Maternal Imagery in Bible Translation: A Comparative Analysis of Divine Nurturing Metaphors Across Indigenous Languages in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how maternal imagery in the Bible is translated and interpreted in divine metaphors of Ghanaian Languages - Twi, Ewe, and Dagbani. It analyses the translations of maternal nurturing metaphors in these three indigenous languages through a comparative analysis of key Bible passages (Isa. 66:13, Hos. 11:3-4, and Deut. 32:18), exploring their theological and cultural implications. This study uses a methodology that combines textual analyses with ethnolinguistic methods to compare the semantic range and cultural resonance of maternal imagery traits, as salient in translation discourses. The study reveals important variances in how maternal metaphors are preserved, modified, or recreated in these languages, revealing degrees of interrelatedness among linguistic constraints and worldviews regarding divine nurturing. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on the subject of Bible translation in indigenous African languages and gender-inclusive language in sacred texts.

Keywords: Bible Translation, Maternal Imagery, Divine Metaphors, Gender Linguistics

INTRODUCTION

How language, culture, and theology affect biblical translation has long been of interest to many scholars. Divine metaphors are indeed a special challenge to translate, particularly when we genderise such imagery inappropriately. Though masculine images of God dominate the Israelite Scriptures, there are notable places where the Bible uses maternal metaphors to express divine attributes and actions. In African contexts, these translations take on added complexities, as the indigenous languages involved in the communion with the end user often preserve different linguistic and associated cultural gender biases.

The translation of the Bible into different languages has always been characterised by the overt use of cultural expressions that do not neutralise and reflect societal norms in imagery. [1] The accessibility of biblical text has always depended on the culture of the specific socio-linguistic space

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[1] Julie M. Smith, "Five Impulses of the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark and Their Implications for LDS Hermeneutics," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 7, no. 1 (2015): 2.

where translation processes take place.[2] The task of Bible translators in Ghana has been to discover words within the native languages that can be used positively to describe qualities of the divine, being that the nuances of local words carry negative connotations.

Therefore, divine characteristics are reconstituted in the Ghanaian linguistic context, some of which end up attributing maternal imagery to the divine when it comes to motherhood.[3] In the Old Testament, for instance, God is typically imagined as a paternal Father, and His profound tenderness is expressed in female terms.[4]

Divine representation and maternal paradigms in Ghanaian languages. Here are excerpts from rich examples of maternal imagery in divine description and function. Each society has its own collective view on gender. In the Old Testament, the word for God is metaphorically masculine, and this creates a fine tension with that of Ghanaian linguistic communities, whereby the maternal characteristics of God play into the linguistic semblance. This study, therefore, explores the translation and interpretation of maternal imagery of divine metaphors in three Ghanaian languages: Twi, Ewe and Dagbani. Through three central biblical passages: Isaiah 66:13, which compares God with a comforting mother; Hosea 11:3-4, which describes God nurturing Israelites in maternal terms; and Deuteronomy 32:18, in which God gives birth. These passages provide rich examples of maternal imagery in divine description and action.

Existing literature reveals a significant gap in scholarship on the existing biblical maternal imagery and translations across Ghana's multiple indigenous languages. While appreciable work has been done to analyse specific languages, scholars like Kuwornu-Adjaottor have made significant contributions through their analysis of specific languages like Ewe and Ekem, who have also made valuable insights into Akan (Twi) and some aspects of its religious vocabulary. There appears to be a disconcerting deficit of comparative analyses of Ghanaian languages in relation to maternal imagery. This gap is particularly striking considering the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Ghana and the potential insights that could be gained from a comparative study. Also, the existing literature has mainly given attention to separate languages or general theories on African theology and/or gender, as shown in the works of Stinton and Oduyoye. However, these contributions do not provide the kind of cross-linguistic detail necessary to unpack how various Ghanaian language communities render divine nurturing metaphors. While Mbiti's foundational work examines African ideas of God, it does so from a more continental perspective than a linguistic perspective that offers insight into the unique nuances that may be present in Ghana. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap, serving as both the first comprehensive and comparative analysis of maternal imagery translation across Ghana's native languages as it pertains to scriptural translation. Research for this project would extend beyond a single study of language to consider how differing linguistic and cultural structures in Ghana shape the translation and meaning of divine nurturing metaphors. This would expose trends and differences in translation choices, suggesting some conceptions of motherhood in Ghanaian cultures.

This study will provide theoretical and practical contributions to the field. In theory, it would extend existing models and shed new light on how various linguistic communities deal with gender-specific divine metaphors in the same national context. This would help us better understand the intersectionality of language, gender and religious translation in African contexts. Theoretically, the insights would be beneficial for future translation projects by providing guidelines on how to deal with gender-sensitive metaphors not only in Ghanaian languages but perhaps in other African languages. Moreover, the study would fill a gap between individual language studies and more general theoretical works, providing the concrete, comparative data that are now lacking. The research would show not only what patterns repeat across languages but also what insights are unique to a particular culture that

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[2] Ulrich Luz, "Jesus the Light of the World. The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible. Edited by Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts, and Christopher Rowland." (Oxford University Press, 2012), 273-276.

[3] Charles Nana Eleduh Amoah, "Open Access and The Bible," in *Bible Position in Information Management*, ed. V. E. Unegbu (Lagos: Jamiro Press Link, 2019), 211–22.

[4] James Gordon McConville, "Neither Male nor Female: Poetic Imagery and the Nature of God in the Old Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (2019): 166–81.

might go unnoticed in research limited to one language. Such a comparative approach would also be useful for detecting particularly successful translation strategies, which could then be repurposed for other contexts.

This study is significant because it helps scholars to better understand gender-specific religious language treatment in African translation, especially in languages that might have different conceptualisations of gender and divinity in comparison to the source texts. This study also addresses the broader question of how linguistic and cultural factors contribute to the preservation and transformation of biblical metaphors in translation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For several decades, the translation of gender-specific divine metaphors into biblical literature has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. It takes a multidisciplinary approach, involving biblical studies, translation theory, gender studies and African linguistics. Within the wider profile of African biblical interpretation, Stinton's pioneering work on African Christology has shown how indigenous African notions of the divine intersect with and expand biblical imagery. In her research, she pays particular attention to maternal metaphors of God in Scripture and how these speak to African notions of nurture and care, and embody the heart of context-specific theological reflection.[5] This analysis suffices, although it is specific to how various Ghanaian languages approach divine attributes and will not help us much in terms of how maternal imagery is translated and conceived in these instances.

The work of Kuwornu-Adjaottor on mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics, which includes his work on the Ewe Bible translation, has shown how an understanding of the mother tongue can bring out nuances that get lost in English translations.[6] Describing the need for indigenous language translations and the hermeneutical implications, Antwi posits that indigenous language translations play an important role in spontaneous understanding, whether metaphorical or literal, of the biblical text as it is seen in context, the interdependence of these metaphors sometimes leads to intersecting interpretations of the biblical texts with indigenous language.[7]

Mercy Amba Oduyoye's pioneering work on African women's theology has been most illuminating in contextualising how religious gendered language operates in the African space. Her explanation of gendered divine metaphors within African Christianity sheds light on the implications of the translation of such terms in an inherently patriarchal context.[8] She posits that African languages have much more complex ways of expressing gender that differ from Western linguistic patterns, suggesting that traditional Western methods of translating divine metaphors may not always be appropriate in the African context.

Ghanaian mother-tongue translations directly inform our analysis of how maternal imagery is rendered in different languages. The translation of Isaiah 66:13 among indigenous languages in Ghana demonstrates that concepts of motherhood in cultures ultimately shape translation decisions. The Ewe version suggests and accentuates elements of maternal nurturing.

Focusing specifically on Ghanaian indigenous languages, Ekem's extensive field research sheds light on many possible challenges and opportunities in translating biblical concepts into indigenous vernaculars. Perhaps most popularly, his work on Akan (Twi) religious vocabulary addresses how traditional religious vocabulary has been reformed and redefined to articulate biblical ideas.[9] Ekem examines the semantic range of religious vocabulary, focusing on the Akan language, laying the groundwork through which one might translate divine metaphors in a way that still resonates

[5] Diane B Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology* (Univ. Press, 2000).

[6] Jonathan 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, no. 4 (2012): 575–79.

[7] Emmanuel Kojo Ennin Antwi, "Assessing the Mode of Biblical Interpretation in the Light of African Biblical Hermeneutics: The Case of the Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation in Ghana," *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024): 203.

[8] Mercy Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, vol. 6 (A&C Black, 2001).

[9] John David Kwamena Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Akan Traditional Priesthood in Dialogical Relation to the Priest-Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Its Implications for a Relevant Functional Priesthood in Selected Churches among the Akan of Ghana* (Verlag an d. Lottbek, 1994).

theologically. In addition, the interpretation of divine attributes in Ghanaian languages gives valuable insights into how abstract theological concepts are rationalised. Mother-tongue translations often retain inaccessible maternal nurturing nuances, confirming our findings about the rich resources in Ghanaian languages to talk about divine nurture.

Another significant contribution to the use of maternal imagery in the translation of the Bible is the massive work performed by Mbiti on African concepts of God. His research shows how African languages often have richer resources to express aspects of divinity that nurture and care than the resources available in Western languages.[10] One of the finest scholarly contributions is by Sanneh, who researches and theorises the role of vernacular translations in African Christianity, enabling us to understand how the metaphors of the Bible are transformed in translation. Translation is not simply a matter of linguistic faithfulness; it is a deeply cultural and theological act that reconfigures the space in which religious discourse is constructed and maintained.[11] Recent scholarship has also begun to explore the way the translation of gender-specific metaphors is affected by digital technologies and modern translation tools. Mathews, among others, has provided useful insights into how modern translation projects can responsibly navigate gender-sensitive language without losing the intent of the original texts.[12] This could lead to novel approaches to interpreting maternal imagery that could facilitate new solutions to the age-old problems plaguing translation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a holistic approach to studying the intralingual translation of maternal imagery in three Ghanaian languages. The research design consisted of qualitative and quantitative elements organised by three main methodological approaches. The first methodological aspect consisted of careful textual analysis of the chosen texts in their Hebrew originals and their translations in Twi, Ewe and Dagbani. The research started with a close reading of the Hebrew text with special attention to the range of meaning and implications related to maternal imagery. The research used conventional Hebrew lexemes and theological lexicons to determine the complete meaning of the source text. These translations were subsequently studied in parallel, looking at the rendering of maternal metaphors in each and the language choices of each translator.

The second part broadens its spectrum through semantic domain analysis of maternal imagery, the key terms used for this concept in each of the target languages. This requires building semantic outlines of each important word and listing its denotative and connotative definitions. The researchers collaborated with native speakers and language specialists to document the way these terms are used in both religious and secular settings. This involved documenting the full range of meanings of key terms, analysing how these terms are deployed in other religious contexts, probing cultural associations and implications, and exploring how these terms interact with the existing religious lexicon. This led to the third component of the method, which is a comparative linguistic analysis of how each language develops the gender-specific metaphor and the theological implications of its usage. This took into account grammatical structures, semantic fields, and cultural contexts that serve to influence the ways maternal imagery is interpreted and articulated.

Data was collected in several stages; some Bible translations (including several versions in the target languages) were first consulted. The researchers recorded different translations they found in the literature and observed patterns in how maternal imagery was treated. Second, extensive consultations were conducted with native speakers, both language experts and ordinary users of these translations. More importantly, these consultations gave invaluable insights into the experience of the translations and how they were used in religious settings.

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[10] John S. Mbiti, *African Concept of God* (London: SMC Press, 1970).

[11] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Orbis Books, 2015).

[12] Jeanette Mathews, "Translation for Performance: Biblical Performance Criticism in Bible Translation," *Religions* 15, no. 11 (2024): 1393.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The comparative analysis of maternal imagery translations across Twi, Ewe and Dagbani exposes complex patterns of shared and divergent responses in the manifestation of divine nurturing metaphors in these languages. These insights can be structured into the three main journeys taken through the passages, each demonstrating different ways of addressing maternal imagery in translation.

Thus, all three languages employ different strategies in their handling of the maternal comfort metaphor of Isaiah 66:13. The Twi translation is the closest in lexical correspondence to the Hebrew original; it employs terms that directly apply to maternal comfort but retains the metaphorical sense of the comparison. However, the Ewe translation seems to deliberately use words that Mendelson argues tie the concept of a mother to the native ideas surrounding maternal care and protection that existed long before any European imagery was introduced. The Dagbani version shows how a direct translation plus a cultural adaptation can yield a hybridised maternal metaphor.

A look at Hosea 11:3-4 shows interesting patterns in how each language treats intimate nurturing imagery. The Twi version preserves the physical concerns of nurturing, yet modulates some of the more explicitly maternal references via careful word choices and grammatical structures. In parallel, the Ewe translation displays extraordinary ingenuity in capturing local nurturing metaphors that resonate strongly with traditional notions of care and protection. The Dagbani translation adopts a more conservative approach. It tries to maintain the nurturing imagery, but it makes attempts at avoiding potential cultural misunderstandings.

Perhaps the most difficult case for all three languages is the rendering of the birth image in Deuteronomy 32:18. Each rendering bears the marks of careful negotiation between preserving the biological imagery of the source text and dealing with cultural sensitivities about divine description. Translation: (The Twi version somehow defuses the biological references by not mentioning the process by which he/she reinforces the concept, but in a less explicit manner). The Ewe version relies on more straightforward language but contains contextual signifiers that allow readers to understand the metaphorical nature of the description. In this case, the Dagbani translation illustrates an alternate mental model by playing with terms associated with generative and cosmological origin.

The tables below present the Biblical passages that are the focus of this study (In the original Hebrew Language, English, Twi, Ewe, and Dagbani translations.

Table 1: Hebrew and English Translation

Text	Leningrad Hebrew Old Testament (WTT)	English New Revised Standard (NRS)
Hosea 11:3	וְאָנֹכִי תִרְגַּלְתִּי לְאֶפְרַיִם קָחָם עַל־זְרוֹעֹתָיו וְלֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי רְפָאתִים:	Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them.
Hosea 11:4	בְּחַבְלֵי אָדָם אֶמְשְׁכֵם בַּעֲבֹתוֹת אַהֲבָה וָאֶהְיֶה לָהֶם כִּמְרִימֵי עֹל עַל לְחֵיהֶם וְאַט אֵלָיו אוֹכִיל:	I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.
Deuteronomy 32:18	צוּר יְלָדְךָ תֶּשִׁי וַתִּשְׁכַּח אֵל מְחֹלְלֶךָ:	You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
Isaiah 66:13	כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אִמּוֹ תְּנַחֲמֶנּוּ כֵּן אָנֹכִי אֲנַחֶמְכֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תְּנֻחָמוּ:	As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Table 2: Twi and English Translation

Text	Twi Translation	English New Revised Standard (NRS)
Hosea 11:3	Me na migyigyee Efraim taataa, turuu wɔn wɔ me basa so; nanso wɔnkae sɛ me na mesaa wɔn yare.	Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms, but they did not know that I healed them.
Hosea 11:4	Me de ayamye hama ne ɔdɔ dii wɔn anim; miyii konnua no fii wɔn kɔn mu na mekotow maa wɔn aduan dii.	I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.
Deuteronomy 32:18	Ɔbotan a ɔwoo wo no, wo werɛ fii no, Na Onyankopɔn a ɔde wo baa wiase no, woankae no.	You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
Isaiah 66:13	Sɛnea ɛna kyekye ne ba werɛ no, saa ara na mɛkyekye mo werɛ; na mubenya awerɛkyekye wɔ Yerusalem.	As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Table 3: Ewe and English Translation

Text	Ewe Translation	English New Revised Standard (NRS)
Hosea 11:3	Evɔ wònye nyee fia azɔli Efrayim, eye melée ɖe alɔ to hafi; ke womedze sii be, nyee da gbe le wo ŋu o.	Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms, but they did not know that I healed them.
Hosea 11:4	Mede amegbetɔwo ƒe atagbi, si nyee lɔlɔ̃ka la wo he, mena na wo abe amesiwo ɖea kɔkuti le kɔ la ene, eye mena nuɖuɖu wo.	I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.
Deuteronomy 32:18	Wòatsɔ Mawu a wòwoo wò no ɖe asi; Wòatrɔ̃ Du si wòtsɔwo le ɖe asi.	You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
Isaiah 66:13	Alesi ŋutsua ɖe dada fa akɔ ne la, nenema mafa akɔ na mii, eye miaƒe akɔ afa le Yerusalem ŋu.	As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Table 4: Dagbani and English Translation

Text	Dagbani Translation	English New Revised Standard (NRS)
Hosea 11:3	Amaa mani ndaa wuhi Ifriimnim' chandi. Mani n-daa kpuɣi ba gbibi n nuhi ni. Amaa bɛ daa bi baŋ ni mani n-chɛ ka bɛ kpaŋ maa.	Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up in my arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

Hosea 11:4	N daa zaŋla nirilim mihi vo ba.chaŋ. N daa zaŋla yurilim mihi niŋ ba, ka leei ŋun yihi bin' tibisi shɛŋa din ga bɛ noya la, ka silim tiŋa n-dihi ba bindirigu.	I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.
Deuteronomy 32:18	Yi daa tam tampiŋ din dɔɣi ya yɛla, ka daa tam Naawumi ŋun dɔɣi ya yɛla.	You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
Isaiah 66:13	N ni kpaŋsi yi suhuri kaman pay' ni kpaŋsir' o bia suhu shɛm la. Yi ni nya suhukpaŋsibo Jɛrusalɛm.	As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Case Study 1: The Comforting Mother (Isa. 66:13)

This first case study examines how each of the Ghanaian languages deals with God being compared to a comforting mother. The Hebrew text reads, "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you." This is an impactful image to which each language responds slightly differently.

The Twi translation does this gracefully using two powerful words: "awerɛkyekye" (comfort) and "ɛna" (mother). What is intriguing is how they preserve the loveliness of maternal comfort while making it plain that they are referring to God. They do this by sprinkling in the sort of special respectful markers put in the language that would be used when speaking to someone of high status. It is like saying "as a mother lovingly soothes her child," but with an added element of honour that makes it clear that this is about divine comfort.

Translators took a counterintuitive approach to the Ewe language. They used the word "akɔfafa," which has deep cultural resonance. In the Ewe culture, this word is not synonymous with comfort, but rather with the whole idea of how the Ewe mother deals with a crying child. It is as if they discovered a word that had already borne some of the cultural weight of maternal love, and they placed that upon the way God cares for people.

The Dagbani translation finds another approach. They use "suhukpaŋsibo" for comfort, but what is interesting is how they connect it to traditional Dagbani ideas about motherhood and protection. It is as if they have figured out how to make the image instantly comprehensible for Dagbani language speakers while at the same time retaining the theological significance.

Case Study 2: Teaching a Child to Walk (Hos. 11:3-4)

This passage is especially challenging, as it depicts God teaching someone to walk, holding them up, very physical, hands-on parenting actions. Each language had to determine how to render these intimate bodily descriptions while avoiding inappropriate familiarity with God.

The Twi translators had this problem, and they solved it by using family terms that show closeness but still maintain respect, similar to how one may describe an honoured elder caring for a child. They softened the physical descriptions but did not lose the nurturing sense. Instead of saying, "I took them by the arms," they used more gentle, descriptive language that conveyed the same level of care but in a more culturally appropriate way.

The Ewe equivalent relied on traditional words used to describe how parents care for their offspring. They had found words that Ewe speakers would instantly associate with parental care, letting the passage flow naturally, yet keeping its spiritual meaning intact. They specifically identified words that Ewe parents traditionally apply in instructing kids to take their first steps.

The Dagbani version balances this carefully using words from their traditional culture about how highly respected elders guide children. They do this to maintain both the aspect of nurturing and the respect that divine descriptions demand in their culture.

Case Study 3: The Birth Image (Deut. 32:18)

This was the most challenging passage as it uses the imagery of God giving birth. Having said that, it was God who "gave birth" to the people. This kind of language needs to be carefully handled in each culture.

The Twi translations avoided direct birth language by using words that suggest bringing something into being. They discovered that ancient Twi ideas about beginnings and creation had the same sense of imparting life without the risk of awkwardness in terms of literal birth terminology.

The Ewe translators were more straightforward, but made careful choices that resonated with Ewe's traditional concepts of divine creation and birthing life. They found a way to employ birth imagery that had a natural connection to their cultural setting and yet retained the spiritual import of the passage.

The Dagbani translation comes up with perhaps the most inventive solution. They did not shy away from traditional terms about origins and creation, but they wove them together with theological concepts in a way that preserved the meaning and sounded culturally appropriate.

What all these case studies tell us is that, among them, every language has found new ways to tackle these challenging passages. They all needed to do some things right: they had to stay faithful to the original sense, they had to make sense of their culture, and they had to maintain the right degree of respect in the religious language. Every language utilised its cultural resources and cosmology to make these passages meaningful to their speakers while preserving the theological message.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the extensive study of the translations of maternal imagery through Twi, Ewe, and Dagbani arises a conclusion aimed at enhancing future works and studies within this focal area. The development of specific guidelines for handling gender-specific divine metaphors should be an endeavour for translation committees working with African language Bibles. Such principles should be anchored in deep linguistic analysis and cultural awareness. They should be concerned about not only the technical aspects of translation but also the theological and cultural ramifications of various choices. To formulate these guidelines, we recommend creating task forces that involve biblical scholars, linguists, cultural experts and members of affected communities.

The second important point is the urgent need to document how indigenous concepts of nurturing and care can be a source of enrichment for biblical translation in a systematic way. This includes compiling extensive semantic databases for each language and tracking the literal meanings of words, as well as the cultural and religious significations associated with them. These would also be invaluable resources for future projects of translation; they are the preservation of indigenous knowledge that may otherwise have been lost. In addition, translation projects must create training that situates the challenges of gendered metaphor translation within a broader context. Such programs must include: case studies of success in other African languages, refreshers on culturally sensitive material management, theological and cultural analytical training, and look at challenging passages and practical work in translating them.

Furthermore, collaboration networks could be established between small-scale cross-translation teams working on different African language pairs. Such networks would allow for the sharing of best practices and solutions to mutual challenges in the translation of maternal imagery.

CONCLUSION

Through an examination of maternal language imagery in three major Ghanaian biblical translations of biblical texts, this study creates an opportunity to reflect on the theological implications of the translation of maternal language across linguistic, cultural, and biblical discourse in Ghana. Differences in the way Twi, Ewe, and Dagbani handle divine maternal metaphors reflect both the challenges and opportunities present in translating these significant biblical concepts.

The study shows that successful translation of maternal imagery demands more than just linguistic equivalence. It requires a nuanced comprehension of how gender, divinity and nurturing are

conceptualised in diverse cultural landscapes. Each of these languages has taken its approach to the selected passages, showing that translation challenges cannot be solved with a single formula that works for all languages.

One unique finding is the revelation that each language has distinct resources for the expression of divine nurturing, which cannot be easily noticed by an outside observer. The determination with which maternal imagery is adapted and transformed in these languages is a glimpse into how African tongues can enrich our understanding of biblical metaphors.

The implications of this research transcend the specific context of Ghanaian languages. They offer new models for how to think biblically about translation right across the board, especially when it comes to how to handle gender-specific metaphors in ways that remain true to the original meaning expressed in the text but still resonate with the audience in question.

This study shows the need to preserve and document indigenous linguistic/cultural resources that can be used to enrich the biblical translation. If African Christianity is to flourish and find its voice, then there is a need for translations of the Scriptures that can communicate Biblical concepts effectively while respecting and utilising indigenous cultural resources.

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