propositional attitude have received an increasing amount of attention in recent years, notably from the perspective of relevance theory (see for example the papers in Andersen & Fretheim 2000).

Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995) elaborate on Relevance and give definitions of descriptive and interpretive use as well as echoic utterances and irony. Nyiramahoro, (2002) also addresses the topic of metarepresentation in Kinyarwanda. She looks at her language particles *-ti*, *ngo* and *ko* as procedural and interpretive markers. Unger, (2002) also shares some thoughts on metarepresentation in discourse with examples from Estonian and Behdini- Kurdish.

### **1.3 Information about the Digo people and their Language**

#### **1.3.1. Demography and Ethnography of the Chidigo Language**

Chidigo is the language of the Digo people of Kenyan Coast. The Digos are situated in Kwale District, Coast Province of Kenya, South of Mombasa. There are also some members of this community in the neighbouring country of Tanzania. These are situated mainly in Tanga. According to a Chidigo myth, the name Digo came about as the sound of falling and breaking of a pot. It is said that as the Miji Kenda group migrated from Shungwaya, a woman running away from the Ormas after a conflict accidentally dropped her water pot. The falling sound was *Di* and as the pot broke the contents spilt out as *Go*. Hence the name of her descendants was called *Adigo* 'the Digos'. The name of their language became Chidigo, *chi* being the prefix for the way and style of doing things or culture. Thus, for these people every

language and style begins with *chi* such as *Chikamba* for the Kamba language, *Chiduruma* for the Duruma language, *Chizungu* for the English language and so on. The total population of the Digos in both Kenya and Tanzania is about 400,000.

Chidigo is one of the nine closely related Coastal languages called the ‘Miji Kenda’. It is partially intelligible with Chijiryama on the North Coast and Chiduruma on the West. Many Digos are bilingual in Chidigo and Kiswahili and the latter has exerted a fair degree of influence on the former.

Chidigo is a Bantu language, classified as Narrow Bantu, Central, belonging to the Niger-Congo language family. Chidigo has several dialects. Most of these are identified by the geographical boundaries of the speakers or clan. There are hardly any differences between these dialects except for use of the consonants [r] and [l] interchangeably and mixing of tenses like saying

(1) *Dzuzi anapigbwa che nphapho*

Three.days.ago when.he.was.being.beaten I am there

‘Three days ago when he was being beaten I was present’

Some Digos would regard *che nphapho* ‘I am there’ as unusual and would prefer *ka nphapho* ‘I was there’. This was the opinion of a language speaker and may vary with others so that it is may not necessarily be a major difference between dialects.

As for specific Chidigo dialects there is Chidegere (named after clan) which is spoken by the Adegere. Their dialect is closest to Duruma in their speech. Culturally, these people are not expected to intermarry with the Digos of other clans. Other dialect groups are the *Chidigo cha Tsimba* and *Chidigo cha Pungu* (‘Chidigo of Tsimba and Chidigo of Pungu’) spoken by the Atsimba and Apungu who are identified by their tendency to mix tenses as shown in example (1). The dialect group of *Chidigo cha Tiwi* ‘Chidigo of Tiwi’, spoken by the Atiwi is known for using [l] in place of [r]. For example they say *lelo* instead of *rero* for ‘today’,

I am a native speaker of Chidigo and the provider of the data with the help of non-translated Digo texts and pronunciation from a few native speakers that I interacted with. In my speech I use [r] not [l] for *rero* ‘today’. The Digos earn their living by small-scale fishing, subsistence farming and retail business.

### 1.3.2. Phonological background

#### 1.3.2.1 Vowel System

Chidigo has 5 vowels, but phonetically there are 10 because of the nasalising effect of intervocalic /h/. There are also two syllabic nasals. I will show the vowel chart with syllabic nasals at the bottom as in the example of Witters, Sim, Pace, Olsen and Huttar, (1998,58).

VOWELS	Front		Central	Back	
	Unrd. Nsld.		Unrd.	Unrd. Rd	
Nsld.					
High	i	ĩ		u	ũ
Mid					
	ε	ẽ		o	
Low				α	
Syllabic Consonants	ᵐ	ᵑ			

#### 1.3.2.2 Consonant System

Chidigo has 18 consonants. Listed below together with their consonant clusters and vowels, on the left column are the phonemes while graphemes of the alphabet are in the right hand column. This orthography has been approved by B.T.L and will be used throughout the paper.

##### *Phonemes*

/p/  
/p<sup>h</sup>/  
/p<sup>w</sup>/  
/b/  
/t/  
/t<sup>h</sup>/

##### *Graphemes*

p  
p  
pw  
b  
t  
t

