

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI, GHANA**

KNUST

**Assessment of Three Problematic Texts in the Synoptic Gospels of the New
Testament of the Dangme Bible**

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**A Thesis submitted to the Department of Religious Studies, College of
Humanities and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FEBRUARY 2018

CERTIFICATION PAGE

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the PhD and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person, nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of any University, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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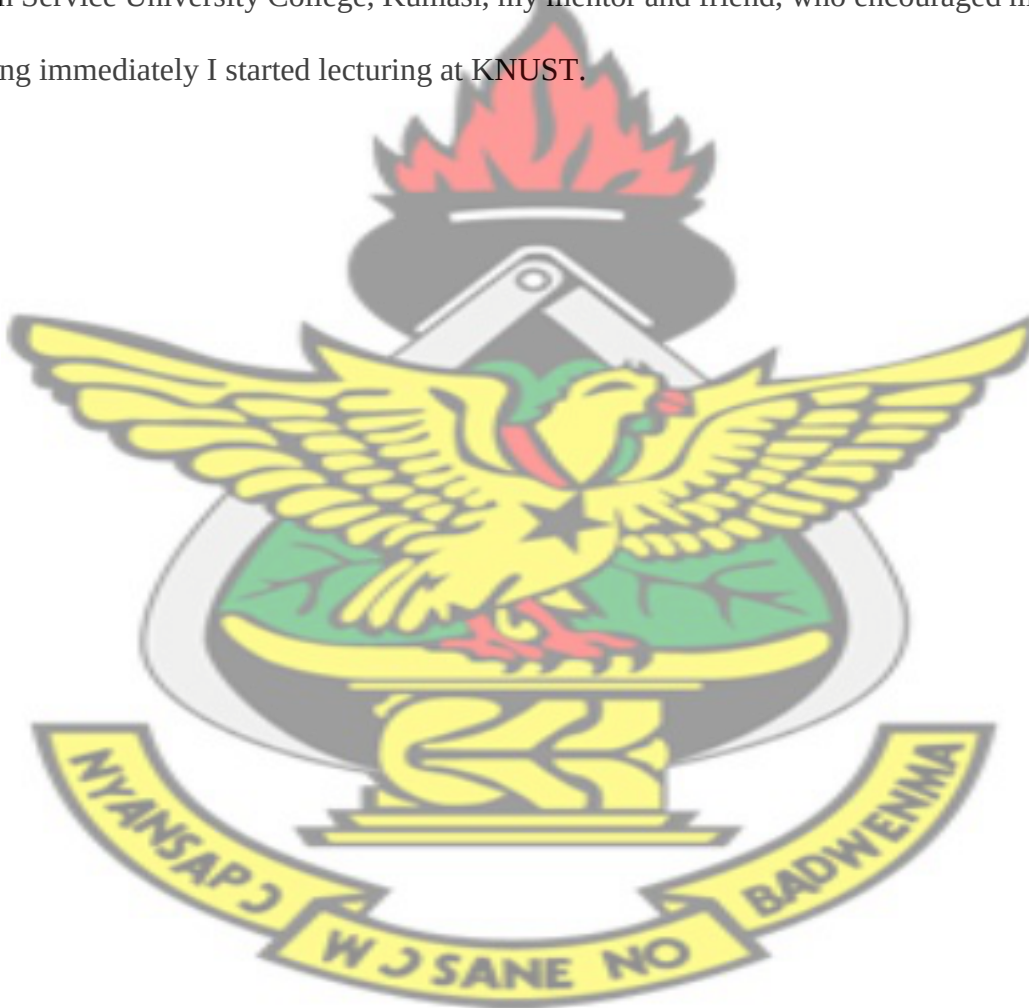
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Jessica, my dear wife, Jethro and Justin, my children, Christiana, my mother, Michael, my late father, and all my students, both past and present at the Department of Religious Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; and also to Prof. S. E. Owusu, of the Department of Settlement Planning, KNUST, and now Vice President of Christian Service University College, Kumasi, my mentor and friend, who encouraged me to start publishing immediately I started lecturing at KNUST.



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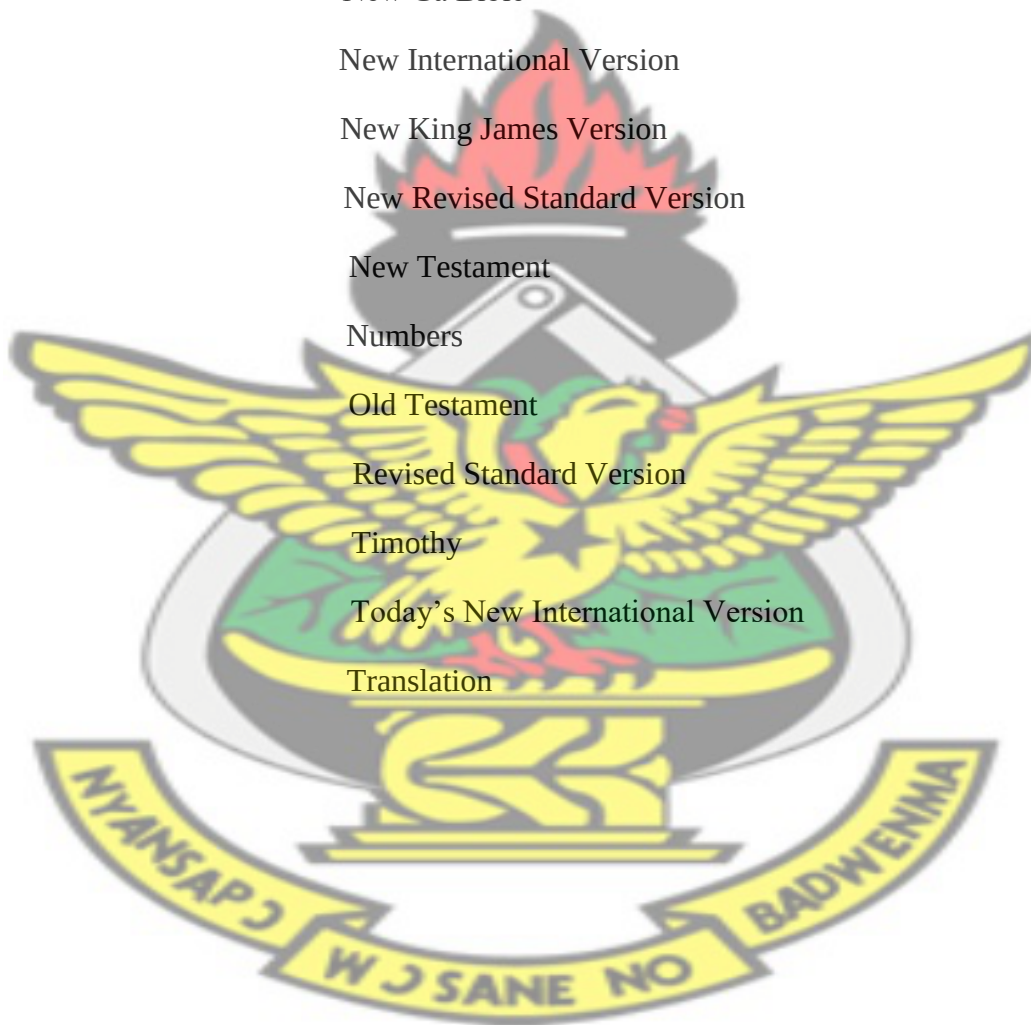
To show that *nile be no kake juemi mi ɔ* (knowledge is not found in one person’s mind), I have cited the works of scholars. I have stood on their shoulders to see afar. I would not have made it without them. To all such scholars I express my profound gratitude. And to my Research Assistants – Stephen Adjabeng, Lily Charwey, Ebenezer Tetteh Fiorgbor, Ebenezer Kupualor, Moses Shardey, Ruth Ocansey, and all the rest whose names I am not able to include in this list for lack of space – I say *ayekoo*. Without your hard work, I would not have obtained the information I needed from the field.

Jonathan Edward TettehKuwornu-Adjaottor
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AkTB	Akuapem-Twi Bible
AsTB	Asante-Twi Bible
BSG	Bible Society of Ghana
BTC	Bible Translations Consultant
DB	Dangme Bible
DBMR	Dangme Bible Manuscript Reviewer
DBTT	Dangme Bible Translation Team
Deut	Deuteronomy
DNTPs	Dangme New Testament and Psalms
EB	Ewe Bible
ENTPs	Ewe New Testament and Psalms
ESV	English Standard Version
Eph	Ephesians
Exo	Exodus
FB	Fante Bible
GB	Gã Bible
Gen	Genesis
GNB	Good News Bible
Heb	Hebrews
IBS	International Bible Society
JACT	Journal of African Christian Thought
KJV	King James Version
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science

	and Technology
Lev	Leviticus
LXX	Septuagint
Matt	Matthew
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NB	New Gā Bible
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Tim	Timothy
TNIV	Today's New International Version
Trans	Translation



ABSTRACT

Three texts in the Dangme Bible (BSG/UBS 1999) generated a lot of discussions during a field survey of the eight Dangme speaking areas. The texts are: *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ...* [Lend us our wrong-doings...] (Matt 6:12); ... *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se* ...[the Holy Spirit pushed the head from behind...] (Mark 1:12); and *Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ ke*, “*Kuasiahɪ ...*” [Then Jesus said to them, “Fools...”] (Luke 24:25). Exegesis of the Greek texts; and semantic analysis of the texts in Dangme, found out that: An alternative translation of Matt 6:12 in the Dangme as *Ne o kɛ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ* [And let go our wrong-doings] will help readers understand forgiveness as “letting go” the offence of an offender, without keeping any record of the offence. The rendering of Mark 1:12 as *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ha nɛ e ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit permitted him to go to the wilderness], will clear the confusion in the minds of Dangme Bible readers who do not understand how the Holy Spirit could “push” Jesus into the wilderness. The alternative translation of Luke 24:25 with the phrase *Oo nyɛ juɛmi he jɔ*, (your mind has become cold) reduces the degrading tone of *kuasia* which etymology means “a good for nothing person”, “an un-respected person”, “a worthless person.” The significance of the research is that it has evolved alternative translations and interpretations of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 for the Dangme Bible reading communities; the researcher has thus started a discussion that other scholars will join.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Bible translation in Ghana dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. According to Ype Schaaf,¹ the earliest local translations were the Ga, Akuapem-Twi, Fante and the Ewe. Portions of the Bible were first translated into Ga (1843), Ewe (1858), Akuapem-Twi (1859), and Fante [Mfantse] (1896) respectively.² New Testament translations in the four languages cited above were published in 1859, 1863, 1877 and 1896 respectively. The complete translations of the whole Bible into Ga, Akuapem-Twi, Ewe and Fante [Mfantse] were achieved in 1866, 1871, 1913, and 1948 respectively. David Anum Kpobi gives the profile of the Bibles in the Ghanaian mother-tongues.³

In Ghana, out of the sixty-seven languages,⁴ the complete Bible has been translated into thirteen and the New Testament into twenty-seven languages. These translations were done by the Bible Society of Ghana (BSG),⁵ the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation

¹ Y. Schaaf, *On their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible on Africa*, rev. ed., (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 89.

² However, according to John D. K. Ekem, “the earliest publication of Scripture portions in Twi was 1845-46” by the Basel missionaries. The Akuapem-Twi Bible was the Bible for the Akan speaking people with the exception of the Mfantse. See John D. K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana): The Historical, Lingusitic, and Theological Settings of the Ga, Twi, Mfantse and Ewe Bibles* (Rome/Manchester: Edizioni de storia eleteratura/St. Jerome: 2011), 51.

³ David Nii Anum Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word: A History of the Bible Society of Ghana, 1965-2015* (Accra: Heritage Publications, 2015).

⁴ M.P. Lewis, G.F. Simmons, and C.D. Fenning (eds.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Eighteenth edition, (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 2015). Accessed online at <http://www.ethnologue.com> on 28/11/2017 p.m.

⁵ The BSG has translated and published the Bible in Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi, Ga, Mfantse Ewe, Dangme, Dagbani and Nzema. The New Testament has been translated and published in Esahie and Dagaare. The Old Testament projects in these languages are ongoing. Revision projects on some of the older versions – Ga, Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi and Ewe have been completed, and the Bibles have been launched. See Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 120.

(GILLBT)⁶ and the International Bible Society (IBS).⁷ These translations are in no doubt important components of the history of the founding, establishment, and growth of the Church among the people concerned; they facilitate the understanding of the Christian faith in these language groups.⁸ However, there seems to be translation, semantic and cultural issues facing mother-tongue⁹ readers of the Bible. The study focuses on the way some Hebrew and Greek terms, concepts, and phrases have been translated in the New Testament of the Dangme Bible.

1.2 Statement of Problem

A critical reading of the *Ngmani Klɔuklɔu* ɔ (The Dangme Bible, BSG/UBS 1999), reveals that there are some translation problems that affect the understanding of biblical texts in Dangme Bible reading communities. These include the following in the New Testament: the phrase *aphes heemin ta opheileemata hemoon*¹⁰ in Matt 6:12 be translated into Dangme – *ke wa tɔmiɔ ɔ ke wɔ* “let go

⁶ The GILLBT has translated and published the Scriptures in 40 languages. Of these, 14 complete mother-tongue Bibles have been published; and 17 New Testaments have been published. Examples are: Konkomba, Tampulma, Bimoba, Farefare, Chumburung; New Testament in 25 languages: Kusal, Vagla, Sisaala, Nafaanra, Hanga, Frafra, Chumburung, Kasem, Mo (Deg), Buli, Lelemi, Adele, Mampruli, Gikyode, Pasaale, Koma, Ntrubo, Birifor, Anufo, Selee, Siwu, Sekpelee, Tuwuli, Ahanta, Nkonya (<http://www.gillbt.org>). GILLBT (Information Brochure), The Opportunity to make an Impact.

⁷ The IBS, now known as Biblica, has translated and published: The Bible in one Ghanaian mother-tongue – Ewe; and the New Testament in three – Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi and Dangme. (www.biblica.com/our-ministry/ministry-map).

⁸ Mother-Tongue: News from GILLBT (October 2017), 7.

⁹ The term “mother-tongue” is used here and throughout this research to mean that linguistic category which expresses the idea that the initial communication skills of a child are acquired from the mother; therefore, the language of the mother would be the primary language that the child would learn (Dörhe Bühmann and Barbara Trudell, *Mother Tongue Matters: Local Language as a Key to Effective Learning* (Paris: UNESCO, 2008), 6.

¹⁰ This thesis uses the Dangme orthography in transliterating the Greek. The Greek long vowels ‘η’ and ‘ω’ are transliterated ‘ee’ and ‘oo.’

our sins” or *ke pa wɔ* “lend us our sins”? The *sukeen* (fig tree) is translated as *ngmɔkɔ tso* in Matt 21:18-19; *ngmɔkɔ tso* is what is commonly called “milk bush”; it is used for fencing. Are the fruits of the *ngmɔkɔ tso* of the Dangme edible?

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What are the implications of translating *to pneuma auton ekballei eis teen ereemon* in Mark 1:12 as *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tse e yi se ke ho nga a nɔ ya* (the Spirit push Jesus by the head him into the desert)? Were the two men on the road to Emmaus who did not understand the issue at stake *anoeetoi* - *kuasiahi* (fools, plural) as rendered in Luke 24:25? When is the word *kuasia* (singular) used among the Dangme? *(T)theoi* is translated as *Mawu ɔmɛ* in Acts 14:11b. Is there any difference between *Nigmo* or *Mawu* (The Almighty God), and *jema wɔ ɔmɛ* (smaller gods) among the Dangme? The translation of *me parassesthoō humin he kardia, pisteuete eis ton theon kai eme pisteuete* in John 14:1 as “...*Nyɛɛɛɛ nyɛ he Mawu nyɛɛ ye; nɛ imi hunyɛ he mi nyɛɛ ye*” (As for you, believe in God; and believe also in me). Since the first *pisteuete* (you believe) can be translated as a verb indicative active, second person plural or as a verb imperative active, second person plural of *pisteuoo*, is the text an affirmation of the belief of the disciples in God or a command for them to believe in God? How should this text be interpreted in Dangme against the background that the Dangme believe or trust Mawu (God) before Christ was introduced to them? The translation of *hoti aneer estin kaphalee* in Eph 5:22-23 as “...*Ejakaā huno ɔ nge e yoo nɔ he wami...*” (Because the husband has authority over his wife...). It is that a husband is the leader in his family or he has authority over his wife? How should this verse be translated in Dangme to render what Paul meant? The translation of *dei oun ton episkopon anepileempton einai, mias*

gunaikos andra in 1 Tim 3:1-2a as “...Asafonyadalɔ ɔ, sékó hi e he. É hi yokake...” (The person who wants to take care of God’s church, should be above reproach: the husband of one wife). The difficulty that the translation of this verse poses has its roots in the Greek text. In verse 1, Paul uses the Greek word *episkopees*, meaning “overseer”. *Episkopees* is a feminine noun, referring to the one who desires to be an overseer. This means a female Christian can desire to be an overseer in the church. But in verse 2 he designates the overseership to *ton episkopon* which is a masculine noun; and this person must have a *mias gunaikos andra*, literally “a one-woman man” which meaning is not clear.¹¹ The basic problem with the Dangme translation of the text is that “é” is a pronoun for all genders – he, she, it. How do we render this verse in a language that does not have pronouns in gender? How do we interpret what Paul meant to Dangmes?

The problems identified in the New Testament of the Dangme Bible as indicated above need to be studied. Such a study requires that the scholar must know Dangme; be able to read the Bible in Dangme; and has the skills of reflecting deeply on issues in Dangme. In addition, the critic should be a scholar in the Bible. Biblical studies use historical-critical method among others in arriving at the meaning of biblical texts; and the Dangme Bible interpreter will benefit immensely from

¹¹ I am aware of the the interpretations of *mias gunaikos andra*. Walter Lock lists no fewer than five distinct interpretations an overseer (bishop) must have: (1) be a married man; (2) not a polygamist; (3) be a faithful husband, having no mistress or concubine; (4) not divorced one wife and marry another; (5) not married a second time after the wife’s death. He rejects the first and the last, but supports the other three. For a discussion see Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1924). On the Greek text. Cf. Frank E. Gaebelien, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Volume 11, Ephesians to Philemon (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 370. Perhaps it is because the meaning of *mias gunaikos andra* clear that the translators of the Bible into Ga (BSG 2006) omitted it. Cf the Ga Bible 1908 the phrase has been translated.

such backgrounds. The researcher's background as a Dangme and student of the New Testament, qualifies him to do such a study.

In July 2009, the researcher did a survey of the eight Dangme speaking areas to find out whether the Dangme Bible reading communities had identified some translation challenges in the Dangme Bible (see survey results, [Appendix 4, Table 1 on page 199](#)). This data may seem old, looking at when it was collected. But it is still relevant since no other scholar has conducted such a survey on the Dangme Bible. Further, since the publication of the Dangme Bible in 1999, there have been no revision leading to an edition of the translation.

On the translation problem, the survey found out that, majority of the respondents, that is, four hundred and twelve (412) representing 72.9% indicated that, they identified some translation differences¹² in the Dangme Bible which sometimes posed problems in the understanding of certain texts. Eighty-four (84) of the respondents constituting 14.9% indicated they did not identify translation differences in the Dangme Bible; sixty-five (69) of the respondents representing 12.2% indicated they could not identify translation differences in the Dangme Bible. The majority of the

¹² J. A. Loewen has given a typology of translation problems: (1) Linguistic - phonological, morphology and word formation, grammatical, lexico-syntactic, dialectical; (2) Psycho-socio-historical; (3) Theological – comparative religious views, biased perspectives. For a discussion see J. A. Loewen (*The Practice of Translation* UBS, 1981).

number who indicated they could identify translation differences in the Dangme Bible makes this an issue.¹³

Three of the identified texts with problems - Matt 6:12; Mark 1:12, Luke 24:25 – generated a lot of questions and discussions among Dangme Bible readers during the field research. They are:

1. *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ...* (Lend us our wrong-doings..., Matt 6:12). *Pa* has different shades of meaning in Dangme: it means “river,” “to drink” (used when one drinks soup), “loan.” In the context of religion, when *pa* (forgive) is used with *yayami* (sin), we can have an expression like *kɛ yehe yayami ɔme ne pa mi* (forgive me my sins). In reference to forgiveness in the context of the Lord’s Prayer, the question one might ask is: does God ‘lend’ us our sins or he ‘forgives’ us our sins?

2. *Amlɔ ɔ mi nɔuu ɔ, Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* (Immediately the Holy Spirit pushed him (Jesus) from behind his head into the wilderness, Mark 1:12). Among the Dangme *nɔne a tsɛ e yi se* [the one pushed by the head] is an idiom used to express reluctance of a bad boy/girl in performing a task. The phrase is also used for

¹³ The preface of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* Dangme Bible (p. iii) paragraph six states that: *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ sisi tsɔɔmi kɛ ba Dangme mi sisije keke ji nɛɔ nɛ. Lɔɔ he ɔ, wa kpa pɛɛ kaa ke nɔ ko na nɔ ko nɛ hia kaa a dla, e tsɛ Ghana Baiblo Kuu ɔ tue se ngɛ he, kone a tsu he ni* (The translation of the Bible into Dangme is just the beginning. So we plead that if anyone sees any error which has to be rectified, the Bible Society of Ghana should be notified so that it will be corrected).

someone whose time to die is not yet up, but has been forced to face death prematurely.

Thus, the phrase in Mark 1:12 *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔtsɛ e yi se kɛ ho* means that Jesus was a “bad boy.” The phrase also implies that it was not yet time for Jesus to be tempted, but the Spirit forced him to go to the wilderness to face Satan.

3. *Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ kɛ*, “*Kuasiahɪ nɛ nyɛ sumɛ kaa nyɛ ma hɛ nihi tsuo nɛ gbali ɔmɛ de ɔ maa ye!*” (Then Jesus said to them, “Fools; you do not want to believe all that the prophets said”, Luke 24:25). The translation of *anoɛetoi* as *kuasiahɪ* (fools) has religious-cultural implications for Dangme speaking people. *Kuasiahɪ* (fool) is a ritual insult. The traditional priest does not use it on the living because it has repercussions. The translators have put *kuasiahɪ* in the mouth of Jesus who is divine; and this might lower the reverence Dangme Christians and Bible readers have for Jesus. The three texts were analysed and discussed in chapter five of the thesis.

1.3 Research Questions

1. (a) What do Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 mean in the Greek New Testament?
- (b) How do Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers understand and interpret Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25?
- (c) How should Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers understand these texts?

(d) How is Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible compared to the Ga, Ewe, Mfantse, Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi translations?

(e) How can these texts be best translated to fit into the religio-cultural context of the Dangme?

2. What challenges does one face in trying to research, translate and interpret the New Testament texts from Greek into Dangme?

1.4 Research Objectives

The research seeks to:

1. Assess the translation problems identified in the three texts.
2. Explore the possibilities of the texts evolving new meanings for interpretation in the Dangme context.
3. Identify specific renderings among the possible meanings that could be best replacements for Dangme translation.
4. Make recommendations for replacement in the Dangme Bible.

1.5 Methodology

This thesis employs the Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics methodology. John David Kwamena Ekem posits that “The varied mother-tongues of Africa have a lot to offer by way of biblical interpretation in Ghanaian/African languages as viable material for interpretation, study

bibles and commentaries.”¹⁴ He is of the view that since there are sensitive issues in African cultures, there is the need for a context-sensitive interpretation of the Bible for various target audiences in Africa,¹⁵ to articulate theological, linguistic and anthropological issues in the mother-tongues of people. He opines that this can be done through “Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics or Interpretation, a discipline that endeavours to interpret the Bible using a language that people can identify with right from infancy.”¹⁶ Ekem expands his definition of Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics when he submits that it is a “discipline devoted to the interpretation and reinterpretation of biblical texts in languages considered by speakers as their first language into which they were born.”¹⁷ He has argued in earlier publications that Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics is likely to shape the future of Biblical Studies in Africa.¹⁸

¹⁴ John D. Ekem, Interpreting ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ in the Context of Ghanaian Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 10 Number 2 (December 2007):48.

¹⁵ John D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 188.

¹⁷ John D. K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana)* (Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing/Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011), 10.

¹⁸ For a discussion see (1) John D. K. Ekem, A Dialogical Exegesis of Romans 3:25a, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* Volume 30 Number 1 (September 2007): 75-93. (2) John D. K. Ekem, Jacobus Capitein’s Translation of ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ into Mfantse: An Example of Creative Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics, *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* Volume 2 (July 2007): 66-79. (3) John D. K. Ekem, Interpreting the Lord’s Prayer in the Context of Ghanaian Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 10 Number 2 (Special Edition in Honour of Professor Emeritus Kwesi A. Dickson) (December 2007): 48-52. (4) John D. K. Ekem, Biblical Exegesis in an African Pluralistic Context: Some Reflections, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 6 Number 1 (June 2003): 31-34. (5) John D. K. Ekem, Translating Asham (Isaiah 53:10) in the Context of the Abura-Mfantse Sacrificial Thought, *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* Volumes 1 & 2 (2002) :23-29. (6) John D.K. Ekem, The use of Archierus ‘High Priest’ as a Christological Title: A Ghanaian Case Study, *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* Volume XI Numbers 1 & 2 (2001):57-64. Seth Kissi also used Ekem’s methodology. See Seth Kissi, An Akan View of Jesus.

Ekem has devised a methodology for mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics (MTBH) in a local Ghanaian setting by using the Mfantse orthography or their closest equivalents. To him, such a method has the advantage of facilitating the first-hand acquaintance of mother-tongue speakers with the “original texts” even before they are translated into their language.¹⁹

However, Ekem does not give a clear procedure for mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics. This thesis has provided a step-by-step procedure to make MTBH more pragmatic.

- (1) Identify a biblical text which has not been properly translated into your mother-tongue;
- (2) Discuss why the translation is problematic in your culture;
- (3) State the methodology you will use and the proponents;
- (4) Do a study (an exegesis) of the text, using Bible study resources – Dictionaries, Commentaries, Encyclopedias, Word Study helps, etc;
- (5) Find out what scholars have said about the text, how they interpret it and the reasons for their interpretations;
- (6) Discuss the usage in your language/culture; interview indigenous speakers of your mother-tongue for deeper insights into the concept you are researching. Use local terminologies in your writing and explain them in English;
- (7) Compare the text in your mother-tongue with other Ghanaian translations you can read and understand;

¹⁹ John D. K. Ekem, A Dialogical Exegesis of Romans 3:25a, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* Volume 30 Number 1 (September 2007): 69-70. Cf. John D. K. Ekem, *Interpretation of 'Scripture' in Some New Testament Documents: Lessons for the Ghanaian Context* (Accra: African Christian Press, 2015), 17-38, 40-61.

- (8) Analyse the mother-tongue translations; what do they mean? How are the meanings of the text similar to that of the Hebrew/Greek? How are they different? What might have accounted for the differences in translation?
- (9) Suggest a new translation of the text that fits into your culture.²⁰

For Ekem to expand his definition of Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics from “interpretation”, to “reinterpretation” means that texts are not static; they can be interpreted to evolve new meanings by the communities. Thus Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics is a dynamic adventure. Ekem’s methodology for mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics is significant; it deals with the transliteration, translation and interpretation of the biblical text from the “original language” to the language of the target readers. In his exegesis and analysis of Heb 9:11-12, he compares some European and other Ghanaian mother-tongue translations and throws light on the hermeneutical issues in the Ghanaian context.²¹

He demonstrates the Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics methodology further with his commentary on Philemon titled *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn: Ne*

²⁰ See J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, “Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics: A Current Trend in Biblical Studies in Ghana”, *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 3(4), 2012: 572-579; _____, “Doing Biblical Studies using the Mother-tongue Approach”, *Journal of Applied Thought* 1(1): 2012:55-80; _____, “African Biblical Studies: Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics Methodology”, _____, *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 1(2), 2015:1-24. I followed this procedure also in the following: J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor “The Practice of Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in Ghana: A Case Study of *bny ysɔr’l* [Deut. 32:8] in Some Ghanaian Communities. *Journal of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics* 1(1) (2015): 134-157.

²¹ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 189-203.

Nkyerɛkyerɛmu fi Griik Kasa Mu kɔ Mfantse Kasa Mu (A Commentary on Paul's Letter to Philemon Based on the Greek Text). He did a back translation into English.²² In this commentary, Ekem gives a guide to the pronunciation of Greek vowels and diphthongs;²³ he gives sectional headings to the text to facilitate understanding; he writes the Greek text, transliterates, followed by a translation, a commentary and a glossary of some important Greek nouns and verbs in Philemon.²⁴ (He does not state exegesis, but it is implied because he gives a select bibliography made up of reputable New Testament scholars such as M.J. Harris, R.P Martin, B. M. Metzger, H. K Moulton, and E. F Scott).²⁵ Ekem does not throw away formal exegesis. In one of his publications, he insists that a scholar who wants to do biblical exegesis in the African context, and by implication use the Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics approach must of necessity include formal exegesis that reflects a dynamic encounter between Biblical and traditional African world-views, both of which continue to exert a powerful impact on communities.²⁶

²² John D. K. Ekem, *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn: Ne Nkyerɛkyerɛmu fi Griik Kasa Mu kɔ Mfantse Kasa Mu* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2009). He translated the commentary from Mfantse into English with the title, *A Commentary on Paul's Letter to Philemon Based on the Greek Text* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2009). His other commentaries include, *Gyoonu Nwoma: Ne Nyerɛkyerɛmu fi Hiibriw Kasa mu kɔ Mfantse Kasa Mu* (Accra: African Christian Press, 2015). *A Hebrew-English Commentary on the Book of Jonah for Church and Academia* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2016). *Nwoma a Wɔtwere de kɔmaa Kolose Asafo: Ne Nkyerɛmu firi Hela Kasa Mu kɔ Asante-Twi Kasa Mu* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2017). This has been translated and published in English as *The Foundations and Practice of our Christian Faith: A Simplified Greek-English Commentary on the Epistle to Colossians* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2017). *Krataa a Wɔkyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Kolossae Asɔr: Ne Nyerɛkyerɛmu fi Griik Kasa mu kɔ Mfantse Kasa Mu* (Accra: African Christian Press, 2015).

²³ Ekem, *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn*, 9.

²⁴ Ekem, *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn*, 32-35.

²⁵ Ekem, *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn*, 36.

²⁶ John D. K. Ekem, Biblical Exegesis in an African Pluralistic Context: Some Reflections, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 6 Number 1 (June 2003): 31-34. Gordon Fee outlines eight basic rules for New Testament exegesis: (1) Survey the historical context in general. (2) Confirm the limits of the passage. (3) Become thoroughly acquainted with your paragraph or pericope. (4) Analyse sentence structures and syntactical relationships. (5) Establish the text. (6) Analyse the grammar. (7) Analyse significant words. 8. Research the historical-cultural background (Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis* revised ed., (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 32.

Ekem's transliteration of the Greek Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (v.1) as *Kristu Yiesu*, and its translation as *Kraest Gyises*; and ἐκκλησίᾳ (v.2) as *ekrisiya* and its translation as *Kristian nkyia* in Mfantse is interesting.²⁷ In the transliteration of Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, Ekem used the English 'Ch' for X, and maintains the ρ 'r' to agree with the 'r' sound in the translation of Χριστός as Christ in the Mfantse Bible.²⁸ Ekem may have done that to maintain the rendition of Χριστός as "Christ" in the Mfantse translations of the Bible. But in his work, he translates Χριστός not as Christ but *Kraest*. Thus, he has departed from how Χριστός has been transliterated in the Mfantse Bible. Again, Ekem transliterates Ἰησοῦ as *Yiesu*, but translates it as *Gyises*. What he has done here is that, he has substituted the consonant "Y" with the diagraph "Gy". But there is "Y" in the Mfantse orthography.²⁹ Perhaps, he may have done that to maintain the Mfantse pronunciation that transliterates Ἰησοῦ as "Jesus" which has become part of Mfantse Christian heritage.

The way Ekem goes about transliteration and translation of Greek words into Mfantse proves his point that Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics is not static but rather it is dynamic. Perhaps it is because of this insight that made him revise or expand his definition of Mother-tongue Biblical

²⁷ Ekem, *Krataa a Pɔɔl Kyerewee Dze Kɛmaa Faelimɔn*, 10-11.

²⁸ See *Nwoma Krɔnkrɔn: Ahyɛmu Dadaw nye Fofor No* (The Holy Bible in Fante [Mfantse]) (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 1974); and *Ahyɛmu Fofor No Mu Nwoma* (The New Testament in Fante [Mfantse], Interconfessional Edition (Bungay, Suffolk: United Bible Societies, 1982).

²⁹ See *Language Guide* (Fante [Mfantse]) Version (Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1986), 7.

Hermeneutics as a “discipline devoted to the interpretation and reinterpretation of biblical texts in languages considered by speakers as their first language into which they were born.”³⁰

This thesis has employed Ekem’s methodology of transliteration of the Greek text, but use the Dangme orthography instead of the Greek, to give prominence to the Dangme language. Even though there is an “ε” in Dangme orthography, it is a long vowel in Dangme but a short vowel in Greek. To avoid any confusion in the pronunciation of transliterated Greek words, the two Greek long vowels, “η” and “ω” will be transliterated as “ee” and “oo” to agree with how they are pronounced in Greek. The Greek texts will be translated; exegesis³¹ and interpretation of the texts will be done. The researcher will however not write commentaries on the texts under study because that is not the focus of the thesis. The focus is the semantic analysis, interpretation and discussion of the Dangme texts under study, to find out their similarities and difference with the Greek text; which translation philosophy or philosophies were used by the translators; and whether the analysis of the Dangme texts will generate new meanings.

³⁰ Ekem, *Early Scriptures*, 10.

³¹ According to Gordon Fee, Biblical exegesis is the historical investigation into the meaning of a Biblical text. It means bringing out the meaning of a passage out of the text. See Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Hand Book for Students and Pastors* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 27.

In his work on Philemon, and earlier publication, Ekem however did not engage the mother-tongue Bible reading communities in his interpretation of the texts. As indicated earlier in this section (p.10), this is the weakness in his methodology. This researcher has involved Dangme Bible reading communities in the interpretation process. The addition of this method to that of Ekem contextualizes the texts and their translation into Dangme. Stakeholders of the Dangme Bible were involved in the interpretation of words and idioms in the texts that are culturally sensitive and may raise issues in Dangme Bible reading communities.

The Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics methodology discussed above shows that it is a dynamic venture because it involves interpretation and reinterpretation of the mother-tongue Scriptures. What this means is that, no one interpretation of a text is final. So no interpretation of a text from another language can be forced on readers of the Bible in a mother-tongue. God understands their mother-tongue, so they expect interpretations of biblical texts to naturally fit into their religio-cultural context.

Nine Dangme scholars made up of two members of the Dangme Bible translation team, four reviewers of the Dangme Bible manuscript, and three representing Dangme Bible readers were interviewed for their understanding and interpretations of the texts under study. Questionnaire were administered to 1000 Dangme Bible readers from the eight Dangme-speaking areas to indicate their understanding and interpretations of two of the texts - Matt 6:12 and Mark 1:12. Interview was the research instrument for the third text – Luke 24:25 – because the word being

researched is an abusive word, known and used in Dangme communities. Elderly Dangmes and linguists, and a converted traditional priest were interviewed for the deeper meanings and implications of the usage of *kuasia* (fool/foolish) in Luke 24:25.

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This approach of finding meaning to a text in the context of readers follows Jacques Derrida's philosophy of Deconstruction³² which posits that, a text does not have a fixed meaning. It can be translated or remolded in the religio-cultural thought of a reading community.³³ The principle of deconstructing a text also agrees with contextual hermeneutics which the science and art of explaining, interpreting or translating a text to communicate the message of its writer to readers in their religio-cultural context. It also follows the position of J. N. K. Mugambi and Johannes Smith; they opine that in the contextual approach to Biblical Hermeneutics (the bigger umbrella under which Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics falls), "there is a movement away from the 'context of the text' and the text itself to the context of the readers,"³⁴ to factor some concerns of the readers into the translated text, so that readers see the Bible as God's message for their communities. Contextual

³² Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 258-259.

³³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978): 278-93. Cf. Yvonne Sherwood, "Derrida and Biblical Studies," *SBL Forum*, n.p.[cited Nov 2004]. Online: <http://sbl-site.Org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=332>, accessed 20/5/12. Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 192-193. For further discussion, see (1) Lois Tayson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* 2nd edition (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 246-280. (2) J. Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). (3) Joseph Adamson, "Deconstruction." In *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (ed.) Irena R. Makaryk (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 25-31.

³⁴ J. N. K. Mugambi & Johannes Smit (eds.), *Text and Context in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004), 23-24.

hermeneutics enable readers bring their own points of view and concerns to a text and so may end up with different meanings.³⁵

In addition to Ekem's methodology involving the Greek text with the mother-tongue translation, the researcher compared the texts under study in Dangme with other mother-tongue translations in Southern Ghana - Ga, Ewe, Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi, and Mfantse - languages the researcher reads and understands to a large extent. This enabled him to find out similarities and differences in the way the texts have been translated in the earlier mother-tongue translations of the Bible in Ghana.

The texts under study were compared to the Greek text and interpretations from Bible commentaries, journal articles and Greek grammar books. *The Greek New Testament*,³⁶ a textual apparatus, were used for the research. It was employed because it is considered by scholars as the nearest to the original text in terms of accuracy. It is a critical edition of the Greek New Testament that contains not just a copy of any one manuscript, but a textual compilation of modern textual scholarship. The textual apparatus was used in conjunction with *The USB Greek New Testament*,³⁷

³⁵ M. N. Getui, T. Maluleke, & J. Ukpong (eds.), *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers. 2001). (2) U. C. Manus, *Intercultural Hermeneutics* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers.2003). (3) G. L. Yorke.& P. M.Renju (eds.), *Bible Translation & African Languages* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers. 2004). (4) E. R. Wenland, & J-C Loba-Mkole (eds.), *Biblical Texts & African Audience* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers. 2004).

³⁶ *The Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001).

³⁷ *The USB Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007). This employs the best available scholarly Greek text (the text of the USB Greek New Testament which is identical with the text of the Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece). See i-ii.

a resource with notable advantages over other similar tools.³⁸ The Dangme translation of the texts were compared to that of the Greek New Testament. This was done before comparing them to other southern Ghanaian mother-tongue translations, to find out where there are similarities and differences, and why.

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1.6 Significance of the Research

The thesis has provided a procedure for doing mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics. This work is the first of its kind by a Dangme biblical scholar. The researcher has thus engaged the Dangme Bible in a scholarly manner; and has evolved alternative translations and interpretations of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 that best suit the religio-cultural context of Dangme speaking people. He has chattered a path for other scholars to follow.

1.7 Delimitation of the Research

As indicated in 1.2, a lot more translation problems were identified during the survey but the three - Matthew 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 generated a lot of discussion in the Dangme Bible reading communities. They have been chosen deliberately because the researcher wants to focus on the Synoptic tradition.

³⁸ The Reader's Edition employs the best available scholarly Greek text (the text of the USB Greek New Testament which is identical with the text of the Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece). Among other things it helps with the identification of certain rare lexical and grammatical forms. See i-ii.

1.8 Organization of the Research

Chapter one is the general introduction which gives a background to the research, states the research problem, research questions, research objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, significance of the research, and organization of the research.

Chapter two is a literature review to clarify and focus the research, justify the research methodology, broaden the knowledge base of the research and contextualize the findings. The chapter reviewed literature under the following headings: Language, mother-tongue, mother-tongue Bibles and their relevance, and mother-tongue Bibles and their challenges.

Chapter three gives an ethnographic data of the Dangme people. This was done to situate the research among Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers in the eight Dangme speaking communities. It discusses the History of the Dangme people; their worldview – belief in God, community, human beings – their origin and afterlife; the Dangme language and literature.

Chapter four is a critical examination of Bible translation and interpretation – definitions of the Bible translation; epochs of Bible translation; Bible translation and interpretation; Bible translation philosophies – the modernist approach, the post-modernist approach, Eugene Nida's theory of Bible translation; Bible translation in African languages; Bible translation in Ghana; history of the

translation of the Bible into Dangme. Bible translation philosophies were discussed to indicate their link with the principles the translators of the Bible into Dangme used.

Chapter five is an exegetical study of the selected texts – Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, Luke 24:25 – backgrounds, literary structure and setting, lexico-semantic analysis. The exegesis was done to determine what the original authors of the texts meant, before interpreting what they mean.

Chapter six focuses on semantic analysis and interpretations of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible – comparison to the Greek texts, principles used by the Dangme translators; problems with the Dangme texts; how Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers should have understood the texts; Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers' interpretations of the texts; comparison of the texts with the Ga, Ewe, Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi, and Mfantse mother-tongue translations of the texts; suggested translations of the texts to fit into the religio-cultural setting of the Dangme.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis. It gives a summary of the problem and research process, key findings, their theoretical and policy implications, recommendations for further research, contribution to knowledge, and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE, MOTHER-TONGUE AND MOTHER-TONGUE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature under the following headings: language, mother-tongue, mother-tongue Bibles and their relevance, mother-tongue Bibles and their challenges, the Dangme Bible. He did this to help him gather information related to the research problem,³⁹ clarify and focus on the research problem, justify the research methodology, broaden the knowledge base of the research area, and contextualise the research findings.⁴⁰

2.2 Language

Richard C. Bright opines that there are over six thousand languages spoken in the world.⁴¹ These languages differ from one another in matters of lexical item, grammar, idioms and figures of speech. He further explains that the historical and cultural settings of the contexts for the speakers of one language differ considerably from the speakers of another.

³⁹ L. R. Gay, G. E. Mills and P. W. Airasian, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* (8th ed.) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice, 2006), 29.

⁴⁰ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology* (3rd ed.), (New Delhi: Sage, 2011), 47.

⁴¹ Richard C. Bright, *Translation Problems from A to Z*, (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 1999), 7.

Allison M. Howell affirms that language is a vehicle of culture and it is intertwined with beliefs, values, and worldviews of its speakers.⁴² She cites Lamin Sanneh who argues that language is more than just the “soul” of a people; it is the “garment that gives shape, decorum, and vitality to conscious life, enabling us to appreciate the visible texture of life in its subtle, intricate variety and possibility.”⁴³ She adds Aloysius Pieris’ contribution to the discussion by affirming his position on language. She states⁴⁴ that, “there is a relationship between religion and language; for, language is the experience of reality and religion is its expression.” Howell further cites Kwame Bediako who opines that language should not just be perceived as a cultural artefact, for it is not our device, invention or our arrangement. Language is a gift of God; every language is theological because it has the ability to express truth for its speakers to experience truth.⁴⁵ As such, it is important not only for a people to be able to read the biblical text in their own language, but also to explore, understand and explain the text and its context in that same language.⁴⁶ Howell has made important points about language and its importance in conveying theological truth. Language is not just a vehicle of communication amongst a people; it is also about a people-group.

⁴² Allison M. Howell, Beyond Translating Western Commentaries: Bible Commentary Writing in African Languages, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 13 Number 2 (December 2010): 21-33.

⁴³ Howell, Beyond Translating Western Commentaries, 23.

⁴⁴ Howell, Beyond Translating Western Commentaries, 23.

⁴⁵ Howell, Beyond Translating Western Commentaries, 23.

⁴⁶ Howell, Beyond Translating Western Commentaries, 23.

2.3 Mother-tongue

B.Y. Quarshie defines mother-tongue as a person's native language, in which one is born into, and grows up with. It is a person's first language as compared to other languages one might learn later in life, for example, in school. The mother-tongue is not the same as a vernacular, the common language of a region or group, no matter how natural such a language and its usage may be.⁴⁷

However, Quarshie's definition of the mother-tongue should not be taken without criticism. In some countries such as Kenya, India, and various Asian countries, mother-tongue refers to "mother language" or "native language" and is used to indicate the language of one's ethnic group, in both common and journalistic parlances rather than the first language. Also in Singapore, "mother-tongue" refers to the English language that was established on the island through British colonization, which is the *lingua franca* for most post-independence Singaporeans due to its use as the language of instruction in government schools, and as a working language.⁴⁸ Reacting to Quarshie's view that the mother-tongue is not the same as the vernacular, Ekem opines that mother-tongue can also become a vernacular, depending on its wide usage across geographical boundaries.⁴⁹ These criticisms notwithstanding, what Quarshie means is that, mother-tongue is a linguistic category which expresses the idea that the initial communication skills of a child are acquired from the mother; therefore, the language of the mother would be the primary language

⁴⁷ B. Y. Quarshie, Doing Biblical Studies in the African Context –the Challenge of Mother-tongue Scriptures, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 5 Number 1, (June 2002):7.

⁴⁸ See John D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2008), 188.

⁴⁹ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 188.

that the child would learn. This implies that the mother-tongue is the language that an individual use for the very first time in life. Thus, the mother-tongue identifies an individual as belonging to a linguistic community; and he or she is identified by it. A mother-tongue is important to its speakers and it matters to God. In that sense, it is the medium of “God’s self-disclosure in Christ.”⁵⁰

Quarshie’s point on the mother-tongue agrees with that of Kwame Bediako that, the mother-tongue is “The repository of indigenous wisdom, knowledge, insight, science, theology and philosophy. It is in the mother-tongue that one thinks and dreams, before translating one’s thoughts to other languages.”⁵¹ Bediako admits that “God speaks into the African context in African idiom, and that it is through hearing God speak in African mother-tongues ‘the great things that God has done’ (Acts 2:11), that African theology emerges to edify not only the African Church but the Church world-wide.”⁵²

Bediako points out that a person’s mother-tongue is a medium for interpreting issues in one’s linguistic community and presenting them to the wider community. Understood this way, it means that readers of the Bible translated into their mother-tongue can interpret biblical texts from their language’s perspective, not to change the text, but to appropriate its message for their reading

⁵⁰ Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies,” 7.

⁵¹ Kwame Bediako, *Religion, Culture and Language: An Appreciation of the Intellectual Legacy of Dr. J. B. Danquah* – J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures Series 37, February 2004 (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2006), 37.

⁵² Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana: Regnum Africa), i.

communities.⁵³ Since languages are not the same, translating and interpreting a message from one language to another is bound to have difficulties. Indeed, there will be a lot of difficulties in translating a text from one language to another but one can find out the types of difficulties that exist and how they can be addressed.

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2.4 Mother-tongue Bibles and their Relevance

Kwame Bediako cites Aloysius Pieris who has suggested that we should think of language as ‘the experience of reality’ and religion as ‘its expression’.⁵⁴ To him, this proposition has a significance for Scripture translation since language enables a people to experience truth that connects them to the reality and actuality of the Living God.⁵⁵ Bediako opines that people may have different notions regarding the technicalities and processes of translation but what is important is that “the Scriptures in a particular language provide the enabling environment for the recognition and response to the Living God to take place with enhanced intentionality within the experience of reality.”⁵⁶

What Bediako means here is that the translated Scriptures, which he calls the Mother-tongue Scriptures, constitute an irreplaceable element in the theological thought of a faith community. Indeed, a Christian living community cannot do without the Bible in its mother-tongue, because it

⁵³ For a discussion see Gerald West, “Biblical Hermeneutics in Africa”, a paper presented at the Ujamaa Centre (University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, 2008), 1-14.

⁵⁴ Kwame Bediako, Biblical Exegesis in the African Context – The Factor and Impact of the Translated Scriptures, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 6 Number 1 (June 2003): 15.

⁵⁵ Bediako, “Biblical Exegesis in the African Context”, 17.

⁵⁶ Bediako, “Biblical Exegesis in the African Context”, 17.

is God's message expressed in the language of that community. Hence, the importance of the mother-tongue translations of the Bible.

Abel Ndjerareou shows how the Bible in his mother-tongue led to the conversion of his father to Christianity and helped him understand better the salvific plan of God after his conversion.⁵⁷ He stresses that for Africans to develop African Christian theologies, there is the need to have the Bible translated into their mother-tongues. This helps the African theologian to dialogue with the Word of God in his own mother-tongue and to theologize properly.⁵⁸ The researcher will find out how the Dangme Bible readers are theologizing with the Dangme Bible in their religio-cultural context.

Thomas Atta-Akosah shows the significance of the language factor in African Christian mission by "demonstrating how Bible translation into mother-tongues enhances biblical interpretation and mutually impact the Church in Africa today."⁵⁹ He posits that God's desire to reach his people through the heart languages makes Bible translation an indispensable tool in the Christian missionary enterprise in Ghana and Africa at large. Mother-tongue Scriptures give the Africans vast opportunity to interpret and reinterpret Scriptures from their own worldview. The mother-

⁵⁷ A. Ndjerareou, "The Contribution of Mother-Tongue Bible Translation to the Formulation of African Theology", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Volume 15 Number 2, (November 2012): 40-42.

⁵⁸ Ndjerareou, "The Contribution of Mother-Tongue Bible Translation to the Formulation of African Theology", 40-42.

⁵⁹ T. Atta-Akosah, "The Language Factor in African Christian Mission: Bible Translation and Biblical Interpretation in the Church in African Church", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Volume 15 Number 2 (November 2012), 20.

tongue translations prepare the grounds for the Gospel to meet with African cultures, “for when Scripture is translated into a mother-tongue it is no longer alien to the receptor culture; it becomes part of the culture because it uses categories from that very culture.”⁶⁰ This implies that mother-tongue Bibles become the Scriptures of the indigenous people and that enable them to apply the teachings of the Scriptures in their own lives in their religio-cultural contexts. Atta-Akosah shows how translating the New Testament into the Deg language has helped the Dega people to understand Scriptures better; and now see God as someone who speaks their mother-tongue to them through the Scriptures.⁶¹ The point here is that, the mother-tongue translations of the Bible are important theological interpretation documents.

C. Lambaard argues that there are some peculiarities about translated biblical text that readers of the Bible may or may not acknowledge.⁶² He affirms a range of factors which are interrelated and largely undetectable: “worldview, philosophy of science and of history, philosophical hermeneutics, exegetical theory, dogmatological and existential faith commitments, and a host of other ecclesial, cultural, language, personal and other factors that together constitute the frame of reference of a Bible translator.”⁶³ The researcher agrees with Lambaard that a translated Bible is shaped by many factors. The world-view of Dangme mother-tongue Bible readers can influence their interpretation of Biblical texts.

⁶⁰ Attah-Akosah, “The Language factor in African Christian Mission”, 20.

⁶¹ Attah-Akosah, “The Language Factor in African Christian Mission”, 21.

⁶² C. Lambaard, Hide and Seek. Aspects of the Dynamics of Bible Translation, *Acta Theologica Supplemenentum* 12 (2009):1-15.

⁶³ Lambaard, “Hide and Seek. Aspects of the Dynamics of Bible Translation”, 7.

Gerald West analyses the theology that lies behind Bible translation and makes a case that, rendering the Bible into local vernaculars is not a self-evident impulse.⁶⁴ As such, translation of the Bible into local languages must be understood as an aspect of a larger theological project. He argues further that the capacity of the translated Bible has the capacity “to speak for itself”, and that once the Bible has been translated into a local language it slips, at least partially, out of the grasp of those who translated it.

West has used the term local vernaculars. This is too broad since we can have a local language of a place becoming the official language of a place. In this thesis, the researcher will use the term mother-tongue which means, the first language of a person, the indigenous language of the mother, the one with which she conceived and gave birth to a child. It is believed that a mother communicates with her baby through her indigenous language.⁶⁵

The researcher agrees with West when he says that, once the Bible is translated into a receptor language, it leaves the hands of the translators. He makes this proposition from the perspective of Deconstruction Criticism which says that:

Literature is as dynamic, ambiguous, and unstable as the language of which it is composed.
Meaning is not a stable element residing in the text for us to uncover or passively consume.
Meaning is created by the reader in the act of reading. Or more precisely, meaning is produced

⁶⁴ Gerald West, The Beginning of African Biblical Interpretation: The Bible among the Batlhaping, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 12 (2009): 34-47.

⁶⁵ West, The Beginning of African Biblical Interpretation: The Bible among the Batlhaping, 34-47.

by the play of language through the vehicle of the reader... Furthermore, meaning that is created, is not a stable element capable of producing closure; that is, no interpretation has the final word. Rather, literary texts, like all texts, consist of a multiplicity of overlapping, conflicting meanings in dynamic, fluid relation to one another and to us.⁶⁶

This means that a text can be interpreted from different perspectives. Thus, Dangme Bible readers can interpret biblical texts from the Dangme perspective.

Quarshie argues that the context of every human activity is paramount in determining the direction in which that activity takes, and that this is also true with theologizing.⁶⁷ He debunks the overreliance by Africans on Western theology and draws attention to the fact that Western theology was not done in a vacuum but was done within their own indigenous context. Exploring the ills in the social, political, economic and religious contexts of Africa, he observes that the presence of ills in these multifaceted contexts have affected the psyche and self-worth of the African theologian. The result is the false conclusion that, what comes from the West is the standard for the church. He therefore makes a case that presenting Jesus Christ to a culture without presenting the Bible to the culture of the people, broadly represented by their mother-tongue, will be an unsuccessful venture. The simple reason is that it will be difficult for Jesus to be welcomed and assimilated into the cultural thought patterns of the people. He cites Bediako who admits:

What God wants to say to any given cultural context must be located in the nuances offered by the mother-tongue Scriptures; and that if God speaks the mother-tongues of Africa, then he must be heard in those languages, and that means moving beyond

⁶⁶ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 258-259.

⁶⁷ B. Y. Quarshie, "Doing Biblical Studies in the African Context- The Challenge of Mother-tongue Scriptures," *Journal of African Christian Thought* vol. 5, no.1 (June 2002): 4.

even the original Hebrew and Greek into what the mother-tongue Scriptures can offer by way of interpretation.⁶⁸

The quotation above clearly makes a case for mother-tongue translations. A people must hear God speak to them in their mother-tongue. God must speak to them through the Bible translated into their mother-tongue. This means that the terminologies used in a mother-tongue Bible to convey God's message to the reading community are important. Bible translators cannot render biblical words from one language and context to another without interpreting them to fit into the religious-cultural thought pattern of the reading community. This thesis finds out how some words in the Greek New Testament have been translated in the Dangme Bible. Indeed, texts in the Dangme Bible will generate some meanings but as to whether they are the appropriate meanings is another matter.

S.J. Joubert posits that modern Bible translations are more sensitive to the needs of readers, and in the process they forget that the words of the biblical text have socio-religious meanings derived from a socio-cultural context.⁶⁹ He is of the view that the meaning of the biblical text in their socio-religious and cultural contexts must be taken into consideration by translators else they imprison and deprive modern readers of the Bible from vital information that form significant backgrounds

⁶⁸ Quarshie, "Doing Biblical Studies," 12.

⁶⁹ S.J. Joubert, No Culture Shock? Addressing The Achilles Heel of Modern Bible Translations, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002): 30-43. Joubert's point was practicalised by Harriet Hill, who conducted a field research among the Adiokrou people of Cote d' Ivoire. In this research, Hill tested several translated Bible passages, with varying amount of information supplied about the original Bible contexts to the Adiokrou people. The outcome was that the understanding of the translation increased significantly as the cultural contexts of the passages were clarified. For a discussion see Harriet Hill, *The Bible at Cultural Crossroads: From Translation to Cultural Communication* (Manchester, England: St. Jerome, 2006). Hill record the field test and results as appendices which takes more than twenty percent of the book.

to understanding a biblical text. The researcher has analysed the texts under study from their religio-cultural backgrounds in both the Graeco-Roman world and Dangme religio-cultural context (see chapters 4, 5 and 6).

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Christo H. J. van der Merwe acknowledges the complexities of language as a dynamic and complex system embedded in the culture and conceptual world of its speakers.⁷⁰ He further gives a wide range of frames that are involved in the process of Bible translation: the incongruence between the world of the Old Testament and speakers of Afrikaans, insights from the fields of cultural anthropology, cognitive linguistics and linguistic typology. He posits that these provides members of a translation team with some criteria to make informed decisions when they negotiate how the meaning of specific Biblical Hebrew constructions are to be construed “directly” in Afrikaans.⁷¹ Van der Merwe has made a very important point here about Bible translation; that the translators cannot downplay the culture of the target readers of a translated text. Culture is important in Bible translation but the extent to which it should be employed need to be considered.

Aboagye Aryeh has shown how mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics “draws Ghanaians closer to God than the use of a secondary culture and language,” by relaying the message of the Bible to the

⁷⁰ Christo H.J. van der Merwe, ‘How ‘direct’ can a direct translation be? Some perspectives from the realities of a new type of church Bible’, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* Volume 72 Number 3 (2016): 1-11.

⁷¹ Van der Merwe, “How ‘direct’ can a direct translation be?”, 1-11.

Ghanaian in his own cultural and social settings.⁷² He argues that since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew/Aramaic cultures, and New Testament was written within Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures respectively, the authors used concepts and images familiar to the original recipients of the Scriptures. He posits that, “many contemporary Jews struggle to understand some of the ideas and metaphors of their ancient forebears, due to the historical, educational, political and cultural gaps created with time by human development and civilizations.”⁷³

Ayerh’s proposition means that the availability of the Dangme Bible has paved the way for the Dangme speaking people to do biblical hermeneutics in their mother-tongue so as to bring to the fore the message of the Bible in their own cultural settings.

2.5 Mother-tongue Bibles and their Challenges

Julie Faith Parker posits that interpreters tend to blame only Eve for succumbing to temptation in the garden, even though Adam is present in Genesis 3:1-6 and shares responsibility for disobedience. His study of fifty English translations of Genesis 3:6b - “and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate” - and translation committee notes reveals that translators frequently isolate the woman by failing to translate (עִמָּה) "with her" in this verse. Even though the Hebrew word (עִמָּה) is undisputed in the MT, ancient textual witnesses, except the Vulgate, consistently

⁷² D.N.A. Aryeh, The Relevance of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in the Ghanaian context. *Journal of Applied Thought*. Volume 3 Number 2 (November 2014), 297.

⁷³ Aryeh, “The Relevance of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in the Ghanaian context”, 294.

include some version of this phrase; and grammatical reference works agree on the function and importance of $\pi\eta$. She concludes that neglecting to translate this word has important ramifications.⁷⁴ A comparative analysis of the texts under study in both the Greek New Testament and the Dangme Bible showed that, not every word in the Greek has been translated into Dangme; on the other hand, the Dangme translators had to insert some words in the translation of certain texts to make them meaningful to Dangme readers (see chapter 6).

Scott MacLochlainn examines the practice of Bible translation and the underlying sets of Christian ideologies regarding the commensurability of linguistic forms.⁷⁵ Based on ethnographic research conducted at a biannual Bible translation workshop in Mindoro, Philippines, in 2013, during which the Bible was translated into three Mangyan languages, he argues that the degree to which the actual linguistic forms in the scriptures are divinely inspired often exists as an irresolvable semiotic problem for Bible translators. Discussing the means through which the Holy Spirit is taken as an essential mediator between the fallible work of Christian translators and the Bible as a language-instantiated form of God's presence, he shows how the employment of "generic" language by Christian translators enables them to mirror and circulate the divine universality of scriptural meaning in earthly form; and concludes that, generic language can be viewed as a site in which

⁷⁴ Julie Faith Parker, "Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission and Implication of $\pi\eta$ in Genesis 3:6b", *Journal of Biblical Literature* Volume 132 Number 4 (2013): 729-747.

⁷⁵ Scott MacLochlainn, "Divinely Generic: Bible Translation and the Semiotics of Circulation", *Signs and Society* Volume 3 Number 2 (2017): 234-260.

multiple and often conflicting claims of language universality and purity are present.

MacLochlainn has said that there are semiotic problems in Bible translation.

Semiotics is the study of natural human language; it constitutes linguistics, a discipline Bible translators employ. But within linguistics is semantics which studies meaning of words by means of grammatical and lexical devices. The researcher has done a semantic analysis of the three selected texts in the New Testament of the Dangme Bible (see chapter 6).

C. H. J. van der Merwe opines that one of the difficulties in the field of Biblical Studies is that most exegetes fully agree that the source languages should play a pivotal role in the interpretation and translation of the Bible.⁷⁶ So translators make every effort to translate every word of a text, even if it does not make sense in the target language. He however cautions that since texts are more than strings of clauses, each with its own propositional content, and language has a social, cognitive and cultural dimensions, translators must take care when translating and interpreting biblical texts from the source languages into a receptor language, for not every word is translatable. Merwe's assertion has been confirmed in the researcher's analysis of the New Testament texts under study (see chapter 6).

⁷⁶ C. H. J. van der Merwe, An Overview of Recent Developments in the Description of Biblical Hebrew Relevant to Bible Translation, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002): 228-245.

B. Y. Quarshie identifies a threefold challenge that mother-tongue Scriptures pose to doing Biblical Studies in Africa namely: “the challenge of producing mother-tongue Scriptures, the challenge of studying them and that of applying them.”⁷⁷ He recounts how in Alexandria, Egypt, the first translation of Scripture was done in the third century BC – the Old Testament into Greek, known as the Septuagint – and how the translation of the Bible into mother-tongues in Africa became the order of the day during the missionary era in the nineteenth century; and how the translation of the Bible into mother-tongues has continued ever since through the work of Bible societies all over Africa.⁷⁸ He however laments over the unsatisfactory nature of these translations in his citation of Kinoti and Waliggo who say that:

Many translators chose to ignore the vital role of the local Christians in the work. What they produced is a literalist ‘transliteration’ rather than translation of meaning. Many translators had a negative attitude to African traditional religion and preferred to introduce foreign terms and expressions in their translations.⁷⁹

I do not agree totally with the point that missionary translators of the Bible into Africa mother-tongues produced literalist “transliteration(s).” Kinoti and Waliggo might have different meaning of transliteration since it is in quotation marks. Transliteration is not translation; it is rather the conversion of text from one script to another by using the alphabet of the language into which the text is being transliterated. Is it the case that the mother-tongue Bibles we have in Africa are mere transliterations of Hebrew and Greek words? There is a sense in which this is true, for example

⁷⁷ Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies”, 7.

⁷⁸ Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies”, 7.

⁷⁹ Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies”, 7. See W.H. Kinoti and J. M. Waliggo (eds.), *The Bible in African Christianity: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Nairobi: Acton, 1997), 1-2.

when it comes to the translation of names; in the Dangme Bible the Greek *Iesus* is *Yesu*, *Kristos* is *Kristo*; the Hebrew *Yhwh* is *Yawε*; but Greek *Theos* is *Mawu*. Thus, transliteration is involved in translation, but translation is not all together transliteration.

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The point that “many translators had a negative attitude to African traditional religion and preferred to introduce foreign terms and expressions in their translations”⁸⁰ is important and worth investigating. This the researcher has sought dialogue with a traditional priest and other Dangme religious adherents to inform his choice of an appropriate word for the translation of the Greek word *anoetoi* into Dangme.

B. Y. Quarshie cites A. O. Mojola who opines that the non-usage of the original language source texts, i.e. the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, but rather the usage of other translations in the major languages of the colonial powers in Africa and in Ghana, affect the quality of mother-tongue translations of the Bible.⁸¹ Thus, the mother-tongue translations of the Bible in Ghana particularly, and Africa in general, are “translations of translations!” And there is therefore the need to retranslate the mother-tongue Bibles based on the biblical languages. He further cites Kwame Bediako who posits that:

What God wants to say to any given cultural context must be located in the nuances offered by the mother-tongue Scriptures”, and that “If God speaks the mother-tongues of Africa,

⁸⁰ Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies”, 7

⁸¹ B.Y. Quarshie, Doing Biblical studies in the African context- The challenge of mother-tongue Scriptures, In J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu (ed.), *Christianity, Mission and Ecumenism in Ghana*. Essays in honour of R. Aboagye Mensah, (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009), 118. See A. O. Mojola, Bible translation in Africa. *Acta Theologica Supplementum*, Volume 2 (2002), 206-207.

then he must be heard in those languages, and that means moving beyond even the original Hebrew and Greek into what the mother-tongue Scriptures can offer by way of interpretation.⁸²

Quarshie has thus added his voice to the discussion on the re-translation and interpretation of the mother-tongue Bibles. I agree with Quarshie that the Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible are translations of translations in the sense that most of them were not translated directly from the Source Languages. The Dangme Bible is not excluded from this assertion. But what is important is its effect on readers.

Philip T. Laryea opines that exegesis in the mother-tongue is possible because the Bible has been translated into the indigenous languages of people. However, there are challenges that translators of the Bible into mother-tongues face if they see translation only as a process, and take it merely as an exercise in “grammar, linguistics and usage, whereby they look only for equivalent words, idioms and expression.”⁸³ To him, translation is not just an exercise of pairing up equivalent words and idioms and expressions in one language with similar ones in another language. It is also a theological venture that involves “the transmission of the cultural, social and religious issues, meanings, concepts and concerns from the world of the source language into the world of the receptor language.”⁸⁴ Having been enlightened by his study of Acts 14:8-17 and 17:22-31, Laryea concludes that:

⁸² Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies”, 12.

⁸³ Philip T. Laryea, Reading Acts 14:8-17 & 17:22-31 in Ga: A Critical Examination of the Issues, Meanings and Interpretations Arising from Exegesis in the Mother Tongue, *Journal of African Christian Thought* Volume 6 Number 1 (June 2003): 35.

⁸⁴ Laryea, “Reading Acts 14:8-17 & 17:22-31 in Ga”, 35.

It is perhaps exegesis in a mother-tongue like the Ga that enables us gain a firmer grasp of some dimensions of natural revelation. Reading Scriptures in the Ga enables Ga Christians to understand their faith [heməkɛyeli] in concrete historical and cultural terms as the world of the Bible connects with the religious and cultural past and present of the Ga people through the medium of the mother-tongue.⁸⁵

The researcher holds the view of Laryea that there are religio-cultural issues in the Bible which translators and interpreters should take into consideration when translating the Bible for a mother-tongue reading community. The researcher had analysed the texts under study from the Dangme Bible and found out that the new meanings they evolve, have religio-cultural implications.

Richard C. Bright documents and discusses some of the translation problems that Bible translators face.⁸⁶ Bright categorises the problems under the following headings: discourse, exegesis and text, communication, grammar, culture, lexicon, rhetoric and highlighting, receptor language and setting.⁸⁷ Bright has done well in documenting these problems. His work proves the fact that

⁸⁵ Laryea, "Reading Acts 14:8-17 & 17:22-31 in Ga", 41.

⁸⁶ Richard C. Bright, *Translation Problems from A to Z*, (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 1999), 3-4. These problems include: Accuracy in translation, ambiguity in translation, anachronism, apostrophe, assumed information, book introduction, book title, chiasms, chronological order of events, clarity of translation, cohesion/transition, collocation, comparative relation, connotation, cross-cultural mismatch, cross-reference, cultural substitute, double meaning, ellipsis, emotive focus, euphemism, figurative extension, footnote, form, front and back matter, genitive in source text, genre, glossary, hyperbole, idiom, illocutionary force, implicative influence, informative load, interpretation of source text, key biblical term, layout in receptor language, lexical correspondence, metaphor, metonymy, naturalness in translation, numbering in receptor language, Old Testament quotation, omission of information in translation, orthography issues, other grammatical relationships, parallel and allegory, participant reference, passive voice, personification, perspective/direction, picture selection, poetry, prominence, pronominal reference, proper name, relationship between relationships, relative clause, repetition, rhetorical question, section heading, simile, skewing between grammar and semantics, sociolinguistic setting, sound symbolism, speech quotation, synecdoche, tense and aspect, textual variant, theme, unknown idea, vocative, zeugma.

⁸⁷ Bright, *Translation Problems*, 5,6. For further discussion of translation problems see (1) Roy E. Ciampa, Ideological Challenges for Bible Translators, *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* Volume 139 (2011).

languages differ from one another, and so translating the Bible from a source language into a receptor language is bound to face both cultural and theological challenges.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature review has revealed that no two languages are the same and so there are bound to be interpretations, additions and omissions when a written document is being translated from one language to another. This revelation is true with Bible translation from the Source Language (SL) to a Receptor Language (RL). Whilst interpretation in Bible translation may be seen as a problem, its advantages outweighs the disadvantages in the sense that mother-tongue Bible readers want to hear God speak to them in their mother-tongues. Thus, it is important that Bible translators translate meaning instead of exact words and idioms from the SL. Translation of idioms should be done with caution to convey what the original author meant to mother-tongue readers of biblical texts.

The next chapter discusses the Dangme people – their location, history, belief systems, language and literature. This is done to situate the research which is about the Dangme Bible.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE DANGME PEOPLE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature relevant to the research. This present chapter focuses on the Dangme people – their location, history, belief systems, language and literature. This is done to establish a link between the Dangme Bible and the Dangme people.

3.2 Location of the Dangme People

The Dangme are a West African people dwelling in modern Ghana and they are about the third largest ethnic group in southern Ghana aside the Akan and Ewe.⁸⁸ Geographically, Dangme land stretches along the coast from Prampram on the west, to Ada on the east, and from the sea on the south across a very dry and sparsely-inhabited plain to the Akuapem ridge on the north.⁸⁹ The Dangme tribes are Adaa, Nugo, Gbugblaa and Kpomi near the sea, and Osudoku, Manya Klo, Yilo Klo and Sɛ in the hinterland. Manya Klo and Yilo Klo extend through the hills and forest north of Koforidua, and are quite different geographically from the rest of the Dangme tribes.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Hugo Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional, Social and Religious Life of a West African People* (Friburg: St. Paul's Press, 1973), 23.

⁸⁹ E. O. Apronti and M. E. Kropp Dakubu, "Towards a Dialect Geography of Dangme", *African e-Journals*, 35 pdf, accessed online at digital.lib.msu.edu/project/africanjournals, 18/12/17.

⁹⁰ Apronti and Kropp-Dakubu, "Towards a Dialect Geography of Dangme", 35.

3.3 Migration

The Dangmes as we know them today lived in one town and as one people in time past. When they were living together they were known as La li,⁹¹ (La people) – not the people of La[badi] in Accra as we know now.⁹²

⁹¹ The claim that Dangme people were known as La li, La people is also substantiated by certain Dangme names of the Suisi clan at Many Kɔ. The first male-born of the clan is Late, the second is Lanɔ, and the third Tɛla. In the case of females, they are named as Laako, Lakuɔ and Lamle; it is interesting how La begins each of the names. Alternatively, the first three male- borns are named Tɛte, Tete and Tɛɛ; and the females Dede, Kɔkɔ and Maamle. These are more general names among the Dangme; they do not pertain to any particular clan.

⁹² Even though there are no written records to substantiate this claim, some Klama songs bear witness to that effect. Klama is not just a dance, the lyrics ascribe its importance. The lyrics which are mostly in proverbs, and hard to understand reveal the history, wisdom and philosophy of the Dangme people. Three of such songs are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>Kabu ke, a de Ometse</i> | Kabu says, tell Ometse |
| <i>Ke [e] yo ngɛ La.</i> | And his wife at La. |
| (b) <i>A kpa ngɛ Zago</i> | There was a shout at Zago |
| <i>Nɛ a nu ngɛ La.</i> | Which was heard at La. |
| (c) <i>Lasii [La li] aklama a</i> | The klama of the La people |
| <i>Pi bi yokwɛ do lo?</i> | Is it not a dance for young girls? |

The names of certain Dangme towns – Lasibi, Ladoku, and Laklɛku - also prove the point that the Dangme people were originally called La li. Thus, the old names of the eight Dangme tribes are:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. La Okɔ | - Adaa |
| 2. La Sibi | - Nugo |
| 3. La Kplɛ | - Gbugblaa |
| 4. La Kplɛku | - Kpomi |
| 5. La Sɛku | - Sɛ |
| 6. La Aklo | - Yilo Kɔ |
| 7. La Aklo Nɔwɛsi | - Many Kɔ |
| 8. La Gbɛse/La nɔ | - Osudoku. |

For a discussion see O. Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No* (It makes you a Dangme), unpublished Dangme lecture notes, Ada Training College; trans., J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor.

According to D. A. Puplampu, the La li (La people) lived together in a town called Same in Nigeria, near the tributary of the Niger River in the north.⁹³ B. D. Teyegaga says that wars which broke out in the middle of the fifteenth to the early part of the sixteenth century (1600-1700 A. D.) resulted in the break-down of the Sudanic Empires which led to the movement of people from the grasslands to seek shelter in the forest regions of West Africa. As a result the La li were attacked by the Balalulu tribe in the neighbourhood and drove them out from Same.⁹⁴ When they got to Dahomey, now Benin, they headed towards Huatsi in Togoland during the reign of King Agokoli who was very wicked.⁹⁵ He enslaved them for a number of years and they worked for him. It got to a time when the La li could not tolerate his wickedness any longer so they ran away and crossed the Volta River⁹⁶ between Kpoom (Kpong) and Akuse, and settled on the grassland known as Tagologo.⁹⁷ They stayed there for over a hundred years, and established forty towns and a host of villages around them.

As to how the La li became known as Dangme li – Dangme people – history has it that in the course of their journey from Huatsi, the La li met some Ewes, who when they saw how the La li were courageous and fearless, gave them the name “Adawo” meaning courageous and fearless people, and they called their language “Adawogbe”. The La li were happy with this name, but

⁹³ D. A. Puplampu, *Dangme Munyu Tubo*, (n.p., 1953).

⁹⁴ B. D. Teyegaga, *Dipo Custom and the Christian Faith* (Odumase Krobo: Zaraphat, 1985), 11.

⁹⁵ T. T. Terkperter, *Dangme Blebo No* (Odumase Krobo: Universal Printing Press, n.d.), 8; trans., J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor.

⁹⁶ Tradition has it that where the La li actually crossed the river Volta was between the town of Lasibi on the right and Latrikuma on the left.

since it was not their language and found it difficult to pronounce, they called themselves “Adagbe” which has now become “Dangme” and Dangme li – Dangme people.⁹⁷

In their towns and villages at Tagologo, the Dangme li (Dangme people) began to spread because of a dispute revolving around a woman whose name is shrouded in mystery.⁹⁸ The dispute according to Dangme history was between the La[badi] people who were part of the La li initially, and the Sɛ (Shai) people. Tetteh Amakwata, the chief linguist of Yilo Klo says that the Dangme elders met to settle the dispute but to no avail. So the La[badi] people consulted the people of Akwamu who helped them to wage war against the Dangme people. The Dangme people were defeated and their towns, including their capital Klekpe, and villages were burnt down. The leader of the Dangme people known as Laanimɔ ɔ was killed. A summary of that war is found in the Klama song which says:

Laanimɔ be we he The leader of the La people was not in the house

Nɛ mumui ye ngma kɛ tsu And a dumb person ate a whole barn of millet.

The war frightened the Dangme people. They interpreted it as “the love among them was finished” that was why things happened that way, so they called their new settlement Lɔlɔvɔ, an Ewe term meaning, ‘love is finished’. The Dangme people realised that their new settlement was not safe as

⁹⁷ Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ*, 9.

⁹⁸ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 3-4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ*, .9-10.

they could easily be attacked by enemies. So they began to look for safe abodes. They migrated according to tribes.⁹⁹

La Sɛku which is the present day Sɛ (Shai) people who were at the centre of the cause of the war between the Dangme on one side and the La[badi] and Akwamu on the other side, headed towards the Volta River on the east as far as to Togo, to a place called Sɛkoje. The remaining headed towards the Sɛ mountains to hide. On the mountain they established twenty-two villages. They stayed on the mountain till the then Colonial Government disturbed them and they moved to Kɔdiabɛ, Dɔyumu and Dodowa.¹⁰⁰

Manya Klo and Yilo Klo went onto the Klo Mountain. Nana Klowɛki, their leader who led them from Asikpe through Same, sent two priest hunters, Muase and Madja to explore the mountain for possible place of habitation. Their report confirmed its suitability so the tribe moved up the mountain and settled there. Those who settled far on the mountain became known as Yilo Klo; and those who settled at the foot of the mountain became Manya Klo. They stayed there till they were evicted in July 1892 by the then Colonial Governor, William Griffith.¹⁰¹ When they

⁹⁹ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 3-4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo No*, 10-11.

¹⁰⁰ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 3-4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo No*, 10-11.

¹⁰¹ Teyegaga, *Dipo Custom and the Christian Faith*, 53.

descended the mountain they went to settle at the present day Nuaso, Manyakpongunor, Odumase, Somanya and Sra.¹⁰²

The Adaa li journeyed into the Oko forest between Goi and Anyamami. They spread further to Okogmleku and Togleku. From there they went to Gomi and finally settled at Big Ada.¹⁰³ The Adaa li are an admixture of at least three distinct ethnic groups namely, Dangme, Akan and Ewe. Descendants of the Dangme group are the clans of Adibiawe, Lomobiawe, Tekperbiawe and Dangmebiawe; those of the Akan groups are Kabiawe-tsu, Kabaiwe-yumu and Kabiawe-kpono; and those from the Ewe groups are Kudjragbe, Korgbor, and Ohuewem.¹⁰⁴

The Osudoku tribe did not go far. From Tagologo (Accra Plains), they journeyed to settle at Gbesi and Lanɔ, which are currently the two divisional homes of the Osudoku people.¹⁰⁵ Some people from Gbesi and Lanɔ live at the present day towns, Akuse and Asutsuare.

¹⁰² Huber, *The Krobo*, 34.

¹⁰³ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo No*, 12.

¹⁰⁴ C. O. C. Amate, *The Making of Ada* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 1999), xii.

¹⁰⁵ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo No*, 12.

The Kpomi, Nugo and Gbuglaa tribes joined the La[badi] people who waged war with the Dangmes to Nyanaose. They later left the La[badi] people at Nyanaose to their present abode – Kpone, Ningo and Prampram, where they established small villages.¹⁰⁶

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The dispersal of the Dangme tribes made them share boundaries with other tribes and this has brought differences in the Dangme language. Those who share boundaries with the Ewe have some Ewe mixed with their dialect, for example, the Adaa; those who are near the Ga speaking tribes have some Ga mixed with their dialect, for example – Nugo, Gugblaa, Kpomi; similarly, those who share boundary with the Akan have some Akan terms mixed with their dialect, for example, the Klo and Sɛ. Thus, Dangme as we have it now has traces of Ewe, Ga and Akan terminologies in it.

In spite of the traces of other languages in Dangme, the Dangme area is recognized as being culturally and linguistically closely knit.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 4; Terkpertey, *Dangme Blebo No*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Apronti and Kropp-Dakubuu, "Towards a Dialect Geography of Dangme", 36.

3.4 The world-view of the Dangme people¹⁰⁸

World-view is the set of assumptions and presumptions that a person holds consciously or unconsciously about how they perceive reality.¹⁰⁹ It provides a group of people with the much-needed foundation for behaviour, thought and assumptions which govern how they live. It is the underlying set of ideas that enables people to cope with life in a given culture.¹¹⁰ Thus a people's worldview is the basis of how they perceive the world; and understand and interpret reality. It is what unravels the underlying complexity of life.¹¹¹ The basic themes that constitute the worldview of the Dangme are: belief in God and spirits; belief in where human beings come from and where they will return after death; belief in community; and belief in witchcraft and anti-social magic.

¹⁰⁸ The background and worldview of a people are important when one is interpreting the Bible for them. The researcher has indicated (3.9) that he will compare the Dangme translations of the texts under study with the Ga, Ewe, Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi, and Fante translations- translations he reads and understands, and speaks, though not perfectly. Since the focus of the research is the Dangme Bible, he has presented in this work, the background and worldview of the Dangme. For discussions on the background and worldviews of the other tribes cited in the thesis, see, K. Nkansa Kyeremateng, *The Akans of Ghana: Their Customs, History and Institutions* (Bepong Kwahu GH: Sebewie Publishers, 2008); Rebecca Yawa Ganusah, *Christ Meets the Ewe-Dome of Ghana* (Accra: Legon Theological Studies/Asempa Publishers, 2008); John Kuada & Yao Chachah, *Ghana: Understanding the People and their Culture* (Accra: Woeli Publishers, 1999).

¹⁰⁹ Robert Kurka, "Comments on World View", In: *Global Civilization, Ancient World: Reader*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1. William L. Osborn and Ralph D. Winter, eds. 11A (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2004); see also J. W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 2nd ed. (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 17.

¹¹⁰ Charles H. Kraft, "Culture, Worldview and Contextualization," In: *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd ed., Ralph D. Winter and Stephen C. Hawthorne, eds. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 385, 387.

¹¹¹ William L. Osborn, "Introduction to World View", In: *Global Civilization, Ancient World: lessons Overviews*, 2nd ed., William L. Osborn and Ralph D. Winter, eds., 11 (Pasadena: William Carry Library, 1988).

3.4.1 Belief in God and spirits

The Dangme believe in God Almighty. Their belief in God is seen in proverbs, songs, sayings, pouring of libation, stories, and in many other things. Belief in God is not debatable among the Dangme. They give respect to God and so do not mention His name anyhow. When something happens to someone and a Dangme mentions the name of God, then it means the matter is not an ordinary one.¹¹²

Like any other African indigenous group of people, *noko tsɔɔ we jokueyo Mawu*, meaning “nobody teaches a child about God”. The Dangme know God is omnipotent so they say *Mawu ji ngua*, and some people even use this maxim as names. They know that everything we receive in this world is from God. This assertion is confirmed in a song which says, *Atonokosi, Mawu lɛ ha ke ma fiɛ he*. This song is a lullaby. *Atonokosi* in this context means baby. Thus the song means “my baby, it is God who has given to me”. The belief of the Dangme is that God is Omnipresent, He is everywhere. They call Him *Nyingmo* or *Mawu*, meaning, Almighty God, anywhere they need Him, and they invoke Him through libation prayer. The Dangme know that God is strong and full of glory, so they call Him *Ongmo*. His name *Openɔsa* means that He is different from other deities. Mawu neither has a shrine nor priest. This is seen in the saying, *noko li Mawu nya ba*, meaning “nobody knows the means to reach God”. The Dangme call God *Tsakoetsɛ*, meaning He cares.

¹¹² Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 5.

They recognize the earth as the wife of God. They address God as *Tsatsɛ Mawu kɛ eyo Zugba zu*, meaning “Father God and his wife the Earth”. The logic here is that if God is our Father, then the Earth who feeds us and provides our needs must be our Mother, and our Father’s wife.¹¹³ One other belief that the Dangme people have about God is that He is bigger than everybody and everything. Thus, when they want to approach him and put their request before Him they pass it through *Jemeawɔhi* (*Jeme li a wɔhi*), the gods of the ancestors and of clans and households who are believed to bless and protect people.¹¹⁴ The *jemeawɔ ɔmɛ* are spirits but they manifest themselves physically in trees, rivers, the sea, fearful animals. This explains why some of these physical objects are worshipped.

3.4.2 Belief in community

The Dangme believe in community as a pattern of social grouping. The Dangme community is both physical and spiritual. It is made up of the living who are in the physical world (*ni hi ne a he nge*); the living dead (*ni hi ne a gbo*), and those yet to be born (*ni hi ne a kpako a ma fɔ mɛ*). The living are in this physical world (*ni hi ne a he ngeɔ nge je ne ɔ mi*); the dead are in the world of the dead (*ni ne a gbo ɔ mɛ nge gbeje; gbo gboe hi a je*); those yet to be born are in the spiritual

¹¹³ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, Otsiamɛ Ngua (Chief Linguist) of Yilo Krobo, July 27, 2010 at his residence in Somanya.

¹¹⁴ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 5.

world (*ni hi ne a kpako a ma ɔ me ɔ nge huanimi*). The belief is that these three separate communities are one; whatever happens in one affects the others.¹¹⁵

The largest physical community among the Dangme is called *wetso* (family tree). It stands for an original *nene kansua* (patrilineal kinship group) which has grown to a large tree, or a plurality of such groups, united under one name. *Kasi* is the next largest community among the Dangme. Etymologically it means “people eating from the same dish”, that is, people who accord each other unlimited hospitality. It is a patrilineal group of many spans. *We* is the smallest community among the Dangme. It means a “home” or “house.” Members of a *we* are called *webii*. Each *weis* headed by the most senior kinsman of the oldest living generation, regardless whether his father was the first-born or not. This is confirmed by the saying, *we fεε we ɔ nɔkɔtɔma nge mi* (each “house has an elder). Several *we* in a *kasi* form *weku*. The *wetso yi*, *kasi yi*, and *wekuyi* (the elders in charge of the *wetso*, *kasi* and *weku*), are all connected with the *nimeli* (ancestors of the various Dangme social groupings, on whose laps they sit and act). They arbitrate in family issues, and take decisions with other elderly people on behalf of the *nimeli ɔ me* (ancestors). Whatever consensus they arrive at in matters concerning family members and properties, the *wetso yi*, *kasi yi*, and *wekuyi* (the elders in charge of the *wetso*, *kasi* and *weku*), inform the *nimeli ɔ me* through *telimi* (the pouring of libation). Thus, the Dangme believe that there is a connection between the living and the dead.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

The mindset of indigenous Dangme people is that it is difficult to do something successfully without informing God, the gods and the ancestors.¹¹⁶

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The following is an example of a libation prayer for the protection of pregnant women known as *mi nɔ kpa fɔmi aloo hɔ kpa womi*:

Eee mwɔnɛɔ So, Sotsɛmɛ a So

TsatsɛMawu kɛ E yo Zugba zu

Wa Jemeawɔhi tsuo pɛpɛɛɛ

Wa nimeli

Nyɛ ba he da nyɛɛ nu!

Nɛ nyɛ ba ʒɔɔ wɔ!

Nɛ jokuɛyo nɛ ngɔ hɔ nɛɔ

Nɛ a kɛ ba nɛɔ yi nɛ na wa mi

Kpa ji nɛɔ nɛ

Nɛ i kɛ ngɛ hɔɔ nɔ fɔɛ

Nɛ e wa

Konɛ kɛ e ma fɔɔ,

Gbe ko nu e he ,

Nɛ to ko nu e he,

Nɛ e fɔ kpoo!

Eee today Thursday of Thursday borns

Father God and His wife the earth

All our deities

Our ancestors

Come for drink and drink!

And bless us!

So that this woman who is pregnant,

Who has been brought should be protected.

This is string

Which I am putting on the pregnancy

So that it will grow

So that when she is about to deliver,

A dog should not hear about her,

A goat should not hear about her,

But that she should deliver in peace!¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 23; trans., J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor.

3.4.3 Belief in the Origin of Humanity and Afterlife

It is the belief of the Dangme that God created human beings, and they came from a place called *Huanimi*. It is only God who has control over *Huanimi* and He sends human beings from there to this world. All human beings have family members at *Huanimi*. This means that a man has his father, mother, wife, family members and friends at *Huanimi*. Similarly, a woman has her parents, husband, family members and friends there.¹¹⁸

The Dangme belief is that before one is conceived, there are certain things one must do to open the way for one to come to this world, and to have a blessed stay. One's *klaa*, soul asks for permission from one's family members before one comes to this world, and bid them farewell. If it happens that some of the family members do not grant one permission, one's conception becomes difficult; and even if one's conception takes place and is born into this world, one lives in the world with a lot of difficulties. One may come to this world all right but will often fall sick, and will not progress in life.¹¹⁹

The farewell message one gives to one's family members at *Huanimi* is called *sesɛɛ*. It has to do with the number of years one is coming to this world to spend, the sort of work one will do, the

¹¹⁸ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹⁹ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

sort of man or woman one will marry, the number of children one will have, the sort of life one will live in this world and how one will die.¹¹⁰

It is the *klaa*, soul of a person that brings a person into this world. A person's *klaa* is that person's *susuma* "spirit" which accompanies that person on the day of his or her birth. A person's *klaa* is the person himself or herself; it never dies.¹¹¹

The Dangme belief is that some women who marry and do not have children is as a result of their *sɛsɛɛ* – the sort of farewell permission they asked from their family members at *Huanimi*. Similarly, there are some men who marry two or three wives and none of them gives birth; this is attributed to their *sɛsɛɛ*. When such things happen, an elder in the family consults oracles and invokes the *klaa* of such a person, and if it is discovered that the problem is from the person's *Huanimi* family, a *toɔ gbetsi loo a yiɔ musu*, that is, rituals are performed to remove the *gbetsi*, the bad omen, and to make peace with the *Huanimi* family members, to allow the person in question to live a "normal" life, and to progress in the world.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹¹ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹² Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

Just as the Dangme belief is that a human being came from somewhere into this world, similarly the belief is that he or she has somewhere to go after life in this world. One's return from this world depends on the sort of farewell permission one asked at *Huanimi* before coming into this world, so when one asks that one will live for a day on earth, the very day one is born one dies. When one asks for ninety years, one will live that period of time on earth.¹¹³

The Dangme believe that it is the *nɔmlɔ tso*, body of a person that dies, but the *susuma*, spirit returns to a place where everyone will go one day. Thus, there is a Dangme saying that *Gbenɔ gba yi tso kpasaa we si nɛ he kake*, meaning, “the ladder of death is not at one place”.¹¹⁴

One's *susuma* that leaves one when one dies is called *kpade* which never dies. It goes to a place called *Gbeje*. The Dangme believe that *Gbeje* is far away beyond the sea, and it is only when the *kpade* is made to cross that it can get there. This belief is evidenced by a libation prayer which says, *Ke o ya a, daw o kɛwo kpongɔ nɔ, nɛ o gbaa wɔ*, meaning “when you get there, stand at the beach and on a higher ground and bless us”. Similarly, before the commencement of the funeral of a Dangme it is said, *wa yaa po lɛpa*, literally meaning “we are going to cross him to the other side of the river”. This means that when the funeral rites have been performed, the way is cleared for the *kpade* to cross over to *Gbeje*.

¹¹³ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹⁴ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

The Dangme believe that all people who leave this world as *kpadehi* for *Gbeje* render account of their stay in the physical world. Thus, when one was on earth and one did good to people, one would render account of one's good deeds. Similarly, those who did not use their stay on earth for wicked acts, will render account based on what they did.¹¹⁵

It is important here to say that the Dangme believe that *kpadehi*, ghosts have special powers for good and evil. When one wrongs a *kpade* one is punished by that *kpade* unless one pleads for mercy and makes peace with it. Similarly, it is believed that the *kpade* has power to bless people with good things. Thus the Dangme are afraid of ghosts; and at the same time give them respect.¹¹⁶

The respect is evidenced in the following libation prayer:

<i>Eee mwɔnɛɔ So, Sotsemɛ a So</i>	Eee today Thursday of Thursday borns
<i>TsatɛMawu kɛ E yo Zugba zu</i>	Father God and His wife the earth
<i>Wa Jemeawɔhi tsuo</i>	All our deities
<i>Nɛnɛ Opuebe kɛ Naana Egbamɛ</i>	Nɛnɛ Opuebe and Naana Egbame
<i>Nyɛ ba he da nyɛɛ nu...</i>	Come for drink and drink...

Because of the belief that ghosts have powers, the Dangme do not joke with the dead. If they are not handled properly, they will cause havoc. Thus, the legacies of dead people are handled with care; so are the children they leave behind. It is believed that ghosts know all that happens in this world, and they are very particular about what happens to their children, and properties. It is also

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Personal interview with Nene Amakwata, July 27, 2010.

believed that ghosts reveal themselves to people and communicate with them. In Dangme such people are called *ni peeli*, soothsayers.¹¹⁷

3.4.4 Belief in witchcraft and anti-social magic

The Dangme believe in the existence of *hiali* or *azetsɛme* (witches) and *nyuali* (sorcerers) who are the cause of every misfortune in life. Both men and women are accused of being a *hialɔ* or *azetsɛ* – a person *nɛ yɛɔ nɔmlɔ* (who eats others) or *nɛ nuu nɔmlɔ muɔ* (who drinks someone's blood). The *hiali* or *azetsɛme* (witches) *ngɛ kaa kɔhiɔ* (they are like the wind); their souls fly at night; nobody can see them except a *wɔtsɛ* (ritual expert).¹¹⁸

A *nyualɔ*, is like a *hialɔ*, regarded as an enemy of private and public welfare. The Dangme often say, *kɛ ogbete gbo ɔ, kaka we he jɔ* (When a wolf dies, peace comes to the house), thus expressing in metaphorical language, that all inmates of a house draw a deep breath on hearing that one among

¹¹⁷ Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*, 7-9, trans., Kuwornu-Adjaottor.

¹¹⁸ Huber, *The Krobo*, 279.

them whose malicious activities they have been afraid of is dead.¹¹⁹ A *nyualɔ* operates by means of *ho-kpaa*,¹²⁰ *zene*¹²¹ and *ti*.¹²²

Because of the belief of the existence of *hiali* or *azetsɛme* (witches) and *nyuali* (sorcerers) who are the cause of every misfortune in life, in Dangme communities there are *tsupa-tsɛmɛ* (owners or dealers in medicine) whose main work is to counteract the activities of witches and sorcerers. They usually have what is literally known as medicine-shrines in the courtyards of their compounds or somewhere nearby. It consists of a set of sacred pots and dishes filled with medicine - water, either resting on the ground or in the branches of specifically planted medicinal shrubs. At times one also finds peculiar therapeutic herbs planted in pot-like basins. Often the whole set-up is given a name to express the “greatness” of the *tsupa-tse*.¹²³

The world-view of the Dangme is intrinsically intertwined with their culture and religion. It tells them that the world is both physical and spiritual; God the Creator of the world is far away and at

¹¹⁹ Huber, *The Krobo*, 279.

¹²⁰ Literally, “fibre of a *ho* tree; it has this name because originally such a fibre was used for preparing it. Presently other strings are regarded as good enough. Each *ho-kpaa* has a name, eg., *Kokonadu*, *Seduma*, *Awakpe*. This effigy remains in the house of the *nyualɔ* and any time he or she wants to cause confusion in the life of somebody, he or she performs some rituals and mentions the victim’s name and his or her wishes are done.

¹²¹ A *zene* is made up of earthenware, either in the form of a potter’s wheel or a miniature pot which has been pierced all over the bottom. It is buried in the land of the intended victim, and the curse is usually pronounced while the curse is being done.

¹²² The *ti* is “black powder” which consists of peculiar leaves that have been crushed and roasted; it is spread near the entrance of a person’s house, with a pronouncement from the *nyualɔ*.

¹²³ Huber, *The Krobo*, 279.

the same time in the midst of his creation; the spirits and mystical powers have a role to play in the affairs of human beings.

3.6 The Dangme Language

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There are thirty letters forming the Dangme alphabet known as *gbi pɛmi*. These are: A(a) B(b) D(d) E(e) Ɛ(ɛ) F(f) G(g) GB (gb) H(h) I(i) J(j) K(k) KP(kp) L(l) M(m) N(n) NG (ng) NGM (ngm) NY(ny) O (o) ɔ(ɔ) P(p) S(s) T(t) TS (ts) U(u) V(v) W(w) Y(y) Z(z).

The Dangme alphabet has seven vowels, seventeen single consonants and six cluster consonants. The vowels are letters which can be pronounced on their own. The consonants are letters of the alphabet which cannot be pronounced on their own without an accompanying vowel. The Dangme vowels are: A(a) E(e) Ɛ(ɛ) I(i) O(o) ɔ(ɔ) U(u). The single consonants are: B(b) D(d) G(g) H(h) J(j) K(k) L(l) M(m) N(n) P(p) S(s) T(t) V(v) W(w) Y(y) Z(z). The cluster consonant are: GB(gb) KP(kp) NGM(ngm) NY(ny) TS(ts).

The Dangme language is tonal, and changes in meaning of words may be brought about by tonal difference.¹²⁴ Dangme has eight dialects represented by Manya Klo, Yilo Klo, Sɛ, Osudoku, Kpomi, Gbugblaa, Nugo and Adaa. These dialects have variations in terms of pronunciation of

¹²⁴ *Language Guide (Dangme Version)* (Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1990), 5.

certain words and the use of certain terminologies but are understood by all. Some linguistic characteristics of the various Dangme dialects are:

Klo (Manya and Yilo): The Klo dialect runs fast. According to tradition, when the various Dangme tribes went their separate ways at Loloɔ, the Klo tribe climbed the Klo yoo (Krobo Mountain) with speed; hence, the fastness of their dialect. For example, the Dangme word for the English “because” is *lo* – short in pronunciation. The dialect is also mixed with Akan, specifically, Akuapem-Twi and Akyem-Twi because when they descended from the Mountain, to their present abode, they shared, and still share boundaries with the Akuapem and the Akyem. An example is the word *wɔfa*, an Akan word in the Klo dialect which means uncle. They have also *afase (wɔfase)*, meaning nephew or niece.

Sɛ: The Sɛ dialect unlike the Klo is not fast; it is slow. The reason given is that when they left Loloɔ, somewhere on the present Accra Plains, they did not go far before settling at their present destinations – Agomeda, Ayikuma, Dodowa. For example, in the Sɛ dialect, the English word “because” is *loɔ* – long in the sense that the *ɔ* is prolonged in pronunciation, and doubled in writing. Because the Sɛ share boundary with the people of Larteh who speak Guan, which is a difficult dialect, the former is not able to pick the language of the latter though, but they have been able to copy some of their songs. This is evident during the festival of the Sɛ tribe. Some of their songs on festive occasions have traces of the Guan dialect. On the other hand, most people living at Larteh can understand and speak the Sɛ dialect, perhaps because it is easier.

Osudoku: The Osudoku dialect like the Sɛ is also slow in terms of speech; the reason given is that from Lɔlɔvɔ it took them a short time to settle at their present home, Gbese and Lanor. But unlike the Sɛ, the Osudoku dialect prolongs words. For example, while the Kɔ will say *lɔ*, and the Sɛ will say *lɔɔ*, a person from Osudoku will say *lɔɔ he je ɔ*, meaning, “because of that”. Tradition has it that the Osudoku dialect is the purest of all the Dangme dialects because from Lɔlɔvɔ (literally, “love is finished”), the Osudoku tribe did not mix with any other tribe. The picture is a little different now, especially at the Asutsuare area, where as a result of fishing, sand winning and the oyster industry, people from Volivo and Battor (Ewe communities) have mixed up with some of the Osudoku towns presently. Thus Osudoku people in towns like Akuse, Kotoko, Asutsuare, understand and can speak some Ewe, which has some influence on the way they speak the Osudoku dialect.

Kpomi and Gbugblaa: From Lɔlɔvɔ the Kpomi and Gbugblaa tribes moved to the coast and settled at their present homes, thus sharing boundaries with the Ga people. Dialects have been influenced by the Ga dialect. It is said that the Kpomi tribe speak Dangme in the morning and Ga in the afternoon. That the Kpomi and Gbugblaa dialects have been influenced by the Ga is evident in the terminologies they use for certain things. If we take the word “because” which is *lɔ* in Kɔ, *lɔɔ* in Sɛ, *lɔɔ he je ɔ* in Osudoku, is *ejaakaa* in Kpomi and Gbugbla. *Ejaakaa* is an adulterated form of *ejaake* in the Ga language. Two of the Dangme tribes Nugo and Ada, use the word *ejakaa* to mean “because of”. Another proof of influence of the Ga on the Kpomi and Gbugbla dialects is the word *shina*, “door”, which is *sinya* in the rest of the Dangme dialects.

Nugo: Like the Kpomi and Gbugbla tribes, the Nugo from Lɔlɔvɔ also moved to the coast but a bit far from Ga. Even though they celebrate Homowo as the Ga people, linguistically, they have not been influenced much by the Ga language. The Nugo dialect compared with that of Kɔ is also slow. Speakers repeat and drag some words. If we take our example *lɔ* in Krobo, the Nugo will say *lɔ lɔ he*, a shorter form of the Osudoku *lɔ he je*.

Adaa: From Lɔlɔvɔ, the Adaa tribe went to Okɔ whemi (the Okɔ forest), near Togbloku. From there they settled at Adaa wemi, (Big Ada), which is near the Volta River. Thus they share boundary with the Tongu people who also live along the Volta River. They are closer to Tongu towns like Mepe, Sogakope, Gaave, Tefle, and Dabalaa, whose mother-tongue is Ewe. One of the characteristics of indigenous Adaa people is that they understand some amount of Ewe because of trade between the two ethnic groups. There are some Adaa names that are typical Ewe names, example, Kuwornu (*e ku e wɔ num*), meaning “death has done me something”; Peku, (*e ngu nɛ kpe ku*), “shame unto death”; Wuddah, (*a me wu e da*), “a human being supersedes a snake”; Adjaottor (*adja po tɔ*), “a person on whom morning dew has fallen”; Kudadji (*ku da dji*), “death has told a lie” – it cannot have the upper hand; Kuduovor (*ku du vɔ*), “death has eaten up”; Vondi (*vɔ di*), “living in fear”. Thus the Adaa dialect is influenced by the Ewe language, and there are words in the Adaa dialect which come from the Ewe, examples being *kusii* (basket); *agbitsa* (garden egg); *adiba* (pawpaw), *Mawu* (God), *agbeli* (cassava), *akɔdu* (banana), *atɔtɔ* (pineapple), *afani* (oyster), *kpakpahe* (duck). Another remarkable linguistic characteristic if we take our

example, of *lo* “because” which runs through the other Dangme dialects except Kpomi and Gbugblaa is that the Adaa people begin the word with *k*. Thus they say *kɔlɔ* *he* “because of”.

3.7 Dangme Literature

The earliest attempts at literary works in Dangme were done by Enoch Azu (“Dangme Historical Songs (Klama) and Dangme Proverbs”); D. A. Puplampu (“Dangme Munyu Tubɔ”, “Mɔmɔyɔ”, “An Adangme Script”, “A Grammar of Dangme”); T. N. N. Accam (“Klama Songs and Chants”, “Adangme Vocabularies”).¹²⁵

D. A. Puplampu came up with a suggestion for a Dangme orthography which included the use of *c*, *j*, and *ng* for the Ga *tɕ*, *dz* and *ŋ* characters. Later when the United Bible Translation Committee decided to publish the Bible in Dangme, and the Government at the time approved the teaching of Dangme in schools in the Dangme areas, the question arose as to whether Ga and Dangme should both use the same orthography. It was at this point that the Institute of African Studies, Legon, was invited to advise on Ga and Dangme orthography. After a careful examination, the Institute found out that the two orthographies were different and for practical purposes a compromise was struck

¹²⁵ The Book of the Prophet Jonah and a very short two-stanza hymn (No. 343) in the Presbyterian Ga Hymn Book is said to have been translated by the Basel Missionary K. Reindorf in 1867 (Dangme Ngami Bɔ, Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1977), 1. There were several efforts by several individuals many of which never went beyond the manuscript stage. There are a few extant works in manuscript form by various individuals. Examples are, Enoch Azu’s translation of the whole Bible into Dangme, B. B. Puplampu’s (later known as Nɛnɛ Adi Buer II) translation of the liturgy of the Presbyterian Church and Ga Hymn Book in Dangme, as well as several original religious poems which were written to be sung to popular hymn tunes. All these works used the Ga orthography that was used to write the Ga School Primers of the latter part of the 19th century and to produce the Ga translation of the Bible.

between the two. Thus, Dangme orthography dropped the c and dz but retained j, ts, and ng; while Ga retained ŋ and dropped tf so that the only difference between the two orthographies is the use of ng by Dangme and ŋ for the Ga. After the final decision on the orthographies, representatives of the Institute of African Studies, Legon, and the Bureau of Ghana Languages and the Dangme Bible Translation Committee¹²⁶ met in 1969 and decided on a set of rules of spelling.¹²⁷

Dangme publications after the committee's report include: John N. Nanor, *Dede Yomɔ* (1970); J. Abedi-Boafo, *Dangme Nyaii* (1971); Edwin N. Tetteh, *Buajɔmi Sanehi Kome* (1972); id., *E Baa Ja Daa*, (1974); T. N. N. Accam, *Dangme Abe Gbi* (1972); id., *Dangme Klama Proverbs* (1972); W. B. Lomo-Tettey, (1975); *Dangme Ngmami Bɔ* (1977); *Language Gudie, Dangme Version* (1977); J. M. T. Dosoo, *Ajesiwɔ*, (1991). All these were published in Accra by the Bureau of Ghana Languages. Other published Dangme books are: E. Amprong Agbozo, *Dangme Kanemi Womi, Sisije Hepielɔ* 1A (1975), Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation; *Waa Kane Ni 1 & 2* (2005), Accra: Literacy International/Bible Society of Ghana; Emmanuel T. Atterh, *Nyasa Kpɛɛ*, Winneba: Department of Ghanaian Languages Education, (n.d.); *Ghana Presbyterian Asafo Sɔlemi La Womi* (2013), Accra: Waterville Publishing House. *Ghana Presbyterian Asafo Jami He Blɔ Nɔ*

¹²⁶ Members of the Committee are as follows: J. R. Ablorh-Odjidja, Presbyterian Book Depot, Accra (Chairman); Edwin N. Tetteh, Bureau of Ghana Languages, Accra (Secretary); E. O. Apronti, Institute of African Studies, Legon (Member); T. N. N. Accam, Accra (Member); Emil B. Pupplampu, Academy of Arts & Sciences, Accra (Member); Nânâ Bana Atrokpa I, Ghana Education Service, Dodowa (Member). Co-opted Members: J. N. Nanor, Bureau of Languages, Accra; V. E. Asante, Bureau of Languages, Accra; L. A. Narteh, Bureau of Ghana Languages, Accra; T. Apronti, Institute of African Studies, Legon; Mabel Pecku, Ghana Education Service, Accra; J. M. T. Dosoo, Ghana Education Service, Ada-Foah; J. Abedi-Boafo, School of Ghana Language, Ajumako (*Dangme Ngami Bɔ* (The Writing of Dangme) (Accra: Bureau of Languages, 1977), 3.

¹²⁷ *Dangme Ngami Bɔ* (The Writing of Dangme), 1-2.

Tomi Womi: Sitomi Mlaa amɛ (Ordinance) (2015), Accra: Presbyterian Press. *Ghana Presbyteria Asafo Jami He Blɔ Nɔ Tomi Womi* (Ordinance) (2015), Accra: Presbyterian Press.

The following are some Dangme unpublished works in manuscript form: J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor & I. K. Narteh, *Hla Nile Se Blɔ*; T. O. Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No*; T. T. Terkperley, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ*; Jacob T. Kwenor, *Masu Glɛ Kpanaa (Masu Mi Nile Blɔ)*; P. K. Djabatey, *Dangme Fitsoo*; Methodist Church, Ghana, *Jami He Blɔnya To Mi*; M. E. Kropp Dakubu, *Dangme-English Dictionary with English-Dangme Glossary*; Ghana Presbyteria Asafo *Jami He Blɔnya To Mi*.

Regarding Christian Scriptures there is the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* (The Dangme Full Bible, Accra: BSG/UBS, 1999); there are also two translations of the New Testament in Dangme, *Somi Heɔ* (The Dangme New Testament, Accra:BSG/UBS, 1977), and *Wami Munyuɔ, Somi He ɔ Kɛ La amɛ* (Living New Testament and Psalms, Accra: IBS, 1997).¹²⁸ The Mainline churches in Dangmeland – Prebyterian, Methodist and Catholic Churches – have translated part of their liturgies from the English and Ga into Dangme; hymn books are being translated into Dangme. Indigenous Dangme preachers use Dangme to preach; non Dangme speakers preach in Akan, Ewe, Ga, and English and is translated into Dangme. There are no Study Bible and Bible commentaries

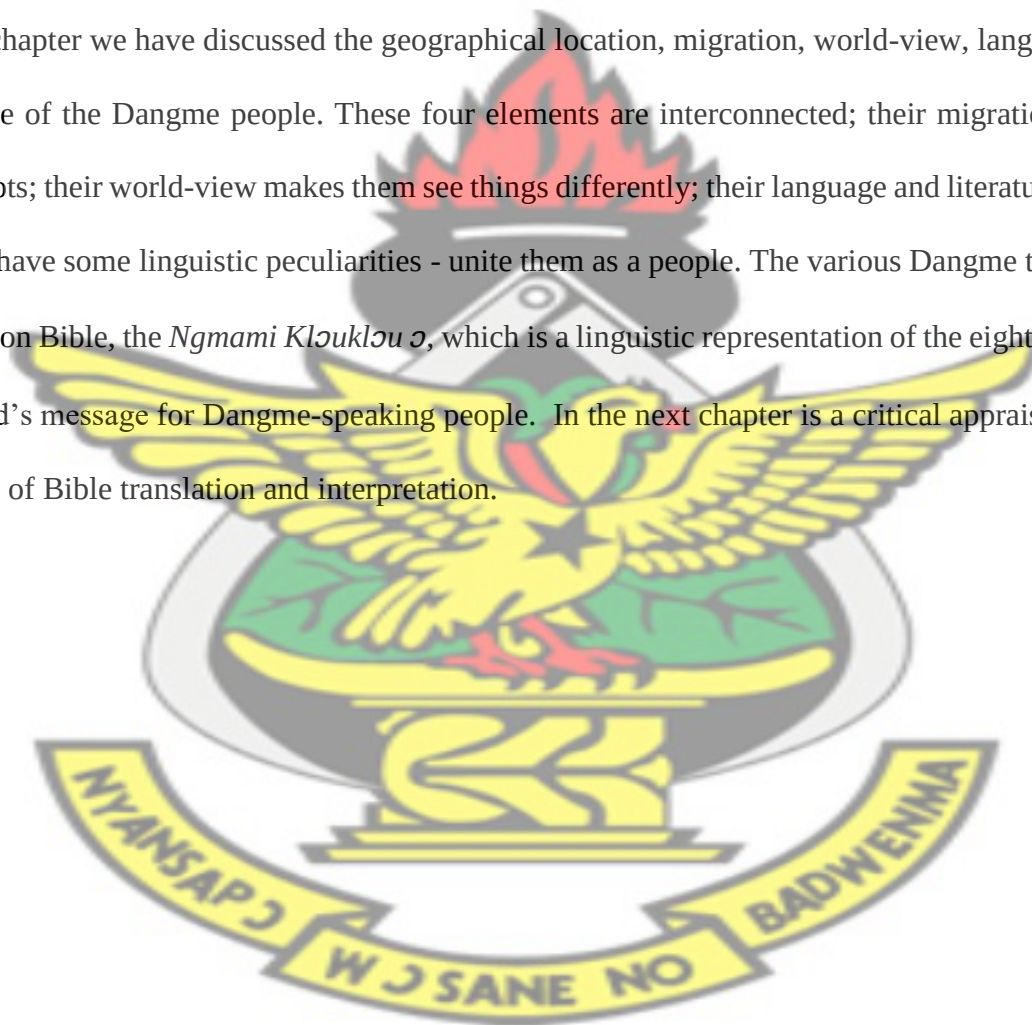
¹²⁸ This is actually not a translation but a paraphrase.

in Dangme. The African Indigenous and Pentecostal Churches in Dangmeland have some choruses in Dangme rich in Theology and Christology which have not been published.

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3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the geographical location, migration, world-view, language and literature of the Dangme people. These four elements are interconnected; their migration traces their roots; their world-view makes them see things differently; their language and literature - even though have some linguistic peculiarities - unite them as a people. The various Dangme tribes use a common Bible, the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ, which is a linguistic representation of the eight dialects; it is God's message for Dangme-speaking people. In the next chapter is a critical appraisal of the theories of Bible translation and interpretation.



CHAPTER FOUR

BIBLE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three we ended our discussion of the Dangme with Dangme literature. The present chapter discusses what Bible translation is, how the Bible in various mother-tongues came into being; the epochs of Bible translation,¹²⁹ Bible translation and interpretation, philosophies of Bible translation, Bible translations in African languages, Bible translation in Ghana, and history of the translation of the Bible into Dangme Bible.

4.2 Definition of Bible Translation

Bible translation defies definition since one's definition of "translation" has a critical impact on the course taken by the translation process.¹³⁰ "Translation" is being used here to mean the process of changing an original written text (source) in an original verbal language (the source language) into a written text (the target text) in a different verbal language (the target language).¹³¹ It is a

¹²⁹ We will not discuss the general history of Bible Translation here because this is documented elsewhere. See (1) R. Elliot, Bible Translation, in: P. W. Comfort, (ed.), *The Origin of the Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003). (2) J-C Loba-Mkole, History and Theory of Bible Translation, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):169-183.

¹³⁰ J. G. Watts & Y. Kruger, "Some considerations on bible translation as complex process", *Acta Theologica Supplementum* (2), 2002: 1. One's definition of 'translation' can place emphasis on the source text or those for whom the translation is being done. If the focus is on the source text, the translator will try to translate with a high degree of accuracy. On the other hand, if it is on the receivers of the message, the translator will leave out or add material to the translation to satisfy them.

¹³¹ R. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 5. Translation is also the expression of something (written or oral) in one language (source language) in another language (receptor language) (H. Elliot, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 2003, 239). Gutt says that translation is an inter-lingual interpretive usage (translation as secondary communication vs direct communication), which proceeds by comparisons of the observable input (original text) and output (translated text)

complex process¹³² since it evolves a new text as a result of decoding¹³³ the source text on several levels and encoding¹³⁴ it into the target language by means of the linguistic, literary, and cultural conventions of the target language.¹³⁵ Bible translation is scientific because the translator conveys a message from one language to another which is a valid subject for scientific description. In that sense, the translator is able to know what content and style the source documents are intended to express, and what forms in the receptor language can appropriately be used to express the same content and intent.¹³⁶ Bible translation is also interdisciplinary since the translator makes use of theoretical concepts and terminologies from both semantics and pragmatics.¹³⁷ Further, Bible translation can be viewed as theology in the sense that the translations contribute to fulfilling the “Great Commission” in Matthew 28:19-20; that is, making disciples, nurturing the baptized with Scripture, and engaging Christians to learn or do theology in context.¹³⁸ Bible translation is also “adaptation” of an existing translation into a localized version for communities so that readers will experience the full effect of the original product. Examples are the Swahili Congo Bible (Bukavu Swahili *Biblia Maadiko Matakatifu Kwa Watu Wote*) which is an adaptation of an existing

(E. A. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, Manchester: St. Jerome, 2004, 204). Translation also involves ‘transmediatisation’ or the transfer from one medium to another (J-C Loba-Mkole, History and Theory of Scripture Translations, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008:169).

¹³² E. A. Nida, The paradoxes of translation, *The Bible Translator*, 42(2a), (1991):5.

¹³³ Decoding means the operation by which a receptor interprets a discourse and understands its message. (E. A. Nida & C. R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Leiden: Brill, 1982, 199).

¹³⁴ Encoding means the operation by which a sender plans and composes a discourse to convey it. (Nida & Tiber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 1982, 200).

¹³⁵ Nida describes the actual process of translating as a technology which employs the insights and principles of a number of behavioral sciences in order to accomplish its goal of effective interlingual communication (E. A. Nida, The paradoxes of translation, *The Bible Translator*, 42(2a), 1991:10).

¹³⁶ R. Elliot, Bible Translation, in: P. W. Comfort, (ed.), *The Origin of the Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 271.

¹³⁷ E. A. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964/2003), 33ff.

¹³⁸ Loba-Mkole, *The Bible Translator* 62(2) (2011): 82.

Scripture translation, namely the Swahili Good News Bible of Tanzania and Kenya (Swahili *Biblia Habari Njema*); and the Swahili Children's Bible is an adaptation of the *Biblia Habari Njema* which was also adapted from *The Children's Bible* published by the Scandinavia Publishing House (1989).¹³⁹ The International Bible Society has adapted the "Living Bible" (New Testament and Psalms) into the following Ghanaian languages: Asante-Twi, *Nkwa Asem* (1996); Dangme, *Wami Munyuo* (1997); Ewe, *Agbenya La* (1998); and Akuapem-Twi, *Nkwa Asem* (2000). Adaptation which does not only include text selection but also the introduction of bridge material and discourse transitional material, are some cases facilitated by computer software such as SIL's programmes CARLA (Computer Assisted Related Language Adaptation) and CADA (Computer Assisted Dialect Adaptation). The softwares adapt a base text in one dialect into a related dialect or language. The basic draft version is then edited by a mother-tongue speaker of the second dialect to ensure that both translation accuracy and linguistic style meet the required standard for Scripture translation.¹⁴⁰ The United Bible Societies (UBS) in addition to the above definitions sees Bible translation as business. By this it means that the UBS approaches its task of making the Scriptures available with business ethics categories such as efficiency, transparency, and mutual accountability. The application of these categories demands that translations are properly done, to meet market demands.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Loba-Mkole, *The Bible Translator* 62(2) (2011): 80.

¹⁴⁰ Loba-Mkole, *The Bible Translator* 62(2) (2011): 80.

¹⁴¹ Loba-Mkole, *The Bible Translator* 62(2) (2011): 82. See also J-C Loba-Mkole, "The Significance of Bible Translation for African Theological Education," in Isabel Apawo Phiri & Dietrich Werner, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* (Dorpspruit, S. A: Cluster Publications, 2013), 508-522.

In simple terms one can say that Bible translation is the representation of the content of source documents (Hebrew and Greek texts) in such a way that the full effect and intent of the source text is made available to the reader.¹⁴² Bible translation is the best example of translation because it is by far the greatest undertaking in interlingual communication in the history of the world.

4.3 Epochs of Bible Translation

The idea of Bible translation finds a classic example in the Bible itself. When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, they had serious difficulty understanding the Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁴³ This was because while in captivity they had to learn different languages in order to survive in a new culture.¹⁴⁴ With time, the younger generations did not have the ability to read or write in Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament was written. Hence they needed translations. The book of Nehemiah records the first attempt of Scripture translation. Nehemiah says that as the Jews from exile gathered in a large square before the water gate of Jerusalem, Ezra the Scribe read the book of the Law of Moses to them while standing on a wooden pulpit especially made for this purpose. He opened the book and read, and a number of the Levites “instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read” (Neh. 8: 7, 8, NIV).

¹⁴² There are different ways of achieving that. It ranges from an approach that emphasises the meaning but still stays as close as possible to the form of the original text, to an absolutely free translation that makes no effort to physically retain the original form and focuses completely on the satisfaction of the receptor (Watt & Kruger, Some considerations on bible translation as complex process, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002: 1).

¹⁴³ F. Brown & S. Driver, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2003), 831.

¹⁴⁴ V. H. Matthews & J. C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 181-256; 257-282.

The Levites made the law comprehensible to the hearers. The phrase “making clear” is *māpōrāš* in the Hebrew; it means “to give insight”.¹⁴⁵ The same word is used in Ezra 4:18 where it is rendered “translated”.¹⁴⁶ In this particular text, a reference is made to a letter written in Hebrew but translated at sight into Aramaic. In other words, the Levites expounded obscure passages and in doing so naturally translated the Hebrew into the vernacular Aramaic dialect (the common language of the Jews at that time). These translations were oral; they were put into writing during the third and second centuries BC, and are known as *Targumim* (paraphrases), the earliest on the Pentateuch being the Chaldaic Targum of Onkelos (third century BC).¹⁴⁷ The “Masoretic text” (ninth and tenth century AD) adopted the later Assyrian “square” script or the Tiberian System. In the fifth-fourth century BC (at the earliest) or the second century BC, Samaritans produced a revision of the Pentateuch called “Samaritan Pentateuch”.¹⁴⁸ The latter consists of two layers, namely the “Palestinian text” (paleo-Hebrew script), which may go back to the fourth century BC, and the actual “Samaritan revision”, which originated from the second century BC (Hasmonian period) and championed the central status of Shechem and Mount Gerizim.

¹⁴⁵ Brown & Driver, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 831.

¹⁴⁶ Brown & Driver, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 831.

¹⁴⁷ J-C Loba-Mkole, “History and Theory of Scripture Translations”, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):171.

¹⁴⁸ The Samaritans revised the Hebrew Scriptures because when the remnant of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, they refused the Samaritans any participation in rebuilding the temple or the city of Jerusalem on the grounds that even though they feared the Lord, they served their own gods (2 Kgs. 17:33).

The next translation effort after those cited above resulted in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, produced about 250 BC.¹⁴⁹ The story behind how the Septuagint was translated is told in “The Letter of Aristeas” (written around 150-100 BC).¹⁵⁰ Aristeas was an official of Egypt’s Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 BC). The story has it that Ptolemy was attempting to gather all of the world’s books into his great Alexandrian library. The Old Testament was not available in a Greek translation, so Ptolemy sent a delegation to the high priest in Jerusalem for texts and scholars. Texts and six elders of each tribe were sent. On the return of the delegation, Ptolemy gave a task to seventy-two elders after he had entertained them. He put them in different rooms and told them to produce a Greek version of the Old Testament text. This they did in exactly seventy-two days. The full Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (“Seventy”) is usually abbreviated LXX in Roman numerals. According to the story, all seventy translations agreed to the letter.¹⁵¹ Scholars have raised the questions whether the translators were seventy-two (Aristeas)¹⁵² or seventy (cf. Ex. 24: 1, 9; Num 11:25) or five according to *Sophrerim* (c.i)?¹⁵³ No reliable source has however been able to settle the matter. The Septuagint which was the result of a team effort, resulting in several versions,¹⁵⁴ constitutes the first historical and literary

¹⁴⁹ Scholars are divided over the date of the translation, placing portions as early as 250 BC and other parts as late as 100 BC. Most say that it was translated in segments by many translators over several centuries and then gathered into one library of scrolls or one codex.

¹⁵⁰ Sidney Jellicoe discusses Modern Theories of the Origin of the Septuagint. See S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 59-73.

¹⁵¹ Studies have shown that the Septuagint is not a single version but a collection of versions made by various authors, who differed greatly in their methods and their knowledge of Hebrew.

¹⁵² Jennifer Dines has argued for historical inaccuracies and several improbabilities in the story of Aristeas. He says the story may have been used to defend the traditional LXX from contemporary pressures to revise it against a particular form of Hebrew text, or against revisions actually in existence. (For a discussion see, Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint*, London/New York: T & T Clark Ltd., 2004, 31-32).

¹⁵³ Loba-Mkole, “History and Theory of Scripture Translations”, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008): 172.

¹⁵⁴ See note 148.

translation¹⁵⁵ that brought two different cultures together – the Semitic and Hellenistic. It thus sparked the development of Bible translations in a very significant way. In the words of Porter and Hess, “The Septuagint is, of course, one of the most important translations ever made, and arguably the single most important from the ancient world.”¹⁵⁶

It was the standard Old Testament text used by the early Christian church because the expanding Gentile church needed a translation in the common language of the time – Greek.¹⁵⁷ The versions they used include the Old Latin (second century), Egyptian or Coptic (second century), Ethiopic or Amharic (fourth century), Gothic (fifth century) Armenian (fifth century), Georgian (sixth century), Syriac (seventh century) and Slavonic (from the ninth century).¹⁵⁸ The entire Septuagint Old Testament is contained in the famous biblical codices: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus,

¹⁵⁵ Although the Septuagint (LXX) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, it is also sometimes an interpretation, making theological points and expanding the text to make it more understandable. Dunn and Roderson give two examples of a theological interpretation of Exodus 24:10 and Isaiah 40:1. The Hebrew of Exodus 24:10 says that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders, having ascended the mountain, “saw the God of Israel.” The translators into the Greek soften this bold statement into “they saw the place where the God of Israel stood,” perhaps bearing in mind the statement that no one can see God and live (Ex. 33:20). In Isaiah 40:1, commands are given that God’s people should be comforted, but there is no indication as to who is being told to give these commands. The Greek version adds the word, “priests” before “speaking tenderly to Jerusalem,” in order to meet this need. (J. D. G. Dunn and J. W. Roderson, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2003, 10).

¹⁵⁶ S. E. Porter & S. R. Hess, (eds.), *Translating the bible. Problems and prospects*, (Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 173). (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1999), 14.

¹⁵⁷ The language of the Jews during the post-exilic period (i.e., the period after their exile into Babylon) was Aramaic and not Hebrew. There were only Aramaic translations of the Old Testament. Thus there was the need for Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, to communicate the message of the Scriptures to the people. These translations sought to relate the Scriptures to contemporary life and culture. Thus, they were extremely interpretive.

¹⁵⁸ Loba-Mkole, “History and Theory of Scripture Translations”, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008): 172. The contents of some of these versions are significantly different when comparing the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text. What these differences mean has not been made certain. It has been conjectured that the Septuagint is simply a poor translation because it does not have certain portions of the original Hebrew. On the other hand, these same differences could also mean that the editorial additions and changes worked their way into the Masoretic Text during its long history of development. It is also possible that there were textual traditions at that time, one followed by the Septuagint, and another followed by the Masoretic Text. (P. W. Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000, 122).

and Codex Alexandrinus. The New Testament writers demonstrated their preference for the Septuagint over the Hebrew by using the Septuagint when quoting the Old Testament.¹⁵⁹

From the second century AD some Christian communities saw the need to translate the Christian Scriptures from an original language to communicate the message of the Scriptures to the people of their communities. This need led to the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian;¹⁶⁰ Origen's Hexapla,¹⁶¹ the Aramaic Targums¹⁶² and the Syrian.¹⁶³ During the era just after Jesus was on earth, the gospel went to various countries and churches multiplied, so

¹⁵⁹ T. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2003), 144-145.

¹⁶⁰ Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotian's new translations of the Septuagint came about as a result of the adoption of the LXX by Christians and its rejection by the Jews. Thus these translations were literal translations of the Hebrew into Greek. Aquila's translation is said to have communicated the Greek poorly. See, Natalio Fernandez Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 109-153.

¹⁶¹ This was the Old Testament written in six parallel columns – (1) the Hebrew Bible, (2) the Hebrew transliterated into Greek characters, (3) the text of Aquila, (4) the text of Symmachus, (5) Origen's own corrected Septuagint text, and (6) the text of Theodotian. Thus Origen's Hexapla came to the scene as a result of he being dissatisfied with the Septuagint text.

¹⁶² The translators paraphrased, added explanatory notes, and often reinterpreted the text according to their theological biases of their time. For a discussion see James D. G. Dunn and John W. Roderson (eds.), *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK, 2003, pp. 9-10 for an example of an interpretation of Ezekiel 16:2-3 from the Aramaic Targums, where the Hebrew has, speaking of Jerusalem, "Your origin and your birth are of the land of Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite". The Targum has, "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanites. There I revealed myself to Abraham your father between the pieces [of the covenant, cf Gen. 15:17] and made known to him that you would go down to Egypt. With an uplifted arm I redeemed you, and for the sake of your fathers I drove out from before you the Amorites and destroyed the Hittites".

¹⁶³ The Syriac version of the Bible is linked to the spread of Christianity to east of the Euphrates River – Mesopotamian cultures – after the first Pentecost. Acts 2:9 states that Parthians, Medes and Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia were at Jerusalem for the first Pentecost. Following Pentecost some of them may have been converted, bringing the gospel back to their homeland. Another possibility is that the Christian persecution at the end of the first century brought the gospel throughout the Near Eastern area and into the Upper Mesopotamian plateau. Converts to Christianity needed the Bible in their language, and that led to the Syriac version of the Bible. For centuries several Syriac translations emerged in the area and competed for superiority, and that led to the Syriac Peshitta, meaning "simple or plain". The addition of "Peshitta" to the Syriac perhaps indicates that it was intended for popular use, or that it avoided adding explanatory glosses and other additions, or perhaps that it was not an annotated text, as was the annotated Syriac-Hexapla then in use by the same community (Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 2000, 124-125).

Christians in these countries wanted to read the Bible in their own languages. As a result, many translations of the New Testament (as well as the Old Testament) were made in different languages including the Latin Vulgate,¹⁶⁴ from which the first English version of the Bible was made.

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Around the fifth century the gospel was brought to London, England by missionaries from Rome. The monks carried the Latin Vulgate with them and used it for any kind of instruction from the Bible, and also read and taught the Latin Bible to Christians living in England. After a few centuries, when more monasteries were founded, there arose the need to translate the Bible into English.¹⁶⁵ The earliest English translations were those made by Caedmon, Bede and Alfred the Great. The most famous Bible from this period was the Lindisfarne Gospels¹⁶⁶ (c. 950), which contained alternating lines of Latin text and Anglo-Saxon translations. Other translations during this period were those done by Aelfric, Abbot of Eynsham (ca. 955-1020),¹⁶⁷ William of Shoreham and Richard Rolle.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ *Volgate* means “common” – the Latin text for the common man. For a discussion, see J-C. Loba-Mkole, “Let’s Translate the Scripture from the Best Sources,” *The Bible Translator* 62(2), (2011): 78-79.

¹⁶⁵ Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000), 134.

¹⁶⁶ Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 134.

¹⁶⁷ Aelfric made idiomatic translations of the various parts of the Bible.

¹⁶⁸ William of Shoreham and Richard Rolle both translated the Psalms into English. Both translations were metrical and therefore were called Psalters. But the latter’s editions of the Psalms included a verse-by-verse commentary. See Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 2000, 135; see also J. H. Lupton, “English Versions”, in: James Hastings, (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible* Volume 4: Supplement Articles (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific), 236-239; H. Barker, *English Bible Versions: A Tercentary Memorial of the King James Version* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75; M. Deansly, *The Lollard Bible and other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 204.

John Wycliffe's translation was the first translation of the Bible from Latin into English in the late 1300s. Wycliffe's motivation for the translation of the Bible stemmed partly from his concern to make the Bible available to the English people in their mother-tongue.¹⁶⁹ Even though his translation was so literal that it was almost unintelligible to those who did not know Latin, his effort is said to have put the English Bible in the hands of lay people.¹⁷⁰ William Tyndale, like Wycliffe, had a similar concern.

4.4 Bible Translation and Interpretation

In the preceding section, we discussed the reasons for the many translations of the Bible – from Hebrew to Greek to Latin to English to Spanish, French and African languages. These languages are the mother-tongues of the people who were born and bred in such language settings. Each of these languages has cultural undertones. Thus, the translation of the Bible from one language to another goes with the interpretation of what something in one language means in another language. We have also made a point that in the modern era of Bible translation in Africa, translators are mother-tongue speakers trained in the biblical languages and in exegesis. Bible translation interpretation, and re-interpretation to bring out the meaning

¹⁶⁹ Wycliffe, the Oxford theologian of his day, spoke against some of the practices of the church. Hence his translation of the Bible from Latin into English was meant to make the Bible available to the people in their local language, so that if the people could read the Bible for themselves and each of them could have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then papal authority would not be binding on them.

¹⁷⁰ H. W. Robinson, *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), 137-145; G. G. Scorgie, M. L. Strauss & S. M. Voth (eds.), *The Challenge of Bible Translation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003/2009), 30.

of what the original texts mean in clear and unambiguous languages into which people are born and bred.

Van der Watt and Kruger opine that to be able to interpret a text well and then translate into a target language, the translator should establish the meaning of the source text as far as it is possible.¹⁷¹ But ‘what is meaning?’ The answer to this question is not immediately obvious, even though one can say that ‘meaning’ means the sum total of what is communicated through language. Geoffrey Leech breaks down meaning into seven types – conceptual or denotative, connotative, social, affective or emotive, reflected, collocative and thematic meanings.

(1) Conceptual or denotative meaning is the logical or cognitive meaning, the basic propositional meaning which corresponds to the primary dictionary definition. (2) Connotative meaning is the communicative value of an expression over and above its purely conceptual content. It goes beyond mere referent of a word and hints at its attributes in the real world. (3) Social meaning is conveyed by a piece of language in its social context. Here meaning is derived from the situation in which a word or phrase is used. (4) In affective meaning, language is used to express personal feelings or attitude of the speaker or writer to the ready listener. (5) Reflected meaning arises when a word has more than one conceptual meaning or multiple conceptual meaning. (6) Collocative meaning is the meaning which a word acquires in the company of certain words.¹⁷²

Alice Mwihaki in her discussion of meaning from functional and semantics and pragmatic perspectives, she addresses the notion of linguistic meaning with reference to Kiswahili. Using a functional grammar, she discusses five types of linguistic meaning – conceptual, connotative,

¹⁷¹ Van der Watt & Kruger, Some considerations on bible translation as complex process, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* (2), 2002: 119.

¹⁷² G. N. Leech, *Semantics: The Study of Meaning* (UK: Penguin, 1974/1999).

social, affective and collocative – and concludes that typology is of value in defining the concept and scope of semantics.¹⁷³

Language thus, conveys **to** its dictionary meaning, connotations beyond the dictionary meaning, information about the social context of language use, a speaker's feelings and attitudes which rob off one meaning on the other meaning of the **same** word when it has two meanings, meaning which is communicated through associations with words which **co-occur** with another word, and meaning communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis. All these types of meanings fit into the total composite effect of linguistic communication.

Van der Watt and Kruger explain that, to find the meaning of the source text, one should make effort to understand the construction of semantics of words – including phonology and lexicography; the construction of sentences – syntax¹⁷⁴ and some stylistic elements, such as figurative language, metaphors, idioms, symbolism, sarcasm, irony, etc; the structure of paragraphs – including the analysis of sentences and discourses;¹⁷⁵ the genre¹⁷⁶ of texts – including

¹⁷³ Alice Mwihaki, Meaning as Use: A Functional view of Semantics and Pragmatics, In: *Swahili Forum* 11, (2004):127-139.

¹⁷⁴ Syntax can have varied impacts on translation when interpreted in different ways. See Van der Watt and Kruger, "Some considerations on bible translation as complex process", *Acta Theologica Supplementum* (2) (2002): 119.

¹⁷⁵ See E. R. Wendland & J. P. Louw, *Graphic Design and Bible Reading* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1993), 4, 11. They discuss the importance of paragraphing in the reading and interpretation process. They say that since meaning is a product of the inter-relatedness of elements, it should not be looked for in analyzing words or even sentences. Rather in studying words, meaning should be sought for in the light of their position and function within their larger linguistic and literary context.

¹⁷⁶ Genres are scientific constructions that are used to classify literature.

the use of micro, maso and macro genres; and the socio-cultural and historical background of the text – the element that deals with knowledge of the world, society, geography, history, etc, of the particular community to whom the source document was written.¹⁷⁷ Thus, it is not only the linguistic elements that are needed to interpret a text but also *historico-socio-cultural* information about the context in which the source text was written. This means that the element of culture cannot be overlooked in any serious Bible translation enterprise.

In this regard Bosch¹⁷⁸ and Sanneh¹⁷⁹ posit that the Christian Bible exists because of its translatability into culture. This implies that for people to understand Christianity, the Bible should be translated bearing in mind their culture. If culture is important in Bible translation, and one culture is different from another, can we talk about an original translation of the Bible? Rhodes says that “because there is no one-to-one parallel of words between languages, and because no two languages ever express themselves in exactly the same way, no translation will ever be absolutely perfect.”¹⁸⁰ And that is exactly the basic problem inherent in Bible translation – we do not have the original manuscript of the Bible, but copies of copies.¹⁸¹ What principles are there to guide Bible translation?

¹⁷⁷ Van der Watt & Kruger, Some considerations on bible translation as complex process, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002): 120.

¹⁷⁸ J. D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 447.

¹⁷⁹ L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 1.

¹⁸⁰ R. Rhodes, *The Complete Guide to Bible Translation: How They Were Developed* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 26.

¹⁸¹ I. Chatzitheodorou, Problems of Bible Translation”, *Translation Journal* Volume 5 (4) (2001): 1. This raises the issue of whether Bible translations and versions are inspired.

4.5 Bible Translation Philosophies

Generally, many Bible translation theories have been documented and advocated including: literalist, functionalist, descriptive, text-linguistic, relevance, interpretive, comparative, professional, literary-rhetorical and intercultural approaches.¹⁸² But in a more limited sense, Bible translation theory has often been described in terms of two opposing philosophies: literal versus dynamic equivalent.¹⁸³ These approaches stem from two philosophies – modernism and post-modernism.¹⁸⁴

4.5.1 The Modernistic Approach

The modernistic approach uses a positivistic framework.¹⁸⁵ Literally equivalence in translation is a positivistic approach. It is referred to as word-for-word translation. It is frequently associated with the phrase “more accurate.” Word-for-word translation is based on dogmatic presuppositions – the mechanical theory of inspiration of Scripture – and the assumption that translation does not need interpretation.¹⁸⁶ But the question is, can we achieve accuracy in translation without

¹⁸² J-C.Loba-Mkole, “History and Theory of Scripture Translations,” *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):175.

¹⁸³ Practically, no bible translation has ever been done exclusively with only one of the two philosophical approaches. Bible translations blend the two approaches, with some translations reflecting one approach more than the other.

¹⁸⁴ J. A. Van der Watt, “What happens when one picks up the Greek text?” *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002):246.

¹⁸⁵ Positivism as a philosophical system holds that laws are to be understood as social rules, valid because they are enacted by authority or derived logically from existing decisions, and that ideal or moral considerations (that a rule is unjust) should not limit the operation of the law.

¹⁸⁶ Van der Watt, “What happens when one picks up the Greek text?” *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002):247.

interpretation?¹⁸⁷ Word-for-word translation is an impossible task since translation is not a matter of finding word equivalents in another language, because languages seldom correspond at the same level. In a real sense, translation is interpretation.

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The basic problem with the word-for-word approach is that it is interpretive, the very thing that it tries not to be. Word-for-word or literal translation is an impossible task since words in themselves are meaningless, unless people assign meaning to them. Wilt and Wendland contend that there is no way to understand the meaning conveyed by a word, [phrase or expression] apart from its frames of reference which encompasses the entire system of beliefs, practices, and experiences that make up the world in which such a word is used.¹⁸⁸ What they mean here is that the meaning depends on the user's interpretation. This of course must be done with the literary context of the text and the cultural context of the interpreter in mind. The two contexts must be brought together for a meaningful interpretation.

In this regard I agree with Friedrich Schleiermacher who explains his theories of interpretation and translation based on three of Herder's doctrines in the philosophy of language. His essay *On*

¹⁸⁷ Loba-Mkole argues that Bible translation and Bible interpretations are intertwined so much that the practice of either one presupposes the other. For a discussion see, J-C.Loba-Mkole, "History and Theory of Scripture Translations." *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):12-13.

¹⁸⁸ T. Wilt & E.Wendland, *Scripture Frames and Framing* (Stellenbosch: African SunMedia, 2008), 249.

the Different Methods of Translation (1813) is summarized in the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* as follows:

- (a) Translation typically faces the problem of a conceptual gulf between the language of the text to be translated and the translator's home language.
- (b) This situation makes translation an extremely difficult task, posing a major obstacle to the attainment of translation's primary goal, the faithful reproduction of meaning.
- (c) Because of this daunting difficulty the translator needs to possess hermeneutical expertise and to be an "artist" if he [she] is to cope with the task of translation at all adequately.
- (d) The conceptual gulf which poses the central challenge here might in principle be tackled in one of two ways: either by bringing the author's linguistic-conceptual world closer to that of the reader of the translation or vice versa.¹⁸⁹ Schleiermacher who champions the latter option of bringing the reader towards the linguistic-conceptual world of the author adopts the plasticity of language to make it possible.
- (e) By plasticity of language Schleiermacher means that even if the usages of words and hence concepts expressed by the language into which the translation is to be done *as it currently exists* are incommensurable with the author's, it is still possible for the translator to "bend the language of the translation as far as possible towards that of the original in order to communicate as far as possible an impression of the system of concepts developed in it."¹⁹⁰

Schleiermacher's approach has a limitation in that it does not promote word-for-word translation which tries to convey the author's meaning in the receptor's language more accurately. However, it is justified in that it makes works available to people who want to read them but are not in the fortunate position of knowing the original languages. Further, through its "bending" approach it effects a conceptual enrichment of the target language.

¹⁸⁹ The former approach had been championed by Luther in his classic essay *On Translating: An Open Letter* (1530) and practised by him in his translation of the Bible; he called it *Verdeutschung*, "Germanizing", an approach which Schleiermacher finds unacceptable, mainly because it inevitably distorts the author's concepts and thoughts.

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4.5.2 The Post-modernistic Approach

Post-modernist, deconstructionist or post-fundamentalist¹⁹¹ perspective of translation has as its basis, communication. This philosophical framework of translation finds expression in the dynamic equivalence methodology which is based on the principle that translation should not be a static process (word-for-word), but rather on thought patterns (thought-for-thought). Proponents of this view have expressed themselves in translations such as the *New International Version* (NIV) and the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV). Adherents of this view opine that, a good translation is the one in which connotations, rhetorical impact and emotive meaning of the original text are reflected as much as possible, without necessarily following the word arrangement and grammar which characterize the original language.

The aim of dynamic-equivalent translations is to have the same communicative impact on modern audience as the original text had on its audience, or at least come as close as possible to it. But one problem with the dynamic equivalence approach is that it is often overly interpretative. While it is true that all translation involves interpretation, sometimes translators give up on finding the meanings of words, and interpret freely as they want. Thus, the possibility of misinterpretation is greater.

¹⁹¹ Van der Watt, "What happens when one picks up the Greek text?" *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002):247.

Mounce is of the view that if we take the English versions of the Bible for example, the smoother the English, the more interpretive it becomes.¹⁹² He affirms that the *NLT* is more interpretive than the *TNIV*, and the *TNIV* is more interpretive than the *NIV*, and the *NIV* is more interpretive than the *RSV*, and the *RSV* is more interpretive than the *ESV*, and the *ESV* is more interpretive than the *NASB*. The common feature about these versions is that they are all interpretive. This confirms the fact that all translation involves interpretation. An outstanding proponent of the dynamic equivalence theory of Bible translation is Eugene Nida.

4.6 A Fruit of the Post-modernist Approach

4.6.1 Eugene Nida's Theory of Bible Translation: Dynamic/Functional Equivalence

The two opposing philosophies cited above, literal and dynamic equivalence, emanating from two approaches, the modernistic and post-modernistic, engaged the attention of translation scholars in the time past. Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, the only translation philosophy known to scholars was literal (formal) equivalence. As indicated above, the principle of literal/formal equivalence seeks as nearly as possible to preserve the structure of the original language. It seeks to represent each word of the original text with an exact equivalent word in the translation so that the reader can see word for word what the original human author wrote.

¹⁹² W. D Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), 29-30. This position may be true to some extent, but is debatable, since all translations involve interpretation. Thus, there are no options. Moreover, the goal of Bible translation is communication. And if we interpret the Bible through the translation process for people to understand, then we have achieved our goal.

As a result of mounting pressure¹⁹³ in the first half of the twentieth-century, to produce Bible translations that would “speak to their readers” as the original biblical texts “spoke to their readers”, Eugene Nida who had a strong desire to produce translations that could serve as missionary tools, put forth a theory of Bible translation through his publications of *Toward a science of translating* and *The theory and practice of translation*.¹⁹⁴ His two fundamental assumptions are that: (a) any message can be communicated to any audience in any language provided that the most effective form of expression is found; (b) human beings share a core of universal experience which makes such communication possible.¹⁹⁵ Using these basic assumptions, Nida applied insights from the field of linguistic theory to develop a scientific approach to translation, and thus was able to provide a theoretical basis for translating the Bible idiomatically rather than literally. This theory he called the dynamic equivalence¹⁹⁶ which is based upon “the principle of equivalent effect”¹⁹⁷ as against “formal equivalence”. The dynamic equivalent approach, which later came to be known as the functional approach,¹⁹⁸ which aims at

¹⁹³ Goodspeed reflects this pressure when he said: “I wanted my translation to make on the reader impression New Testament must have made on its earliest readers.” For a discussion see E.J. Goodspeed, *New Chapters in New Testament Study* (New York: McMillan, 1937), 113. Phillip had similar goals in producing *New Testament in modern English*, a task he began in 1941. Following is how he put his objective: “I still feel that the most important ‘objective for this exercise is communication. I see it as my job as one who knows Greek well and ordinary English very well to convey the living quality of the New Testament documents. I want above all to create in my readers the same emotions as the original writings evoked nearly 2,000 years ago. See J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*, 1972: viii.

¹⁹⁴ E. A. Nida & C. R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969/1982).

¹⁹⁵ Nida & Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. The diagrams on pages 121 and 147 in TAPOT illustrate this.

¹⁹⁶ The Dynamic equivalence theory of Bible translation represents a compromising of the Protestant principle, going back to Wycliffe and Tyndale, that ordinary Christians should have the opportunity to read the Word of God in their own tongue.

¹⁹⁷ E. A. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964/2003), 159.

¹⁹⁸ J. De Waard & E. A. Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986).

translating thoughts rather than words, using simple language and style, reflects a missionary approach to culture. Bible translations using this approach are easily understood by the reader. This approach is more faithful to the goal of the Bible writers – to communicate in the common language of people. Translations using this approach are easier for unchurched people and new Christians to understand.¹⁹⁹

4.6.2 Critique of Nida's usage of "Equivalence"

Even though the term 'equivalence' offers a cognitive frame to accommodate and articulate a good number of translation models such as functional equivalence,²⁰⁰ relevant equivalence²⁰¹ and literary-functional equivalence,²⁰² the principle that a translation should have an equivalence

¹⁹⁹ Waard & Nida, *From One Language to Another*, 19.

²⁰⁰ The functional equivalence theory of translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, in terms of meaning and style. It aims at communicating a message which is faithful to the original message, but clear and natural in the receptor's language. This is achieved through analysis, reconstruction and transference of the source text to the target one. There are four stages in this process. The first stage is that the text is translated by a single translator and given to a translation team. The second stage is the correction by the translation team. The third stage consists of the text reworked by the team after external remarks (reviewer, stylist, manuscript examiner, translation consultant, translation committee, etc). The fourth stage is the result of a final re-reading of the translated text and approval by the team for processing to production. E. A. Nida has always recommended Bible translation to be done from original sources/culture to the target ones. (See, Loba-Mkole, "History and Theory of Scripture Translations." *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):176.

²⁰¹ The functional equivalence's claim to being the best available approach to Bible translation was challenged with the publication of *Relevance: Communication and cognition* (Sperber and Wilson 1986) in which the authors undermined the foundation on which functional equivalence was built. They argued that the code model was not the best theory of communication but the inferential model, which they called relevance theory, a theory which posits that communication does not take place solely by encoding and decoding processes, but by the communicator providing evidence of his or her communicative intention. Building on Sperber and Wilson's proposition, Ernst-August Gutt in his work *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (1991; 2nd ed. In 2000) argued that the relevant theory has theoretical implications in that it provides the much needed framework for understanding translation than Nida's functional equivalence.

²⁰² Literary-functional equivalence constitutes a new development of functional equivalence, with special emphasis on literary features, which many common language translations neglect (E. R. Wendland, "A literary-rhetorical approach to biblical text analysis and translation." In T. Wilt. *Bible Translation Frames of Reference* (Manchester & Northampton: St Jerome, 2003), 32-40. This approach depicts translation as a mediated act of communication (genre, context, settings, cognitive and *skopos* frames) that represents in a given language the variety of expressive dynamics

relation with the source language text is problematic. Over the years, scholars have critiqued the dynamic/functional approach to Bible translation. They opine that it makes no attempt to retain the form of the source text unless the natural way of expressing the same thought in the receptor language would use a parallel form. It is receptor (language and context) oriented rather than source oriented. Nababan, citing Hervey, Higgins and Haywood, and Miao, gives three main reasons why, an exact equivalence or effect is difficult to achieve.

First, it is impossible for a text to have constant interpretations even for the same person on two occasions. Secondly, translation is a matter of subjective interpretation of translators of the source language text. Thus, producing an objective effect on the target readers, which is the same as that of the source text readers is an unrealistic expectation. Thirdly, it may not be possible for translators to determine how audiences respond to the source text when it was first produced.²⁰³

Noss argues that any theory of translation must draw on the theory of language, and dynamic equivalence cannot have that, hence it falls short.²⁰⁴ Carson admits that one of the problems with dynamic equivalence and functional equivalence is that some have used it to ‘justify poor translations, or even justify entire theological agendas’.²⁰⁵ Thomas has raised the issue of dynamic equivalence being a system of hermeneutics than a method of translation.²⁰⁶ But as indicated earlier (4.6) it is not possible to do translation without interpretation. The two activities cannot be

(great impact, appeal and beauty) of diverse texts of Scripture. With this approach, a special attention is paid to the target language through a literary-rhetorical analysis and application of the target language verbal forms (constitution-collection-classification-comparison-comprehension-creation-examination-and-criticism) (See Loba Mkole, “History and Theory of Scripture Translations.” *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):78.

²⁰³ Nababan, *Translation Theory*, 2008, <http://www.proz.com>, accessed April 1, 2011.

²⁰⁴ For a discussion see Philip A. Noss (ed.), *A history of Bible translation* (Scotland: Francis Dalrymple-Hamilton, 2007).

²⁰⁵ D. A. Carson, ‘The Limits of Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation and other Limits too’, *The Bible Translator* Volume 56, Issues 1-4 (2005): 91.

²⁰⁶ For a discussion, see Robert L. Thomas, ‘Dynamic Equivalence: A Method of Translation or a System of Hermeneutics, *Masters Seminary Journal* Volume TMSJ01, Fall (1990): 149-169.

separated. Some critics have pointed out that Nida's definition of translation is a declaration or manifesto which views communication in terms of a conduit metaphor.²⁰⁷ Porter²⁰⁸ contends that some of the criticisms leveled against the dynamic equivalence theory of translation is that Nida does not take the theory far enough.²⁰⁹ Others, however, believe that Nida has gone too far, and wish to return to a more literalistic translational method.²¹⁰ There are those who also are of the opinion that, Nida's method of translation amounts to the practice of Western cultural hegemony.²¹¹

Nida's theory of dynamic/functional equivalence has been criticized, but he has succeeded in bringing to the fore the idea that Bible translation should not be static but dynamic; it must serve a function – communicating the Bible in simple languages to target readers/audiences. Also through him the term “equivalence” has become a catch-word in Bible translation. Even though it has been criticized, it is still widely used since most translations suppose a degree of equivalency

²⁰⁷ O. A. Mojola & R. E. Wendland, “Scripture Translation in Translation Studies.” In T. Wilt, ed., *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2003), 7.

²⁰⁸ S. E. Porter, “Translations of the Bible (since the KJV).” In S. E. Porter, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 365.

²⁰⁹ Those who share this view say Nida is still concentrating upon the sentence level in translation (e.g. his use of Mark 1:4, ‘Jesus preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin,’ as a template), rather than appreciating that a text must be understood, analyzed, and hence translated at the level of the entire discourse, or in terms of relevance (See B. Hatim and I. Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London: Longman, 1990); also E. A. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* Second Edition (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1991).

²¹⁰ Those with this opinion contend that the source language must take priority, since some of the tenets of dynamic equivalence – such as mutual intelligibility and emphasis upon the receptor – distract from the centrality of the sacred text (See L. Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

²¹¹ See, L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995).

with the original text.²¹² In spite of the criticisms, the dynamic/functional equivalence method has yielded some important results in terms of common language translations which the majority of Bible readers have been using since the last half-century.²¹³

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4.6.3 Bible in African Languages as Fruits of Nida's Dynamic/Functional Equivalence of Bible Translation

Loba-Mkole cites some examples as the *Good News Bible*, *Français Courant*, *Français Fondamental*, *Die Gute Nachricht* or the common language translations in Afrikaans, Akan, Swahili and Malagasy.²¹⁴

The common language translation of the Bible into Akan Loba-Mkole refers to above, is the revised edition of the full Akuapem-Twi Bible, published in 1900 by the Basel Missionaries.²¹⁵ It had orthography difficulties since it was written in the Akuapem language and was meant to be read by the Asante, Akuapem and Fanti readers whose pronunciation of certain words is different. Ekem admits that difficulty led to the newly-revised full Bible in Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi bearing the titles *Anyamesem anaa Kyerew Kronkron Akan kasa mu* and *Anyamesem anaa Twere*

²¹² Loba Mkole, "History and Theory of Scripture Translations." *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):176.

²¹³ Watt, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* (2), 247.

²¹⁴ Loba Mkole, "History and Theory of Scripture Translations." *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):176.

²¹⁵ J. D. K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana): The Historical, Linguistic, and Theological Settings of the Gã, Twi, Mfante, and Ewe Bibles* (Rome/Manchester: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura/St. Jerome, 2011), 69.

Kronkron Akan kasa mu (The Divine Word or Holy Scriptures in the Akan language), published in 1964.²¹⁶ The question is, are the common translations of the Bible really common in terms of the translation of certain cultural terminologies?

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In Ghana there is the common language translation for the eight Dangme-speaking tribes²¹⁷ known as the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* (The Bible or Holy Bible in Dangme).²¹⁸ Unfortunately, the linguistic and cultural differences of the various tribes were not taken into consideration by the translators; hence some of the readers see the translation as one-sided.²¹⁹ Currently all the eight language groups use a common translation of the Bible. While some terminologies are understandable to some tribes, they are not easily understood by others. This is because even though they are all Dangmes, there are some terminologies that are peculiar to each tribe. Using such terminologies for all prevents people from understanding the message. Thus, even among the Dangmes, there is the need for interpretations of the Dangme Bible to suit the various reading communities; and translators should take this into consideration. Three of these translation problems in the Dangme Bible (BSG/UBS 1999) raised by Dangme Bible readers are discussed in chapters six of this thesis.

²¹⁶ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana)*, 75.

²¹⁷ Adaa, Nugo, Gbugblaa, Kpomi, Osudoku, Manya Klo, Yilo Klo and Se.

²¹⁸ Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1999.

²¹⁹ The various tribes should be involved in the translation process right from the beginning. This could be done by letting each tribe nominate people who are Christians and also knowledgeable in the Dangme language and culture, to serve on the translation team. Their role will be to protect the interest of their various tribes, by suggesting words and terminologies that will best convey meaning to Bible readers of their tribes.

4.7 Bible Translation in African Languages

The history of Bible translation in Africa is divided into three periods: The Biblical and Early Church Era, the Missionary Era, and the Modern Era. The Septuagint – the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Vulgate – the Latin version of the Bible, the Bible in Coptic – an Egyptian language, and in Ethiopic – an Ethiopian language, were translated during the Biblical and Early Church Era in Alexandria, Egypt.²²⁰

During the Missionary Era in the early 1800s, the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society whose primary mission was to provide Bibles where they were needed in the languages of the people had a profound effect on Bible translation and distribution. During this era, missionaries learned foreign languages; they wrote down previously unwritten languages and they translated the Scriptures. While some did the work themselves, others relied on mother-tongue speakers. As the local churches grew, with increasing number of educated mother-tongue translators, the balance began to shift and African Christian translators became more and more equal partners on translation teams.²²¹

²²⁰ G. L. Yorke & P. M. Renju (eds.), *Bible Translation and African Languages* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 17-18. For a discussion, see Ype Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing* (Akropong: Regnum Africa, 2002), 1-28.

²²¹ Yorke & Renju (eds.), *Bible Translation and African Languages*, 19. See J. D. K. Ekem, *Early Scripture of the Gold Coast* (Rome/Manchester: Edizioni di storia e letteratura/St. Jerome, 2011) for a discussion on how the Gã, Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi, Fante and Ewe Bibles were translated during the Missionary Era.

The Modern Era of Bible translation in Africa coincides with the Era of Independence for African nations from colonial rule. The early 1960s which characterized the beginning of this era also marked the beginning of the independence of African churches from their founding missions in Europe and North America. As a result, the Bible Society Movement in Africa established National Bible Societies. Thus Bible Society offices were opened in many independent African nations such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroun, Tanzania and Zambia, among others, to translate the Scriptures into local languages and to promote its use through wide distribution. Translators were more and more mother-tongue speakers trained in the biblical languages and in exegesis. The United Bible Societies built a team of consultants of both Africans and non-Africans to provide translator training and assistance to African church translation teams.²²²

4.8 Bible Translation in Ghana

4.8.1 Contribution of John David Kwamena Ekem

John David Kwamena Ekem has done a historical case study of the translation of the Bible into four of the dominant languages – Ga, Twi (Akuapem and Asante) - of the Gold Coast, now Ghana.²²³ He discusses the history of Gold Coasters (Ghanaians) and European missionaries collaborating on the translation of the scriptures in Ghana and Togo beginning in the fifteenth

²²² Yorke & Renju (eds.), *Bible Translation and African Languages*, 20.

²²³ John David Kwamina Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana): The Historical, Linguistic, and Theological Settings of the Ga, Twi, Mfantse, and Ewe Bibles* (Rome/Manchester, UK: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura and St. Jerome Publishing, 2011).

century through the twentieth century, with glimpses into the twenty-fifth century as well. He sets the tone for the book with a discussion on “Early Phases of Interaction with Custodians of the Judeo-Christian Scripture on the Gold Coast”²²⁴ He admits that it began in Africa – Alexandria in Egypt – with the translation of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, the Septuagint (LXX). He also notes that mother-tongue translation and interpretation of the Scriptures in Ghana did not begin with missionaries, but with Jacobus Capitein, a Ghanaian ex-slave who after studies at Leiden became the chaplain at the Elmina Castle and began translating the Scriptures into Mfantse.²²⁵ He includes also stories about other pioneers such as Anton-Wilhelm Amo (1703-1756), and Christian Potten (1715-1769) in the translation enterprise.²²⁶

Ekem documents the history of the Ga Bible. It starts with the early and pioneering translations of the Bible into Ga. The work acknowledges pioneers like Rev. W. A. Hanson, and focuses on Johannes Zimmermann and his team of national translators who worked together to ensure the translation of the Bible into Ga.²²⁷

In the “The Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi” section, Ekem discusses the history of the translation of the Bible into the Akan dialects of Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi.²²⁸ He pays particular attention to the work of the Basel Missionaries, especially, Johann Christaller and indigenes like

²²⁴ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 11-22.

²²⁵ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 7-16.

²²⁶ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 7-16.

²²⁷ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 23-48.

²²⁸ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 49-78.

David Asante, Clement Anderson Akrofi, and C. A. Denteh. This section of the book details the story of the development of the Akan language, and the politics that went with it.

The section on “The Mfantse Bible” examines the translation of the Bible into Mfantse.²²⁹ Ekem says that unlike the Ga, Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi translations, the Mfantse Bible is unique in that its translation was initiated by indigenes. He discusses in detail, the roles of Revs Andrew Parkar, J. O. Hammond, and Gabriel Acquah.²³⁰

The translation of the Bible into the Ewe language of Ghana and Togo is discussed in the section titled “The Ewe Bible.” Ekem highlights the critical contribution between translators from the Northern German Missionary Society (popularly referred to as the Bremen Mission) and their indigenous counterparts in a rich biographical and historical detail.²³¹

In a section titled “Summary of Issues Emerging from the Study and the Way Forward,” Ekem pulls the thread together of the main findings, addresses their implications, and outlines an agenda for future work and research. In addition, he links the translations of the past to Bible translation in the present to show that we must build on the earlier translations. He also provides a critical link

²²⁹ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 79-113.

²³⁰ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 82-94.

²³¹ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 115-147.

between translation of the Bible into majority languages and the unfinished translation needs of the minority languages of Ghana.²³²

Ekem recommends strongly that students of mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics should learn from the innovative and meaningful attempts by Rev Hanson who translated Scripture within the context of indigenous Ga expression and culture; the bold initiatives in language use and the theological reflection by Quist in his translation work of the Ewe Bible. He commends Quist's commentary on Matthew that has profound implications for mother-tongue hermeneutics.²³³

In this work, Ekem has reiterated his position on mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics as an academic discipline, and advocates for hermeneutics in Bible translation. Bible translation into mother-tongues involves the task of finding appropriate indigenous terms and the interpretation and re-interpretation as well as re-semanticization of such terms.²³⁴ Thus, there is a link between Bible translation and interpretation. This was discussed in 4.4.

²³² Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 149-157.

²³³ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 156.

²³⁴ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*, 53. In his work, *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2005), 61-64 and 120-124, Ekem makes a case for re-interpretation and re-semanticization of some key theological terms within the Akan context.

4.8.2 Contribution of David Nii Anum Kpobi

David Anum Kpobi has documented the history of the Bible Society of Ghana, whose major tasks involve the production and distribution of the Bible in Ghanaian mother-tongues.²³⁵ Kpobi begins his story by tracing the history of the Bible in Ghana under the topic, “the Bible in Ghana”. It covers the events and developments that took place between the fifteenth and the twentieth centuries. It echoes the speculation by earlier historians that the earliest copy of the Bible in Ghana must have come with the Portuguese explorers in the fifteenth century. Kpobi also tells the story of the earliest attempts to convert Ghanaians to Christianity; an attempt which actually brought Ghanaians into direct contact with the Bible for the first time.²³⁶

In the second section of his work, Kpobi sets the historical background, and that enables him to place the history of the Bible Society of Ghana into the global history of Bible Societies as they developed from Britain and spread to other parts of the world.²³⁷ Sections three and four focus on the history of the formation, growth and development of the Bible Society of Ghana. It also brings to the fore, how the Bible Society of Ghana seeks to fulfill its mandate through a well-calculated activities.²³⁸

²³⁵ David Nii Anum Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word: A History of the Bible Society of Ghana, 1965-2015* (Accra: Hertage Publications)

²³⁶ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 1-28.

²³⁷ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 30-38.

²³⁸ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 39-97.

In the concluding section, Kpobi highlights on-going projects, current challenges and the prospects of the Bible Society of Ghana as it positions itself to confront the complex and breath-taking transformations of the contemporary era and beyond.²³⁹

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Kpobi approaches his work from a historical perspective, building on earlier secondary sources such as Schaaf's *On their way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*; and Ekem's *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast*. Though historical, Kpobi raises issues which are related to this thesis: the lack of Bible helps such as Study Bibles, commentaries and dictionaries in Ghanaian mother-tongues,²⁴⁰ and the need for Youth Bible, Women's Bible and Children's Bible in the mother-tongues.²⁴¹ Engaging in these projects requires adaptation of existing works, translation and interpretation from one language to another.

4.9 History of the Translation of the Bible into Dangme

Personal communications with E. D. Leiku and G. D. Kitcher (now G. D. Kitcher-Asare), the two survivors of the Dangme Bible translation team²⁴² revealed that C. W. Doku, J. M. T. Dosoo, E. Populampo, S. T. Akunor, E. D. Leiku and G. D. Kitcher translated the Bible into Dangme. The Bible Translation Consultant (BTC) at the time was Rev. Prof. G. Ansreh, a linguist. He

²³⁹ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 99-133.

²⁴⁰ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 103-104.

²⁴¹ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 105-106.

²⁴² Face-to-face interview with E. D. Leiku, January 6, 2011 at KNUST, Kumasi; telephone interview with G. D. Kitcher-Asare, January 7, 2012.

supervised more than two-thirds of the Dangme translation project. The Dangme Bible was however published and launched when Rev. Dr. J. D. K. Ekem (now Very Rev. Professor Ekem) was the Translations Consultant of the BSG, after supervising some portions of the Dangme translation, and the proof reading.

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The Dangme Bible translation project started in the early 1960s with the New Testament, which was published and launched in 1977. The translation of the Old Testament into Dangme started in 1982 and was completed in 1996. The New Testament was revised and added to the Old Testament. The Dangme Bible was published in 1999, and launched in 2000 at the Lasi Park, Odumase-Krobo in the Eastern Region.²⁴³

The Dangme Bible translation team did not make use of one specific source during the translation. They relied on sources such as Bible Helps and Translation Guides, different English versions of the Bible – *KJV*, *RSV*, *NIV*, *TEV* (*GNB*); and some earlier Ghanaian mother-tongue translations – Ga, Ewe, Mfantse, Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi. The team also went to indigenous Dangme-speaking communities to research into words that posed challenges to them.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Personal communication with Leiku and Kitcher-Asare, 2012.

²⁴⁴ Telephone interview with Kitcher-Asare.

“Some of the challenges we faced were that, along the line, some of the books that were translated and were sent for review could not be traced; they got missing, and we had to translate them again. This may be due to poor record keeping on our part. Also some of the reviewers did not return their scripts on time.”²⁴⁵

David Anum Kpobi gives some information on the Dangme Bible.²⁴⁶ The Dangme Bible was recorded on cassettes in 2006, as part of the Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) project, to facilitate the reading and discussion of the Dangme Bible in churches and communities.²⁴⁷ He illustrates this with a picture of Dangmes in a town procession at Kasseh, Ada, “expressing joy because they can now listen to the Word of God in their own mother-tongue, Dangme.”²⁴⁸ He indicates that at a special Bible Reading Marathon to commemorate the Bicentenary of Bible Society worldwide, held at the Ridge Church, Accra in 2004, the Dangme Bible was also read.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Telephone interview with Kitcher-Asare.

²⁴⁶ David Nii Anum Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word: A History of the Bible Society of Ghana, 1965-2015*(Accra: Heritage Publications, 2015), 68, 120.

²⁴⁷ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 75.

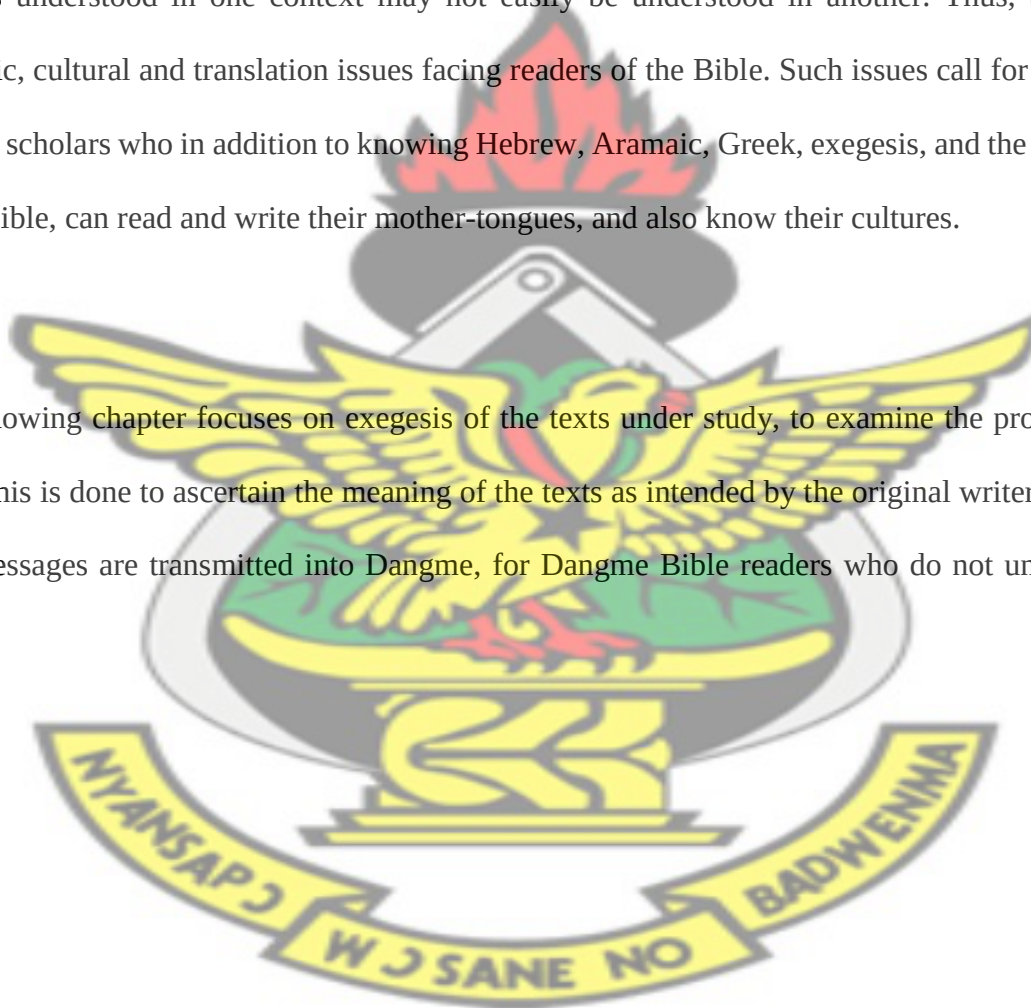
²⁴⁸ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 76.

²⁴⁹ Kpobi, *Entrusted with the Word*, 83-84.

4.10 Conclusion

From the discussion above one can say that Bible translation from the original languages into other languages is not a straight forward exercise. It calls for interpretation and reinterpretation from the source-language into the receptor language. Thus no translation can be perfect since there are always issues to be resolved regarding how certain words and terminologies should be translated. What is understood in one context may not easily be understood in another. Thus, there are linguistic, cultural and translation issues facing readers of the Bible. Such issues call for study by Biblical scholars who in addition to knowing Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, exegesis, and the theology of the Bible, can read and write their mother-tongues, and also know their cultures.

The following chapter focuses on exegesis of the texts under study, to examine the problematic texts. This is done to ascertain the meaning of the texts as intended by the original writers, before their messages are transmitted into Dangme, for Dangme Bible readers who do not understand Greek.



CHAPTER FIVE

EXEGESIS OF MATT 6:12, MARK 1:12 AND LUKE 24:25

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on Bible translation, and the philosophies behind translations. We found out that Bible translation involves interpretation; there is a link between Bible translation and interpretation. That link is exegesis, a careful historical, literary, and theological analysis of a text, practised by biblical scholars as research into an author, his thought, the influences upon him and his genius.²⁵⁰ This present chapter is exegesis of the problematic texts in Dangme - Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 – all from the Synoptic Gospels. These texts were identified during the field survey of the eight Dangme Bible reading communities.

5.2 The Synoptic Gospels and Synoptic Problem

Matt, Mark and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because of the very close relationship they bear to one another. They are so close that when they are placed alongside one another and compared, they agree to a large extent in the events they describe; and there is also a high level of verbal agreement in the stories and traditions that they share in common.²⁵¹ This wide-ranging agreement has led to the almost universal view that the three Gospels are related to each other

²⁵⁰ Jean Claud Margot, “Exegesis and Translation”, *Evangelical Quarterly*, (April 1975), 156-165. Michael J. Gorman outlines what exegesis entails. Exegesis about asking historical, literary religious or theological questions about a text with the aim of not just understanding a text, but discovering something new. For a discussion see Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* Revised and Expanded Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010), 10-11.

²⁵¹ David Noel Freedman (ed.), *Synoptic Gospels*, *Exegetical Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids MI/Cambridge, UK: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 1262.

through a literary relationship categorised as follows: the work of one Evangelist has been used by one or more of the others, and or the Evangelists have access to a common source or sources.²⁵² This has created a difficulty; and the problem of determining the precise relationship is known as the Synoptic Problem.²⁵³ There have been a wide-range of solutions proposed to the Synoptic Problem, but the most widely held solution is the Two Source Theory which posits that Mark's Gospel was used as a source by Matthew and Luke. In addition, Matthew and Luke had access to another body of source material, known as Q, of which scholars have much disagreement on its precise nature.²⁵⁴

Regarding the Synoptic Gospels F. F. Bruce writes, "Each of them [Synoptic Gospels] was written in the first instance for a definite constituency."²⁵⁵ Matt wrote to the Jews, Mark to the Romans and Luke to a Roman official, Theophilus.²⁵⁶ This shaped their choice of words and materials or events; they were selective and sensitive in their narrations to suit their audiences.

²⁵² Synoptic Gospels, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 1262.

²⁵³ Synoptic Gospels, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 1262.

²⁵⁴ For a discussion see A. J. Bellinzoon, Jr., (ed.), *The Two-Source Hypothesis* (Macon, 1985); W. R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem* (1964. Repr. Macon, 1981); J. A. Fitzmyer, The Priority of Mark and the 'Q' Source in Luke, in *Jesus and Man's Hope* (Pittsburgh, 1970), 1:131-170 (repr. in *To Advance the Gospel*, 2nd ed., [Grand Rapids, 1980]. 3-40); M. D. Goulder, Luke: *A New Paradigm*, JSNT Sup. 20 (Sheffield, 1989); C. M. Tuckett, The Existence of Q, in *The Gospel Behind the Gospels*, ed. R. A. Piper, NovTSup 75 (Leiden, 1995), 19-47 (repr. in Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* [Peabody, 1996], 1-39).

²⁵⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1982), 31.

²⁵⁶ Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, 44.

Exegesis of Matt 6:12

5.3.1 The wider context of Matthew 6:12

Matt 6:12 forms part of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom which begins from Matt 3 and ends in Matt 7. After the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17), the devil tempted him to sin; he overcame the devil (Matt. 4:1-11). He began his public ministry by calling on people to repent for the kingdom of heaven was near (Matt 4:12-17). Knowing that the message of the kingdom needed to be proclaimed widely, he called 12 people to follow him proclaim the message of the kingdom (Matt 4:18-22). For Jesus' followers to proclaim the message of the kingdom, they needed to understand it first so Jesus took his time to explain the subject of his kingdom (Matt 5-7). Jesus taught his followers about the character they should exhibit (Matt 5:1-12); their circle of influence (5:13-16); and then focused on the substance of his message (Matt 5:17-20). Matt 5:21-7:6 is the substantiation of his message. Jesus rejected the traditions of the Pharisees (Matt 5:21-48), and also their practices (Matt. 6:1-7:6). Two of such practices are almsgiving (6:1-4), which the Pharisees performed before men; and prayer (6:5-8) which they loved to perform publicly.

In contrast to the Pharisees' praying to "show off", Jesus taught his followers a model prayer (6:9-13)²⁵⁷ often called "the Lord's Prayer".²⁵⁸ This prayer contains the following elements : (1) Prayer

²⁵⁷ This is also recorded in Luke 11:2-4, with some variations.

²⁵⁸ But it is actually the disciples' prayer since it will be said by his followers. See, Loius A. Barbieri, Jr, "Matthew" In: John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, New Testament Edition (Colorado Springs: Colorado, 2000), 32. Osayande O. Hendricks' interpretation of the Lord's Prayer is that it is a by-product of Caesar's imperial control of political economy, and therefore it is Lord's paradigmatic critique of political economy. For a discussion see, Osayande O. Hendricks, "Guerrilla Exegesis: A Post-Modern Proposal for the Insurgent African-American Biblical Interpretation", *Semeia* 72 (1995):73-90. See also, Musa W. Dube, "To pray the Lord's Prayer in the Global Economic Era (Matt. 6: 9, 13)", In: Gerald O. West & Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends* (Boston/Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2000), 612-630. Dube interprets

is to begin with worship. (2) It must be said with reverence for God. (3) It must be said with the desire for God's kingdom to come. (4) Prayer includes request that God's will be accomplished on earth. (5) It includes petitions for personal daily needs.²⁵⁹ (6) It includes requests for spiritual needs, such as forgiveness.²⁶⁰

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5.3.2 The Immediate Context of Matt 6:12

The immediate context of Matt 6:12 is Matt 6:1-18 in which Jesus teaches about piety and its rewards. In these verses, Jesus examines the hypocritical practices of the Pharisees after rejecting their traditions (Matt 5:21-48). The general summary is found in Matt 6:1 Προσέχετε [δὲ] τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν ἕμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς· εἰ δὲ μὴ γε, μισθὸν οὐκ ἔχετε παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ ὑμῶν τῷ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. (Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men [human beings], to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven). This is followed by three parallel illustrations of the wrong and the way to go about religious observance: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. These were central elements in Jewish religion, and it is assumed that they are valid for Jesus' disciples.²⁶¹ Jesus' issue in Matt 6:1-8 is not whether his disciples should practise almsgiving, prayer and fasting, but how they

Mt. 6: 9, 13 as an "invitation to Christian communities and individuals to assume active responsibility for all that hinders the daughters and sons of God around the world to come to full realization", 629.

²⁵⁹ See Matt 6: 11 and Lk.11:3 which has the common phrase, *ton arton hēmōn ton epiousion*. The interpretation of this phrase has posed a big challenge to New Testament exegesis. For a discussion see, J. D. K. Ekem, "Interpreting the Lord's Prayer in the Context of Ghanaian Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (December 2007): 48-52.

²⁶⁰ Forgiveness here denotes our indebtedness to God which make us eternally dependent on God. For a discussion see, P. K. Poku, *A Critical Look at the "Lord's Prayer," Matt 6:7-13 with an Akan Eye* (Pisheng: Digital Press, 2016).

²⁶¹ D. A. Carson et al (eds.), *New Bible Commentary 21st Century Edition* (Downers Grove, Illinois/Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997), 912.

should be practised and why. Jesus focuses his teaching on the question of “reward” – what we get for performing these religious acts. We find a symmetry of the three illustrations in verses 2-4, 5-6, 16-18. This is sandwiched by an extended discussion of prayer, which further explains the wrong way of praying (vv. 7-8) and the right way (vv. 9-15). Matt 6:9-13 has a parallel in Luke 11:2-4. But the former is longer than the latter; and the familiar doxology occurs only in later manuscripts of Matt.²⁶²

Matt 6:12 reads, καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν.

[“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”].²⁶³ Scholars are divided as to what ὀφειλήματα “debts” in the verse mean. Anthony J. Saldarini contends that, ὀφειλήματα “debts” is most probably sins (hence the traditional translation “trespasses”) to be forgiven by God, especially at the judgment at the end of the world”.²⁶⁴

5.3.3 Morphological and Syntactical Analysis of Matt 6:12

καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν.

The text begins with καὶ which is a conjunction meaning “and, even, also.” καὶ is sometimes used in modifying a word.²⁶⁵ The context of a sentence determines how καὶ is translated. The “and” meaning is used in Matt 2:2,3, 11, 4:22. In Matt 5:39, καὶ means “also” (cf. Matt 10:30, John 8:19,

²⁶² Carson et al, *New Bible Commentary* 913.

²⁶³ *The USB Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).

²⁶⁴ Anthony J. Saldarini, “Matthew” In; James D. G. Dunn & John W. Rogerson, (eds.), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 1018.

²⁶⁵ Maurice A. Robinson and Mark A. House (eds.), *Analytical Lexicon of New Testament Greek Revised and Updated* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers), 187.

1Cor 11:6). Sometimes, *καὶ* means ‘but’ (Matt 11:19). *Καὶ* is also used to introduce an apodosis of a sentence (James 2:4, Gal 3:28).²⁶⁶ *καὶ* is used twice in Matt 6:12. The first *καὶ* in the phrase or statement or clause, connects verse 11, after a pause - the semi colon.

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ἄφες is a verb aorist active imperative, second person singular of the verb *ἄφηνμι*. It means “let go”, “permit”, “cancel”, “forgive”.²⁶⁷ The imperative mood of *ἄφες* raises the question, whether we command God when we are asking for His forgiveness. But that is not the case because Jesus’ introduction of the prayer with *Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* (Our Father who is in heaven, 6:9), suggests that we go to God in humility and request, rather than “command” Him.

ἄφηνμι is a verb attested in the New Testament together with its cognate noun *ἄσις* to express the concept of forgiveness which occurs 142 times. Of these, 47 are found in Matt, 34 each in Mark and the Lucan writings, and 14 in John. The term occurs only 45 times in the sense of “to forgive” in the New Testament. It is used occasionally in a secular sense (Matt 18:27, 32), but usually in the religious sense of forgiveness or forgiveness of sins (*ἄφηνμι ἁρματίας* Mark. 2:5, 7, cf. Luke 7:47, ff), debts (*ὀφειλήματα* Matt 6:12), and trespasses (*παραπτώματα* Mark 11:25 f.; Matt 6:14 f.). In the Gospels, however, and the rest of the New Testament, *ἄφηνμι* is used in the original sense of “to let go” (Mark 1:34; 5:19, 37); “to dismiss, cancel, divorce, release” (Matt 13:36); “to leave”

²⁶⁶ William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1993), 259.

²⁶⁷ *Bible Works* 6.

(Mark 1:20; 10:28); “to leave behind” (Mark 1:18); “to abandon” (Mark 7:8). Forgiveness can also be expressed as remitting (ἀπολυω), or pardoning (χαριζομαι).²⁶⁸

The concept of forgiveness in the Gospels and in the rest of the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament. In the LXX, ἀφίημι is used for a series of Hebrew words that denote either “release,” “surrender,” or “leave,” or “leave in peace” (Ju. 2:23; 3:1; 2 Bas. 16:11; 20:23; cf. 104:14). It is also used to mean “remission” (Gen 4:13; Exo 32:32; cf. 24:18; 31:5). The object of remission is sin or guilt.²⁶⁹ Even though there are examples of human beings forgiving one another in the Old Testament (Gen 50:17; Ex 10:17; 1 Sam 15:25; 25:28; Prov 17:9), the majority of references to the forgiveness of sins have God as subject (Exo 34:7; cf Num 14:18-20; Neh 9:17; Psa 130:4; Mic 7:18; Dan 9:9). Thus in the Old Testament we find many prayers of God’s forgiveness of both individuals (2 Kgs 5:18; Psalm 25:11) and especially the people of Israel (1 Kgs 8:30-50; 2 Chron 6:21-39; Psa 79:9). But the Old Testament does not represent forgiveness as automatic: It flows from the sovereign freedom of the living God.²⁷⁰

In the Gospels, the concept of forgiveness is discussed in relation to the Son of Man who has power to forgive sins and the community of faith who must forgive in order to receive God’s forgiveness.

²⁶⁸ H. Vorländer, “Forgiveness” in Colin Brown, General Editor, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 697-703.

²⁶⁹ Bultmann, “ἀφίημι” in, Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 510.

²⁷⁰ Ellingworth, “Forgiveness of Sins” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall, Eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 241.

Stories of forgiveness of sins in the Gospels are not understood in isolation; they are best understood with reference to reverent passive expressions in the Old Testament such as “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven” (Psa 32:1; cf Deut 21:8; Is 6:7; 33:24; 40:2). In the Synoptic story of Jesus’ healing of the lame man (Mark 2:1-12), the scribes’ indignation, “Who has the power to forgive sins but God alone?” (v.7, cf Luke 5:21), is caused by Jesus’ statement “Your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). “Their anger is aroused not because forgiveness of one human being by another is unknown, but because the passive formula implied a claim to make performative statements in God’s name.”²⁷¹ Jesus’ statement that he heals the lame man so that the scribes may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth (v.10) makes the claim virtually explicit.

Closely related to forgiveness are those passages which speak of the remission of a debt. We find a typical example in the story of the two debtors (Matt 18:23-35). There, it is important to note that, as Jesus’ final comment makes it clear, the remission of debt is a parable of forgiveness in the kingdom of heaven. This is the sense with which forgiveness must be understood in the Lord’s Prayer, where Luke 11:4 has “forgive us our sins” and Matt 6:12 has “forgive us our debts.” In Matt’s account, sins are being thought of metaphorically as incurring indebtedness to God.

²⁷¹ Ellingworth, “Forgiveness of Sin,” In Joel Green et al, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 241.

ἡμῖν is a personal pronoun dative plural, meaning “us”.²⁷² It refers to those who are to ask God for forgiveness (ἄφιμι). τὰ ὀφειλήματα noun accusative plural, meaning “debts,” that which is owed. Forgiveness of debts (ἄφιμι ὀφειλήματα) is what the disciples are to ask for. The critical questions are whether sins are debts we owe God;²⁷³ and how (ὀφειλήματα) should be translated into Dangme in the context of forgiveness for Dangme Bible readers who are of the view that when we think of sins as debts we own God; then God “lends us our sins” when we ask for forgiveness, rather than “letting go” of them. Matt 6:12 is translated into Dangme and discussed in chapter six (6:2).

ὥς is a conjunction which can be translated “as”, “that”, “how”, “about”.²⁷⁴ In the verse it means “as” and it links the first part of the request καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν (And forgive us our debt) to the second part καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν (even as we forgive our debtors). The second καὶ in the verse is an adverb; it can mean “and”, “even” or “also”.²⁷⁵ “Even”

²⁷² Bible Works 6.

²⁷³ Scholars are divided as to what “debts” in Matt 6:12 mean. Anthony J. Saldarini say that, “The ‘debts’ ὀφειλήματα are most probably sins (hence the traditional translation ‘trespasses’) to be forgiven by God, especially at the judgment at the end of the world” (Anthony J. Saldarini, “Matthew” in James D. G. Dunn & John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 1018). Cf. Luke 11:4, where ἁμαρτίας (sins) is used. Could it be that sins are moral debts we owe God? And that they reveal our shortcomings before God, as suggested by Louis A. Barbieri, Jr, “Matthew” *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications, 2000), 32.

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²⁷⁵ Bible Works 6.

is the contextual meaning; and it implies that the disciple or petitioner has forgiven those who had offended him or her. Jesus hammers this point home in verses 14-15 Ἐὰν γὰρ ἀφῆτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, ἀφήσει καὶ ὑμῖν ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος· ¹⁵ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀφῆτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οὐδὲ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἀφήσει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν. (For if you forgive men [people] when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men [people] their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins). These verses have made our receiving of God's forgiveness dependent on our willingness to forgive others when they wrong us.

5.3.4 The Meaning of Matt 6:12

Jesus' teaching is addressed to a community based on the giving and receiving of forgiveness, from which those who refuse to forgive their enemies exclude themselves. The passages cited above further illustrate this principle: God's forgiveness can only be received by those who are ready to forgive others. This principle is given special emphasis in Matt's version of the Lord's Prayer by being made the subject of the verses following immediately after the Lord's Prayer, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (vv. 14-15). The same thought is expressed in Luke 6:37 and 7:47. Thus, Matt 6:12 is about forgiveness of sins and not debts. This is the way Matt 6:12 should be understood by readers. How has this verse been translated in the *Ngmami Klouklou* ⚡, the Dangme Bible? This question will be answered and discussed in chapter six (6.2.1).

5.4 Mark 1:12

5.4.1 Exegesis of Mark 1:12

5.4.2 The Wider Context of Mark 1:12

The prologue²⁷⁶ of the Gospel of Mark, forms the wider context of Mark 1:12. Mark's opening words, "the beginning of the good news"²⁷⁷ of Jesus Christ, the Son of God serves more or less as the title of the whole work.²⁷⁸ The entire story of Jesus' ministry is "good news" for the whole world. Mark's quotation of the Old Testament prophets in verses 2-3 - Malachi (3:1) and Isaiah (40:3) - "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"; 'a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him'" - introduces John the Baptist, who prepares the way for Jesus Christ through preaching of repentance and baptism (vv.4-8).

5.4.3 The Immediate Context of Mark 1:12

Jesus comes to the scene and goes through baptism by John (v.9). At Jesus' baptism the Spirit took possession of him (Mark 1:10-11). Immediately after that the Spirit took him into the wilderness

²⁷⁶ There is a long-standing debate on the function and extent of Mark's prologue. On one hand, it appears that the purpose of Mark's prologue (like the birth narratives in Matt and Luke and the prologue of John) is to introduce the reader to Jesus' true significance as the Messiah and Son of God before the story about him begins. But it is not clear where the prologue ends and the gospel 'proper' starts. It is just the first verse that is introductory or verses 1-8? If the introduction includes verses 2-11 then the place of John the Baptist as recorded is very important, not only as the promised forerunner of the Messiah but also as setting the pattern for his life, rejection and death. (Carson et al, *New Bible Commentary* 950). My position is that verses 1-8 constitute the introductory part of Mark's gospel.

²⁷⁷ Mark's language of "beginning", "good news", and "Son of God" deliberately echoes the Roman doctrine of the divine emperor. Thus Mark is saying to the Roman world that Caesar is neither the beginning of the good news for the world, nor is God's son; Messiah Jesus is. As such, Mark's opening words directly challenge the Roman emperor cult. Craig A. Evans, "Mark", In: James D. G. Dunn & John W. Rodgers, (eds.), *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U. K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 1066.

²⁷⁸ Evans, "Mark", 1066.

to be tempted by the devil (Mark 1:12-13). Mark's description of how Jesus went to the wilderness to be tempted is quite abrupt that it calls for investigation. Craig A. Evans says that the evangelist's choice of words is curious, for "drive out" (ἐκβάλλειν) is frequently used to describe the casting out of demons (cf. Mark 1:34, 39; 3:15, 22, 23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18, 28, 38).²⁷⁹ "The Markan evangelist may have wished to emphasize the power of the Spirit...[for] when the Spirit moves, dramatic things happen".²⁸⁰ However in the parallel accounts of the same incidence in Matt and Luke, the picture is different – ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοῦ πνεύματος²⁸¹ "the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness" (Matt 4:1); ἤγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ²⁸² "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luk 4:1). So which is which: did the Spirit "throw", "drag" or "push" Jesus into the wilderness or made him go into the wilderness? What might have informed Mark to report the incident the way he did? Mark used τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει "the Spirit threw him" because of his reading community who were probabaly Roman soldiers. The urgency of the action in verse 3, φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him", stressed by the use of the aorist imperative ἐτοιμάσατε "Prepare [now]", suggests this. Further to that is Mark's use of a forceful word ἐκβάλλει "he cast out" which his readers understood. Again, the editorial links like εὐθὺς "straightaway", "immediately" (1:12, 18) in the account of Jesus' ministry; and the impressive speed of urgency, that is, the racy nature of the narratives – the healing of the paralytic man (2:1-12), the stilling of the storm (4:35-41), and the cure of the deaf and mute man (7:31-37) and the

²⁷⁹ Evans, "Mark", 1067.

²⁸⁰ Evans, "Mark", 1067.

²⁸¹ *Bible Works* 6.

²⁸² *Bible Works* 6.

blind man (8:22-26) – suggest that his readers have military background; they were people who had no time to waste.

5.4.4 Morphological and Syntactical Analysis Mark 1:12

Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. Καὶ is a conjunction meaning “and”, “even”, “also”.²⁸³ The preferred meaning in the context is “and”. It links Jesus’ baptism in verse 9-11 to his being carried away into the desert to be tempted by the Devil. It makes the two episodes a continuum, one following the other.

εὐθὺς is an adverb meaning “straightaway”, “immediately”.²⁸⁴ It shows the urgency with which Jesus left the scene of his baptism. The word keeps the narrating moving at a pace through out the book, as it chronicles Jesus’ travels of his three-year ministry on earth. εὐθὺς which is particularly applied to a servant, agrees with the theme of the Gospel of Mark: “Jesus the Servant of God.” The word which is found eighty times in the New Testament occurs in Mark alone about forty times.²⁸⁵

τὸ πνεῦμα is a reference to the spirit that descended upon Jesus at his baptism (v.10).²⁸⁶ Robert Bratcher and Eugene Nida have cautioned that in this context, it is quiet important that one makes

²⁸³ Bible Works 6.

²⁸⁴ Bible Works 6.

²⁸⁵ Bible Works 6.

²⁸⁶ Bible Works 6.

sure that the word used for “spirit” carries the proper connotation, for “driving one out into an uninhabited region” is precisely what demon are usually credited with doing.²⁸⁷

αὐτὸν is a pronoun accusative masculine singular, referring to Jesus on whom the Spirit performs an action.²⁸⁸ ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. ἐκβάλλει is a verb indicative active third person singular of ἐκβάλλω. It means “he cast out”. The word is very forceful in the Greek. It shows the action of the Spirit with Jesus. He is cast out εἰς “into” τὴν ἔρημον “the desert”. Jesus was literally “thrust” into the desert; he was literally compelled to go there. Barton et al has noted that, “This does not mean that Jesus was reluctant to go, but rather he was intensely determined to go, in agreement with the Spirit.”²⁸⁹ Mark used the same word to denote the expulsion of demons (1:34, 39; 3:15, 22-23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18, 28, 38). Where people are involved, force is always indicated (1:43; 5:40; 11:15; 12:8). Mark used the word once in relation to the removal of an eye (9:47). As John Grassmick has rightly noted, Mark’s use of ἐκβάλλει reflects his forceful style.²⁹⁰ Matt and Luke however use the milder words ἀνιχθῆ “was led up” (Matt 4:1) and ἡγετο “was led” (Luke 4:1) to describe the Spirit’s activity after Jesus’ baptism.

In the New Testament ἐκβάλλω appears eighty-one times to illustrate a wide range of meanings. It must be noted however that ἐκβάλλω has a theological bearing only in connection with casting out demons (cf. Matt 7:22; 8:10 par. 9:34; 12:26 f; 17:19 par. Luke 13:32). Thus, the translation of

²⁸⁷ Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene. A. Nida, *The Translators Handbook on Mark* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), 33.

²⁸⁸ *Bible Works* 6.

²⁸⁹ Barton et al, *Mark: Life Application Commentary*, 18.

²⁹⁰ John D. Grassmick, Mark” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (eds.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs: Victor Imprint, 2000), 106.

the verb ἐκβάλλει is the contention in Mark 1:12. Bratcher and Nida opine that since Mark often uses ἐκβάλλω for the casting out of demons and in this passage combines it with the vigorous word ἐὶθὺς, it ought to be translated by something stronger – “forced out” or “thrown out.”²⁹¹ But, how can the Spirit throw out Jesus? “Throw out” or “cast out” is too strong a term to be used for the Spirit’s activity with Jesus. I propose “the Spirit made Jesus go into the wilderness.”

5.4.5 The Meaning of Mark 1:12

After Jesus’ baptism, he went forward in the power of the Spirit and at once, the Spirit sent him farther out into the desert region. Even though the word “sent” is from a strong verb ἐκβάλλω which reflects Mark’s forceful style of writing, reflected in the way he presented how demons are cast out, the thought in Mark 1:12 is that of a strong moral compulsion by which the Spirit led Jesus to take the offensive against temptation and evil instead of avoiding them. This is the way the verse should be understood. Mark 1:12 will be translated into Dangme and discussed in chapter six (6.2.2).

5.5 Luke 24:25

5.5.1 Exegesis of Luke 24:25

²⁹¹ Bratcher and Nida, *The Translators Handbook on Mark*, 32.

5.5.2 The Wider Context of Luke 24:25

The wider context of the text under discussion is the Gospel according to Luke which was first read to followers of Jesus in a Mediterranean city.²⁹² The author does not categorize this book as “Gospel” but a διήγησιν “narrative” (1:1) which he claims to write more ἀκριβῶς “fully” or “accurately” (1:3) than his predecessors. With this comparison, Luke is observing that his predecessors, including Mark²⁹³ have not given their readers Jesus’ or the apostles’ speeches. Thus Luke-Acts is a historiographical narrative of a series of event-accounts. In his narration of events, Luke moves step-by-step; that is, he is orderly in his presentation.²⁹⁴

5.5.3 The Immediate Context of Luke 24:25

The immediate context is Luke’s narration of the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus recorded in 24:13-39. The actual context however, is Luke 24:13-35 - the Emmaus story, one of the most beloved accounts of the resurrection narrative. This story is imbedded into the Lukan passion and empty-tomb episodes, and indeed, the whole of Luke’s account of Jesus’ ministry, by retrospective summary (Luke 24:19-24). It is an account of Jesus’ helping two ordinary persons who had lost hope and fallen into the pit of sadness and despair. Luke was the only Gospel writer who described in detail Jesus’ encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.²⁹⁵ Perhaps Luke chose to

²⁹² D. L. Balch, “Luke,” *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, eds., James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 1104.

²⁹³ The Two Source Theory proposed as a solution posits that Mark’s Gospel was used as a source by Matthew and Luke. In addition, Matthew and Luke had access to another body of source material, known as Q, of which scholars have much disagreement on its precise nature. See 5.2 above.

²⁹⁴ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* NICNT (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 11.

²⁹⁵ Mark briefly mentioned this encounter in Mark 16:12-13.

emphasize this story because it identified the major error of the disciples at this time. On one hand, they did not know the Scriptures that well; on the other hand, they were slow to believe. Jesus was sternly astonished by the two disciples for these two faults and proceeded to explain to them how his life, death, and resurrection had fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture.

The narrative of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus contains some terms that reflect scriptural interpretation: συζητω "dispute, discuss" (24:15), διήνοιγω "open up completely" (24:31-32), διερμήνευω "translate, interpret" (24:27), and ὁμιλεω "converse, speak" (24:14-15). These terms characterize Jesus as a teacher and Jesus' followers as interpreters of the Old Testament.²⁹⁶

Luke 24: 13-32 is divided into three scenes:

- (i) The two disciples taking a lonely but thoughtful walk (vv. 13-14)
- (ii) Jesus confronting them to consider three critical questions (vv. 15-27)
 - (a) "What are you discussing together as you walk along"? (v.17)
 - (b) "What things [have happened]"? (v. 19)
 - (c) "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory"? (v.26)

²⁹⁶ B. J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, SNTA 14 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989).

- (iii) The disciples' experience of the burning truth - Jesus is risen; he is alive (vv. 28-32).

In these verses, we see Luke's orderly presentation of events of the two disciples' experience of the resurrected Christ.

5.5.4 Morphological and Syntactical Analysis of Luke 24:25

καὶ αὐτὸς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· ὦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται·

καὶ is a conjunction meaning “and”, “even”, “also”.²⁹⁷ The “and” is the most suitable meaning here. It links the response of the two disciples to Jesus' question in verse 19, about what has happened to Jesus of Nazareth. αὐτὸς is a pronoun intensive nominative masculine singular meaning “he”.²⁹⁸ It refers to Jesus. εἶπεν is a verb indicative aorist active third person singular of the verb λεγω, meaning “say.”²⁹⁹ It is the action of the nominative pronoun. πρὸς is a preposition accusative; it means “to”, “towards”.³⁰⁰ “To” is the contextual meaning. αὐτούς is a pronoun personal accusative masculine plural, meaning “them;”³⁰¹ referring to the two disciples in conversation with Jesus.

²⁹⁷ Bible Works 6.

²⁹⁸ Bible Works 6.

²⁹⁹ Bible Works 6.

³⁰⁰ Bible Works 6.

³⁰¹ Bible Works 6. Laurence Porter suggests that the masculine pronouns αὐτῶν/αὐτούς “them” in v. 13 and 25 used of the travelers, and even the ἀνόητοι “foolish” in v.25 do not preclude the idea of man and wife sometimes suggested to have been the case in this text. (Laurence E. Porter, “Luke” In: F. F. Bruce (Gen. Ed.), *New International Bible*

ὦ is an interjection,³⁰² meaning “oh”. It expresses Jesus’ surprise at the two disciples who do not understand what has happened in Jerusalem, regarding the Christ.

ἄνόητοι in the phrase is an adjective vocative masculine plural, translated as “foolish” or “foolish people”.³⁰³ It is Jesus’ rebuke of the two disciples for their slowness in heart in believing what the prophets have said; that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and then enter his glory (vv. 25b-26), expressed in the Greek text as, βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται· οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ.³⁰⁴

The issue at stake in verse 25 is the translation of ἄνόητοι understood as “foolish” or “foolish people,” an insult, when genuinely Jesus did not mean to insult the two disciples for their lack of understanding of what has happened. The question is, does one’s inability to understand an issue makes one foolish?

Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1979), 1227. Porter’s suggestion might not be the case because the ἄνόητοι “foolish” is also masculine. Thus, the two travelers were men and not a man and a woman.

³⁰² *Bible Works* 6.

³⁰³ *Bible Works* 6.

³⁰⁴ I have paraphrased the verses here, for smooth reading of the sentence.

The word ἀνόητοι is attested in Greek literature. Plato's Parmenides used the verbal adjective νοητος to mean intelligible. The opposite is expressed by ἀνόητος. He speaks of νοηματα...ανοητα - unintelligible, unimaginable.³⁰⁵ Ανοητα also means "senseless", "foolish", indicating a lack of understanding and judgment. In the Septuagint ἀνόητος appears nine times for the Hebrew word 'wîl (Prov 17:28) and 'iwwelet (Prov 15:21), meaning "foolish", "without sense" (see 32:31; Psa 49 [48]:12, Sir. 21:19; 42:8; Macc. 5:8 f; 8:17).

The first occurrence of ἀνόητοι in the New Testament is in Luke 24:25, where the risen Christ used it on the disciples on their way to Emmaus, to describe their deficient spiritual understanding of the will of God. Here, Christ used ἀνόητοι not in the sense that the disciples were moronic, but in the sense that they lacked understanding of what the Scriptures says about the Christ.

In Rom 1:4, Paul use ἀνόητος to denote the man who is lacking in understanding, knowledge, instruction, and spiritual insight. In Gal 3:1, 3, Paul addresses the Galatian Christians who do not understand the freedom which their salvation has given them as ἀνόητοι, "foolish". Here again the word ἀνόητοι, "foolish" does not mean such people lack sense; it means they lack understanding. Vincent says that ἀνόητοι is made up of α and νοεω, which implies 'besides seeing', 'perception

³⁰⁵ *Parmenides* 132c, cited in Colin Brown, Gen. Ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Michigan: Zondervan Press, 1986), 124.

of the mind as consequent upon sight'. It is therefore equivalent to “dull perception”. Thus, ἀνόητοι does not mean foolish people as such; it is used to describe people who are dull in understanding.³⁰⁶

In the New Testament we find other words such as μωρε, translated into English as “foolish” in the sense of a person being stupid, unwise. In Matt 5:22 Jesus says, anybody who will call his brother or sister μωρε “fool”, shall be liable to hell fire. “Fool” in the verse means “blockheaded”.³⁰⁷ In Matt 7:26 Jesus, in concluding his Sermon on the Mount says anyone who hears these words and do not put them into practice is liken to an ἄνθρωπος μωρος “foolish man/person”. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matt 25, Jesus uses the word μωροί “foolish” for the five women who took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. Paul, talking about Christ the wisdom and power of God says in 1 Cor 1:20 that God has made ἐμωρανεν “foolish” the wisdom of the world, and chose the μωρα “foolish things” of the world to shame the wise (1 Cor 1:27). Further, Paul exhorts that anyone who wants to be wise by the standard of this world should first become μωρος “foolish” (1Cor 3:18). In Eph 5:4 one of the vices that should not be found among believers is μωρολογία “foolish talk”. Christians are to avoid μωρας ζητησεις “foolish disputes” about the law also (Titus 3:9).

³⁰⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament* Second Edition (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1886), 435.

³⁰⁷ Bertram, “μωρος” in, Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 840.

The Greek word μωρος translated “foolish” is probably from the root μυο which means “to shut up”, “blockheaded”. From the root word μωρος we get the word μυστηριου which means “a hidden thing, secret mystery” that is not obvious to the understanding.³⁰⁸ Thus, the difference between an ἄνοητος and a μωρος is that the former is used to describe a person who is slow in understanding, and the latter for a stupid person who talks or acts unwisely. So, the fact that a person is ἄνοητος “dull in perception,” does not mean he or she is μωρος “stupid.”

5.5.5 The Meaning of Luke 24:25

Ἀνόητοι used by the risen Christ in Luke 24:25 does not mean “foolish people” in the sense of people being moronic; the word denotes “dullness”. He used ἄνόητοι for the two men on their way to Emmaus who were dull in their minds and as such are slow in understanding what the prophets had said about the Christ. Ἀνόητοι in the text is a rebuke, and not an insult; and it should be understood in that sense. The word is translated into Dangme and discussed in chapter six (6.2.3).

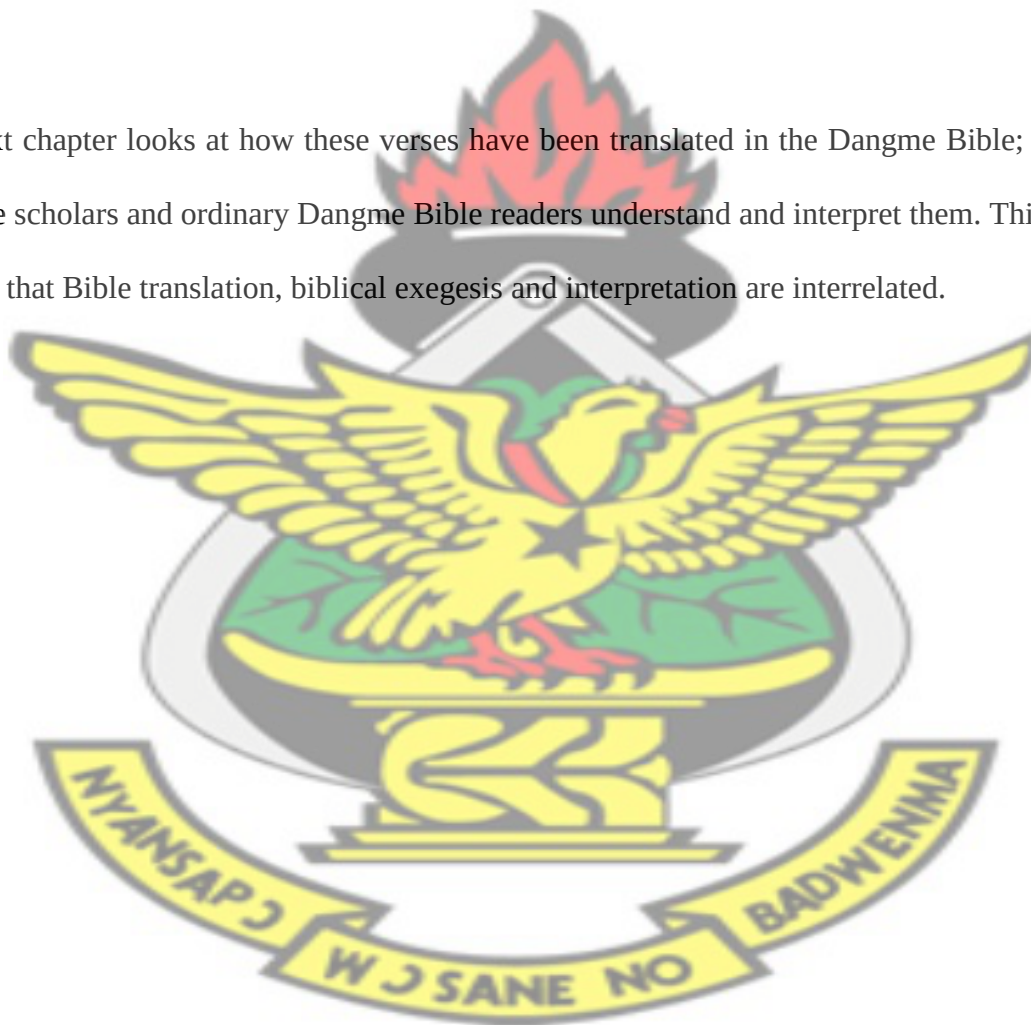
5.6 Conclusion

Exegesis of the texts under study – Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12, and Luke 24:25 – have brought out their meanings; and how they should be understood by readers. Even though Matt 6:12 reads, “And forgive us our debts...” it should be understood in terms of forgiveness of sins. Since Mark 1:12,

³⁰⁸ For a discussion see, *Strong's Greek/Hebrew Definitions*, and *Thayer's Lexicon Definitions*.

“And immediately, the Spirit cast him into the desert...” is an example of Mark’s forceful style of writing and it shows the moral compulsion under which Jesus set forth to face Satan’s temptation, it should be understood as Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. In Luke 24:25, Jesus’ usage of “Oh foolish people” on the two disciples on their way to Emmaus should be understood as a rebuke for their lack of understanding and belief in what the prophets have said about the Christ.

The next chapter looks at how these verses have been translated in the Dangme Bible; and how Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers understand and interpret them. This is done to show that Bible translation, biblical exegesis and interpretation are interrelated.



CHAPTER SIX

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF MATT 6:12, MARK 1:12 AND LUKE 24:25 IN THE DANGME BIBLE

6.1 Introduction

In chapter four (4:9) we gave a brief account of the translation of the Bible into Dangme. In chapter five (5:3, 4, 5) exegesis of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 brought out the intended meaning of each text. In this current chapter, we present a statistical data of the 565 Dangme Bible Readers from the eight Dangme tribes who responded to the questionnaire;³⁰⁹ analyse the Dangme translations of the text, looking at how some Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers understand and interpret them. Suggested translations that fit into the religio-cultural thought of the Dangme are given. This is followed by a discussion of the findings. The chapter demonstrates that even though Bible translation is not about hermeneutics of biblical texts, there is hermeneutics in Bible translation.

6.2 Statistical representation of the 565 Dangme Bible Readers from the eight Dangme tribes who responded to the questionnaire.

6.2.1 Statistical Representation of their Bio-data

³⁰⁹ This is done descriptively with percentages to bring out the trends and patterns that may be lurking within them.

Data were collected on the sex, age, position in denomination, indigenous Dangme and the non-Dangme to assess the frequency of readership of the Dangme Bible.

6.2.1 (a) Sex of Respondents

This was done to ascertain the gender distribution of respondents that were selected for the study as well as to know the gender distribution as to the use of the Dangme Bible.

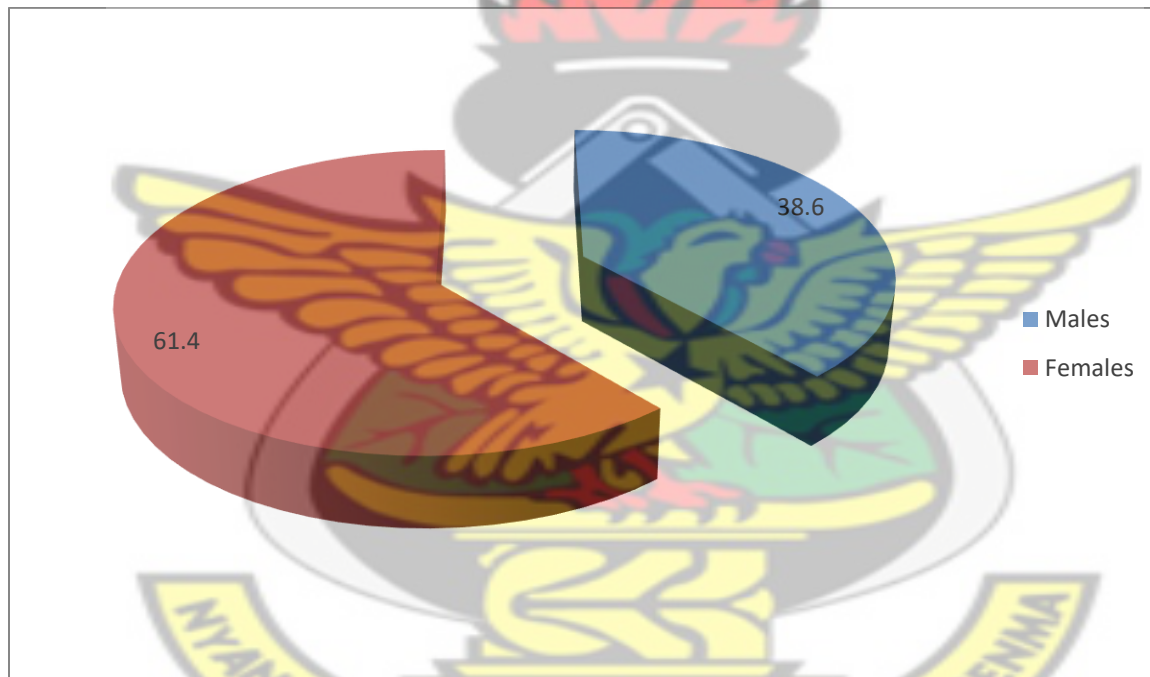


Figure 6. 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Respondents selected consisted of both males and females; the males constituted two hundred and eighteen (218) representing 38.6%, while the females were also three hundred and forty-seven (347) representing 61.4%. The difference in the sampling respondents for the sex is attributed to

the random sampling method used; however, this shows a strong representation of both sexes in the study and represents collective views of both males and females within the study area.

6.2.1(b) Ages of Respondents

On the part of age distribution, respondents were asked to indicate the range in which their age falls; this was to allow for easy presentation and a well categorising of age difference for the study.

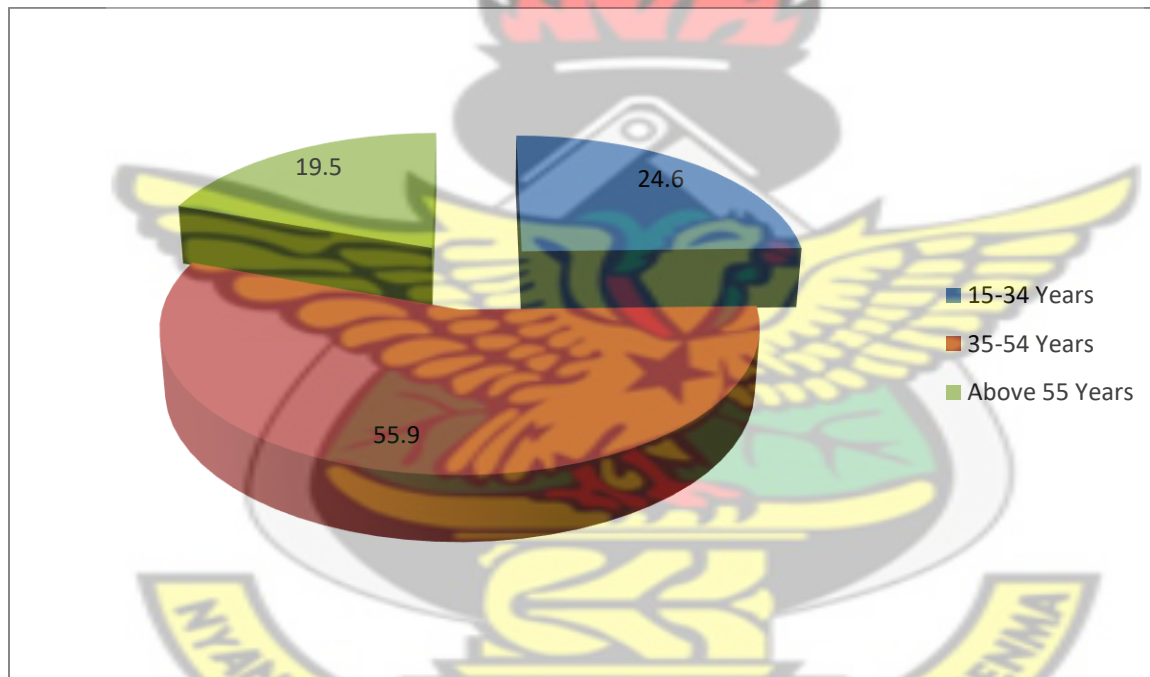


Figure 6.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

From the study, it was realized that, majority of the respondents made up of three hundred and sixteen (316) representing 55.9% were those within the age bracket of 35-54 years, followed by those within the age bracket of 15-34 years which constitute one hundred and thirty-nine (139)

representing 24.6%, while those accounting for respondents more than 55 years were one hundred and ten (110) representing (19.5%).

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6.2.1 (c) Denominations

In order to have a fair view of the usage of the Dangme Bible, various individuals selected were sampled from various denominations of churches within the study area in order to account for variety and differences in responses from the various denominations.

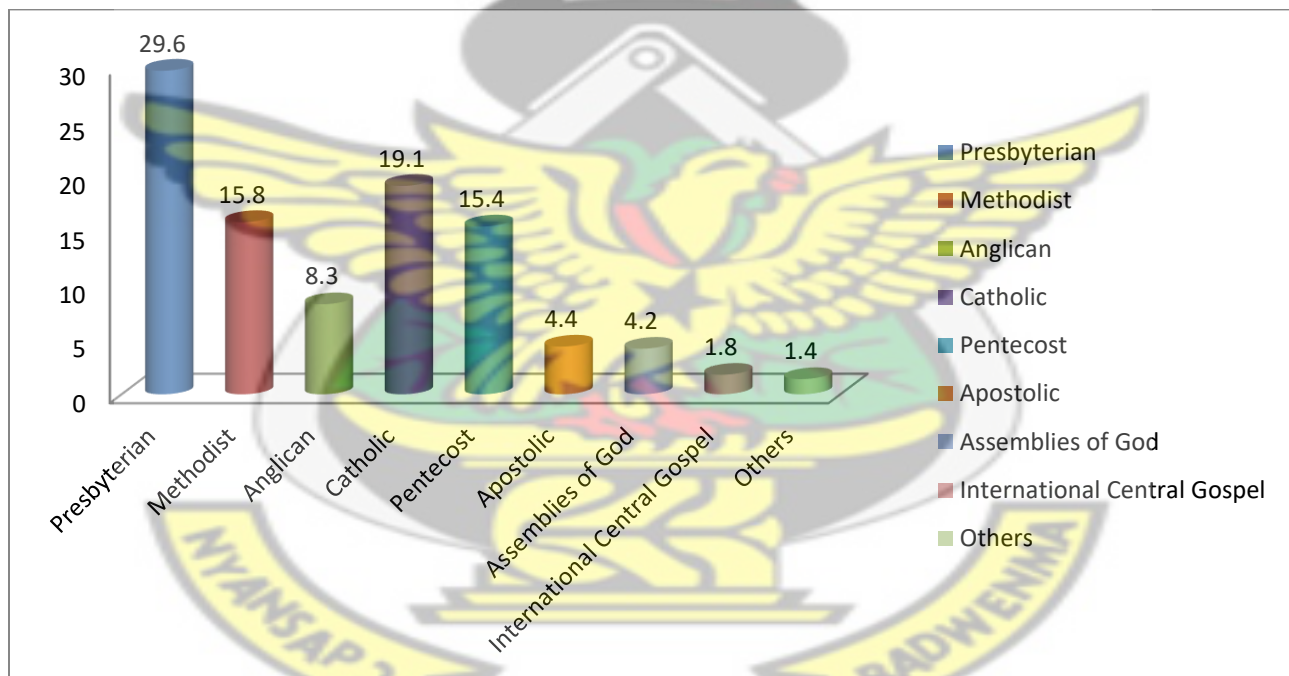


Figure 6.3: Denominations of Respondents

It was found that, there was a good representation of various denominations for the study; majority of the respondents were Presbyterian consisting of one hundred and sixty-seven (167) representing 29.6%, followed by Catholics constituting one hundred and eight (108), representing 19.1%.

Respondents sample from Methodist accounts for eighty-nine (89), representing 15.8%, followed by those in the Church of Pentecost constituting eighty-seven (87), representing 15.4%. Respondents sample from Anglican constitute forty-seven (47) representing 8.3%; Apostolic consists of twenty-five (25) representing 4.4%; Assemblies of God consists of twenty-four (24), representing 4.2%; International Central Gospel consists of ten (10) respondents representing 1.8%, while the Other denominations consists of eight (8) respondents representing 1.4%. This result shows the effort made by the researcher to include as many denominations as possible in order to capture the views of all denominations to bring out a good representative view of denominations using the Dangme Bible.

6.2.1 (d) Position in Denomination

Respondents sampled were also found to be of various capacities in the various denominations. This was done to help understand the categorical distribution of respondents captured for the study.

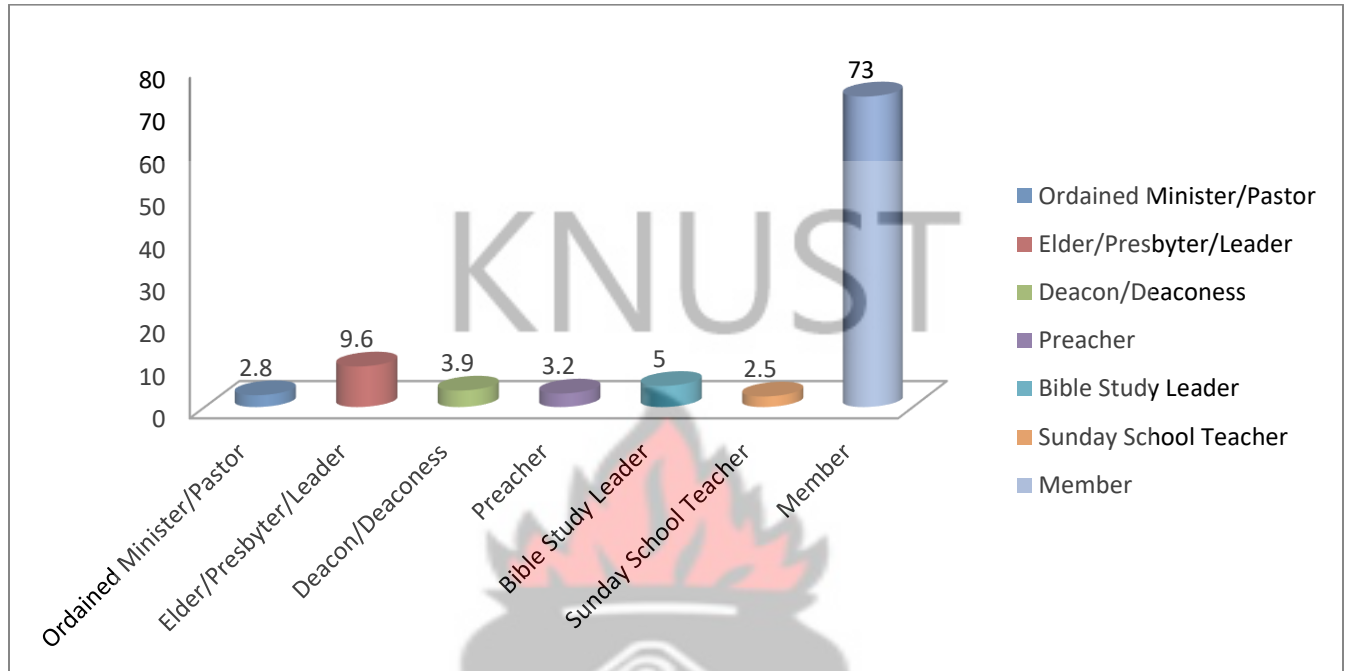


Figure 6.4: Position of Respondents in Denomination

Respondents were found to be occupying different positions in the churches. The study revealed that, Ordained Ministers/Pastors were sixteen (16) representing 2.8%; Elder/Presbyter/Leader were found to be fifty four (54) representing 9.6%; Deacons/Deaconesses were found to be twenty two (22) constituting 3.9%; Preachers were also eighteen (18) representing 3.2%; Bible Study Leaders accounted for twenty eight (28) representing 5%; Sunday School Teachers were also fourteen (14) constituting 2.5%; and members accounted for four hundred and thirteen (413) constituting 73%. This shows that, the study is made up of different people occupying different positions within the various denominations involved in the study.

6.2.1 (e) Indigenous Dangme/non-Dangme Respondents

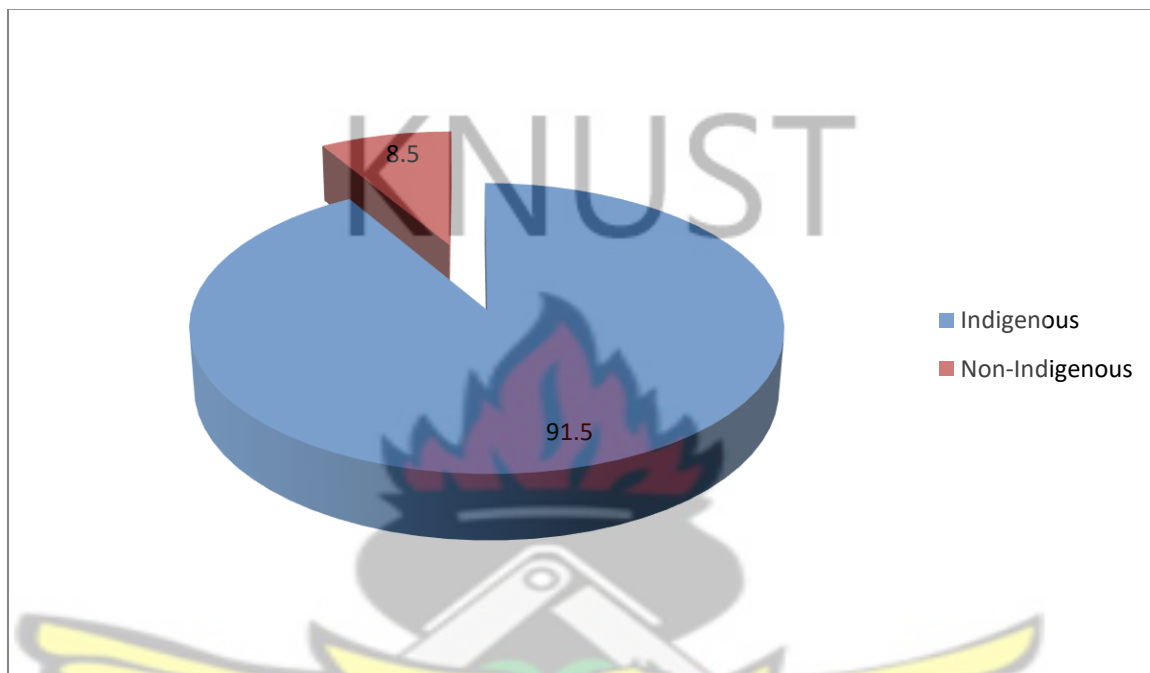


Figure 6.5: Indigenous Dangme and non-Dangme Respondents

On the part of indigenous and non-indigenous respondents, the study found that, majority of the respondents were indigenous Dangmes who account for five hundred and seventeen (517) representing 91.5%; while those who were non-Dangmes account for forty-eight (48) representing 8.5%. The non-indigenous Dangme speakers were included in the research because they were staying in Dangme-speaking communities at the time of the research, and have identified with the Dangme language by learning and speaking it; moreover, they read the Dangme Bible.

6.2.1 (f) Indigenous Dangme Respondents

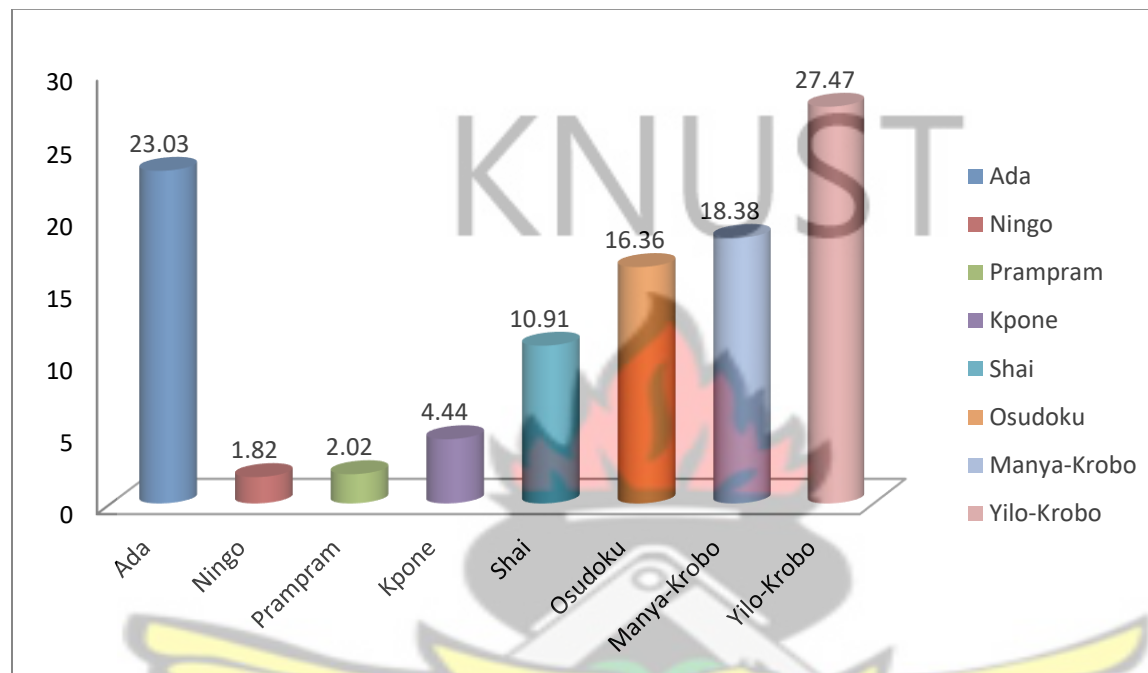


Figure 6.6: Indigenous Dangme-speaking composition

The indigenous Dangme respondents who form the majority from the selected tribes were found to be randomly disbursed among all the tribes selected as indicated from Figure 6.6. Majority of the dominated Dangme were from Yilo³¹¹ Krobo 136 (27.47%), followed by Ada 114 (23.03%), Manya-Krobo 91 (18.38%), Osudoku 81 (16.36%), Shai 54 (10.91%), Kpone 22 (4.44%),

³¹¹ This spelling uses English orthography; the Dangme orthography uses Yilo. See chapter three: Ethnographic Data of the Dangme People where Yilo Krobo is use d instead of Yilo Krobo.

Prampram 10 (2.02%) and finally Ningo 9 (1.82%). The results indicate that indigenous Dangme people from all the various tribes were involved in the study.

6.2.1 (g) Total Respondents from the Eight Dangme-speaking Areas

The total respondents from the eight Dangme-speaking areas were found to vary from each speaking area. The area with the majority of Dangme speakers was the Yilo-Krobo 140 (24.8%), followed by Ada 119 (21.1%); Manya-Krobo 98 (17.3%); Osudoku 84 (14.9%); Shai 76 (13.5%); Kpone 24 (4.2%); Ningo 12 (2.1%); Prampram 12 (2.1%). The results of Figure 9.6 show that respondents from the eight Dangme-speaking areas were not the same across the areas.

6.3 Translation Philosophy employed in rendering Matt 6:12

6.3.1 Matt 6:12

Greek:	και	ἄφες	ἡμῖν	τα	ὀφειλήματα	ἡμῶν
Transliteration:	<i>kai</i>	<i>aphes</i>	<i>humin</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>opheilemata</i>	<i>heemoon</i>
Back in Dangme:	<i>Nɛ</i>	<i>kɛ kɛ</i>	<i>wɔ</i>	<i>mɛ</i>	<i>hiɔ ɔ</i>	<i>wa</i>
Back Trans in English:	And	forgive	us	the	debts	our
Dangme :	<i>Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ...</i>					
	[Lend us our wrong-doings...]					

Aphes (forgive, let go,) is translated as *ke pa* (lend) in relation to debts. But “forgive” should naturally go with “sin”. *Opheileemata* (debt) is translated *tɔmi ɔme* (wrong-doings, sins) and not “debts”. This is because naturally “debt” goes with ‘payment/cancelation, not “sin”. To solve the problem of forgiveness and debts, and debts and sins, *aphes* was interpreted, not translated, to make the verse meaningful to the Dangme Bible reading communities. Thus, the Dangme translation reads: *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔme ke pa wɔ...* [Lend us our wrong-doings...]. This is a thought-for-thought translation. The translators used the thought-for-thought translation philosophy in rendering Matt 6:12.

6.4 Matt 6:12 in the Dangme Bible

Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔme ke pa wɔ... [Lend us our wrong-doings...].³¹²

6.4.1 Problem with the Dangme Translation of Matt 6:12

Pa has different shades of meaning in Dangme: it means “river,” “to drink” (used when one drinks soup), “lend.” In the context of religion, when *pa* (forgive) is used with *yayami* (sin), we can have an expression like *ke yehe yayami ɔme ne pa mi* (forgive me my sins). In reference to the subject under discussion – forgiveness in the context of the Lord’s Prayer - the question one might ask is: does God “lend” us our sins or he “forgives” us our sins?³¹³

³¹² *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1999).

³¹³ This has been discussed elsewhere. See J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, “Are Sins Forgiven or Loaned? Translations and interpretations of Matthew 6:12 by Some Dangme Scholars.” *ORITA: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, University of Ibadan Publication. XLII (2) (2010): 67-81. See also E. N. B. Anum and J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor,

6.4.2 Dangme scholars and Bible readers on the translation of Matthew 6:12

On the question of whether God “lends” us our sins or “forgives” us, the researcher had different interpretations from some Dangme scholars. Eugene Natue (June 30, 2009)³¹⁴ is of the view that,

a kɛ yayami paa nɔ ko ne e ko ya pee yayami hu [one is forgiven his or her sins to deter him or her from sinning]. *Ke o pee yayami ne a kɛ ke mo ɔ o he je ɔ nɔ ne o tsaa nɔ peɔ yayami. Se ke a kɛ yayami pa mo ɔ, o le kaa hiɔ ko fɔɔ si ha mo ne o ma ba wo.*

Lɔɔ he ɔ, o be nɔtsae ne o pee yayami hu, ne o hiɔɔ ne ko ba hiɛɛ. [When you sin and you are forgiven outrightly, you forget that you have been forgiven, and continue to sin. But when you see the forgiveness as a debt/loan which you will pay for, you do not continue to sin, else you have more debts to pay].

Natue’s interpretation cited above that when we view sin as debt/loan to be paid for, it makes us more careful so that we do not sin again, evokes a question: Do we have power to stop sinning? (See Rom. 3:10-18; 7:12-24). The interpretation is first, not scriptural because, we are born in sin and under the power of sin (Gen 5:3; Job 15:14; 25:4; Ps 51:5; Rom 3:9) and we do not have power

“New Testament Concepts of Forgiveness in the Gospels in the Context of Dangme Translation and Usage”, *American Journal of Biblical Theology* 12(25) (2011): 1-19.

³¹⁴ Rev. E. N. Natue holds a Specialist Certificate in Dangme from the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako, and a Diploma in Advanced Study of Education from the University of Cape Coast. He is the District Minister of Nkurakan District of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Now a retired Minister; he lives at Somanya.

in ourselves to stop sinning (Rom 7:21-24). Second, it is incompatible with God's unchanging moral perfection (1Pet 1:15-16), and his completely and unchangeably loving nature (John 3:16; 1John 4:10). Forgiveness of sin is possible because God is holy, loving and gracious, and promises to forgive when we confess (Rom 5:8; 1John 1:9). In Isa 43:25, God says he is the one who blots out our sins for his name sake, and remembers our sins no more (cf. Jer 31:34). This does not strictly speaking mean that, God ever forgets; it means he acts towards those whom he forgives as though their sins were forgotten.³¹⁵ He separates their sins from them, for the word *aphesis* from *aphieemi* translated as “forgiveness,” means “to send forth.”³¹⁶

In another interview with Natue (July 7, 2009) he said, “Another way of interpreting Matthew 6:12 is to use the concept of *yayami he hiɔ womi* [the wages of sin – Rom 6:23] if we want to use the concept of *kɛ ke* [forgive]. Since we have “wages of sin” in the Bible, we can then translate Matthew 6:12 as: *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ kɛ ke wɔ* [Forgive us the wages (debts) of our sins].” Thus, using the idea of *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ kɛ ke wɔ* [Forgive us the wages (debts) of our sins] can help us translate and interpret Matthew 6:12 in the

³¹⁵ George W. Bethune, *Guilt, Grace and Gratitude* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 85.

³¹⁶ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1996), 122.

context of the Dangme people. In that sense the text can be translated as *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ kɛ ke wɔ* [Forgive us the wages (debts/punishments) of our sins].

The problem here is that the phrase, *opsoonia tees hamartias* [wages of sin] is Pauline. Thus, Pauline category is being used here to interpret Matthew.³¹⁷ But since one of the principles of Bible interpretation is that, “we compare Scripture with Scripture...because the greatest interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself,” using one idea in the Bible to interpret, but not to translate, another biblical text is allowed.³¹⁸ In that sense, the Dangme usage of *pa* in rendering the Greek word *afes* (forgive) is an interpretation and not a translation. However, the Dangme rendering *pa* is a contribution to the interpretation of the text in the sense that the term does not allow one to take forgiveness of sin as a license “to sin that grace may abound” (Rom 6:1).

One terminology that emerged from Natue’s interpretation of forgiveness is *hiɔwo*. In Dangme, *hiɔwo* [wages] means the payment for property acquired or a piece of work done. It has both positive and negative meanings. Positively, people work for *hiɔwo* [wages]. But negatively, *hiɔwo* means a “punishment” or “curse.” Among the Dangme when someone does evil in the society, it is said to that person, *Mawu maa wo mo hiɔ* [God will pay you]. By this, people mean that God will punish the evil doer in his or her own coin. This means that what the person has done to other

³¹⁷ Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 230.

³¹⁸ Hendricks and Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, 230.

people which they do not like, God will make sure that a similar thing is done to him or her. In that sense, God is seen as the punisher of evil. Thus, among the Dangme, people sometimes punish the evil doer, and they believe God does same (Rom 12:19).

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On a more serious note, *hiɔwo* is a kind of “curse.” According to Ishmael Narteh (August 2, 2009),³¹⁹ when the statement *Mawu maa wo mo hiɔ* [God will pay you with the same coin] is pronounced on one who violates a ritually sanctioned law among the Dangme, he or she understands it as a “curse.” Thus, such a person will say to the one who pronounces the judgment, *o nɛ mi gbiɛɛ* [you are cursing me]. For the curse to be removed, the *musu yemi* or *yimi*³²⁰ [curse removing] ritual is performed by the *weku nikɔtɔma* [head of family] who is the *se tsɛ* [clan or stool head]. He confesses (not always though) the offence that led to the curse or foreseen *gbiɛɛ* on the animal and slaughters it. It is believed that the blood of the animal washes away the sin of the offender.

³¹⁹ I. K. Narteh, is a retired Educationist and Dangme Teacher at Somanya. He holds a Specialist Certificate in Dangme from the then School of Languages, Adjumako, and B.A in English and Linguistics from the University of Ghana, Legon. He was a reviewer of the manuscript of the Dangme Bible.

³²⁰ *Ye* in Dangme means “eat”; it suggests that the slaughtered animal is eaten. *Yi* is an Akan word meaning “remove”. It suggests that the blood of the slaughtered animal removes curse.

Bringing the two usages – *hiɔwo* and *gbiɛɛ* together, we can say that *hiɔwo* stands for *tue gbla mi* [punishment] for sin committed and *gbiɛɛ* [curse] for violating ritually sanctioned laws. This can be applied in the interpretation of Jesus' death. What the slaughtered animal does for the offender, Jesus did for the sinner. Jesus was slaughtered for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29; Matt 27:33-35; Rom 5:8; 1Cor 5:7). He died once to take away the sins of many people (Heb 9:27). All those who believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins have God's forgiveness. Further, he has become a curse for us, and a blessing at the same time in that His death redeems us from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13).

Padi Boti (July 12, 2009)³²¹ is of the view that when God forgives our sins, he cancels them and remembers them no more. He says: *I heye kaa ke wa jaje wa yayami ɔ, Mawu ke kee wɔ (e tsu ɔ wa he ne e je ɔ nge e juɛ mi hu lɔ) se pi ne e ke paa wɔ. Ke Mawu ke yayami pa wɔɔ, ne tsɔ kaa wa heɛ Mawu hiɔ; wa be nyee maa wo ejakaa nimli adesahi ji wɔ.* [I believe that when we confess our sins, God forgives us (he cancels and remembers our sins no more). When God lends us our sins, it means that we owe God; we cannot pay because we are human beings]. Matilda Tettey-Fio (July 13, 2009)³²² suggests a similar view as that of Boti. She says: "To me this whole idea of God 'lending' us our sins as it were does not make sense.

³²¹ Rev. E. P. Boti is a Dangme Specialist from the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako. He is a retired Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana who lived at Somanya. He died in middle part of 2017.

³²² She holds a B.Ed Degree in Dangme from the University of Education, Winneba. She is an Elder of the Presbyterian Church at Akuse.

Whenever I pray the Lord's Prayer, I say, *Mawu ne ke wa he yayami ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ* [God should forgive us our sins; that is, he should wipe them away, and take them out from his mind]. Joshua Nyumuah (July 13, 2009)³²³ holds a similar view as Tettey-Fio. Buerthey Lawerteh (July 13, 2009)³²⁴ also makes a contribution on the subject under discussion: "In reciting and teaching the Lord's Prayer, I always say *Mawu ne ke wa he yayami ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ*. [God should forgive us our sins] because that is the ideal. Theologically, 'forgive' carries the meaning of cancellation of sins, without remembering them anymore. And that is exactly what Christ wants us to do. In fact, that is what he demonstrated during his earthly ministry, that, when someone sins against us, we should forgive the person completely, and try not to remember it."

Two surviving members³²⁵ of the Dangme Bible translation team interviewed on telephone during the research (July 7 & 8, 2009) agreed that there is a problem in the rendering of *ke pa* as forgiveness in the Dangme Bible. They indicated that when they were doing the translation, there was a debate as to whether forgive in Matthew 6:12 should be translated *ke ke* (give willingly without hold a part) or *ke pa* (give with the intention of taking back). When they contacted some elderly Dangmes, they were of the view that since *ke ke* connotes an outright gift, when it was

³²³ Joshua Nyumuah holds a degree in Dangme from the University of Education, Winneba. He lives at Nkruakan

³²⁴ Telephone interview with Rev. J. Buerthey Lawerteh. He holds a degree in Dangme from the University of Education, Winneba.

³²⁵ Gloria Kitcher-Asare is a graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako and the University of Cape-Coast; Rev. Escobar Leiku is a graduate from the School of Languages, Adjumako, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon and the University of Education, Winneba.

used to translate the word forgive, it will give people the freedom to continue sinning. So we settled on *ke pa*. The comments from these translators agree with that of Natue that, the use of *ke* could give people the licence to continue sinning.

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6.4.3 Researcher's interpretation of the Dangme scholars' understanding and interpretations of forgiveness

From the interviews conducted, we see that there are three ways by which Matt 6:12 could be translated: *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ ke pa wɔ...* [Lend us our wrong-doings...]; *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ ke ke wɔ...* [Forgive us the debt of our sins...]; *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ ke ke wɔ...* [Forgive us our wrong-doings...].

Each rendering has a noun and a verb. In *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ ke pa wɔ...*, *tɔmi* (wrong-doing) is a noun; *pa* (forgive) is a verb. In *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ ke ke wɔ...*, *yayami* (sin) is a noun, *hiɔ* (debt) is a noun, *ke* (forgive) is a verb. In *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ ke ke wɔ...*, *tɔmi* (sin) is a noun, *ke* (forgive) is a verb.

The subject of the rendering is *tɔmi*, *yayami* (sin) or *hiɔ* (debt). The verb is forgive – *pa* or *ke*. We can see some semantics here. The Dangme terms for sin can be one of the the following: *tɔmi*,

yayami or hiɔ. Forgive is *pa* or *ke*. Thus, *kɛ pa* and *kɛ ke* in Dangme are contributions in the theological study of forgiveness. But their meanings in the Dangme are based on intent, that is, future reckoning – *I kɛ pa mo*; and *I kɛ ke mo* – future non-reckoming. It is important to state here however that, as just as *kɛ pa* does not suggest the freedom “to sin that grace may abound”, *kɛ ke* does not also suggest the license to continue to sin.

But, there is a difficulty in rendering forgiveness as *pa*, which means “lend.” It implies that when we sin God just overlooks it. He forgives but does not forget. On the other hand, *ke* connotes an outright gift. The implication here is that when God forgives us, he does not hold our sins against us. He forgets our offences. *Ngɔɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a he hiɔ wo ɔ kɛ ke wɔ...* [Forgive us the debts of our sins...] is an interpretation of Matt 6:12 rather than a translation. Even though it sounds good, it is an interpretation of Jesus, using Pauline categories.

It must be noted however that, theologically, *kɛ pa* used to translate forgive has some conditionality. In the context of Matt 6:12, it implies that when we pray to God for forgiveness, He forgives us partially; He keeps account of our sins and any time we sin, He reminds us of the previous sins before He forgives us. In that sense, our sins pile up before God; we cannot pay for them because we are human who keep on sinning. Another issue about *pa* is that it connotes borrowing. In that sense forgiveness from God becomes a loan. Each time we pray for forgiveness, God “lends” us; and if loans are not gifts and so must be paid for, then our sins before God are

“debts” which must still be paid for. The critical question here is, with what are we going to pay for such “debts”? Will God be ever satisfied in our attempt to pay for our “debts” of sin?

The researcher’s position is that *ke ke* should be used to translate forgive in Matt 6:12 because it means “to give something outright, and willingly.” When we sin and pray to God for forgiveness, He forgives us despite our past wrongdoings. Scripture supports this position. The apostle James says, when we bring our petitions before God, he answers us *aploos kai oneidizontos* generously and ungrudgingly, or without finding fault with us (James 1:5).

6.4.4 Dangme Bible readers’ understanding and interpretation of forgiveness

A questionnaire on five different translations of Matt 6:12 of Dangme was distributed among one thousand Dangme mother-tongue Bible readers in the eight Dangme speaking areas, to test their understanding of Matthew 6:12 in the Dangme Bible. In one of the translations *ke pa* was substituted with *ke ke*.

Ngɔɔwa tɔmi ɔmɛ ke pa wɔ kaa bɔ nɛ wɔ hu waa ke paa nihi nɛ tɔɔ wa nɔɔ. (Matt 6:12)

- A. *Mawu nɛko kai wa he yayami ɔmɛ* [God should not remember our sins].
- B. *Mawu nɛ ke wa yayami ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ* [God should cancel our sins and remember them no more].
- C. *Mawu nɛ ku e hɛ ngɔ fɔwa yayami ɔmɛ a nɔ* [God should overlook our sins].
- D. *Mawu nɛ flii wɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ* [God should lend us our wrong-doings].
- E. *Heto nɛ ɔmɛ tsuoo* [All the above].

The results are follows:

Table 1: Understanding and Interpretation of Matt 6:12

Dangme-speaking Area	Matt. 6:12					
	A	B	C	D	E	
Ada	9 (1.6%)	93 (16.4%)	2 (0.4%)	2 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	106
Ningo	0 (0%)	11 (1.8%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	13
Kpone	2 (0.4%)	10 (1.7%)	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	15
Prampram	2 (0.4%)	10 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	11
Shai	2 (0.4%)	71 (12.5%)	2 (0.4%)	5 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	80
Osudoku	1 (0.2%)	81 (14.3%)	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	87
Manya-Krobo	7 (1.2%)	88 (15.5%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	97
Yilo-Krobo	4 (0.7%)	138 (24.4%)	7 (1.2%)	3 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	164
Total	27 (4.9%)	502 (88.8%)	15 (2.8%)	21 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	565 (100)

Source: Field data 2009

6.4.5 Interpretation of field data on Matt 6:12

On the understanding and interpretation of Matt 6:12, the study found out that, majority of the respondents constituting five hundred and two (502) representing 88.8% indicate that, their understanding is the alternative (B) *Mawu neke wa yayami ɔme ne ke wo* [God should cancel our sins and remember them no more]. However, the rest of the respondents also understand it in

different ways. Twenty-seven (27) representing 4.9% indicate their choice for alternative (A) *Mawu nɛ ko kai wa he yayami ɔmɛ* [God should not remember our sins]; nineteen (19) representing 3.3% chose alternative (D) *Mawu nɛ flii wɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ* [God should lend us our wrong-doings]; whereas fifteen (15) of the respondents representing 2.8% chose alternative (C) *Mawu nɛ ku e hɛ ngɔ fɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a nɔ* [God should overlook our sins]. This outcome indicates a clear varied understanding of the translation of Matt 6:12 in the Dangme Bible by the respondents from all the Dangme tribes. 502 (88.8%) are in favour that forgive in the text under study should be translated *kɛ ke*.

6.4.6 Researcher's comments on the Dangme renditions of the Greek *afes* (forgive) and *ofeileemata* (debts)

From the above we see that there are three interpretations of “forgive” by the Dangme Bible reading communities. Forgive means “cancel” - 88.8 percent; it also means “not remember” – 4.9 percent. 2.8 percent say it means “overlook.” The sense of the Greek text *afes* “let go” is maintained in these Dangme interpretations. But the meaning of *ofeileemata* “debts” has changed. The Dangme interpretations are *yayami* or *tɔmi*, meaning sin. Readers of the Matthean community, who were Jews, understood “debts” as sins. This understanding came from the fact that they spoke Aramaic; and the root of the Aramaic word *ḥōbā* (debt) rendered *ofeileemata* in Greek was an imagery for sin.

However, the problem arises when the text is to be translated into a Gentile context. Luke's rendering of the wrong things we do against God and humans as sin to be confessed (11:4), and not "debts" to be paid for supports the argument that one's background, and the contexts into which one translates and interprets a biblical text, changes the meaning of the original text, to suit the readers. Theophilus, the original addressee of the Gospel of Luke was not a Jew but a Gentile. Dangme Bible readers are also Gentiles. If Luke did not interpret wrong doings as debts to be paid for but sins to be confessed for forgiveness, then the Dangme translation of Matt 6:12 *ke pa* (give with the intention of taking back) as rendered in the Dangme Bible is a problem to Dangmes. A Dangme proverb says, *no ko heja we nge e hiɔtse he* (nobody feels homesick for the one he or she owes). If sins are debts we owe God, can we pay for them? The critical issue here is that we are human and continually wrong God and our fellow human beings. If our wrong doings are debts we owe God, then they keep on mounting up moment by moment, which implies that if we are to pay, then we must pay with interest. How possible could that be?

6.4.7 A Comparative Analysis of Matt 6:12 in other southern Ghana Translations

Somi He ɔ (Dangme New Testament),³²⁶ *ne o ke wa hiɔɔme ne ke wɔ* [And forgive us our debts];
ɲmale Krɔnkrɔn Le (New Ga Bible),³²⁷ *ni oke wɔnyɔji le ake wɔ...* [And forgive us our debts];
Biblia (Ewe Bible, BSG, 1931/2010),³²⁸ *Eye natsɔ miafe vodadawo ake mi...*[And forgive us our wrong doings].

³²⁶ *Somi He ɔ* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1977).

³²⁷ *ɲmale Krɔnkrɔn Le* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 2006).

³²⁸ *Biblia* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1931; Bible Society of Ghana, 2010).

Twerɛ Kronkron (Asante-Twi Bible),³²⁹ *na fa yɛn aka kyɛ yɛn*[And forgive us our debts]. *Twerɛ Kronkron* (New Testament, English-Twi Version)³³⁰ also has *na fa yɛn aka kyɛ yɛn*[And forgive us our debts]. Compare these with the 1964 version which reads: *na fa yɛn aka firi yɛn*; and loan us our debts). Both the 1964 and 2012 translations of the *Kyerɛw Kronkron* (Akuapem-Twi Bible)³³¹ have *na fa yɛn aka firi yɛn* [And lend us our debts].

On the other hand, *ke* (Dangme New Testament, New Ga Bible, Ewe Bible) and *kyɛ* (Asante-Twi and New Testament English-Twi Version) runs through these translations; it has the connotation of an outright gift. The fact that the newer Asante-Twi versions has *kyɛ* as “forgive” means that the translators might have realized the difficulty *firi* poses to indigenous Asante Bible readers.

³²⁹ *Twerɛ Kronkron* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 2012).

³³⁰ *Twerɛ Kronkron* (Kumasi: New Word Publishing (Gh) Limited, 2013).

³³¹ *Kyerɛw Kronkron* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1964; Bible Society of Ghana, 2012).

6.4.8 A new suggested translation of Matthew 6:12 that fits into the religio-cultural context of the Dangme

Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ ke wɔ kaa bɔ nɛ waa kɛ kee nihi nɛ tɔɔ wa nɔ [Let go our sins just as we let go the sins of those who wrong us].

From the research report, 88.8% of the respondents in the eight Dangme Bible reading communities understand *kɛ ke* as meaning forgive. The other alternatives however are also valid, but from the statistics, they are not the favourite choices of the majority Dangme Bible readers.

6.5 Translation Philosophy employed in rendering Mark 1:12

6.5.1 Mark 1:12

Greek: Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον

Transliteration: *Kai euthos to pneuma auton ekballei eis teen ereemon*

Trans into Dangme: *Nɛ o ya ɔ mumi lɛ sake kɛ ho a nga nɔ*

Back Trans in Eng: And immediately the spirit him throw into the desert

Dangme: *Amlɔ ɔ mi nɔuu ɔ, Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya*

[Immediately the Holy Spirit pushed him by the head into the wilderness].

Klɔuklɔu, (holy) is not in Greek text. It may have been inserted by the Dangme translators, perhaps to distinguish the sort of spirit that threw Jesus into the desert, since among the Dangme there are a lot of spirits – benevolent and malevolent. *Ekballei* (he cast out) is translated as *- tsɛ e yi se* (pushed him by the head from behind); that is, “the Holy Spirit pushed him (Jesus) at the back of his head into the wilderness” The translator of this verse employed both the word-for-word and thought-for-thought philosophies.

6.5.2 Mark 1:12 in Dangme

The Holy Spirit pushed him by head from behind into the wilderness.

This same verse has been translated in the *Somi He ɔ* (New Testament in Dangme, BSU/UBS, 1977) as *Amlɔ nɔuu ɔ, Mumi ɔ kpaka lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya*. [Immediately, the Spirit led him into the wilderness].

Mumi ɔ (1977) has been rendered *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ* (1999); *kpaka lɛ* (1977) is *tsɛ e yi se* (1999). Spirit and Holy Spirit; any difference? Why the qualification of the Spirit with “Holy”? Does it make any difference to the Dangme Bible reading community?

6.5.3 Problem with the translation

Tsɛ e yi se [pushed him by the head from behind] means applying a force to someone from behind. It is an idiomatic expression to compel reluctance of a weaker person to do something against his or her wish. Among the Dangme *nɔne a tsɛ e yi se* [pushed by the head from behind] is a “bad boy/girl.” The phrase is also used for someone whose time to die is not yet up, but has been forced to face death. Thus, the phrase in Mark 1:12 *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho* means that Jesus was a “bad boy.” But that was not the testimony given of him by the Father at his baptism. God spoke from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). The phrase also implies that it was not yet time for Jesus to be tempted, but the Spirit forced him to go to the wilderness to face Satan.

6.5.4 Understanding of Mark 1:12 by Dangme Bible translators

In an interview with Gloria Kitcher-Asare (July 7, 2009),³³² one of the surviving translators of the Dangme Bible on the use of the phrase, *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* [And immediately, the Spirit pushed him by the head into the wilderness] in Mark 1:12 she said, “Until you drew my attention to it, I never thought of it as a lexical issue that could affect the interpretation

³³² Gloria Kitcher-Asare is a graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako and the University of Cape Coast. Telephone interview.

of the text.” She has thus agreed that the phrase is culturally inappropriate to be used for Jesus and his relation with the Spirit.

Escober Leiku is another member of the Dangme Bible translation team. In an interview, with him (July 8, 2009),³³³ he said, “Even though the phrase *tsɛ e yi se* in Dangme is used for bad boys, that is not the sense in which they used it in Mark 1:12 for the Spirit’s activity with Jesus. He continued, “What we mean in that verse is that Jesus did not go into the wilderness by his own volition, but he was moved by the Spirit to go. In that sense, if we want an alternate phrase then that will be, *Mumi ɔ faa lɛ ke ho nga anɔ ya* [The Spirit moved him into the wilderness].

Like Kitcher, Leiku has also confirmed the lexical inappropriateness of the phrase *tsɛ e yi se* [push him by the head from behind]; but unlike Kitcher, he has suggested an alternative translation of the phrase. Leiku’s alternative translation of the phrase literally means that, Jesus was compelled by the Spirit to go into the wilderness.

³³³ Rev. Eskober Leiku is an Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana; a graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon and the University of Education, Winneba. He is one of the surviving members of the Dangme Bible Translation team.

6.5.5 Researcher's comments on the Dangme renditions of the Greek *ekballei* (cast out) as *tsɛ e yi se* (push by the head)

Tsɛ e yi se is an idiomatic expression meaning “to compel”, “to hurry”, “to rush” somebody to something reluctantly. Thus, the expression is forceful in nature. It agrees with the *ekballei* in the Greek text which semantically means “to make to depart forcefully and unaccompanied.” Perhaps the forceful nature of *ekballei* may have may have necessitated its translation into Dangme as *tsɛ e yi se* (push by the head), a phrase used to compel unwilling persons against their will to perform a task. Even though the Dangme rendition does not mean that Jesus was an unwilling person, in the thought of indigenous Dangmes it is implied. The issue here is; how can such an unwilling person be divine?

That the translation of the phrase *tsɛ e yi se* in the Dangme Bible is a problem is supported by the fact that some Greek-English translations³³⁴ of the text render “cast” as “sent” – “At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.”

³³⁴ John R. Kohlenberger III (Gen ed.) *NIV Greek and English New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012); William D. Mounce, *Interlinear for the Rest of Us: The Reverse Interlinear for New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006).

6.5.6 Understanding and interpretations of Mark 1:12 by Dangme Bible readers

After the interview with the translators, the researcher administered questionnaire to one thousand³³⁵ Dangme Bible readers in the eight Dangme speaking areas to test their understanding of the text:

Amlɔɔ nɔuu, Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya (Mk.1:12).

- A. *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nyeɛ Yesu hɛmi kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit in front of Jesus led him to the desert].
- B. *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nɛ ngɛ Yesu se ɔ tsitse lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit behind Jesus pushed him into the desert].
- C. *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nu Yesu nɛ e gbɛ lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit got hold of Jesus and dragged him into the desert].
- D. *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ ha nɛ Yesu ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the desert].
- E. *Heto nɛ ɔmɛ tsuoo* [All the above].

The results are as follows:

Table 2: Interpretation and Understanding of Mark 1:12

Dangme-speaking Area	Mk. 1:12				
	A	B	C	D	E

³³⁵ 565 Dangme Bible readers from the eight Dangme traditional areas responded to the questionnaire.

Ada	10(0.9%)	7(1.2%)	2(0.4%)	95(16.8%)	1(0.2)	115
Ningo	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	12(2.1%)	0(0%)	12
Kpone	0(0%)	1(0.2%)	0 (0%)	11(1.9%)	0(0%)	12
Prampram	2(0.4%)	4(0.7%)	0(0%)	10(1.8%)	2(0.4%)	18
Shai	2(0.4%)	1(0.2%)	1(0.2%)	40(7.1%)	0(0%)	44
Osudoku	5(0.8%)	4(0.7%)	2(0.4%)	78(13.8%)	0(0%)	89
Ma-Krobo	15(2.7%)	3(0.5%)	1(0.2%)	91(16.1%)	0(0%)	110
Yilo-Krobo	8(1.4)	3(0.5%)	7(1.2%)	145(25.6)	2(0.4%)	165
Total	42(7.4%)	23(4.1%)	13(2.3%)	482(85.3%)	5(0.9%)	565(100)

Source: Field data 2009

6.5.7 Interpretation of field data on Mark 1:12

Mark 1:12 also recorded varied preferences from the respondents. Majority of the respondents, that is, four hundred and eighty-two (482) representing 85.3% interpret it as alternative D *Mumi Klɔuklɔɔ ɔ ha nɛ Yesu ho nga a nɔya* [The Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the desert]; forty-two (42) constituting 7.4% of the respondents also choose alternative A *Mumi Klɔuklɔɔ ɔ nyeɛ Yesu hɛmi kɛ ho nga a nɔya* [The Holy Spirit in front of Jesus led him to the desert]; twenty-four (23) representing 4.1% indicated their understanding of the text for alternative B *Mumi Klɔuklɔɔ ɔ n ɛ ngɛYesu se ɔ tsitseɛ lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit behind Jesus pushed him into the desert]; and fourteen (13) representing 2.3% also interpret the verse as alternative C *Mumi*

Klɔuklɔɔ ɔ nu Yesu nɛɛ gbla lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔya [The Holy Spirit got hold of Jesus and dragged him into the desert]. However, five (5) of the respondents representing 0.9% indicated the understanding of the verse can be interpreted as all the alternatives. This means that, there was a varied understanding of the text by respondents irrespective of their tribes hence, their challenge of interpreting it.

6.5.7 A Comparative Analysis of Mark 1:12 in other southern Ghana Translations³³⁶

The Ga and Ewe translations - *Ŋmale Kronkron Le* (Old Ga Bible), *Ŋmale Krɔŋkrɔŋ Le* (New Ga Bible), *Biblia* (Old Ewe Bible), *Biblia* (New Ewe Bible) - use *kpla* and *kplɔ*, meaning “led” or “guided” and *do du* “rushed” to describe the Spirit’s activity with Jesus. Compare the above renderings with the following translations which also use milder expressions than what Mark used to translate *ekballei*: *Somi Heɔ* (Dangme New Testament), *Wami Munyu ɔ: Somi He ɔ Kɛ La amɛ*, (Dangme New Testament and Psalms) render *ekballei* as *kpaka* “accompanied;” *wo lɛ kɛ ho* “sent him”; and three Akan newer translations – *Nkwa Asem* (Asante-Twi New Testament and Psalms), *Nkwa Asem* (Akuapem-Twi New Testament and Psalms) and *Twerɛ Kronkron* (New Testament, English-Twi Version) render the word as *de Yesu kɔɔ* “sent Jesus.”

³³⁶ See J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, A Comparative Study of Mark 1:12 in Some Ghanaian Mother-tongue Translations of the Bible, *Journal of Arts and Culture* Volume 6, (November 2011): 67-73.

The *Kyerɛw Kronkron* (Old Akuapem-Twi Bible), *Twerɛ Kronkron* (Old Asante-Twi Bible), *Nwoma Krɔ̀nkrɔ̀n* (Old Mfante Bible), and *Ahyɛmu Fofor No Mu Nwoma* (Mfante New Testament) translate *ekballei* as *twee*, meaning “dragged,” and the *Ngmami Klouklɔu* (Dangme Bible), *tsɛe yi se* “push by the head.” These expressions imply that perhaps Jesus was reluctant to go into the wilderness after his baptism.

There is no doubt about the fact that the Greek word *ekballoo* implies a strong action. But rendering it with milder expressions could also mean that perhaps the latter translators were aware of the difficulty the earlier translators may have gone through and the challenge the translation of *ekballei* may cause in the religio-cultural context of Ghanaian mother-tongue Bible readers. Perhaps we can harmonize the rendering of *ekballoo* in the various translations to give its theological interpretation.

6.5.8 A suggested translation of Mark 1:12 that fits into the religio-cultural context of the Dangme

Amlɔ ɔ mi nɔuu ɔ, Mumi ɔ ha nɛ e ho nga a nɔ ya [Immediately the Spirit made him go into the desert] or [...the Spirit permitted him to go into the desert].

The research report indicates that 482 (85.3%) of the respondents in the eight Dangme Bible reading communities are in favour of the translation of Mark 1:12 as, *Mumi Klɔuklɔ ɔ ha nɛ Yesu ho nga a nɔ ya* [The Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the desert]. The other renderings are also valid and so may be considered as alternatives.

6.6 Translation Philosophy employed in rendering Luke 24:25

6.6.1 Luke 24:25

Greek:	καὶ αὐτὸς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὦ ἀνοήτοι
Transliteration:	<i>kai autous eipen pros autous “oo anoeetoi...”</i>
Trans into Dangme:	<i>Nɛ e de ke mɛ “Oo kuasiahi....”</i>
Back Trans in Eng:	And he said to them, “Oh fools...”
Dangme:	<i>Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ ke, “Kuasiahi...!”</i> (BSG/UBS, 1999) [Then Jesus told them, “You fools...]

The interjection ὦ ‘oo’ expressing Jesus’ emotion or sentiment about the discussion of the two men on the way to Emmaus is not in the Dangme text. The translators omitted it perhaps to make for a smooth reading of the verse. They used a mixture of word-for-word, and thought-for-thought principle in translating the verse.

6.7 The Dangme translation of Luke 24:25

*Kekε nε Yesu de mε ke, “Kuasiahi nε nyε sume kaa nyε ma he nihi tsuo nε gbali ɔmε de ɔ maa ye!”*³³⁷ [Then Jesus said to them, “Foolish people! You do not believe all that the prophets have said.”]

6.7.1 Problem with the Text

The problem with this text is the rendition of the Greek *anoetoi* as *kuasiahi*. Unlike the approach the researcher used for the other two texts under study in this thesis, he did not provide a questionnaire for Dangme Bible readers to give their interpretations *kuasiahi* and its usage in the text. This is because it is known by all Dangme speakers, including children that *kuasia* is an insult. Further, it is a presumed ritual insult. So he interviewed elderly and knowledgeable Dangmes to get information on the meaning and implications of the usage of the word in the text.

³³⁷ *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 1999). Two other translations of the text in Dangme are as follows: (1). *Kekε nε Yesu de mε ke, “Oo kuasiahi nε nyε ngε siɔɔ ngε nyε tsui mi ngε nihi tsuo nε gbali ɔmε de ɔ hemi kε yemi he.”* [Then Jesus told them, “Oh foolish people who are slow in heart in believing all that the prophets have said]. *Somi He ɔ* (New Testament) (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1977). (2). *Kekε nε Yesu de mε ke, “Nyε nɔ lemi se maa kε! Mɛni he je nε nyε he we gbali ɔmε a munyu ɔmε nε ngε Ngmami ɔmε a mi yi ɔ!”* [Then Jesus told them, “It will take a long time for you to become wise. Why are you not believing all that the prophets have said in the Scriptures?] *Wami Munyu ɔ: Somi He ɔ Kε La a Mε* (The Living Word: New Testament and Psalms) (Accra: International Bible Society, 1997).

6.7.2 The traditional priest and the usage of *kuasia* among the Dangme

In Dangme communities, during the yearly festivals of the clan and minor deities, wives and husbands present offerings to the priest, that he may invoke his god on their behalf to grant them offspring. Hugo Huber³³⁸ gives the following example of such a prayer.

Dangme

English translation

Ee-e Mau ke eyo Zugbazu

Eh, Mau and his consort the Earth

Nyεεbahe da ne nyenu-oo!

Accept this wine and drink!

Nyεεha wɔ kplɔkɔtɔ!

Grant us your blessings[plentitude]!

Nana Klowεki ke

Nana Klowεki and

wa-Klo dzemawɔi kpago kpago!

all our [seven] Krobo deities!

Nyεεbahe da ne nyenu oo!

Accept and drink this wine!

Nyεεha ne e fɔ!

Grant her to have a birth!

Nyεεha le hɔ-oo-hɔ,

Give her conception,

bi-oo-bi,

(give her) a child

that the town may grow large!

³³⁸ Hugo Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional, Social and Religious Life of a West African people* (St. Augustine near Bonn: Anthropos Institute, 1973), 141.

nɛ maa bɔ!

The priest prays for women to conceive and give birth. When a woman conceives, she goes to the priest for a ritual that protects the pregnancy from evil spirits, so that she delivers safely. That ritual performed with a prayer is known as *hɔ kpa womi* (tying the pregnancy). Again the priest prays occasionally for protection and prosperity for all members of the family, clan and town. The fact that it is the priest who does all these prayers and many more on behalf of the people in the community shows that the people regard him as the link between the seen and the unseen world. He is a representative of the divine; his office is sacred and therefore - according to Buenor Populampo³³⁹ - a converted traditional priest from Ada, and now a Presbyterian Minister – “as part of the process of becoming a priest, the candidate vows not to use his mouth in such a manner that will bring curse on people.³⁴⁰ He is not expected to use abusive language on human beings. Even if by mistake the priest insults a human being, he does not use the word *kuasia* on women in particular, and human beings in general. Insulting somebody *kuasia* means invoking a curse on that person.”

Some Dangme scholars were interviewed on the usage of *kuasia* in Dangme communities. They said *kuasia* is an abusive word which has become common today; but the traditional priest does

³³⁹ Interviewed August 1, 2009. Rev. Gideon Buenor Populampo holds a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon and a Master of Theology degree from the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, Akropong-Akuapem. He is a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Interviewed at Sakumono.

³⁴⁰ This is an implied Dangme belief in “curse”. See pp. 49-50 where under the discussion of world-view, I have stated that Dangme world-view includes belief in spirits that bless and curse.

not use it because his usage may have implications.³⁴¹ Jacob Tetteh³⁴² gave the etymology of *kuasia*. He said it is made up of two words – *kua* and *sia*. *Kua* is an Akan word. It was imported into Dangme by the Krobo who share boundary with the Akyem. It means “a thing that will not get far.” The Dangme equivalent is *yakagu*; it means something unprofitable. *Sia* in Dangme is an insult; it means *noko ne senami be he* or *noko ne bu be he* “something that is useless/something that is not respected.” Thus *kuasia* is a “double insult.” When used on a person, it means that the person is useless and cannot make progress in life. The usage of *kuasia* on a human being by implication removes the humanness from a person created in the image of God. The word is not supposed to be used on human beings; the traditional priest does not use it on the living.

In the olden days, the word *kuasia* was used by the Dangme community on a woman who died in the process of child birth. It is said of a woman who is pregnant: *e ho Mawu a je paya* (she has gone for water from God’s world). In everyday life anybody who goes out to fetch water is supposed to come back home. Similarly, a woman who has gone to fetch water from God’s world is supposed to come home with the water; that is, a pregnant woman is supposed to deliver safely. When a pregnant woman delivers safely the Dangme say *yoo je Mawu a je pa ke ba* (the woman

³⁴¹ Telephone interview, August 2, 2009.

- (1) Mary Maku Teye from Atua. She hails from Atua in the Manya Krobo District. Holds a Bachelor of Education (Dangme), from the University of Education, Winneba. She teaches Dangme.
- (2) Rev. Felix Tetteh Nakote from Somanya. Hails from Somnya in the Yilo Krobo District. Holds Bachelor of Education (Dangme), from the University of Education, Winneba. He teaches Dangme. He is an ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

³⁴² Personal interview, 3rd August, 2009 at his residence in Somanya.

is back with water from God's world), or *yo ɔ kple* (the woman has landed); and that is considered *manye munyu* (good news).

But if in the process she dies with the baby, the Dangme say, *Yo ɔ nye blɔ yaya*; (the woman has taken a bad path); *Yo ɔ je kuasia* (the woman has done a foolish thing). She went for water from God's world and did not come back – she died in the process. The painful part of it is that, she did not die alone, but with the baby. She died with a potential human capital. The implication is that, she does not want the family, clan or town to progress.

T. O. Ceasar says³⁴³ that, the priest prays always that God should give all pregnant women children *ne maa bɔ* (so that the town may grow large). So if there is somebody who does not want the development of the town, such a person is not wanted in the community. Such a person was not buried ordinarily. She was buried by the *Agbazo/Agblazo wɔnɔ* (Agbazo/Agblazo priest) and his people. The burial was done at midnight, when everybody in the community was asleep, after the dead baby had been removed from the deceased. The corpse was put besides an ant hill and watered, so that by the following morning, ants would have covered it. This practice is captured by a *tɛgble* song (executioners' song) which says, *I gbe ha koku, baba ngo ye* (I killed for the ant hill, and the ants ate it). The deceased was buried that way with rituals, to ensure that she does

³⁴³ T.O Caesar, *E Peeɔ Mo Dangme No* (It makes You a Dangme) (unpublished), 69-70; cf. T.T. Terkper, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ* (Dangme Culture) (unpublished), 85-86.

not reincarnate. It must be noted here however that, Christian women who die in the process of giving birth are not buried that way.

6.7.3 Other Dangme terms for *kuasia*

Today, the word *kuasia* has become a common insulting word, but it was not meant to be used on women in particular, and the living in general. Synonyms of *kuasia* in modern usage are *biɛmi* and *vɔlu*, (moron, lack of intelligence). According to my informants,³⁴⁴ some phrases that express the same idea are: *e da mi tsɔ we*; *e be pɛpɛ pɛ*; *e li nɔ* (his/her is not correct in the mind). Another one is *abuneetsɛ* (a ten minus one person). *Nee* in Dangme means nine. Nine is less than ten by one. The meaning here is that if one has to count ten to make a human being complete in the mind, the *abuneetsɛ* has nine marks instead of ten so he or she is incomplete. He or she does not think well before taking action. *Abuneetsɛ* is found in the drum language of *lakpa nipeeli* (false diviners). People who have problems which they think have spiritual causes see *nipeeli* (diviners) for help. Some of the diviners do not charge for their services; clients thank them with whatever they deem fit. Others who charge exorbitantly for their services are known as *lakpa nipeeli* (false

³⁴⁴ The following Dangme scholars provided information through personal interviews on August 6, 2009:

- (1) Ishmael Kweku Narteh. Hails from Ningo in the Dangme East District. Hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Linguistics and English from the University of Ghana, Legon. Retired Dangme teacher. Member of the Dangme Bible Manuscript Review Committee. He died in 2010.

The following confirmed the information Ishmael Kweku Narteh has given:

- (2) Samuel Kwame Angmorteh. Hails from Somanya in the Yilo Krobo District. Holds Bachelor of Education (Dangme), from the University of Education, Winneba. Retired Dangme teacher.
- (3) Nene Seth Ayertey. Hails from Dodowa in the Dangme East District. Holds Bachelor of Education (Dangme), from the University of Education, Winneba. Teaches Dangme. He died in 2014.
- (4) Rev. E. P. Boti. Hold a Diploma in Ghanaian Language (Dangme) from the School of Languages, Adjumako. Retired Dangme teacher. Member of the Dangme Bible Manuscript Review Committee. Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. He died is 2017.

diviners). They asked clients to bring items such as fowls, sheep and goats, which are slaughtered and consumed during the performance of rituals amidst drumming. The set of drums played communicate a message which clients do not understand. The *vuga* (big drum) sounds *kuasia lotɔ* and the *vuvi* (small drum) responses *abunee konglo* (big full, incomplete mind.)³⁴⁵

E la tso sui (his/her firewood is not burning) is another. The traditional Dangme uses firewood as a source of fire for cooking. The hearth must have enough firewood to produce quality flame to boil food. *E la tso sui* means that the person is likened to a big hearth with little firewood. So instead of producing quality flame for cooking, the firewood produces smoke. In that sense, whatever that person says is without any serious thought. Thus, it is not taken seriously by people.

Another Dangme phrase that expresses moronic is *huane*. The Dangme believe that they are from *huanemi* (the unseen world) before coming to this world. When a person is not thinking and behaving soundly, such a person is coming from *huanemi* (the unseen world) but has not yet got to this world.³⁴⁶ All these are milder forms of *kuasia* in modern day usage.

³⁴⁵ My informants cited above.

³⁴⁶ Rev. E. P. Boti, interviewed August 6, 2009.

6.7.4 Researcher's comments on the rendition of *anoetoi* (foolish people) as *kuasiahi* in the Dangme text

From the explanations of the usage of *kuasia* given above, it is clear that the translation of *anoetoi* in Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible as *kuasiahi* is an issue. Dangme speakers know the word as an insult. The rendering of *anoetoi* as *kuasiahi* means that the two people on the way to Emmaus lacked intelligence, but that is not the case. The exegesis of the text (5.5.4) shows that Jesus used *anoetoi* as a rebuke, and not an insult.

In the Greek text the *anoetoi* is preceded by an interjection “Oh” which expresses Jesus’ surprise at the disbelief of the two men. This is not rendered in the Dangme text. Rendering it in Dangme would have toned down the intensity of *kuasiahi*. The rendering of “Oh” with *kuasiahi* however, still has the *kuasia* an insult in the translation. From the synonyms of *kuasia* given above (6.4.3), rendering the interjection “Oh” and replacing *kuasiahi* with *abuneetsɛ* (incomplete people) can be taken as a rebuke but it still carries the idea of incompleteness of the human person.

6.7.5 A Comparative Analysis of Luke 24:25 in other southern Ghana Translations

The Old and New Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi translations (1964, 2012) render the Greek word *anoetoi* as *adwenenmuharefo* and *adwneharefo* ɔ, meaning people who are shallow-minded; they think childishly. The New Testament, English-Twi Version (2013) render it as *mo nyansa sua* your wisdom is little; the Old Ewe translation (1931) as *amemanyanuwo* people who cannot

comprehend; the Ewe New Testament and Psalms (1988) as *ame mesenugomewo* people who lack understanding.

The Mfantse Bible (1948) and New Testament (1982), the Old and New Ga Bibles (1908, 2006); and the Dangme New Testament (1979) and Bible (1999) use *nkwasea/kuashiai/kuasiahi*, meaning, people who have no brains, and therefore cannot think upright. The Ewe New Testament (2003) and New Bible (2010) use *movito susu glodo towo* - fools, slow to understand; *susu glodo towo* means people who are slow in understanding; it is similar to *ame mesenugomewo* people who lack understanding; however, the use of *movito* (fools) is the same as *nkwasea/kuashiai/kuasiahi* as rendered in the Mfantse, Ga and Dangme translations. The fact that somebody does not understand an issue does not mean that he or she is foolish.

If *anoeetoi* means “dullness in the mind”, and is used for people who are slow in understanding issues; and Jesus’ usage of *anoeetoi* in Luke 24:25 was for a rebuke rather than an insult, then the Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi and Ewe renditions of *anoeetoi* are better. Jesus would have used *moros* (foolish, blockheaded) if he had meant to insult the disciples. Mfantse, Ga, and Dangme translators may have used some English versions as their basic texts (cf. RSV, NRSV, NIV, NLT).

6.7.6 A new Dangme Translation of Luke 24:25 that fits into the religio-cultural thought of the Dangme

Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ kɛ, “ Oo nyɛ juɛmi he jɔ; nyɛ tsui hu pee siɔɔ; nyɛ sumɛ kaa nyɛ ma he ni hi tsuo nɛ gbali ɔmɛ de ɔ maa ye! [“Then Jesus said to them: O!, your mind has become cold; you are slow in heart; you do not want to believe all that the prophets have said.”]³⁴⁷

6.8 Discussion

6.8.1 Finding from the translation of the texts

(a) Matt 6:12

Our findings from the Greek text revealed that even though the Matthean community which was Jewish understood *afes* (forgive) as “let go”, it matches better with “sins” than with *ofeileemata* “debts” in a Gentile community such as the Dangme.

³⁴⁷ Compare my suggested rendering with the translations in which *anoetoi* is rendered more of a rebuke than an insult: (1) Richard Francis Weymouth, “Weymouth’s New Testament in Modern Speech,” Revised by J. A. Robertson, cited in *Weymouth’s New Testament* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1967), “O dull-witted men”, He replied, “with minds so slow to believe all that the prophets had spoken”. (2) Charles B. Williams, *The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People* (Illinois: Moody Press, 1965), The he said unto them, “O men sluggish in mind, slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken”. (3) Gerrit Verkuyl, *The Berkeley Version* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1945), Then he said to them, “O simpletons, with hearts so slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” (4) Roland Knox, “The New Testament in the Translation of Monsignor Roland Knox” cited in *Knox Version* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1967), Then he said to them, “Too slow of wit, too dull of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

Interpreting sins as debts means that sinners have to pay for their sins. If sins are debts, then it also means that God's forgiveness is temporal. He still keeps memories of the sins of the offender. This defeats the meaning of forgive, which is "let go."

"Forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4, the pararell of Matt 6:12) substantiates the finding that "forgive" matches better with "sins" than with "debts". This finding confirms Saldarini's (2003) assertion that *ofeileemata* "debts" in Matt 6:12 "are most probably sins hence the traditional translation as trespasses" (p.118).

Interpretations of the Dangme translation of Matt 6:12 by the Dangme Bible reading communities give insights into the meaning of the verse. 88 percent of the respondents interpreted the verse to mean that God forgives human beings who wrong Him when they ask for His forgiveness. To them, God cancels the wrong doings of the sinner. Their interpretation of forgiveness as "cancellation of sins" agrees with the Greek word *afes* meaning "let go."

The 4.9 percent who interpreted forgiveness as God "not remembering the sins of the sinner" makes God's forgiveness a permanent thing. Their understanding of the verse was that if God forgives, He does not keep memory of the sins of the sinner. Even though this interpretation has a lower percentage, it is valid because it gives an insight into the meaning of *afes* "let go." This can be could be an alternative Dangme interpretation of God canlleing our sins when we pray for forgiveness of sins.

The 3.3 percent who interpreted the verse as “God should lend us our wrong-doings” did a direct literal interpretation of the Dangme text in which the Greek *afes* is rendered *kɛ pa*. *Pa* among other meaning, is an economic term which connotes the idea of lending. One is lent money with the expectation of paying back. Failure to pay means debt. In that sense, human sins are debts owed God. Even though this interpretation borrows the word “debt” as found in the Greek text, it cannot be taken as an alternative interpretation of Matt 6:12 in Dangme because it does not agree with the religio-cultural thought pattern of the Dangme.

The 2.8 percent who interpreted God’s forgiveness as God overlooking sin, does not agree with the meaning of *afes* “let go.” It rather makes God’s forgiveness temporal. When God says He has forgiven the sins of an offender; He has only overlooked them. Therefore, this interpretation cannot be an alternative for rendering the Greek *afes*.

Ke meaning outright gift, used in rendering the Greek word *afes* in Matt 6:12 in the Dangme New Testament (BSG/UBS 1977), the New Ga Bible (BSG 2006), the Ewe Bible (BSG 2010) and *kyɛ* in the Asante-Twi Bible (BSG 2012) confirm the interpretations of the the 88.8 percent of the Dangme Bible readers who interpreted God’s forgiveness to mean He cancelling the sins of the offender.

(b) Mark 1:12

The result of our study of Mark 1:12 in the Greek showed that *ekballoo* (cast out) connotes a strong action. Jesus' usage of *ekballoo* in dealing with the expelling demons buttresses its forcefulness.

The forceful nature of *ekballoo* may have made the translators of the Bible into Dangme to render it as *tsɛ eyi se* (push the head from behind), an idiomatic expression which evolved a lot of interpretations by Dangme Bible reading communities.

The 85.3 percent who understood and interpreted the verse as “The Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the wilderness” may have done so to avoid attributing “violence” to the Spirit's activity with Jesus. This interpretation agrees with Matt 4:1, the pararell of Mark 1:12, which presents the story of the Spirit leading Jesus into the wildersness after his baptism. This could be an alternative interpretation of *tsɛ e yi se* (push him by the head from behind).

The 7.3 percent who interpreted the verse as “The Holy Spirit in front of Jesus led him into the wilderness,” may have pictured the Spirit ahead of Jesus as he followed. But can one see Holy Spirit? One can fell the Holy Spirit's presence, but may not see him. Further to this is the fact that *tsɛ eyi se* literally means “push the head from behind” and *nyeɛ e hɛmi* means “walking in front of.” Since “behind” and “in front” are two poles apart, this

interpretation cannot be an alternative for *tsɛ eyi se* in the Dangme text and *ekballoo* in the Greek.

The 4.1 percent who interpreted the text as “The Holy Spirit behind Jesus pushed him into the desert wilderness” are close to the meaning of *ekballoo* in the Greek text (cast out). But it cannot be taken as an alternative interpretation of the verse because it is difficult to perceive how the Spirit, qualified as “Holy” in the Dangme text (but not in the Greek), get hold of Jesus and cast him out or throw him into the wilderness.

Similar to the interpretation above is that of the 2.3 percent who said the text meant that “The Holy Spirit behind Jesus, pushed him into the wilderness.” The idea of the Holy Spirit “pushing” Jesus is an issue. On the basis of that, the interpretation cannot be an alternative for what Mark 1:12 means to Dangme Bible reading communities.

The rendering of *ekballoo* in Mark 1:12 in the Old Ga Bible (BSG 1908), the New Ga Bible (BSG 2006), the Old Ewe Bible (1931), and the New Ewe Bible (BSG 2010) as *kpla* and *kplɔ* – “led” or “guided”; and the Dangme New Testament (BSG 1977) as *kpaka* – “accompanied”; the Dangme Living Word and Psalms (IBS 1997); as *wo lɛ kɛ ho* “sent him”; and three Akan newer translations – Asante-Twi New Testament and Psalms (IBS 1997); Akuapem-Twi New Testament and Psalms (IBS 1997) and the New Testament, English-Twi Version (2013) as *de Yesu kɔɔ* “sent Jesus,” show that the rendering of *ekballoo* is not only a problem in the Dangme Bible.

My suggested rendering of *ekballoo* as *ha nɛ e ho* (permitted him to go) will clear the confusion in the minds of Dangme Bible readers who do not understand how the Holy Spirit could “push” Jesus into the wilderness. The translation of *ekballoo* as “permitted him to go” is in line with Kohlenberger’s (2006) Greek-English translation of the word in Mark 1:12, “At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.”

(c) Luke 24:25

The exegesis of the text revealed that Jesus used *anoetoi* not as an insult but as a rebuke. Thus, its rendering as *kuasiahi* in the Dangme is a problem to the Dangme Bible reading community. My informants gave the etymology and synonyms of *kuasia*.

If the etymology of *kuasia* is one who is useless or not respected, then using it in the Dangme text implies that the two men on the way to Emmaus were useless people. This is an insult to God who made them in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26; Psa 139:14). The rendering of *anoetoi* as *kuasiahi* is also an insult on the personality of the two men, for the fact that they did not understand the issue at stake does not mean that they were useless, good for nothing (Matt 5:22).

All the synonyms of *kuasia* are insulting, and have negativities when used to describe a foolish person. *Nyɛ juɛmi he jɔ* (your mind has become cold) is an idiom that can relate

kuasiahi in the Dangme text. It gives an idea implied in describing someone who is not thinking well. This idiom, has thus reduced the insult of *kuasiahi* in the Dangme text, making it a rebuke. *Nyɛ juɛmi he ɔɔ* (your mind has become cold); *nyɛ tsui hu pee siɔɔ* (has your heart has become slow) fit well into the Dangme text of Luke 24:25. My rendition helps the Dangme Bible reading community in placing a divine value on Jesus who can rebuke his disciples for unbelief (Luke 19:39).

My translation confirms that of Knox (1967) – Then he said to them, “Too slow of wit, too dull of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

6.9 Bible Translation and Interpretation

This research has confirmed Ekem's (2011) proposition that translation of biblical texts from one language or version to another is not without interpretation. The three texts translated from the Greek into Dangme revealed that adjustments have to be made to the translated texts before they can be readable and understandable to the targeted readers. These adjustments are part of the hermeneutical processes which Bible translators cannot run away from if they want their translations to speak in context. After all, the essence of Bible translation is communication, and not just a matter of finding equivalent words in two languages. Words in themselves are meaningless, unless they convey meaning to the people who use them. A word may mean something in a particular context, but may mean something else in another context. The success

of the biblical text communicating its message to readers depends on the translator's ability to transport material from one world of thought to another. There is no doubt that the Dangme Bible is the word of God; but it is also the work of humans because of the part the translators play in making it meaningful to the reading communities.

6.10 Translation Philosophy of the Dangme Bible

A comparative reading of Matt 6:12; Mark 1:12; and Luke 24:25 in the Greek New Testament and the Dangme Bible (BSG/UBS 1999) reveals that the Dangme translators used both the word-for-word and thought-for-thought principles of Bible translation. In other words, they translated meaning of words rather than mere words.

Translation of biblical texts from one language or version to another is not without interpretation. Translation is not just a matter of finding equivalent words in two languages. It involves interpretation since it has a complicated task of transporting material from one world of thought and language to another. In that sense, all translations of the Bible are interpretations of the Word of God, which is one.

The semantic analysis and interpretation of these three verses – Matt 6:12; Mark 1:12; Luke 24:25 - has confirmed Derrida's philosophy of Deconstruction (1976, 1978) cited by Tyson (2006) that, "A text does not have a fixed meaning. It can be translated or remolded in the religio-cultural thought of a reading community (pp.258-259). It also affirms the position of Mugambi and Smith

(2004) that in the contextual approach to Biblical Hermeneutics (the bigger umbrella under which Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics falls), “there is a movement away from the ‘context of the text’ and the text itself to the context of the readers” (pp.23-24). This is done to factor some concerns of the readers into the translated text, so that readers see the Bible as God’s message for their communities. The findings of this research is also in line with Getui, Maluleke and Ukpon (2001), Manus (2003), Yorke and Renju (2004), Wendland and Loba-Mkole (2004) that Contextual Hermeneutics enable readers bring their own points of view and concerns to a text and so may end up with different meanings.

6.11 Challenges in Bible Translation

During the field work in the Dangme-speaking communities, 43.5 percent of the Dangme Bible readers did not respond to questionnaires on Matt 6:12 and Mark 1:12; and some Dangme scholars were slow in agreeing that Jesus’ usage of *kuasiahi* in Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible was not appropriate because they thought doing that would have meant changing the Word of God. The respondents based their contentions on Rev 22:18-19, and Deut 4:2, which warns readers of the Bible not to “add” or “subtract” something from what is written in the Bible. With what the researcher has done, he has not changed or diluted the Word of God for Dangme Christians and Bible readers; he has rather helped Dangmes to understand the Bible in the Dangme context. For, the Word of God is one everywhere, but it must be read, understood and applied in the context of the readers.

Reading the Bible in one's mother-tongue has great value which no other "foreign" translations can give to an indigenous mother-tongue Bible reader. First, it makes a reader appreciate God who understands and speaks his or her language and wants to communicate with a Bible reader in his or her mother tongue – the language that identifies one, and is identified with; second, it evokes certain philosophical and theological terms which give deeper meaning to the religious life of readers. The three texts from the Dangme New Testament discussed in this research illustrate this assertion. The findings of this research has confirmed Bright (1999) that there are semantic problems in Bible translation.

6.12 Conclusion

There are semantic problems in Bible translation. Such problems arise because words have meanings, but their meanings are determined by the context in which they are used. What a word means in one context, may mean a different thing in another context. Translators of the Bible from the original languages into mother-tongues should translate meaning rather than the form of words. The semantic analysis and interpretation of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible, substantiates this position.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The researcher set out to analyse and interpret three texts that generated discussions during a survey of Dangme Bible reading in the eight Dangme speaking areas. The texts are: *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ...* [Lend us our wrong-doings...] (Matt 6:12); ... *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se* ...[the Holy Spirit pushed him by the head...] (Mark 1:12); and *Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ ke, “Kuasiahi ...”* [Then Jesus said to them, “Fools...] (Luke 24:25). He sought to find out whether the texts would evolve new meanings that would help the Dangme Bible reading communities understand and interpret them in their contexts; and to find out the translation principles used in rendering Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 in the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ*, the Dangme Bible (UBS/BSG 1999).

7.2 Summary of the Research Process

In chapter two the researcher reviewed literature related on language, mother-tongue, mother-tongue translations of the Bibles - their relevance and challenges - and the Dangme Bible. This was done to enable him clarify and focus the research problem, justify the research methodology, broaden the knowledge base of the research area and contextualize research findings.

Chapter three discussed the ethnographic data of the Dangme people: location, migration, world-view – belief in God and the spirits, community, where human beings come from and where they will return after death, witchcraft and anti-social magic; language and literature. The chapter linked the Dangme people to the Dangme Bible.

Chapter four focused on a critical appraisal of the history and theory of Bible translation: Bible translation as a complex process that involves decoding of the source text and encoding it into target languages; epochs of Bible translation and their emphasis; Bible translation and interpretation; the modernistic and post-modernistic philosophies of Bible translation; Eugene Nida's theory of Bible translation as a system of hermeneutics; Bible translation in African languages; Bible translation in Ghana; history of the translation of the Bible into Dangme.

In chapter five the researcher did exegesis of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 in the Synoptic Gospels, in which each Evangelist wrote for an audience and as such was selective in their choice of words and materials or events, to suite their communities. The exegesis of each text followed an outline: wider context, immediate context, morphological and syntactical analysis, and meaning. This was done to demonstrate that there is a link between Bible translation and interpretation; and that link is exegesis.

Chapter six focused on semantic analysis and interpretations of Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 in the Dangme Bible. The analysis was preceded by a statistical representation of Dangme Bible readers from the eight Dangme tribes who responded to a questionnaire. The analysis focused on the Dangme texts, and how Dangme scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers understood and interpreted them. The various interpretations were analysed in the discussion section, and suggested translations that fit into the religio-cultural thought of the Dangme were given. These were done to substantiate the point made in chapter five that even though Bible translation is not about hermeneutics of biblical texts, it involves hermeneutics.

7.3 Summary of Findings

7.3.1 (a) Matt 6:12

The problem in Matt 6:12 is how the Greek words *afes* (forgive, let go) and *ofeileemata* (debts) have been rendered in the Dangme translation (BSG/UBS 1999). It was found out that among Dangme Bible readers *ke ke* (forgive) matches better with *tɔmi ɔmɛ* (wrongdoings, sins) rather than *hiɔ ɔmɛ* (debts).

Ke ke implies an outright gift; in this context it connotes “letting go” of an offence by the one offended. This means that when one realizes that he or she has sinned against God and asks for forgiveness, God forgives; He “lets go” the offence without keeping record of it,

or referring to it later. Similarly, those who say the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13) should "let go" the offences of those who wrong them, if they want God to "let go" their wrong doings.

My suggested rendering of Matt 6:12 in the Dangme is *Ne o ke wa tɔmi ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ* [And let go our wrong-doings]. This translation will help Dangme Bible readers to understand that forgiveness is about "letting go" the offence of an offender, without keeping any record of the offence.

7.3.1 (b) Mark 1:12

The difficulty with Mark 1:12 in the Dangme Bible (BSG/UBS 1999) is the rendering of the Greek word *ekballoo* (cast out) as *tɛ eyi se* (push the head from behind).

The study found out that *ekballoo* (cast out) connotes a strong action; and Jesus' usage of the word in expelling demons proves its forcefulness. The translators' rendering of *ekballoo* as *tɛ eyi se* (push the head from behind), an idiomatic expression, perhaps was so to tone down the forceful nature of *ekballoo*. This rendering has rather evolved varied interpretations by the Dangme Bible reading communities; notable among them being *ha nɛ e ho* (permitted him to go).

My suggested translation of Mark 1: 12 in Dangme as *Mumi Klouklou ha nee ho nga a no ya* [The Holy Spirit permitted him to go to the wilderness], will clear the confusion in the minds of Dangme Bible readers who do not understand how the Holy Spirit could “push” Jesus into the wilderness. It will also help them to understand that when one is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, one is also under His control; the Holy Spirit permits one to do what pleases God. The Holy Spirit’s activity understood this way will help determine when the Spirit or otherwise is working in the lives of people. This will be a check on the numerous charismatic experiences of people whose activities sometimes create doubt in the mind of people.

7.3.1(c) Luke 24:25

The rendering of *anoetoi* (foolish) as *kuasiahi* (foolish people) in the Dangme Bible (BSG/UBS 1999) is a challenge to Dangme Bible readers in whose context, a priest does not use the word *kuasia* (fool) with respect to the living.

It was found out that Jesus used *anoetoi* as a rebuke and not an insult. His usage of *anoetoi* on the two disciples on their way to Emmaus was to rebuke their unbelief in what the prophets have said about the Christ – that he would resurrect.

Understood this way, one would have expected the Dangme translators to have used a rebuking word rather than an insult, coming from no mean a person as Jesus Christ. Alluding the use of *kuasiahi* to Jesus the divine, has lowered his respect among Dangme Bible readers.

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My suggested rendering of *Oo nye juɛmi he jɔ*, (your mind has become cold) tones down the insult in *kuasiahi*, making it a rebuke. This rendering, reduces the degrading nature of *kuasia* which etymology means “a good for nothing person”, “an unrespected person”, “a worthless person.” The rendering promotes the dignity of the human being who is wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26; Psalm 139: 13-14).

7.4 Limitation

The findings of this research were arrived at by using the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics methodology which required that data be collected from scholars and ordinary Dangme Bible readers. Dangme scholars and linguists were interviewed. A limitation of this research is that it used 2009 data. The data is old though, but it is still relevant because it is the first attempt by a Dangme biblical scholar to gather data on problematic texts in the Dangme Bible. It is hoped that the Bible Society of Ghana will use findings of this research in revising the the Dangme Bible for the publication of a new edition, and future researchers will conduct surveys of the Dangme Bible reading communities for current data.

7.5 Recommendations for Implementation

7.5.1 For Academia

Since the translation problems discussed in this thesis are not only peculiar to the Dangme Bible but exist in other Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible; it is being recommended that postgraduate students and researchers in Biblical Studies should read the mother-tongue translations objectively, discover problematic idioms and expressions; study them using the procedure of the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics used for this thesis and come out with findings that fit into the religio-cultural contexts of respective indigenous Bible reading communities.

It is being recommended that Dangme biblical scholars conduct researches on the problematic rendering of texts identified in the Dangme Bible (NT) on pages 2 to 4; and (OT) in Appendix 5, p. 209 of this thesis.

7.5.2 Bible Society of Ghana

It is being recommended that the BSG should consider the findings of this research in the future revision of the Dangme Bible.

7.6 Contribution to Knowledge

I have provided a step-by-step procedure for the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics methodology; and have proposed Dangme mother-tongue and religio-cultural interpretations of the following texts for Dangme speaking people:

(a) Matt 6:12

Ne o ke wa tɔmi ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ [And let go our wrong-doings].

(b) Mark 1:12

Mumi Klɔuklɔu ha nɛ e (Yesu) ho nga a nɔ ya [The Holy Spirit permitted him (Jesus) to go to the wilderness].

(c) Luke 24:25

Kɛkɛ nɛ Yesu de mɛ ke, “Oo! nyɛ juɛmi he jɔ; nyɛ tsui hu pee siɔɔ; nyɛ sumɛ kaa nyɛ ma he ni hi tsuo nɛ gbali ɔmɛ de ɔ maa ye! [“Then Jesus said to them: O! your mind has become cold; you are also slow in heart; you do not want to believe all that the prophets have said.”]

7.7 Conclusions

No two languages are the same and so there are bound to be interpretations, additions and omissions when a written document is being translated from one language to another. This assertion applies to Bible translation. Whilst interpretation in Bible translation may be seen as a problem, its advantages outweigh the disadvantages in the sense that mother-tongue Bible readers want to hear God speak to them in their mother-tongues. It is therefore important that Bible translators translate meaning instead of exact words and idioms from the Source Languages (SL). This means that Bible translators should translate words and idioms in the SL that would not make

sense in Receptive Languages (RL) – to the mother-tongue of Bible readers - with caution, using appropriate lexical but culturally appropriate terms that evolve from the history, worldview, language and literature of mother-tongue speakers, to enable readers accept God's message to them.

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Bible translation from the original languages into other languages is not a straight forward exercise. It calls for interpretation and reinterpretation from the SL into a RL. This thesis has shown further that Bible translation also calls for reinterpretation of existing mother-tongue interpretations, to fit texts in the religio-cultural contexts of readers. In that sense no translation can be perfect; Bible translation is not static; it is a dynamic and an ongoing venture. In Bible translation and interpretation scholars should see it from that perspective. Seen this way, biblical scholars, in addition to knowing Hebrew, Greek, theology of the Bible in general, and of the biblical books in particular, and also how to do exegesis, need to know their cultures and mother-tongues, to enable them interpret the Bible to mother-tongue reading communities.

Indeed, there are problems in Bible translation in general, and semantic problems in particular. What a word means in one context, may mean a different thing in another context. Trying to force meaning on words in order to make them fit into a context creates ambiguity, confusion, misunderstanding and misinterpretation by readers. Bible translators should not base translation on dogmatic presuppositions underpinned by the mechanical theory of inspiration of Scriptures, with the assumption that translation does not need interpretation. Rather, Bible translation should

be based on a philosophy or principle that is dynamic and flexible. The findings of this research on the “Assessment of three problematic texts in the in the synoptic Gospels of the New Testament of the Dangme Bible”, specifically on Matt 6:12, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25 in the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ (Dangme Bible), supports a meaning based approach to Bible translation.

Mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics, an approach that adopts and adapts words and phrases in biblical texts in order to appropriate the word of God to indigenous Bible reading communities helps translators in translating the Bible to communicate with readers. The findings of this research have given new theological insights to the existing interpretations of the texts. The intended meaning by the original authors may have changed but the new insights have clarified the understanding of the Dangme Bible reading communities.

The step-by-step procedure of the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics methodology used for this research is an innovative addition to Ekem’s proposal. It has clarified the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics approach. The procedure has made a point that mother-tongue Bibles can be studied academically by University Departments of Religious Studies and Theological Seminaries in Ghana/Africa, in addition to the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Greek New Testament currently referenced in Biblical Studies. Studying the mother-tongue Bibles scientifically, will bridge the gap between Biblical Studies done in universities and Bible Studies in mother-tongue Bible reading communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Primary Sources

No.	Name	Profile	Date (s) interviewed
1.	E. N. Natue (Rev.)	A retired Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana; holds a Specialist Certificate in Dangme from the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Adjumako, and a Diploma in Advanced Study of Education from the University of Cape Coast; was District Minister at Somanya and Nkurakan.	June 30, 2009; July 7, 2009.
2.	E. P. Boti (Rev.)	An Ordained (retired) Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, and a Dangme Specialist from the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Ajumako; a reviewer of the manuscript of the Dangme Bible.	July 12, 2009.
3.	I. K. Narteh	An Educationist and Dangme Teacher, (now deceased); awarded a Specialist Certificate in Dangme from the then School of Languages, Adjumako, and B.A in English and Linguistics from the University of	August 2, 2009.

		Ghana, Legon. He was a reviewer of the manuscript of the Dangme Bible.	
4.	E. D. Leiku (Rev.)	An Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana; a graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Ajumako, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon and the University of Winneba; one of the surviving members of the Dangme Bible Translation Team.	July 8, 2009; January 5, 2012.
5.	G. Kitcher-Asare	A graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Ajumako and the University of Cape-Coast. One of the surviving members of the Dangme Bible Translation Team.	July 7, 2009; January 6, 2011.
6.	F. N. Appertey (Rev.)	An Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana; a graduate of the then School of Ghanaian Languages, Ajumako, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; former Principal of Abetifi College of Education; pastured at Asesewa; a reviewer of the Dangme Bible; currently Chairman of the Dangme Tongu Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, where the Dangme Bible is mostly read; a reviewer of the manuscript of the Dangme Bible.	August, 9 2009

7.	J.Nyumuah	Holds a degree in Dangme from the University of Education, Winneba; author of <i>Krobo Culture</i> (1998).	July 13, 2009.
8.	M. Tettey-Fio	She hold a B.Ed Degree in Dangme from the University of Education, Winneba; an Elder of the Presbyterian Church at Akuse.	July 13, 2009
9.	J. B. Lawerteh (Rev.)	An Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana; a graduate of Dangme, Theology, and Guidance and Counseling, from the then School of Ghanaian Languages at Ajumako, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, and University of Education, Winneba; currently Headmaster of Suhum-Crabo-Coaltar Senior High School; a reviewer of the Dangme Bible; a reviewer of the manuscript of the Dangme Bible.	August 6, 2009
10.	Nene Amakwata	Chief Linguist of the Yilo-Krobo Traditional Area	July 27, 2010
11.	517 Indigenous Dangmes and 48 non-Dangmes, who read and understand Dangme.	Dangme Bible readers from the eight (8) Dangme tribes: Adaa, Nugo, Kpone, Gugblaa, Sɛ, Osudoku, Manya-Klo, Yilo-Klo.	Responded to questionnaires July 2009.

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Appendix 2

Interview Questions for Dangme Bible Translation Team Members and Reviewers

1. Who were the other members of the Dangme Bible translation team? What were their backgrounds?
2. Who was the Bible Society of Ghana's Translations Consultant at the time?
3. What were the sources for the translation of the Dangme Bible?
4. What were some of the challenges that the translating team faced?
5. Do you find some translation problems in the Dangme Bible?
6. What is your understanding of Matt. 6:12 in the Dangme Bible which reads: *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ kaa bɔ nɛ wɔ hu waa kɛ pa nihi nɛ tɔɔ wa nɔ ɔ.*
7. What are the implications when we say *Mawu nɛ ngɔ tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ*?
8. Do you see the phrase *kɛ pa wɔ* as a problem?
9. Do you have any alternative translation of Matt 6:12?

10. What is your understanding of Mk. 1:12 in the Dangme Bible which reads: *Amlɔɔ nɔuu, Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya...?*

11. Among the Dangme, *mɛ nɔ yi se a tɛɛ?*

12. What are the implications of saying, *Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tɛ e [Iesu] yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya?*



Appendix 3

Appendix 3

1. ID Number: _____

2. Name: _____

3. Age: _____ 4. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

5. Level of Education: ☐ Senior High School ☐ College of Education ☐ Polytechnic

6. Are you a Dangme? ☐ Yes ☐ No 7. Do you speak Dangme? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Which Dangme-speaking area do you come from? ☐ Ada ☐ Ningo ☐ Prampram
☐ Kpone ☐ Shai ☐ Osudoku ☐ Manya-Krobo ☐ Yilo-Krobo

9. Do you read Dangme? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. What is your Church/Denomination: ☐ Presbyterian ☐ Methodist ☐ Anglican
☐ Church of Pentecost ☐ Apostolic ☐ International Central Gospel ☐ Catholic
☐ Assemblies of God Other: _____

11. Date of Survey: _____ Time: _____

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Appendix 4

Survey Questionnaire

1. Name: ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Rev. ☐ Dr. ☐ Rev/Dr
☐ Prof. _____
2. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female 3. Age: _____
4. Level of Education: ☐ Community Literacy Education ☐ Middle School/Junior High School ☐ Senior High School ☐ College of Education ☐ Polytechnic ☐ University
5. Church/Denomination: ☐ Presbyterian ☐ Methodist ☐ Anglican
☐ Church of Pentecost ☐ Apostolic ☐ International Central Gospel ☐ Catholic
☐ Assemblies of God Other: _____
6. Position in Church: ☐ Pastor/Minister ☐ Elder/Presbyter/Leader ☐ Deacon
☐ Preacher ☐ Bible Study Leader ☐ Sunday School Teacher
☐ Other _____
7. Are you are Dangme? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Which Dangme-speaking area do you come from? ☐ Ada ☐ Ningo ☐ Prampram
☐ Kpone ☐ Shai ☐ Osudoku ☐ Manya-Krobo ☐ Yilo-Krobo

9. Do you read Dangme? [☐] Yes [☐] No

10. Do you read the Dangme Bible? [☐] Yes [☐] No

11. How often do you read the Dangme Bible? [☐] Daily [☐] At least thrice a week
[☐] Weekly

12. How do you understand the following verses of Scripture?

(a) *Ngɔɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ kɛ pa wɔ kaa bɔ nɛ wɔ hu waa kɛ paɔ nihi nɛ tɔɔ wa nɔ*
ɔ. (Matt. 6:12)

- A. Mawu nɛ ko kai wa he yayami ɔmɛ [God should not remember our sins].
- B. Mawu nɛ kɛ wa yayami ɔmɛ nɛ ke wɔ [God should cancel our sins and remember them no more].
- C. Mawu nɛ ku e he ngɔ fɔ wa yayami ɔmɛ a nɔ [God should overlook our sins].
- D. Mawu nɛ flii wɔ wa tɔmi ɔmɛ [God should loan us our wrong-doings].
- E. Hetɔ nɛ ɔmɛ tsuoo [All the above].

(b) *Amlɔɔ nɔuu, Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ tsɛ e yi se kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya* (Mk.1:12).

- A. Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nyɛɛ Yesu hɛmi kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya [The Holy Spirit in front of Jesus led him to the desert].
- B. Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nɛ ngɛ Yesu se ɔ tsitɛɛ lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya [The Holy Spirit behind Jesus pushed him into the desert].
- C. Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ nu Yesu nɛ e gbɛ lɛ kɛ ho nga a nɔ ya [The Holy Spirit got hold of Jesus and dragged him into the desert].
- D. Mumi Klɔuklɔu ɔ ha nɛ Yesu ho nga a nɔ ya [The Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the desert].
- E. Hetɔ nɛ ɔmɛ tsuoo [All the above].

Appendix 5

Some Translation Problems in the Old Testament of the Dangme Bible Identified during the Survey

Genesis 12:5; 14:12-15 – *wɔfase*

Genesis 2:8b - *nɔmlɔ nɛ e pue ɔ*

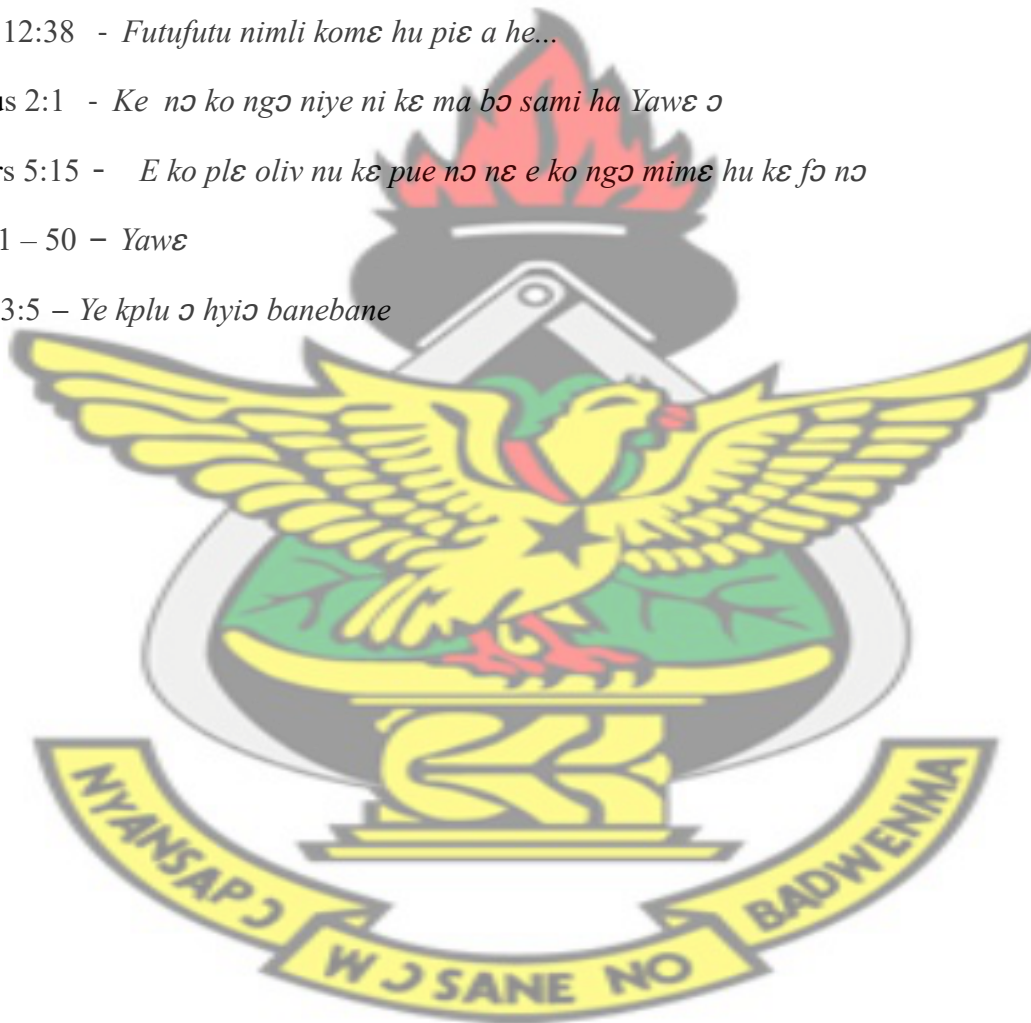
Exodus 12:38 - *Futufutu nimli komɛ hu piɛ a he...*

Leviticus 2:1 - *Ke nɔ ko ngɔ niye ni kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Yawɛ ɔ*

Numbers 5:15 - *E ko ple oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ nɛ e ko ngɔ mimɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ*

Psalms 1 – 50 – *Yawɛ*

Psalms 23:5 – *Ye kplu ɔ hyiɔ banebane*



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Appendix 6

Statistical Tables

Table 1: Translation Problems in the Dangme Bible

Tribe	Yes	No	Cannot Identify Translation Problems	Total
Ada	93	6	20	119
Ningo	8	3	2	12
Kpone	7	2	15	24
Prampram	9	1	2	12
Shai	54	18	5	76
Osudoku	67	12	6	84
Manya-Krobo	75	17	7	98
Yilo-Krobo	101	27	12	140
Total	412(72.9%)	84(14.9%)	69 (12.2%)	565 (100.00%)

Source: Field Data, 2009.

Table 2: Respondents from the Eight Dangme-speaking Areas

Dangme-speaking Area	Number of Questionnaire Distributed	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Ada	150	119	21.1
Ningo	100	12	2.1
Kpone	100	24	4.2
Prampram	100	12	2.1
Shai	150	76	13.5
Osudoku	100	84	14.9
Manya-Krobo	150	98	17.3
Yilo-Krobo	150	140	24.8
Total	1000	565	100.0

Table 2(a): Interpretations of Matt 6:12 at the eight Dangme-speaking Areas

Dangme-speaking Area	Matt 6:12	A	No.	%	B	No.	%	C	No.	%	D	No.	%	E	No.	%	
Ada			9	1.6		93	16.4		2	0.4		2	0.4		0	0	
Ningo			0	0		11	1.8		1	0.2		1	0.2		0	0	
Kpone			2	0.4		10	1.7		2	0.4		1	0.2		0	0	
Prampram			2	0.4		10	1.7		0	0		1	0.2		0	0	

Shai			2	0.4		71	12.5		2	0.4		5	0.8		0	0	
Osudoku			1	0.2		81	14.3		1	0.2		4	0.7		0	0	
Manya-Krobo			7	1.2		88	15.5		0	0		2	0.4		0	0	
Yilo-Krobo			5	0.9		138	24.4		8	1.4		3	0.5		0	0	
Total			27	4.9		502	88.8		15	2.8		21	3.3		0	0	565 / 100%

Table 2(b): Interpretations of Mark 1:12 at the eight Dangme-speaking Areas

Dangme - speaking Area	Matt 6:12	A	No	%	B	No	%	C	No	%	D	No	%	E	No	%	
Ada			10	0.9		7	1.2		2	0.4		95	16.8		1	0	
Ningo			0	0		0	0		0	0		12	2.1		0	0	
Kpone			0	0		1	0.2		0	0		11	1.9		0	0	
Prampram			2	0.4		4	0.7		0	0		10	1.8		2	0.4	
Shai			2	0.4		1	0.2		1	0.2		40	7.1		0	0	
Osudoku			5	0.8		4	0.7		2	0.4		78	13.8		0	0	
Manya-Krobo			15	2.7		3	0.5		1	0.2		91	16.1		0	0	
Yilo-Krobo			9	1.6		4	0.7		8	1.4		145	25.6		2		
Total			43	6.8		24	4.2		14	2.6		483	85.5		5	0.4	565/100