

cf 1 : 8). Similarly, certain prepositional phrases, probably also used idiomatically, may be considered definite even though the object has no article, if the context indicates definiteness (cf. the English "at home"); for example, John 1 : 1 "in the beginning".

### **With Proper Names**

Use of the article with proper names is rather irregular, since a proper name would be definite even without the article. Some monadic nouns, moreover, which usually require the article, may sometimes be considered as proper names and thus not have the article, much as the English "the earth" or "earth". So also with the divine names and titles, the article may or may not be used. Even with these proper and divine names, however, the regular rules regarding the use of the article may apply in any given instance, as was noted above regarding John 1 : 1, "the Word was God". Similarly, the "Holy Spirit" generally takes the article in reference to his person and omits the article in references to his operations. The word "law" requires individual attention. The article indicates a particular law, or the Mosaic law; without the article, reference may be to "law" as a principle, but evidently sometimes to the Mosaic law under the rule governing proper names.

The Greek article, like James' characterization of "the tongue" (generic usage, by the way!), is indeed "a little member and boasteth great things". The careful translator will not fail to consider it carefully, and the New Testament student will be rewarded by acquainting himself with its significance.

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## **Gender, Pronominal Reference, and Possession in Guajiro**

*William E. Thompson*

South American Indian Mission

The Guajiro language (also spelled Goajiro and Goajira), spoken by about 40,000 Indians in the Guajiro peninsula of Colombia, South America, presents special problems to the translator because of the grammatical structure involving gender, pronominal reference, and possession.

### **Gender Distinction**

Guajiro is an Arawak language with a more or less complicated morphological (word-forming) structure. Not only are there at least eight relative orders of suffixes which may be attached to verb stems, but the particular combinations which occur exhibit many types of

irregularities in the forms of the suffixes. These complexities of form, however, do not cause special difficulty for the translator. They must simply be learned. What does complicate the picture is the elaborate rigidity of the gender system, plus the difficulty of pronominal reference and certain types of obligatory possession.

The fact that Guajiro contains gender distinctions might be interpreted by some people as a distinct advantage since both Greek and Spanish have gender differences. The trouble is that gender works somewhat differently in Guajiro and is far more extensive in the linguistic structure. Guajiro has two genders: (1) masculine and (2) feminine (or perhaps better, non-masculine). Masculine nouns include men and all male sex-distinctive animals, plus a few inanimate words such as "sun" and "rainbow". The feminine (or, non-masculine) nouns include all women, female sex-distinctive animals, and most inanimate words, e.g. "road", "water", "tree", and "day". The Guajiro system would not be so difficult if it were not for its all-pervading usage. Not only do nouns indicate gender by their endings, but agreement in gender is indicated in adjectives, verbs, pronouns, and possessive prefixes. Every sentence seems to "bristle" with gender reference.

There are a few instances in which so-called "natural gender" may override the requirements of grammatical gender. For example, the word for "clan" is feminine, but in referring to men of the clan it is possible to use a masculine pronominal reference in close agreement with the feminine word "clan". This shift from feminine to masculine is, however, not very common.

Sex distinction also enters into the lexical part of the language. For example, one word for "want" identifies a woman's "wanting" and another word is used for describing the same attitude on the part of men. Similarly, a distinction is made between women "kissing" and men "kissing".

### **Pronominal Reference**

The system of pronominal reference by which pronouns such as "this" and "that" refer to antecedents in the previous clause or sentence is quite different from English or Spanish. Where the context is familiar these deictic pronouns are used more or less as emphatic particles, but where the context is unfamiliar to the hearer there is a marked tendency to repeat the noun expression in a number of successive clauses, where Greek, English, or Spanish would use deictic pronouns such as "this" or "that" or personal pronouns such as "he", "she", or "it".

### **Obligatory Possession**

Certain terms in Guajiro are regularly possessed. For example, one rarely hears "father" or "son" without some possessive prefix to indicate whose father or son is being talked about. One can by persevering elicit a form such as "son" without any explicit indication of possession, but the form is unnatural and in some contexts means "an indefinite person's son", i.e. "somebody's son".

The parts of the body also occur with possessive prefixes. One does not normally speak of "eye", "arm", or "leg", but rather of "his eye",

“her arm”, or “the man’s leg”. Hence, in translating “eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth” one must say “one person’s eye for another person’s eye and one person’s tooth for another person’s tooth”.

### Grammatical and Lexical Problems in John 1

A number of grammatical and lexical problems are illustrated by the first part of John 1, especially in connection with the selection of an adequate term to translate “Word”. This passage is difficult enough in Greek, English, or Spanish, but in Guajiro it seems to be exceptionally complicated. During the process of working on the translation of this passage we have considered five different terms for “Word”, none of which are fully satisfactory, but each of which presents its special problems and difficulties. In addition to these five terms there may, of course, be some better solution which has not been found as yet.

The first of these terms is *puuchka* which may mean “word”. The difficulty is that it also means “an unfortunate happening”. When one asks an informant for the Guajiro word for Spanish *palabra* “word”, the answer is invariably *puuchka*. But when one asks an informant for the meaning of *puuchka*, in nine out of ten cases one receives the Spanish equivalent *desgracia* “an unfortunate affair”.

However, the word *puuchka* not only has an unfortunate connotation; but in being feminine in gender, there are grammatical complications in pronominal references. One would not want to refer to *puuchka* by the pronoun meaning “she” or “her” in verses 2-4. The context would be so completely strange that the reader would not interpret the verses correctly. Rather than regarding all things as made by the Word, the inevitable interpretation would be that all things were made “by her”; but the identification of “her” would remain a mystery. Any attempt to give personality to the term *puuchka* would only result in creating a female deity, and this is certainly not the meaning of the passage. In order to avoid the incorrect pronominal reference it would be necessary to repeat the word *puuchka* wherever the “Word” is referred to in the passage by pronouns. This would have resulted in awkward repetitious forms, but could have been done. However, the wrong connotation of the term *puuchka* plus its grammatical awkwardness because of being feminine in gender ruled out its use in the translation.

The second possible term was *aniki* but this word almost always requires a possessor. The form *aniki* can be elicited from some informants, but with difficulty. For the most part they insist on such a form as *taniki* “my word”, *puniki* “your word”, *nuniki* “his word”, etc. If we were to use the stem *aniki* in its proper grammatical setting, it would be necessary to have some possessor. Probably the only, even partially, satisfactory expression would be “God’s Word”. This type of translation would, however, have involved us in many complications and would have referred primarily to the Bible, and we certainly would not want to say, “God’s Word [i.e. the Bible] was God”. Furthermore, it would have been impossible to teach any idea of personality, for the term “God’s Word” would not have been regarded as a title of a person. It would have been too specifically an action of God, for the expression

*nuniki Maleiwa* "God's word" (literally, "his-word God") is primarily equivalent to "what God said".

The third possible translation was *aashahanushka*, a nominalized passive form of the verb *aashahash* "to speak". The literal translation would be "that which was spoken". But as regards its gender this form has the same liability as *puuchka*, for it is feminine, as may be noted by the ending *-ka*. Furthermore, this word denotes the passive of the process and does not indicate necessarily the result. The word *aashahanushka* does not mean "word" in the usual sense and it cannot be pluralized, for it does not specify the "word" or "words" that were spoken, but simply that someone was spoken to. Hence, it may not only mean "that which was spoken", but "the fact that he was spoken to". Being nonspecific as to the type of agent, the form is quite ambiguous; and even though an informant may produce this form as a translation of "word", it is entirely too ambiguous and fails to represent adequately the meaning of the Biblical text.

The fourth possibility was *aashahai'kai* "he who speaks". This form has the advantage of being masculine, and as such can be easily referred to by the appropriate pronouns. It also possesses a form which readily leads to the interpretation of the "Word" having personality. The difficulty is that its incompletive aspect implies that "he is one who continually speaks", in other words, one who rambles or talks too much.

The fifth possibility was *aashahashkai* "he who spoke". This form is admittedly not too close an equivalent of the Greek *logos*, but it is the closest usable equivalent in Guajiro which we have found to date. It does have certain advantages. In the first place, it is masculine in gender and may be readily referred to by appropriate pronouns. In the second place, it provides a ready base for understanding the "Word" as a person. In a certain sense this form is not too far removed from the essential meaning of the Greek, for the *Logos* does not refer to the passive result of the process of speaking, but to the active agent of the creative declaration, summed up in the words "God spoke and it was so".

### Antecedent Reference

In the matter of pronominal reference all languages seem to differ considerably, and Guajiro is no exception. For example, in John 1 : 9 it is impossible to translate the initial pronoun "that" (AV and Spanish Reina-Valera) by such a demonstrative. Such a pronoun would refer to John. Hence, in order to avoid a wrong reference, we have been obliged to use "this light". It is true that this noun expression has no exact equivalent in the Greek text, but neither does the English "that". However, in adding "this light" to the text we were not trying to be overly explicit or to be adding even for the sake of greater clarity (though this did result). What we were concerned with was a translation which would say what the original had said, but in a form which would conform to the requirements of Guajiro syntax.

In the same verse (John 1 : 9) there is a related problem of reference, but it involves number and lexical problems. For example "every man" translated literally would not mean what it does in English. In order to

be all-inclusive and generic, we have been obliged to use plural forms. This would require "all men". However, such a phrase would be unusable, for it would specifically exclude women. In Guajiro there is no equivalent of "person" or "human being". All humans are divided by two sets of intersecting terms. The first distinction is "men" vs. "women", and the second is "Guajiros" vs. every one else. In such a circumstance we found it necessary to translate "every man" as "all men and women".

In John 3 : 23 we could have easily mistranslated the subject of the predicate expression "came and were baptized". The Valera version is ambiguous in the use of *ellos* "they" (cf. also the AV). This pronoun could easily refer to the disciples of Jesus mentioned in the preceding verse, and a literal translation into Guajiro would have precisely that meaning. Hence, we were obliged to use a noun expression as the subject, namely, "men and women". (Note that the RSV has "people", but this type of translation is impossible in Guajiro because of the distinction noted in the preceding paragraph).

### **Obligatory Possession**

As noted above, there are certain types of nouns which are obligatorily possessed. A few additional illustrations of this feature of Guajiro may make the picture clearer. For example, in John 3 : 35 it is necessary to say, "the Father loves his Son". Otherwise the meaning would be that the Father loved "somebody's son", but not his own. Similarly, in John 5 : 19-21 the context requires us to substitute "his Father" for certain occurrences of "the Father" and "his Son" for certain occurrences of "the Son".

In John 14 : 9-11 there is a somewhat different type of problem, for in this section Jesus speaks of himself in the first person. Accordingly, "the Father" becomes "my father"; in verse 9 one must translate, "He who has seen me has seen my Father".

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## Proposed Publication of the Manuscript Evidence for the Text of the Greek New Testament

*(Bible Translators throughout the world will be intensely interested in the recent announcement concerning the publication of an exhaustive treatment of the manuscript evidence for the Greek New Testament. The following statement, released by the American Editorial Board, provides some idea of the importance and character of this work. — Ed.)*

A group of American and British scholars is now engaged in the task of preparing a new edition of the manuscript evidence for the text of the Greek New Testament. The last successful attempt to produce such an edition was made more than eighty years ago by Constantine von Tischendorf. Since that time, many ancient manuscripts have come