



KASEM, FAREFARE AND GONJA RENDITION OF TOUCH IN 1 JOHN 1:1

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ABSTRACT

The authors did a careful study of the translations of the action verb touch in 1 John 1:1 in three languages (Gonja, Kasem and Farefare) translated by one agency the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT). The authors realized that GILLBT used beta (touch) in Gonja, me (familiar) in Kasem and bona (be with) in Farefare translations respectively. This paper seeks to introduce Relative Mother Tongue Bible translation as a discipline devoted to comparing texts translated by an organization to foster coherence and also to render accurate message with regards to the authors' intent in the various translations. It focuses on comparative word to word translation of biblical texts in various translations. It is devoted to bridging the differences in sentence structure in the circulating translations.

Key words: ψηλαφήσατέ, ψηλαφήσειαν, ψηλαφωμένω, ἀκηκόαμεν, ἐώρακαμεν; ne, ni, dwei, taane; nyε, wom wu, kalom, eere, gore; nu, beta, nfin.

INTRODUCTION

What Jesus taught and achieved has been transmitted to us by others, in line with their culture and tradition. Biblical scholars agree that there is no simple answer to what the best translation of the Bible is. Each one has strong and weak points, signs of distortions and textual errors because of the efforts of translators in their quest to improve upon the meaning of the text to their audience. In contemporary Ghana, there are three Bible Translation Agencies – Bible Society of Ghana (BSG), the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) and the International Bible Society (IBS).² These organizations have translated the entire Bible into several Ghanaian Mother-Tongue languages including the Yene Gɔɔ (Farefare). Others such as the Ebɔɛ Be Kawɔl ɲkre Popɔr (Gonja) and the Wε Ni-Duure Tɔno (Kasem) are only the New Testament translations of the Bible in their respective Mother-Tongues. Mother-Tongue translations of the Bible emanate from daughter translations such as the English versions which were translated from the Greek for English audience. In this regard, most of the important words are sometimes given an interpretation very far from the original word. An issue of that sort is found in the Kasem and Farefare translations of the first Epistle of John hence the need for this paper.

BACKGROUND

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) is credited with the traditional classification of the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. 1 John 1:1 reads; “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.” (Revised Standard Version). The above verse contains three of the traditional sensory classifications underlined above. After studying 1John 1:1 in the Kasem-Wε Ni-Duure Tɔno (1988), the Farefare-Yene Gɔɔ (2007), and Gonja-Ebɔɛ Be Kawɔl ɲkre popɔr (1984), the researchers want to find out the following:

1. The various words used to translate the three senses in Kasem, Farefare and Gonja languages.
2. The theological significance of the sense of touch in the text.

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²Kuwornu-Adjaottor, J. E. T. “Patronage and Usage of the Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles in Kumasi.” Prime Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS), Vol. 2(7) (2012).

EXEGESIS OF 1 JOHN 1:1

The Greek New Testament Text (Nestle-Alan 2009)

Ὁ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ Λόγου τῆς ζωῆς.

Ὁ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ Λόγου τῆς ζωῆς,—

b. Transliteration

Ho ēn ap’ archēs, ho akēkoamen, ho eōrakamen, tois ophthalmois hēmōn, ho etheasametha kai ai cheires hēmōn epsēlaphēsan peri tou logou tēs zōēs,-

Kasem Translation

Debam popone tōnō konto se de pa á lōre wolo na maḡe o wora boboa ne to. Debam nam seene de ni o kwora mo, ye de kori de ne o yibia. De fōge de nii-o ye de tiini de **me** de do. Ko ye Dwea Botara taane mo de lage ge ta.

Farefare Translation

To pa’ale bō’ora la yamam yehera la se’em te ba yi’ira Yelehom sebo n bo’ore vom la. A daa pon bōna la pin’ileḡo na. To daa wom a yetōgom la ge nyē’ en la to nini. Yelemenere,te nyē’ en, ge daa **bōna** la en.

Gonja Translation

Yesu Kristo ne baa tre Kamalga ne k bee sa ḡkpa nsaa wōto durnya be faranḡo kike na be asheḡ ne anyee sibe a sa menyī na. E malga ne an nu nseḡ wu mo kinishito ḡ keni mo nseḡ ta an be enōana m **beta** mo.

χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, (our hands have touched)

Χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, literally reads; “hands our they touched.” This may confuse the non-Greek readers as compared to “We touched with our hands.” Even though ἐψηλάφησαν is a First Aorist Indicative Active Third Person Plural of the verb ψηλάφῶ (touch) which means “they touched,” from the preceding clauses such as ἀκηκόαμεν (we have heard), ἐώρακάμεν (we have seen) and ἐθεασάμεθα (we have looked), one can deduce that the writer was part of those who “touched.” Hence the application of the First-Person Plural “We touched.”

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SENSE OF TOUCH IN 1 JOHN 1:1

The author uses the action verb “touch” to reiterate the awareness of the risen Christ. Several scholars maintain that, “ἐψηλάφησαν, which occurs in the New Testament only in Acts 17:27 and Hebrews 12:18 beside these two passages, denotes not the bare handling, but the searching, exploring use of the hands, that tests by handling.” In Luke 24: 39, Jesus makes it categorically clear that the spirit has no flesh and therefore cannot be touched. The author’s choice of ψηλαφῶ “the sense of touch” is primarily to distinguish between Jesus’ human nature from the Spirit one. The touching with the hands refers to his human nature. Since Christ is one but has two natures, because he came from the Father that he might put on our flesh, the author rightly declares that he is the same, and had been invisible, and afterwards became visible which he testified by using the verb touch.³ The noun χεῖρ’ (hand) is used thirteen times in the Gospel of John. Keung has divided the results into three groups and explains it this way;

Three of the verses talk about the hands of the enemies, the Jews (John 7:30, 44; 10:39).

Five of the verses talk about the hand of Jesus or God (John 3:35, 10:28-29, 13:3 and 20:20). The remaining five go to the disciples: Lazarus (John 11:44), Peter (John 13:9 &

³ The Christological emphasis signified at this point the revelation of God symbolically represented by light and darkness. It portrays the historical nature of Jesus (that is the divine and human nature of Jesus).

21:18) and Thomas (John 20:25, 27). These are significant occasions in the Gospel of John tradition: the raising of Lazarus, the washing of disciples' feet, prophecy of Peter's martyrdom and the empirical Thomas! Surprising, ψηλαφάω is nowhere to be found in Gospel of John, not even the Thomas story! To outsiders, 'That which is accessible to human hearing, sight and touch' means nothing extraordinary. But for members of the Johannine community and the readers today, this conjures up a whole range of associations: God, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and the born blind, Lazarus, Peter and Thomas. Therefore, Gospel of John relies heavily on Gospel of John, or rather, the experience of the Gospel tradition of the community. The author defended his true Christology by proclaiming his eyewitness status.⁴

The situation at which the epistle was addressed revolves around heretical teachings and the spiritual condition of believers at that time. John wrote to warn against false teachings such as the antichrists who denied the true humanity of Jesus and also to explain to believers who were involved in worldly things the true fellowship with Jesus.

At the transfiguration (Mat 17:3), when Moses and Elijah appeared to them signifying the law and the prophets, Peter, James and John saw them and heard them talk with Jesus, but they did not "touch" them because they were spirits only. In the case of Jesus, He has both qualities and could be touched. Therefore, the text (1 John 1:1) cannot be translated without the much-needed emphasis on ψηλαφάω (touch) in portraying the full intention of the author.⁵

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE THREE SENSES IN 1JOHN 1:1

HEARING

Language	Word	Meaning
Greek	ἀκηκόαμεν	We have heard
Kasem	Ni	Hear
Farefare	Wom	hear
Gonja	Nu	Hear

Table 1.0⁶

SIGHT

Language	Word	Meaning
Greek	εἰδόμεν	We have seen
Kasem	Nε	See
Farefare	Nye	See
Gonja	Wu	See

Table 1.1⁷

TOUCH

Language	Word	Meaning
Greek	Ἔψηλάφησαν	They touched
Kasem	Me	Familiar
Farefare	bona	Be with
Gonja	Beta	Touch

Table 1.2⁸

⁴ Kwok, C. Keung, *Feast of the Archangels* (2007), 2.

⁵ The one who was God and was with God in eternity became flesh and John beheld His glory (Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2014 p14).

⁶ The sense of hearing is duly presented in all the translations in this survey.

⁷ The sense of sight is duly presented in all the translations in this survey.

⁸ In this table, touch is translated as be with and familiar in Farefare and Kasem respectively. This is so because the two belong to the Gur language group and influences each other.

COMPARISON OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF “WE TOUCHED WITH OUR HANDS” IN 1 JOHN 1: 1

Languages	Translation	Meaning
Greek	χειρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν,	We touched with our hands
Gonja	An be enɔana m beta mo	Our hands have touched him
Kasem	De tiini de me de do	We were familiar with him *
Farefare	Ge daa bɔna la en	We were with him *

Figure 2.0⁹

ΧΕΪΡΕΣ ἩΜῶΝ Ἐψηλάφησαν, (CHEIRES HĒMŌN EPSĒLAPHĒSAN)

Languages	Translation: 1 John 1:1	Literal Meaning
Gonja	E malga ne annu nsej wu mo kinishito η keni mo nsej ta an be enɔana m beta mo	He spoke and we heard and we have seen him with our eyes, looked at him and used our hands to touch him
Kasem	Debam nam seene de ni o kwora mo, ye de kori de ne o yibia. De fɔge de nii-o ye de tiini de me de do	We have truly heard his voice, and have seen his face. We have thoroughly looked at him and we were more familiar with him
Farefare	To daa wom a yetɔgom la ge nye' en la to nini. Yelemɛɛɛɛ, te nye' en, ge daa bɔna la en	We have heard his word and have seen him with our eyes. Truly, we have seen him, and we were with him

Figure 3.0¹⁰

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF ΧΕΪΡΕΣ ἩΜῶΝ Ἐψηλάφησαν,(CHEIRES HĒMŌN EPSĒLAPHĒSAN)

Indeed, it is true that the disciples were “with” and were “familiar with” Jesus because they were together throughout his earthly ministerial period. However, these two “claims” in the Kasem and Farefare translations do not hold the same meaning as “touched with the hands” in the Greek text and the Gonja translation. In other words, the theological significance of the sense of “touch” invariably is different from that of “familiarity” and being “with.”

TRANSLATION INACCURACIES

Perkins maintains that some passages of the Bible are so difficult that any translation is really the exact interpretation of what the narrator meant and for that matter translators tend to paraphrase rather than translate.¹¹ Nevertheless, in most circumstances, the translators tend to negligibly omit some words used by the narrators invariably with the intention that they are not necessary in the passages. For example, in 1 John 1: 1, the narrator employed three sensory organs—the ear (sense of hearing), the eye (sense of sight) and the hand (sense of touch). The Kasem (1988) and Farefare (2007) translations have included the sense of hearing and the sense of sight but have paraphrased the sense of touch to mean “we were used to” or “we were familiar with” and “we were with” respectively. The Gonja (1984) translation has included all the three sensory acts. This indicates that the Ngbanye (Gonja people) would get a good understanding of the text according to the intent of the narrator than the Kasem and Farefare people. It is against this background that we set out to interview people on their views about this and other discoveries.

⁹ The Kasem and Farefare translators' choice of *me de do* and *bɔna la en* cannot be interpreted to mean touch.

¹⁰ Figure 3.0. Shows the text (1 John 1:1) in all the three translations. The expression used has no relationship with the word touch.

¹¹ PHEME PERKINS, *Reading the New Testament* 2ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) 18.

PROCEEDINGS FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

a. Interview with Kofi Awutugba

He owns a Kasem Bible and can read and understand it very well.

Interviewer: What do you have to say about the word of God being translated into Kasem your mother tongue?

Interviewee: “It’s great! Since I can read and understand the Bible just like the English man, I feel great.”

Interviewer: Do you have any idea about the languages in which the Bible was first written? **Interviewee:** Yes, a friend told me it was written in the language of the Jews and in Greek. He like reading the Kasem Bible so much and admits that; “there are some words that I sometimes do not understand and, in some cases, too I am always confused so when I am confused, I read the Asante-Twi to get the meaning before I read again.”

The mention of Asante-Twi led to this question: “Now that you have Asante-Twi and Kasem translations of the Bible let us open to 1 John 1: 1 and see something.

Interviewer: After reading the two versions what have you detected?

Interviewee: They are saying the same thing, he said.

Interviewer: Are you sure? Then let us all read it again gradually. After a careful reading,

Interviewee: He shouted yes! The Asante-Twi added “ye de ye nsa kaε” (we have touched with our hands). And explains that it is always so in some cases when he read the two together. “The Ashanti’s, always sadd something which is not in the Bible.” He promises to give me more verses in this regard at a later date.

Interviewer: I asked him whether he has ever for once tried to check the two with any of the English versions.

Interviewee: No.

So I took out my English Bible and we did the comparison together. Finally, he agreed with me that the Asante-Twi translation corresponds accurately with the English (Revised Standard Version) which means that there is a lapse in the Kasem translation.

Interviewee: Our people have decided to shorten it, he claimed.

Interviewer: So can you say that de me de do is “we touched with our hands?”

Interviewee: No! He answered.

Interviewer: So what do you think should have been there?

Interviewee: de jea dwei o (our hands touched him).

Interview with Emmanuel Atambire

Atambire is one of the mobile preachers stationed at vantage points in Kumasi. He preaches using the Farefare language in the Frafra communities in suburbs of the Garden City. Atambire thinks that the various translations originated from the English versions and serve a greater purpose in that the message is now in the indigenous languages and is accessible to the indigenous people and fosters easy understanding. He alludes to the fact that as a mobile preacher using the Farefare translation in the Frafra communities, the people understand him better than when he uses other languages like English and Asante-Twi.

The principle that the Bible, being the Word of God is inspired by God is free from errors and should be read and interpreted literally in all details (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993: 69) is the notion being held by Atambire. He thinks that the translators did it through the help of the Holy Spirit and therefore should not be subject to scrutiny. He has therefore neither dreamt of comparing texts nor think of errors in any form purported to be in the translated texts. “That would be an indiscriminate act against the word of God” he reiterates.

Interview with James Abanti

Mr. James Abanti is an elder at Moshie Zongo Roman Catholic Church Kumasi. He had a story to tell.

Interviewee: He quickly went into his room and brought out a book titled “Kassem Warrem, Missa, de Lee Tɔnɔ 20th February 1976” (Prayer, Mission, and Songs book), signed by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Rudolph Akanlu of blessed memory. He brought it to prove to me that the early missionaries made available the

prayers said during mass which were in Latin in the Kasem language prior to the early twentieth century. According to him the Kasena community is the first group to encounter Christianity in the Sub-Region, precisely in 1906/7. The Kasem Mission Book and Bible (New Testament) have therefore influenced most of the other languages in the area. “So now that you people are talking about inaccuracies, if you locate a mistake in the Kasem text, you will find the same with the Farefare translation in that order” he remarked.

Interviewer: In an attempt to know whether he knows that the sense of touch is omitted in the Kasem translation.

Interviewee: He asked whether it is present in the Farefare translation. “Yeah, so you see what I said.” The Kasem used *de me de do* (familiar with) and that is wrong. It can never be interpreted to mean “we touch with our hand.” It means “we are familiar with him.” According to Abanti *dwei de de jiia* (touched with our hands) should have been used.

Interview with Reverend Moses Age

Rev. Moses Age is a minister at the Trinity Foundation Church at Nayoku in the West Mamprusi District. As a Kasem himself, he is also fluent in its grammar and usage. He thinks that those who translated the Kasem Bible would have to look at it again. Promising to get me several inaccuracies, apart from 1 John 1:1, he stresses that he often resorts to the English text for a clearer meaning in most cases. Rev. Moses agreed that the translators did not consider the relevance of the sense of touch in 1 John 1: 1 that is why they used *me de do*. “*Me de do* (familiar with) is different from *dwei de a jiia* (touch with hand),” he stresses. On how he thinks the clause “we touched with our hands” should be translated, he said “it is simple and very easy; *de dwei de de jea*.”

OTHER USAGE OF EPSĒLAPHĒSAN (TOUCH) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 24:39

Greek Text – ἴδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτός· ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα.

Gonja Translation – Men keni ma enoana ne ma aya m pin fane ma nna. Men beta ma η keni, ηkpal mane so, kebuniyoyu maη kɔ eyur ne awibi fane kanane η kɔ ere.

Kasem Translation – Fɔge-na á niia mo jea de a ne na ye tei to. Ko seene ko ye amo. Taane-na amo á nii. Chira bajeye ya-nɔna de kui ne á na nae amo na ye tei to.

Farefare – Behɛya n nu’uhen la n natala la teyan wan nyɛ’ te la dela mam n bala. Gorɛya n ija behɛ te ya wan nyɛ’ te n tara la asaala iɲnaane. Se’ere n sɛe la, kɔkɔ ka tare asaala iɲnaane.

Acts 17:27

ζητεῖν τὸν Θεὸν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὐροῖεν, καὶ οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα.

Gonja Translation – E daη wora loη nna ne b laa n fin mo kukoko to n ya nya mo ashi bumo be kafin na to. Ama anyi be ekama ere nyam ne Ebɔre maη wɔ kufɔ.

Kasem Translation – We na ke nabiina konto to ye se ba ta lag-o mo. Ba jege se ba taane mo banii o jei se balaam wane balɔr-o. We nam maηe o dae yiga yiga dedaane debam maama.

Farefare Translation – A daa naam ba te ba me wa ε la a zen’an. Te daanse’ere ba wan nyɛ’ wo ban eere a na’ma la. Ge bala mea zan’anYene kazaen la to wo nera ayema n yeke se’em la te.

Hebrew 12: 18

Greek Text – Οὐ γὰρ προσελήλυθατε ψηλαφωμένῳ καὶ κεκαυμένῳ πυρὶ καὶ γνόφῳ καὶ ζόφῳ καὶ θυέλλῃ.

Gonja Translation – Men baa nyiηi fane men maη ba kebee mo ne baah tij m beta na ase ne ede wulowulow daa wɔ kumo so na. Ndoη ne tentembiri daη sɔ kakpa ne kaboh daη wora gbrum ne kumo be Kaman ne afugboh ko daη ba na.

Kasem Translation – Abam tu á twɛ We tei ye ko dae nenɛene ko deem na ke tei de Israel tiina bam to. Banto deem tu piu kolo ba yi na ne ye ba wae ba dwei de jea to. Maηa kalo We na kwei o nia yam o ke Moses jeηa ne o pa-ba to,min-fɔrɔde lim de doa mumunim wora.

Farefare – Yamam ka wa’an zoore la te nereba wan ta’an kalom te dita la bugum peelom te la lebege lika la se’em ka ta’an nyeta a neŋa, ge te sabeo kantɛ lɔbera.

TABLE OF GREEK WORDS AND THEIR GONJA, KASEM AND FAREFARE TRANSLATIONS

Epselaphēsān

Quote	Greek	English	Gonja	Kasem	Farefare
Luke 24: 39	Ψηλαφήσατέ	You touched	Beta	Taane	Gore
Acts 17:27	Ψηλαφήσειαν	They touched	Nfin	Taane	Eere
Hebrews 12:18	ψηλαφωμένω	I touched	Beta	Dwei	Kalom

Table 4.0

FINDINGS

In this discourse, it has been noted that the translators of the Kasem and Farefare mother-tongue translators did not take into consideration the significance of the action verb “touch” as recorded in 1 John 1:1 in their translations. This is so because all those interviewed on this issue gave their suggestions as dwei and kalom respectively. Besides, in Acts 17: 27, the verb ψηλαφῆσειαν which is the aorist active participle deponent third person plural of the verb ψηλαφάω which means they – feel after, handle, touch. The English Revised Standard Version translates it as “they felt.” The Kasem translates it as bataane which means “they felt without sight”¹² whereas the Farefare translated it as ba me wa ε “they would search for.”

Again, in Hebrews 12: 18, ψηλαφωμένω was used which is the present passive participle first person singular of the verb ψηλαφάω which means to – feel after, handle, touch, used in relation to a mountain that can be “touched.” The Gonja translation used the verb beta which means “touch” whilst the Kasem and Farefare used the dwei and kalom which both mean “touch” respectively, but the Kasem translation went ahead to add “with our hands.”

With regards to the above analysis, the verbs dwei in Kasem and kalom in Farefare which were used in Hebrews 12: 18, can also be used in 1 John 1: 1 to interpret the clause χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, (we have touched with our hands). This is justified by the suggestions of the personalities I interviewed and the fact that touch in Kasem is dwei¹³ and hand in Kasem is jeŋa¹⁴. For the plural of hand, the Kasem simply replaces the (ŋ) with (a) to give jea (hands). In Luke 24: 39, jea (hands) and nu’uhe (hands) were used in the Kasem and Farefare translations when Jesus said “see my hands.” “We have touched with our hands” in Kasem should be; de dwei de daane de jea and in Farefare: te de ke te nu’uhe kalom.

Besides, in Luke 24: 39 Jesus used ψηλαφῆσατε (psēlaphēsate) which is the aorist active middle-second person plural form of the verb ψηλαφαω (psēlaphaō) which means “you ‘people’ handle, feel or touch.” The Gonja translators used beta (touch), Kasem used taane (feel) whilst Farefare used gore (handle). In Acts 17: 27, the narrator used ψηλαφῆσειαν (psēlaphēseian) – aorist active participle deponent - third person plural of the verb ψηλαφαω (psēlaphaō) which means “they might – feel after, handle or touch.” Gonja used n fin (to search for/to find), Kasem used taane (feel) and Farefare used eere (search). Also, the author in Hebrews 12: 18, used ψηλαφωμένω (psēlaphōmenō), the present passive participle first person singular of the verb ψηλαφαω (psēlaphaō) which means “I felt after, handled, touched.” The Gonja translation renders it as beta (touch), Kasem-dwei (touch) and Farefare-kalom (touch).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the findings above, it is unanimously agreed that in 1 John 1: 1, the phrases ye de tiini de me de do and ge daa bōna la en used to render “we touched with our hands” in the Kasem and Farefare languages respectively are inaccurate. On the other hand, the Gonja’s nsej ta anyi be aŋaana m beta mo is a perfect translation of the clause in question (χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, “cheires hēmōn epsēlaphēsān) in 1 John 1:1. This is so because the narrator’s choice of ψηλαφάω “the sense of touch” is primarily to distinguish

¹²Awedoba, K. Albert. *Studies in Kasem Phonetics and Phonology, Language Monographs No. 5* (Accra: Institute of African Studies University of Ghana Legon. 2002), 177.

¹³Awedoba 2002: 147

¹⁴Awedoba 2002: 156

between Jesus' human nature from the Spirit one. The handling of the hands refers to his human nature. Translating this verse without establishing the human nature (sense of touch) means that the narrator's intention is not properly communicated to the indigenous audience and thus truncates the meaning of the text. Indeed, it is improper to substitute "we touched with our hands" for "we were too familiar with" and "we were with" as the Kasem and Farefare claim.

RELATIVE MOTHER TONGUE BIBLE TRANSLATION

The mother tongue biblical hermeneutics have found roots in the Ghanaian fraternity. This approach according to scholars like Kuwornu-Adjaottor deals with putting the word of God into the traditional languages for easy understanding. Patronage and usage of the translated texts in the local communities according to researchers have increased¹⁵ over the years; compelling scholars like Bayeti¹⁶ to call for a translation in the Talene language and a probability of a queue of request in that direction in the near future. The translation agencies in Ghana needs to be commended. However, to add up to this approach, the authors did a careful study of the translations of the action verb (touch) in 1 John 1:1 in three languages (Gonja, Kasem and Farefare) translated by one agency (GILLBT). The authors realized that GILLBT used beta (touch) in Gonja, me (familiar) Kasem and bona (be with) Frafare.

This paper therefore seeks to introduce relative mother tongue bible translation. This approach deals with comparing text translated by an organization to:

1. Foster coherence
2. Render accurate message with regards to the author's intent.

The discipline focuses on comparative word to word translation of biblical texts in various translations. It is intended to bridge the differences in sentence structure in the circulating translations. This is necessary because one translation organization can translate the Bible into several Ghanaian languages. It is also true that a geographical area can contain several ethnic groups such that at a given service several translated texts would be read. There is therefore the need to maintain the coherence in the translations. In other words, the message should be the same in all the translations.

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