

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**A SEMANTIC AND A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISTIC
EXPRESSIONS IN DANGME**



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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**A SEMANTIC AND A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISTIC
EXPRESSIONS IN DANGME**

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Languages Education, Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial
fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Dangme)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

DECEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, REGINA KWEITSU, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

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SUPERVISORS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. REGINA OFORIWAH CAESAR

SIGNATURE :

DATE:

DEDICATION

To my late father, Mr. Kwei Kweitsu. I also dedicate it to my mother, Ms. Dora Djangmah, my siblings, my cousins, my nieces and my nephews.



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I thank the Almighty Father for bringing me this far. I am very grateful to God for the protection and love He showed to me during the period of writing this thesis. I am most grateful for His travelling mercies, protection, guidance and love that has brought this thesis to a successful end.

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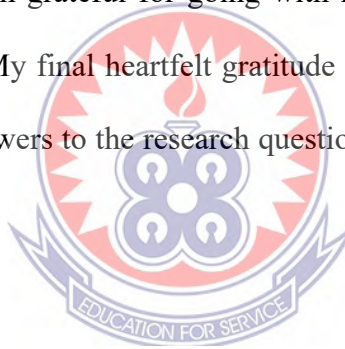
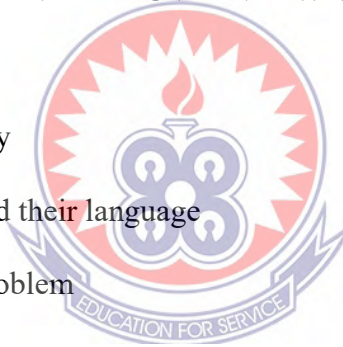
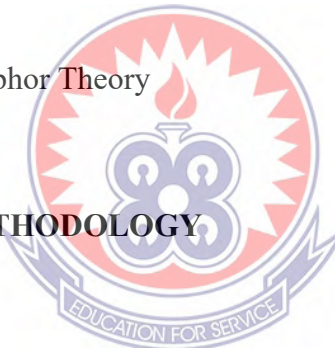


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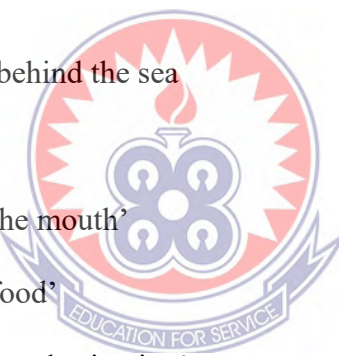


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUX	Auxiliary
COP	Copula
CONJ	Conjunction
CMT	Conceptual Metaphor Theory
DEF	Definite Article
FOC	Focus Marker
FUT	Future Marker
GER	Gerund
NEG	Negation
OBJ	Object
PST	Past Tense
PRT	Particle
POSS	Possessive
PL	Plural
2SG	Second Person Singular
2PL	Second Person Plural
3SG	Third Person Singular
INDEF	Indefinite Article



ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme, a Kwa language spoken in the Greater Accra and some parts of Eastern regions of Ghana. It looks at the meaning and the sociocultural implications of euphemistic expressions. It also tried to explore euphemistic expressions found in some recorded Dangme conversational data. The study investigates the correspondence between the source and the target domains of euphemistic expressions concerning the life cycle of human beings using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Data were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from sixteen native speakers of Dangme from Ada Foah, Big Ada, Kasseh and Koluedor through interview and recordings of the following; marriage ceremonies at Kadjanya, a funeral rite at Gorm, funeral announcements and a culture programmes held on Radio Ada. The secondary data was obtained from a Dangme book (Akpanya masu hwo-gbaku). The study revealed that Dangme has euphemistic expressions across the life cycle of the human being, ranging from birth, puberty to death. It revealed that in some of the recorded Dangme conversational data, euphemistic expressions were present. Also, these euphemistic expressions were conceptualized in various ways. It was noted that Dangme employ more death euphemistic expressions than birth and puberty in the human life cycle which come in metaphorical terms.



CHAPTER ONE

THE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.0 Introduction

This thesis investigates the semantic and the sociocultural analysis of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. The study looks at the various domains in which euphemisms can be expressed and the metaphorical extension of those euphemistic expressions, that is, the relation between the source domain and the target domains. Also, it looks at the sociocultural implications of the euphemistic expressions. It further looks at the conversational analysis of euphemistic expressions in Dangme.

This chapter is organized under the following sections: Section 1.1 looks at the background of the study. Section 1.2, the Dangme people and their language. The statement of the problem is in section 1.3. Section 1.4 outlines the purpose of the study and the objectives of the study are in section 1.5. The research questions that guided the study are in section 1.6. The significance of the study is in 1.7. Section 1.8 looks at the limitation of the study. The scope of the study is in section 1.9. The chapter ends with the organization of chapters in section 1.10.

1.1 Background to the study

Every language in this world has its own traditions and ways of communication. This study investigates the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. According to Hymes (1972), sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of sociocultural rules of use that is, knowing how to use and respond to

language appropriately. He adds that the appropriateness depends on the setting of the communication, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. He explains further that being appropriate depends on knowing what the taboos of the other culture are, what politeness indices are used in each case, what the politically correct term would be for something, how a specific attitude (authority, friendliness, courtesy, irony) is expressed among others. It could be deduced from the above explanation that a person needs to have communicative competence in the society in order for him or her to be considered as being culturally inclined.

According to Niraula Dulal and Koirala (2020), language is a medium through which one expresses thoughts and feelings to others. It is used in every aspect of human communication, expressing emotions such as love, hatred and anger, revealing identity, disseminating information, among others. They assert that although language is used freely, society sometimes imposes restrictions and constraints on the use of certain terms, expressions, or behaviours, called “taboos”. Euphemism as a linguistic device is used to avoid taboo words and acts which are prohibited and banned by norms and traditions.

These norms and traditions depend on the cultural competence of the people in the society. Therefore, when euphemisms are used, they replace the offensive ones. And this makes the natives to be more polite and culturally competent. Euphemistic expressions are used widely by people by means of delivering real information in mild or inoffensive way. The study of euphemisms has become very significant to many scholars of the world across languages. Jdetawy (2019) opines that speakers in all languages try to avoid

the taboo expressions which is one of the main reasons behind the adoption of euphemisms and it has been a topic of interest that attracts the attention of many researchers. For good impression to be maintained among the Dangme people, they will certainly resort to using more euphemistic expressions. And this is very significant and needs to be revealed.

Holder (2002) postulates that in speech and writing, euphemisms are used when dealing with taboo or sensitive subjects. He adds that euphemisms are also the language of evasion, hypocrisy, prudery and deceit. Since all expression, being written or verbal, has meaning, this work investigates the meanings and the sociocultural implications of the euphemistic expressions in Dangme. Hasegawa (2005) investigates euphemistic forms and functions of English and Japanese by using contrastive analysis as well as considering the views on euphemism of Japanese English-language speakers and Australian Japanese-language speakers. The results of the investigation showed that the language learners' communication difficulties are caused by euphemistic, dysphemistic and doublespeak locutions in the target language.

Burridge (2012) argues that euphemism and its counterpart dysphemism are powerful forces and they are extremely important for the study of language change that provides an emotive trigger for word addition, word loss, phonological distortion and semantic shift. Taboo words play perpetual havoc with the methods of historical comparative linguistics, even undermining one of the cornerstones of the discipline – the arbitrary nature of the word (Burridge 2012). She opines that when it comes to taboo words, speakers behave as

if there were a very real connection between the physical shape of words and their taboo sense. Her work revealed the various communicative functions of euphemisms and the different linguistic strategies that are used in their creation, focusing on the linguistic creativity that surrounds the topic of 'old age' in Modern English (Shakespeare's sixth and seventh ages).

Shehab, Qadan and Hussein (2014) examine the role context plays in determining the translation strategies pursued by translators of Arabic euphemisms into English. Due to different cultural backgrounds, adherence to the employment of euphemism in a social context may differ in both Arabic and English. This is because while some situations call for the use of euphemism in one culture, the other culture finds no point in using such euphemisms for such situations; preserving the original Arabic euphemisms when rendered into English in this case could lead to misunderstanding and may deprive the source language from a cultural trait. Mocanu (2017) studied taboos and euphemisms in religious language. According to her, religious language is based upon the recognition of a word's sacredness, which is defined by reference to the religious dimension of the human being. Her paper reviews the main religious taboos specific to religious language and the description of the pragmatic valences that the euphemistic expression manifests in the religious communication.

Baranova and Pletenko (2018) studied the peculiarities of euphemisms for diseases, death and dying in the English mass media discourse. Some peculiarities that were found in their study indicated that euphemism is a linguistic phenomenon, which is a vivid

example of bilateral interaction between processes of society's development and its ideological principles. Also, with the passage of time and changes in the vital, moral and social orientations of the community, the use of euphemistic structures has also been modernized. This study will find out whether there are such euphemistic expressions in Dangme.

1.2 The Dangme people and their language

The name 'Dangme' is used to refer to both the people and the language. The closest neighbours of the Shai people are the Ga, Akan and Guan people. Dangme is part of the Kwa languages of Niger-Congo family of languages. It has three tone levels. These include high, mid and low. Dangme is spoken in the Greater Accra and part of Eastern Regions in the south eastern part of Ghana.

According to Puplampu (1953), formerly, the Dangme people were called La li (the people of La). The Dangme people comprise, Ada, Nugo, Gbugblaa, Prampram, Shai, Sɛ Osudoku, Yilo and Manya Krobo.

The people of Krobo are situated in the Eastern Region whereas Osudoku, Shai, Gbugblaa, Ningo and Ada are situated in the Greater Accra Region. The people of Ada, Ningo and Gbugblaa are situated along the coast with the Ewe and Ga being their neighbours.

1.3 The statement of the problem

Euphemisms form a very essential part of language usage in most societies of the world. Euphemism as one of the major figures of speech in languages, aims at replacing offensive or harsher expressions with inoffensive expressions. A lot of attention has been given to the study of euphemism from various angles across languages. Agyekum (2002) investigated menstruation as a verbal taboo among the Akan of Ghana. Baranova and Pletenko (2018) also studied peculiarities of euphemisms for diseases, death and dying in the English mass media discourse. Mofarrej and Al-Haq (2015) examined death euphemistic expressions in Jordanian Arabic from the angle of sociolinguistics. Their study examines the effect of the social variables: age, gender and region on the use of these expressions. According to Pour (2010), language which people use in their daily lives can be both simple and at the same time very complicated. Therefore, people will have to have an intuition in what and how they express what they mean. She then studied euphemisms in the translation process when the target and the source languages have various cultural backgrounds. She confirmed that culture can place more emphasis on the use of euphemistic expressions while a translator is translating from one language to another.

Mwanambuyu (2011) examines Silozi euphemisms from a sociopragmatic perspective within the framework of theories of sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Precisely, her study applied speech act theory, politeness theory, face theory and conversational analysis theories. Her work was done in order to prove or test the theoretical position that in instances of language use in context, euphemisms perform functions as espoused under

speech theory. Native speakers of Dangme also use euphemistic words and expressions to replace harsher ones. However, in the case of Dangme, Adi (1997) recorded few areas where euphemisms could be expressed without any analysis. Also, Aborchie (2011) did a similar work in Dangme by listing some euphemistic expressions without analyzing them from any viewpoint. Apart from these works, the study of euphemisms from any perspective in Dangme is overlooked, to the best of my knowledge. Hence the motivation to fill the gap by investigating the semantics and sociocultural implications of euphemistic expressions in Dangme to add to the existing literature on Dangme and the literature on euphemisms in general.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the meaning and sociocultural implications of euphemisms in Dangme. It will investigate the various domains under which euphemistic expressions can be used as far as the life cycle of the Dangme people is concerned.

1.5. Objectives of the study

The purpose of the study will be achieved with the following objectives:

- To analyze the meaning of the euphemistic expressions in Dangme using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.
- To investigate the sociocultural implications of euphemisms in Dangme.
- To analyse euphemistic expressions found in some Dangme conversational programmes.

1.6 Research questions

The following research questions have to be answered in order to achieve the research objectives:

1. What are the meaning of euphemisms in Dangme?
2. What are the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme?
3. What are some euphemistic expressions used in performing certain programmes in Dangme?

1.6 Significance of the study

This research will bring to light the various domains in which euphemisms can be expressed in Dangme. Societal values, customs, beliefs and thoughts are enshrined in euphemisms hence the need for this study. The findings of the research will help broaden the mind of other researchers and general readers to be abreast with euphemistic expressions in Dangme. It will also serve as a resource material in the language for students, teachers and the other researchers on the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The main limitation of the research was that the researcher was not been able to undertake the study in all the remaining six dialect groups of Dangme and this was a result of time constraint.

1.9 Delimitation/ scope of the study

This research involves the Dangme language and the Dangme people but it does not involve all the seven dialects of Dangme. The study took into account one dialect group and the main focus of the researcher is on the Ada dialect of Dangme in the Southern part of Ghana from the coastal dialects. The reason for the choice of speakers of this dialect is time constraints. The researcher was not able to access all the seven dialects for the needed information hence the need to choose the Ada dialect speakers to represent the coastal dialects of Dangme. This study is also delimited to the semantic and the sociocultural analysis of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. It further concentrated on the euphemistic expressions on the life cycle of the Dangme people, that is, birth, puberty and death.

1.10 Summary and organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized in six chapters. Chapter one gives the general background to the study. Chapter two discusses the existing related literature on euphemisms and the theoretical framework. The theoretical frameworks employed for the study is the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In chapter three, the methodology is discussed. Chapter four analyzed the semantics of the euphemistic expressions and sociocultural implication of euphemistic expression in Dangme. Chapter five accounted for euphemistic expressions from conversational data in Dangme. Chapter six summaries the study, outlines the findings and makes recommendation for future research works.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains two major sections. These are the literature review and the theoretical framework. Literature is reviewed in section 2.1 and the theoretical framework in section 2.2.

2.1 Literature review

This section reviews related literature on euphemism. The study of euphemism has received significant attention from scholars. In the view of Wardhaugh (1986), euphemisms exist in most of our society, the result of dressing up in certain areas in life to make them more presentable, euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about unpleasant things and neutralize the unpleasantness. Examples are the subject of death and dying, employment and criminality. Annan (2017:93) also posits that euphemism is a figure of speech in which a less unpleasant or milder expression is used in place of a harsher or blunt one required. The literature would be reviewed in six parts: these are the concept of euphemism, euphemism and language, euphemism and culture, works from the semantic and the sociocultural viewpoints and works on conversational analysis on euphemistic expressions across languages.

2.1.1 The concept of euphemism

Etymologically, euphemism is derived from the Greek language “*eu*” meaning “good” and “*pheme*” meaning “speak” which can be defined as speaking with good words (Rosa

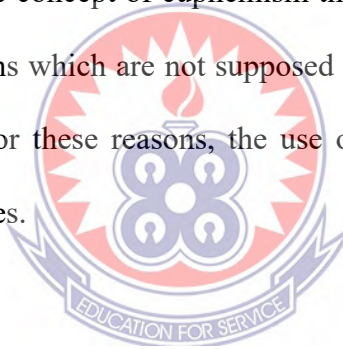
and Zaim 2014). Similarly, Lei (2016) also asserts that the word “euphemism” in English comes from classical Greek. In classical Greek, “eu” means “well” or “sounding well”, “pheme” means ‘speech’. Lei (2016) further explains that the literal meaning of the whole word is “elegant and fair-sounding speech”. Euphemism is a kind of common social phenomenon of language which exists in the majority of human languages (Lei 2016:1). Hornby (1994:395), as cited in Batibo and Kopi (2016), opines that euphemism is an indirect word or phrase that people often use to refer to something embarrassing or unpleasant, sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is, such as the word ‘washroom’ instead of the more direct word ‘toilet’ or the phrase ‘pass away’ instead of the usual word ‘die’.

Also, Sari (2007) affirms that the word euphemism comes from the Greek word *euphemos*, meaning “auspicious or fortune speech” which in turn is derived from the Greek root-word *eu* “good or well” + *pheme* “speech or writing”. He explains further that the *eupheme* was originally a word or phrase used in place of a religious word or phrase that should not be spoken loudly. According to Sari (2007), euphemism is used as an alternative to dispreferred expression in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one’s face or through giving offense, that of the audience or of some third party.

Lyons (1981) argues that euphemisms are a much favoured device when speakers are confronted with the necessity to speak about difficult subjects. “The essence of metaphor involves understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Euphemisms may address subjects of taboo in a metaphorical way or via other

expressions to diminish the risk of causing offence and the potential for hurting feelings which may be associated with the matter being mentioned. Linguistically, Allan and Burridge (2006:34) contrast three types of "X-phemisms": dysphemism, orthophemism and euphemism. He noted that in general, dysphemistic are expressions offensive and impolite, whereas orthophemistic and euphemistic ones are not. Therefore, dysphemism is not preferred during social interaction. On the other hand, orthophemism is more formal and direct and carries no connotation. Euphemism is more colloquial and figurative than the corresponding orthophemism.

It can be deduced from the concept of euphemism that in every human society there are certain words or expressions which are not supposed to be said directly because they are vulgar or inconsiderate. For these reasons, the use of euphemisms has become a very essential tool in our societies.



2.1.2 Euphemism and Languages

Enab (2019) states that languages mirror societies' cultures, traditions, religions, psychological orientations, and other social issues. And any change in one or more of these aspects will thus be reflected in language, as the expressive tool. He further explains that since the words we choose to utter tell a lot about who we are and how we like people to perceive us, many people tend to use language politely; a way that beautifies them by decreasing the sensitivities in them. It is from this view that Prayogi (2008) affirms that language is a system of oral or written expression and communication of ideas and emotions or the process, the style and the vocabulary of such system.


According to him language cannot be separated from the primary functioning as means of communication for the people and their society.

Prayogi (2008) adds that in daily life, language is inseparable because language is the main instrument of communication and language is the mirror of human reality. This is to say that the human being uses language to express feelings, respond to phenomena and share ideas. Due to this fact, it is realized that language has a big deal in understanding the message of communication. He further explains that euphemism is a study in sociolinguistics concerned with polite meaning that is inferred from an utterance of sentence.

Mu'in (2019) postulates that language-use is controlled by linguistic etiquette. He adds that the linguistic etiquette is something like guidance for language use in a socio-cultural setting. Also, he said linguistic principles cover politeness principles and euphemism which are meant to make the utterances used in social communication and interaction socially polite and acceptable. It could be deduced that, as far as euphemistic expressions are concerned, language is used as medium of communication among the Dangme people, and these euphemistic expressions are communicated through the use of language. Without language the euphemistic expressions will not be known and vice versa. This makes the two to be inseparable in the Dangme society as in some other cultures.

2.1.3 Euphemism and culture

Hammad (2007) opines that every culture has its own values, habits, customs and traditions. According to him, euphemism which is also known as sweet talking, is used to be polite in impolite situations or to maintain one's face. He explains further that maintaining one's face is common between the speaker and the hearer. In interactions, one is expected not to be offended by others and this mainly depends on the level of formality and social status between the individuals. Therefore when someone uses sweet talking, he or she tries to maintain his or her face and others as well. Hai-long (2008) contended that there is no dividing line between language and culture. He added that "as an inalienable part of language, euphemism bears the mark of culture to some extent; euphemism is a mirror of culture".

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central white sunburst or flame-like shape. Below this, there are two stylized blue figures that resemble the letters 'U' and 'E' intertwined. The entire emblem is set against a red background with a white border. A blue banner at the bottom of the circle contains the text 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' in white capital letters.

In the view of Enab (2019), euphemism as a linguistic, pragmatic and cultural phenomenon, plays a vital role in creating harmonious interaction and saving face in social communication. Allan and Burrige (1991), as cited in Enab (2019), claims that one of the cultural reflections in language is when the speaker tries to hide specific taboo words or expressions that would be frowned upon if expressed explicitly in public by persons, societies, religions or communities. And this linguistic process is called "euphemism".

Mu'in (2019), asserts that human behaviour will be closely related to values, norms, rules, or laws (in the written form and convention) and the like. Mu'in explains further that these values, norms, regulations or laws are represented in the speech acts, and in

social communication and interaction, human beings are ruled and controlled by cultural values, norms and rules as their living guidance. He argues that polite speech acts should follow a respectful behaviour and non-verbal behaviour should be followed by polite verbal communication/interaction by using courteous speech acts.

According to Quo (2010), traditional euphemisms refer to some indirect expressions of linguistic taboos, and these indirect expressions were created because topics such as life, death, disease, sex and secretions in some cultures were forbidden to be mentioned openly and directly. He posits that for the sake of pleasantness, people refrained from talking about them in public and tried to use more refined alternatives to make replacements, hence euphemisms developed. For instance, “secretion”, a taboo in both English and Chinese languages, has got a great number of euphemistic words and expressions, like “answer/feel the nature’s call”, “go to the bathroom”, “spend a penny”, “wash one’s hand”, “do one’s urgent business” and “relieve oneself.” He affirms that such euphemisms embody human being’s desire to extricate themselves from barbarism and to become civilized creatures. In his view, euphemisms are used in order to avoid asking some harsh or blunt questions which may offend the English-speaking people with whom they probably communicate. The study of euphemism is of great importance and practical value in successful intercultural communication.

Amenorvi and Grumah (2020), also made a claim that culture is linked to human languages in such a remarkable way that human identities are inseparable from the language they employ for their day- to- day activities. According to Amenorvi and

Grumah, the capacity of language to hold the culture of the people who speak it has been one of the most investigated in language studies. They explain that a culture of the people and their worldview can be traced to how they employ language in various contexts and on various topics. They believe that every culture has a unique way in using language to outdoor such cultures, and the languages they use vary from time to time based on the topic under discussion. This study investigates whether the use of the euphemistic expressions which are used in the Dangme society vary from time to time depending on the topic for discussion.

2.1.4 Semantic view point of euphemisms

Lyons (1981), opines that the scientific study of language is the greatest concern of all the disciplines with an interest in meaning. Similarly, Crystal (2008) defines semantics as a major branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning in language. Few works have been done on the semantics of euphemistic expressions in some languages using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

Fernández (2008)'s paper drew attention to the euphemistic and dysphemistic figurative language used to designate the taboo of sex in the frame of the well-known Conceptual Metaphor Theory initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). He claims that conceptualization plays a crucial role in both the use and interpretation of sexual metaphorical euphemisms and dysphemisms. In this regard, he considered the implications and effects of the process of lexicalization in conceptual categorization, particularly concerning the directionality of metaphorical projections. He also analyzed

the function of conceptual metaphors in euphemistic and dysphemistic use, seeking to study the way in which a particular experiential domain is more likely to give rise to verbal mitigation or offence. Finally, he traced how a given conceptualization accounts for the interpretation of sex-related euphemistic and dysphemistic metaphors. The analysis undertaken by Fernández (2008), shows that metaphorical terms and phrases referring to sexual taboos can be insightfully described in terms of Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive view.

Gathigia, Ndung'u and Njoroge's (2015) investigation set out to identify the sexual intercourse euphemisms used in Gĩkũyũ, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. It also discusses the semantic and lexical processes used in those euphemisms and points out the specific metaphors that underlie the latter. The euphemisms were assigned to their corresponding semantic and lexical processes, and then discussed in terms of the correspondences between the source domain and target domain, two key concepts of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The specific metaphors behind those euphemisms were discussed. It transpired from this discussion that men generally looked at sexual intercourse more as work, a game, war, food and utility, while women looked at it mainly as a form of companionship. The current study is similar to Gathigia et al. (2015). It discusses the metaphor behind the euphemisms relying on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory propounded by Lakoff (1992). The investigation examines the correspondence of the source domain to the target domain in Dangme.

Zhou (2015) studied the formation of euphemisms in China. He examined the phonetic means, semantic means and the grammatical means of euphemisms. He concluded that by learning appropriate usage of words and phrases, learners can avoid being misunderstood in dealing with people from other cultures. The current study investigates the sociocultural and the semantic means of euphemistic expressions in Dangme.

Burkhailo's (2019) study also deals with the metaphorical euphemisms occurring in the original text and some Italian translations of F. M. Dostoevskij's novel "Crime and Punishment." She argues that particular attention is given to the euphemisms formed via application of metaphor, as it appears to be one of the most effective veiling instruments. The main thematic areas of metaphorical euphemisms used are indicated and subsequently, a lexicographic-cultural analysis is conducted, paying attention, as well, to the essential functions and processes of formation of such type of words and expressions in Russian and Italian. Her study has shown that an important part of the article is devoted to the contrastive analysis of Russian metaphorical euphemisms found in the text of the novel and their translations into Italian. Also, apart from masking meaning, metaphorical euphemisms which contain cultural and symbolic expressions are expressed by means of semiotic content of denotatum, and this characteristic makes them often a complicated translation problem to resolve.

Jaoko (2016), did a linguistic analysis of the metaphorical euphemisms used in Dholuo HIV/AIDS discourse, using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which analyzes metaphors in terms of target and source domains. He also used the Relevance Theory mainly when

metaphors used show ambiguities. He said the Relevance Theory's comprehension is used in the disambiguation of such metaphorical expressions.

Joako (2016) explains that the metaphorical expressions are regarded as conceptual strategy for structuring linguistic expressions to construe meaning. He drew his data from conversations, radio broadcasts, health facilities, newspapers, Dholuo music and other social gatherings. It was demonstrated from his study that attributes of one experiential domain was mapped onto another experiential domain. And this domain mapping process helped understand the target domain, in our case HIV/AIDS and its discourse from the various metaphors in Dholuo language. The study revealed that HIV/AIDS has influenced lexical innovations in Dholuo, and that Dholuo speakers have found a means in metaphors to euphemize HIV/AIDS discourse. He further argued that the metaphor involves understanding of one thing in terms of another. Finally it was seen from Jaoko's (2016) work that the Conceptual Metaphor Theory was tested and was found adequate in the analysis of the metaphors used in HIV/AIDS euphemisms in Dholuo.

Owiredu (2020) analyzed contrastively, Akan and Hebrew euphemistic expressions for death using the theoretical framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory espoused by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). He opines that the cognitive approach enabled him to demonstrate the mitigating power of metaphors used as a dynamic source for euphemistic reference with the ability to conceal offensive and taboo aspects of the target domain. His work put the various Akan and Hebrew euphemisms into five categories of death metaphors with the aim to contrastively establish similarities and differences in the

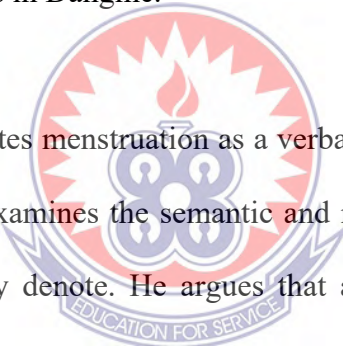
conceptualization of death in the two languages. His intention was to demonstrate how metaphors are employed as euphemistic device for speaking indirectly, unprovocatively and respectfully about death. His study specifically reveals how the Akan and Hebrew cultures, defined by their respective languages, share the same attitude to death. It was also revealed from the study that the function of metaphors in euphemistic reference has been demonstrated as being very significant in both languages. It was evident that Hebrew and Akan share the same conceptual mappings regarding mortality. He stipulates that it is obviously rooted in the universal understanding that DEATH metaphors are deeply ingrained in our physical and bodily experience.

Owiredu (2020) citing Kovecses (2007:165) asserts that the evidence provided by his study supports the claim that members of different cultures cannot conceptualize a universal experience “in a way that contradicts universal physiology”, but can conceptualize it “within the constraints imposed on them by universal physiology”. Finally in his data, the metaphors DEATH IS LOSS, DEATH IS THE END, DEATH IS SLEEP, DEATH IS A JOURNEY AND DEATH IS A PERSON indicate that in both Hebrew and Akan, death hides itself behind cautiously constructed metaphors on both the Akan and Hebrew languages. This study investigates the Conceptual Metaphor of death euphemistic expressions to find out whether similar things also occur in Dangme.

2.1.5 Sociocultural view point of euphemisms

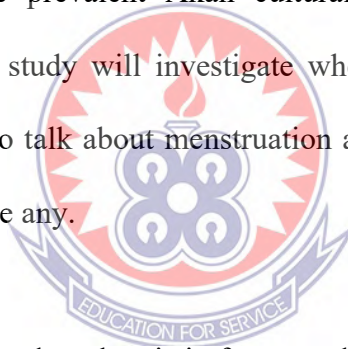
One major trend in the research on euphemism is a focus on being polite in communication by speakers and hearers in a society. To understand this trend better,

Farghal (1995), investigates the nature of euphemism in Arabic. His investigation showed that speakers of Arabic employ four major devices for euphemizing: figurative expressions, circumlocutions, remodeling's and antonyms. He further proves that there is close interaction between the Politeness Principle (Leech 1983) and the Cooperative Principle's maxims of conversation (Grice 1975). Most importantly, it was argued by Farghal (1995) that Arabic euphemisms flout one or more of the maxims of conversation, thus giving rise to particularize conversational implicatures. Consequently, flouting is shown to play an important role in lexical choices in addition to their well-established roles in structural and discoursal choices. The current study investigates the sociocultural implications of euphemisms in Dangme.



Agyekum (2002), investigates menstruation as a verbal taboo among the Akan of Ghana. In other words, his work examines the semantic and metaphorical relations between the euphemisms and what they denote. He argues that among the Akan, euphemisms for menstruation follow two basic models: (1) negative (indisposition and seclusion of the woman) and (2) positive (transition and fertility and the arrival of a protective visitor). With urbanization, modernization, and the adoption of Western religions, some of the Akan euphemisms for menstruation have become fossilized, and others no longer referential reality. According to him, changing patterns in the use of the euphemisms and the drastic changes in the current generation's knowledge of them, reveal much societal changes in the Akan speech community. He explains further that any word is an innocent collection of sounds until a community surrounds it with connotations and then decrees that it cannot be used in certain speech situations. Agyekum (2002), argues that it is the

symbolic value the specific culture attaches to the words and expressions that make them become taboo. Furthermore, he mentions that menstruation in Akan is *kyima* and Akan speakers from teenage and adult females to male medicine peddlers, doctors and traditional healers, try to avoid mentioning menstruation as much as possible. This however makes the topic impossible to avoid due to its prevalence within everyday life. Thus, the use of euphemisms is common when addressing the subject of menstruation, he said. He affirms that Akan women will use euphemisms in their own discussions that involve complaints about a menstrual problem, or as a way to avoid performing certain domestic activities and obligations. Agyekum (2002), asserts that the euphemisms used are representations of the prevalent Akan cultural attitudes and perceptions about menstruation. The current study will investigate whether the Dangme community has expressions that they use to talk about menstruation and the beliefs behind the usage of such expressions if there are any.



Hasegawa (2005) investigated euphemistic forms and functions of English and Japanese by using contrastive analysis as well as considering the views on euphemism of Japanese English-language speakers and Australian Japanese-language speakers. The results of the investigations showed that language learners' communication difficulties are caused by euphemistic, dysphemistic and doublespeak locutions in the target language. The outcomes of his study provide a valuable means of establishing an understanding of how and why euphemisms are currently exploited in both Japanese euphemistic, dysphemistic and doublespeak locutions in the target language. The results also indicated clearly the relevance of these three entities, which can be utilized interchangeably according to the

speaker's purposes, the different desirable semantic outcomes and the inclusion of intermingled elements of communication settings.

Azkiyah (2008) studied euphemisms found in political articles in the national sections of the Jakarta Post. According to her, euphemism is common in our society due to the fact that it is part of language custom; therefore, it has been in every culture. Azkiyah (2008), adds that, every generation and every culture develop their own euphemisms; therefore, euphemism is a mental phenomenon, almost all cultures seem to have certain things that people try to avoid mentioning directly. She argues that one of the principles of euphemism is that the expressions should be replaced by the preferred expressions to execute the user's communicative intentions on a given context and to avoid the possible loss of face. However, she argues that euphemisms do not necessarily have to deal with taboos or bring negative impact such as a point of deception; it also has positive impact; since in modern usage, euphemisms are often concerned with politeness.

The analysis of her data was based on the type and functions of euphemism. It was revealed from her study that all types of euphemisms indicated that euphemisms which appeared most frequently in the national section of the Jakarta Post were metaphor, idiom, hyperbole, litotes, synecdoche and associative engineering. Again, it was revealed that, there were six metaphors, one idiom, one hyperbole (overstatement), one litote (understanding), three synecdoche, and one associative engineering. Additionally, other types such as circumlocution, technical jargon, euphemistic dysphemisms, general – for specific, denial, acronym, abbreviation and metonymy were not found. Based on the

functions, Azkiyah (2008) posits that five functions of euphemisms were found. These include; eight informational functions, two evaluative functions, one organizational function, one request function and one criticism function.

Somaškaitė (2011) explored the political euphemisms that are used in the English newspapers and analyzed their semantic and structural features. He examined the theoretical approaches and studies concerning the concept and features of euphemisms. He then identified the political euphemisms used in today's English newspapers; to group euphemisms into classes according to semantic features and analyzed structural and semantic peculiarities of political euphemisms. His study showed that the articles on political party issues and politicians contain a vast majority of political euphemisms which may imply that politicians are strongly inclined to use euphemistic language when discussing various issues within the political parties or giving speeches.

According to him, it is revealed from his study that political euphemisms perform five pragmatic functions: politeness, taboo, covering up, inducing, and tactical. Regarding structural features from his study, the most frequent structural feature of political euphemisms in terms of formation was compounding which means it is the most frequent way of building political euphemisms in terms of their structure. Somaškaitė (2011) also revealed that in terms of semantic innovation, most euphemisms were based on metaphorical transfer which means it is the most frequent semantic feature of political euphemisms, whereas the sub-categories of metonymy and hyperbole remained empty, which signals them to be not common ways of forming political euphemisms.

Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) investigated euphemism strategies used in Saudi Arabic and English. Their study shows that there are some similarities and differences, which can be attributed to cultural and religious beliefs and values. The strategies of euphemism found in the Saudi responses are 'part-for-whole', 'overstatement', 'understatement', 'deletion', 'metaphor', 'general-for-specific', and 'loan words and jargons' (Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni, 2012). They confirm that the British participants employed 'understatement', 'deletion', 'loan words and jargons', 'metaphors', and 'general-for-specific'. Their work indicates that Saudi Arabic seems to have more ways of expressing euphemisms. The study also reveals that there is no relationship between euphemism strategy choice and gender. Another significant finding is that the Saudis and the British resort to taboos when handling death and dying, but hardly ever for bodily functions. Euphemistic language, like language in general, is influenced by its users' cultural and religious beliefs, life-styles, and norms. Finally, Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni's (2012) study suggests that increasing second/foreign language learners' awareness of euphemism is essential for intercultural communication.

Again, Kaguda (2012) studies death and dying, analyzing the language used in coping with death in Shona society. His work analyzes the language that the Shona people in Zimbabwe use in naming death and dying, describing the death and consoling the bereaved. His paper drives its linguistic analysis from a Shona socio-cultural religious perspective. Related to the perspective of the study, the concept of saving face and easing the tension caused by death, and the notion to be understood in the light of the politeness principle that guides human communication was employed. In order for him to establish

whether the Shona people use their language ordinarily, or they fine-tune it to suit specific situations, particularly the unpalatable social situation like death and dying (language for specific purpose), his data was employed through interview and participatory observation. It was established from his study that the Shona people have the tendency of creating, packaging and repackaging their language in relation to social dilemma confronting them. Again, it was shown that indirect way of referring to tabooed matters such as death are in tandem with the Shona semantic philosophy, in which, by indirection, they find direction.

In this regard, references to death and dying often take the form of some blunt and euphemistic expressions as a way of coping with death and dying. He affirms that euphemistic words and expressions allow the Shona people to talk about unpleasant notions and neutralize the unpleasantness, for example on the subject of death and dying. His work concluded that Shona people make use of euphemistic language to conceptualize and verbalise the taboo of death and dying. Also, he said that idiomatic and metaphorical expressions fit the purpose of euphemism. He opines that in the Shona context, people pass over, pass on, they are carried to rest, they fall asleep and do not die. All this euphemisms rely on the Shona traditional, religious beliefs and the politeness principle that guides human communication on matters to do with death.

Hojati (2012) studied the use of euphemisms in the context of English-speaking media. He postulates that euphemisms are frequently used by speakers of different languages to soften the impact of concepts with the potential to cause offence and social disapproval.

He further explains that the use of euphemisms has increased by the media and new controversial euphemism has also been born. Bearing these points in mind, his study was carried out with the aim of eliciting and qualitatively examining a number of high-frequency euphemisms employed by English-speaking media. He selected three high-profile media and their news bulletins were recorded for a three-month-long period. The calculation of frequencies of different euphemisms used by the media organizations revealed that poverty- and military-related euphemism figured prominently in the news bulletins, while euphemisms dealing with economy, disability, death and sex had lower frequencies of use.

Pan's (2013) study examines the functions and applications of English euphemisms. He posits that English euphemism is not only a social phenomenon, but also a lingual phenomenon. In social interaction, people have to use different words to convey their thoughts and ideas. In order to avoid the embarrassment or ease the sting of harsh words, man has created euphemism. In Western cultures, people have been using euphemism widely in many different fields. The originality of his work lies in the study of English euphemisms from the perspective of pragmatics. His study introduces the features, functions and the applications of English euphemisms, intending to help people better understand euphemisms and make good use of them in real communication. The present study investigates euphemisms, in Dangme from different domains. It also shows how the Dangme culture is portrayed in their use of euphemisms.

Also, Ghounane's (2014) study sheds light on the dark side of Algerian culture in relation to language use through investigating linguistic taboos and euphemistic usage. His study showed that the attitudes of Algerian speakers are linked to certain socio-cultural and psychological factors. These include the social norms of the society, the social upbringing of its individuals and the social environment which they get in contact with, in addition to their identity construction and other parameters. These substitutions are the results of societal, psychological and cultural pressures.

Njoroge's (2014) work discusses the relationship between informative and interpretation of euphemisms as well as taboo words and the social – cultural context in which they are used by speakers of Kikuyu as a first language. The theoretical framework Njoroge (2014) employed in her work was the Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). The objectives of her study were to identify and describe the euphemisms and taboo words that are popularly used by speakers of Kikuyu, to establish the informative and semantic attributes of euphemisms and taboo words in Kikuyu language and to analyze the pragmatic and social functions of euphemized taboo words which are used by speakers of Kikuyu. Her data was collected from twenty male informants and twenty female informants from Kabete area of Kiambu County.

Results from Njoroge's (2014) research work shows that in order to avoid embarrassment and face – loss, Kikuyu people try to look for substitutions that can hide or cover up the harmonious power of taboo words. Again, her results show that euphemisms are employed to replace offensive expressions that can cause harm and shame to the speaker

of Kikuyu language. This current study investigates what happens among the Dangme people.

Jaleel and Memon's (2015) study is geared toward exploring the euphemistic language of death and gender in Sindhi language. Their work gives a general description of euphemism, taboo and Sindhi culture. They sourced their data by interviewing four participants which were two males and two females. The results of the study indicate that euphemistic expressions of death and gender are present in Sindhi language. Death is considered as a tabooed topic in all languages due to the connotative meanings associated with death. They explain that the euphemism for death replaces the connotations associated with taboo topic of death. And in this way death euphemism keeps people in comfort zone to discuss and share ideas about death. Also in Sindh, death is considered as misfortune with man, people are afraid of death, so they replace the word 'mot' death with euphemistic expressions. So the people avoid quoting the taboo topic directly; instead they use different expressions to increase politeness in conversation.

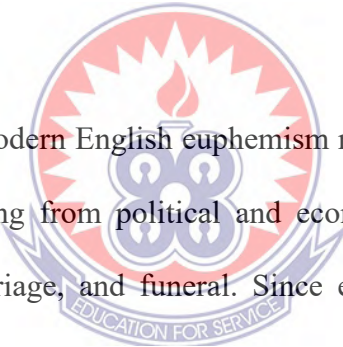
Jaleel and Memon (2015) assert that it was prominent in their study that euphemisms of *mot* death vary from time, region, circumstances and place. And the most frequent euphemisms of *mot* 'death' in Sindhi language are *guza:re wayo* , *lada:ru: kare wayo*, *foṭ, rehlat''a*, *wafa:t, piya:lo* and *wisa:l, burko mata:e wayo* which literally means 'death' in Sindhi language. In their work, they posit that language and women are connected with each other. Therefore, the connotations associated with women have significant impact upon the language users. They argue that similarly, Sindhi community assumes za:l

“wife” as personal belonging so they replace the word with euphemistic expressions based on the age, gender, context and relations. This thesis investigates whether the Dangme people also have various euphemistic expressions for announcing death.

Aboh (2015) examines the use of euphemism as one of the politeness strategies that speakers deploy to lessen the effect of an expression which might be interpreted as threatening to the hearer. Drawing insights from face theory, Aboh’s (2015) paper argues that to preserve the self-image of the hearer is equally the preservation of the hearer’s identity and to disregard the self-worth of hearer is to disregard the hearer’s identity. Again Aboh (2015), using Helon Habila’s *Waiting for an Angel*, Vincent Egbuson’s *Love My Planet*, Abimbola Adelokun’s *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* and Okey Ndibe’s *Arrows of Rain* as representative texts, the analysis shows that euphemism is a strong discourse strategy that is not only deployed to tone down the effect of an expression on hearer, but a linguistic modality which discourse participants activate basically for politeness reasons.

Aboh’s (2015) work identified four categories of sex euphemisms. These include sex as movement/journey, sex as food, sex as a biological process of maturity and the sex organ as a manipulative object. He adds that syntactically, except for one lexical and one phrasal euphemism, the euphemisms found in the sampled texts occur at the sentential level. Also, Aboh’s (2015) study revealed that the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu exerts significant pressure on conversationalists’ use of language.

Mofarrej and Al-Haq (2015) investigated the euphemistic death expressions used in the Jordanian society. Their study also examines the effect of the social variables: age, gender and region on the use of these expressions. The results of the study showed that there are certain expressions which are more frequently used than others among participants, irrespective of their age, gender or region. Their study also indicated that the social variables affect the use of these expressions only in certain situations. According to them, the above 30 year-old participants used more euphemized expressions than those who are 30 years old or under. It was revealed from their study that males and females used different expressions only when trying to reduce the painful effects of someone's death.



Zhou (2015) opines that Modern English euphemism relates to all aspects of personal, as well as social lives, ranging from political and economic life to everyday childbirth, death, disease, aging, marriage, and funeral. Since euphemisms are established social speaking and behaving norms, ways of thinking as well as outlook of value, it is essential to study their features and application. He argues that euphemism exists in all aspects of American English in great numbers and is categorized into eight types. These include death, aging and disease, marriage and pregnancy, military, disability and handicap, profanity, profession, politics and finally education. For these categories, he looked at the euphemistic expressions under each. He concluded that euphemism helps writers to convey those ideas which have become a social taboo and are too embarrassing to mention directly. Politicians skillfully choose appropriate words to refer to and discuss a subject indirectly.

Anber and Swear (2016) investigated the sociocultural differences in translating euphemistic expressions from English into Arabic. Particularly, their study examined the euphemistic expressions in the novel “A Grain of Wheat” to show the differences in the usage of these expressions by two translators from different cultures. The study suggested that knowledge and competence of the translators in handling sociocultural differences as well as the employment of effective strategies such as those proposed by Leppihalme and Unseth (2006) are indispensable tools for solving the problems of translating euphemistic expressions.

Bayisa (2017) identifies and describes linguistic taboos and their corresponding euphemistic expressions among the Oromo of Oromia Regional State in Addis Ababa. He conducted the study using the qualitative method. The main instruments of data collection were focus group discussion, unstructured interview, observation and introspective method. The framework of the study is a pragmatic approach to euphemism and taboo which mainly includes euphemism to context of situation, Speech Act Theory, Face and Politeness Theory. The findings of his study revealed that in daily communication, the Oromo societies of the research area, Oromia Regional State are highly intertwined with social taboos. They prohibit uttering taboo words or expressions related to death, disease, woman (pregnancy, menstruation, delivery and virginity), sexual organs, sexual acts, some normal and impaired body parts, excretion and names related to marriage relationship.

According to Bayisa (2017), these tabooed subjects are categorized into: context-specific and generally unmentionable taboos. Context-specific includes non-taboo words and words related to the hearer's physical or social defect. Also, non-taboo words are words which have neutral meaning in everyday speech and have got tabooed inference in specific-context. He adds that taboos related to the hearer's physical or social defects are any words with connotations to the hearer representing his/her physical or social defect, and mentioning taboo terms related to physical impairments and diseases are categorized under this topic. General taboos are unmentionable words which are absolutely forbidden words. Taboos related to death, sexual organs, sexual acts, excretion and name of father-/mother-in laws are categorized under this section.

Again, he said whatever taboo terms are the Oromo societies of the study areas use euphemistic expressions to show mildness, roundabout, indirect, polite, less distasteful, inoffensive, agreeable, tactful, less explicit, to make taboo words comparatively favorable meaning or less unpleasant association whereas the substituted taboo words/expressions are characterized as harsh, blunt, direct, distasteful, painful, unpleasant, indelicate, offensive or frightening.

Furthermore, Bayisa (2017) explains that the Oromo of the study area avoid uttering these taboo expressions to save someone's face loss through euphemistic expressions and make the speaker or hearer free from any embarrassment or feeling of shock. To do this, they use euphemistic expression strategies like metaphor, metonym, circumlocution, synecdoche, hyperbole, understatement, antonym, onomatopoeia and borrowing. The

society of the study areas use distinctive euphemistic expressions for a single tabooed term, except some expressions they use in common. In fact, the usage of linguistic taboos and euphemistic expressions is determined by differences in age, gender, relationship, geographical location, context of use and the like.

Bayisa (2017) argues that among the Oroma of the Oromia Regional States, taboo words and euphemistic expressions may be reflected as taboo words/euphemisms which are similar in all research areas. However, there could be taboo words/euphemistic expressions; which have meaning extension, taboo words/euphemistic expressions which are taboo/euphemism in one of the research sites and not known or has another meaning in other sites of the study.

Lei (2016) also asserts that euphemism as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon, contributes greatly to people's daily communication. The proper use of euphemism is helpful in avoiding harm and offending others.

He further explains that the use of euphemism featured with the use of cultured and indirect language, always complies with politeness principle accordingly, which reveals certain humanistic spirits. He then discusses how to use English euphemism from the perspective of Politeness Principle. Through analysis, he points out that euphemism should be properly used in a certain degree of politeness, and the use of direct and indirect method of applying euphemism in college English teaching can help achieve the successful communication and promotion of English teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Banagbanag (2018) did a descriptive qualitative research using textual analysis to find out the motivations for using euphemisms among Filipinos as reflected in selected short stories in English. He reviewed fifty English short stories written by Filipinos during the American and the contemporary periods. Also, his study examined the context of their usage guided by Face Theory, Grice's Cooperative Principle, Relevance Theory and Politeness. He argues that the motivation for euphemism usage involves the practical concerns behind euphemism, that is, why people choose to employ a euphemistic phrase in place of another, more direct mode of speech. He opines that euphemisms are used to enhance good relationships. From the expressions collected from the fifty stories, politeness is the very common motivation for employing euphemisms. He affirms that these expressions which try not to offend the reader or the addressee in the stories are the writers' or the characters' polished ways of concealing some harsh realities of life like death, ailments, descriptions of people trivialized by society, expressions of anger, ways of calling the divine beings, insanity, and sex. According to Banagbanag (2018), euphemisms categorized under Relevance Theory are expressions whose meanings are disguised by the way they are used in context. And their meanings are not unveiled directly by the words' primary meaning. He said they can only be discovered through critical reading. Relevance is in the reader's attempts to understand the expression. He further explained that those that are used to save face are expressions which are sugarcoated such that the addressee would not be embarrassed. Those under the Co-operative Principle are expressions which help develop understanding if the characters in the story or the readers themselves are equipped with

the proper knowledge or stock of vocabulary in order to decode the information presented.

Al-Khasawneh (2018) did a similar work to that of Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012). His work explores the euphemistic strategies used in Saudi Arabic and American English. He used a questionnaire adopted from Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) to collect the data of the study. He opines that people often use euphemistic utterances or expressions to avoid offensive or tabooed topics, to make them more implicit and considerate. Al-Khasawneh's (2018) results revealed various strategies used by the participants, such as deletion, synonyms, metaphor, understatement, part-for-whole, overstatement, and jargons. The most frequent strategies used by the Saudis were part-for whole', understatement', and general- for-specific'. However, he said the American participants tended to use taboo words', general-for-specific' and synonyms' more frequently than the other strategies. The findings also showed that there is no relationship between strategy choice and gender. Again, the findings from his work suggest that Saudi Arabic seems to use euphemistic strategies more than the Americans. Al-Khasawneh (2018) finally affirms that these results could be referred to cultural and religious beliefs and values.

Additionally, Zaid, Batool, Khan and Mangla (2018) assert that although euphemism, being an effective communication device, gives the native speakers the opportunity to sound polite in the most impolite situations, their presence often generates confusion among the non-native speakers for whom the language has more to do with conveying the exact meaning than implying something beyond the obvious. They then investigated

whether euphemism asserts the intended meanings to L2 learners and to what extent they remain able to comprehend the meaning of a euphemistic expression. They found out that the elements of complexity and misunderstanding can be characterized by the intransparent nature of the words, and to some extent, interference of L1. They also concluded that the ever increasing proliferation of euphemisms by teachers as well as by classroom material affects student's learning and understanding of language when used in daily lives.

Amenorvi and Grumah (2020) did an investigation on the cultural underpinnings that govern the use or disuse of sexually explicit Ewe and Mampulli verbs *mɔ* and *nnyai* (have sex) respectively. They opine that human sexuality has some form of taboos associated with it across cultures and a deep comprehension of a people's culture leads to the breaking of barriers of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The finding from their investigation indicated that the culture underpinnings that govern these taboo words were that first, the Ewe and the Mampulli cultures regard sex as a sacred thing that using such explicit words in talking about it is too raw and uncultured. That is to say that, among the Ewe and the Mampulii of Ghana, the act of sex itself is considered as sacred or holy and deserves reverence. According to them, one Ewe woman in her sixties gave an example by saying:

It is only today that you children do not respect sex and talk about it openly everywhere. Even dogs hide if they want to have sex. Using *mɔ* for sex is the same as having sex in public. This is why we use the word *dɔ* (sleep) instead of *mɔ*.

Amenorvi and Grumah (2020:12)

Secondly, their study revealed that both cultures are patriarchal or male dominant. Thirdly, the Ewe and the Mampulli cultures permit polygamy and frown on polyandry. Amenorvi and Grumah's (2020) investigation finally reveals that the two culture frown on homosexuality.

Olimat (2020) investigated the use of euphemism and dysphemism in the Jordanian society for dealing with COVID-19. The research was approached from a sociolinguistic perspective and framed mainly within the Theory of Euphemism and Dysphemism by Allan and Burridge (1991; 2006), together with Warren's Model of Euphemism (1992) and Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980). He employed a sample of 200 Jordanians asking them to respond to a questionnaire including demographic information and closed-ended and open-ended questions. According to him, COVID-19 is the major health crisis worldwide nowadays. And linguistic aspects of individuals and communities, including euphemism and dysphemism, were affected by this global challenge because choosing appropriate words to express what speakers intend to say and to reflect what they value or disvalue is a basic part of communication.

Olimat (2020) affirms that euphemism is an acceptable expression used instead of an offensive one to avoid unpleasant connotations, while dysphemism is a derogatory expression with negative suggestions used instead of neutral or polite one to attack something or someone. The results show that the Jordanians used different euphemistic techniques in daily COVID-19 conversations, namely, metaphor, shift from Arabic into English, medical terms, and abbreviation. Also, it was seen from the study that the

participants hardly adopted dysphemisms when talking about COVID-19. Olimat (2020) further explains that the wide use of COVID-19 euphemisms and dysphemisms shows the linguistic development of the Jordanian Arabic speakers and are as a result of recent educational developments, cross-culture interactions, new lifestyles, and modern social behaviours.

2.1.6 Euphemistic expressions from the viewpoint of conversational analysis

According to Peräkylä (2004), conversation analysis is a method for investigating the structure and process of social interaction between humans. He opines that conversation analytic studies use video or audio recordings made from naturally occurring interaction, that is, interactions that would take place even if the data collection was not there. He urges that conversation analytic studies offer qualitative (and sometimes quantitative) descriptions of interactional practices (structures underlying all interaction such as turn-taking, and specific actions such as asking questions, receiving news or making assessments). Few works were done on euphemistic expressions from the perspective of conversational analysis.

Harahap's (2017) work deals with the euphemism used by characters' utterances in *The Dressmaker* movie. Her study was aimed to know the types of euphemism in *The Dressmaker* movie script. Her study was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method and the source of data was *The Dressmaker* movie. The data were drawn from utterances produced by characters in the movie. The sentences uttered by characters showed the types of euphemism were: (1) metaphor (2) remodeling (3) circumlocution

(4) clippings (5) full-omission (6) metonymy (7) hyperbole and (8) understatement. She opines that the characters used the euphemism in order to keep the relationship among them, not to embarrass the interlocutors, to keep listeners from losing face and to conserve participant's self-esteem.

Lubis (2019) looks at euphemism of "*Mangupa*" a traditional marriage ceremonial of Mandailing ethnic group from Batak. The main purpose of his work was to describe the euphemisms in Mandailing ethnic group especially for traditional ceremony which is called *Mangupa* often done in marriage ceremonies. He postulates that language and culture are two things that cannot be separated and that the usage of euphemism in conversation especially in traditional ceremony very common. The qualitative descriptive approach was used in his study and the source of the data was the utterances delivered in marriage ceremony especially *Mangupa*, the marriage ceremony. The data of his work was collected by using video recording, and face to face interview to get further information from the elderly with average age of 55 years. He then analyzed the data based on the types and functions of euphemisms by Allan and Burrige (1991). He explains further that euphemism is often used in Batak Mandailing wedding ceremony called *Mangupa*.

The results from his study revealed that there were twenty phrases considered as euphemisms in the *Mangupa* utterances that were analyzed based on Allan and Burrige (1991). Also, there were three times figurative expressions, twice metaphor, five times flippancy, once remodeling, eight times circumlocutions and once substitution. Again,

circumlocution, a type of euphemism which is a smoothing word by using some of the longer words and indirectly, was the most type of euphemism that was found in *Mangupa*. According to Lubis, euphemism is used in giving advice to the bride and groom. Additionally, the study showed that the functions of the euphemisms that had been identified are tools for smooth speech.

The work of Aldriani (2019) describes the use of euphemistic expressions in an article in the online newspaper, '*Express*'. The article was about marriage life of the Late Princess lady Diana and Prince Charles of the United Kingdom. He explains that euphemistic expressions are found in both printed and online media, as a newspaper has the power of influencing the reader's mind in delivering many kinds of news or events in daily life. Therefore, in this developing communication era, the preference and the use of the proper words in a newspaper is a must. He said journalists are demanded to be able to deliver the news by using polite and formal words instead of the offensive words.

A descriptive research and Warren's theory (2017) cited in (Beizae & Mirza, 2016) was used to analyze the use of euphemistic expressions based on semantic innovation and formal innovation found in some articles in the '*Express*' online newspaper. His data was in the form of words and phrases and in analyzing the data, the pragmatic referential method which interprets the meaning of euphemistic expressions was used based on the context. The study showed the types of semantic innovation used including particularization, implication and metaphor. According to him, the most dominant semantic and formal innovation are implication and derivation. Finally, the results

revealed that the 'Express' online newspaper has done well to deliver the news about the phenomenal marriage life of the late Princess Lady Diana and Prince Charles by using euphemistic expressions so far.

Asseel (2020) examined euphemism constructed through the discourse of animated films by employing the strategies of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Moreover, the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) was also employed to examine discursive strategies involving visual representations accompanying euphemism and what underpins those strategies. It shed light on the multimodal relations between the representations of both visual and the strategies. He opines that animated films are contemporary popular cultural products recreating the 'real' world and engaging massive worldwide audiences of adults and children. And children as the ostensible viewers of animated films may acquire their cultural and ideological knowledge and beliefs about the world from the representations in animated films. He said euphemism is frequently associated with the notion of taboo so new words or phrases are designated to refer to linguistic taboos as alternatives used by speakers to minimize the threat to the audience's face as well as to their own. In addition, euphemistic occurrences represent a self-interested version of reality by pushing a topic into the background and highlighting instead of a particular view of a topic. Therefore, euphemism is a speaker-oriented tool implying the reaction the speaker intends to prompt in the audience. A data set comprising 176 euphemisms found in four full-length anthropomorphized animated featured films (AAFF) extracted from film scripts and online channels was collected. His study shows that euphemism as a discursive linguistic tool has been used extensively in animated films as a manifestation

of the discursive role anthropomorphized characters play to transmit certain ideological and social representations. The study also identifies the main types of euphemism used in films, drawing on a framework of types based on Warren (1992), Allan and Burrige (1991) and Crespo (2006). After the main types of euphemism have been identified, the data set approached from the perspective of taboo and culturally repressed topics, such as sexuality, gender and race was also revealed.

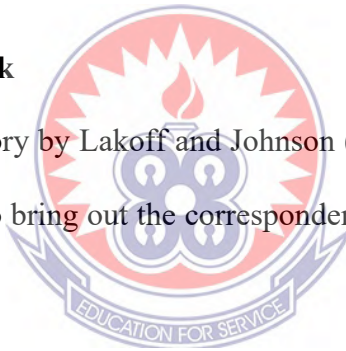
He then applied discursive strategies adapted from Reisigl and Wodak (2016) in order to identify important categories for the analysis of euphemistic discourse. This approach forms the basis for an in-depth, qualitative analysis of several representative scenes extracted from the films under investigation. His analysis focuses on racial euphemisms targeting different races and then analyzed sexual euphemisms related to nudity and sexual body parts, as well as conceptual metaphoric representations of sexual euphemisms. His work also focuses on gendered euphemisms targeting the representation of four female characters in the films. The result from the analysis shows that animated films tend to use euphemism to camouflage various taboo areas and manipulate the viewers' perceptions, such as those relating to sexuality, gender and race. Also, nominalization strategies were used more frequently with euphemisms referring to race, sex and gender. Metaphors and conceptual metaphors were used more frequently with sexual euphemisms. Finally, the results revealed that visual empowerment strategies of female characters to highlight their sexuality were used more frequently with gendered euphemisms. Asseel (2020) argues that while the linguistic element attenuates an ideology by virtue of euphemism's manipulative nature, the visual element, in turn,

highlights and confirms the same ideology, values or stereotypes. Therefore he affirms that animated films can articulate the ideological and social legitimation or normalization of a particular view of race, sex or gender through the use of euphemism and visual discursive strategies.

The study also investigates the use of euphemisms by analysing conversations recorded in a funeral and a marriage rite. Other recordings, which were done during funeral announcements and a cultural programme (*kusumi ko laa mo*) ‘know your culture’ held on radio, were also analysed.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1992) was used for the semantic analysis to bring out the correspondence between the source domain and the target domain.



2.2.1 The Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory was propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1992). Lakoff and Johnson first came up with the theory in their publication *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980. In this publication, Lakoff and Johnson define metaphor as understanding and experiencing one aspect in terms of another or as a tightly structured mapping between two domains which are referred to as: the source domain and the target domain; these domains are conceptual. In this case, what is concrete and more clearly related to the physical and bodily experience and which is easily understandable

constitutes the source domain while that which is abstract and less clearly structured and understandable constitutes the target domain. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) disclosed that many such related sets of conventional metaphorical expressions exist in English, and argued that these expressions are not simply ways of talking about one thing in terms of another, but there is evidence that we also think about one thing in terms of another. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory is grounded on the correspondence between the source domain and the target domain, in this sense, the euphemistic expressions and their referents.

Lakoff (1992) defines metaphor as a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning to express a similar concept. He opines that the general theory of metaphor is given by characterizing such cross domain mappings. And in the process, everyday abstract concepts like time, states, change, causation, and purpose also turn out to be metaphorical. The result is that metaphor (that is, cross-domain mapping) is absolutely central to ordinary natural language semantics, and that the study of literary metaphor is an extension of the study of everyday metaphor.

He further asserts that, metaphor is characterized by a huge system of thousands of cross-domain mappings, and this system is made use of in novel metaphor. Because of these empirical results, the word 'metaphor' has come to be used differently in contemporary metaphor research. The word metaphor has come to mean a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system. According to Lakoff (ibid), the term metaphorical expression refers to

a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross domain mapping (this is what the word metaphor referred to in the old theory). According to Lakoff (1992), the example below indicates that just as significant life events are special cases of events, so are events in love relationships special cases of life events.

Thus, the *LOVE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor inherits the structure of the *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor. What is special about the *LOVE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor, is that there are two lovers, who are travelers, and that the love relationship is a vehicle. The rest of the mapping is a consequence of inheriting the *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor. Because the lovers are in the same vehicle, they have common destinations, that is, common life goals. Relationship difficulties are impediments to travel.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

- Target Domain: Love
- Source Domain: Space
- The lovers are travelers.
- The love relationship is a vehicle.
- Inherits the *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor.

He opines that a career is another aspect of life that can be conceptualized as a journey.

Maduka (2002:34) discussed metaphor first as an analogy between two things though dissimilar in form but which share certain attributes in common when subjected to comparison. Secondly, he describes metaphor as a special type of analogy which is contrasted with *simile*. He used the concepts namely: I. A. Richards' concept of tenor-vehicle interaction, developed by I. A. Richards to clearly explicate the term *metaphor*. By tenor he meant what the poet sets out to express; vehicle is the mental picture he

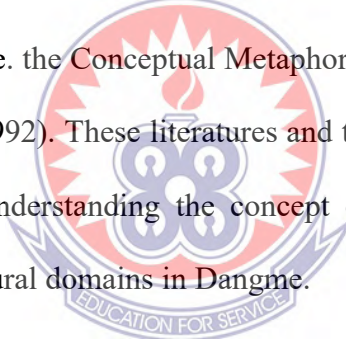
evokes to communicate and ground the attribute which the tenor shares with the vehicle- the sustaining link of the comparison. According to Croft and Cruse (2004:193), metaphor in cognitive semantics is treated as a construal operation, and it involves judgment or comparisons. They postulate that it involves a vehicle and a target. Again, they said metaphor involves an interaction between two domains construed from two regions of purport, and the content of the vehicle domain is an ingredient of the construed target through processes of correspondences.

In the view of Semino (2008), cognitive metaphor theorists emphasize that target domains typically correspond to areas of experience that are relatively abstract, complex, unfamiliar, subjective or poorly delineated, such as time, emotion, life or death. In contrast, source domains typically correspond to concrete, simple, familiar, physical and well-delineated experiences, such as motion, bodily phenomena, physical objects and so on. He further defines conceptual metaphors as systematic sets of correspondences, or ‘mappings’, across conceptual domains, whereby a ‘target’ domain (e.g. our knowledge about arguments) is partly structured in terms of a different ‘source’ domain (e.g. our knowledge about war). Crystal (2008:98) discussed conceptual metaphor as a theory associated with cognitive semantics in which metaphor is seen as a process of understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. He argues that a typical metaphor is a mapping between a better-known, more concrete conceptual domain (the source domain) and the conceptual domain which it helps to organize (the target domain). The current study is related to the theory since it deals with the correspondence between the source domain and the target domain.

2.3 Summary

The chapter reviewed related literature on the study of euphemistic expressions from different perspectives across languages. The chapter is divided into two major sections, the literature review and the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The first section (2.1), reviewed related literature on the concept of euphemism, euphemism and language, euphemism and culture, works from semantic and the sociocultural viewpoints and works on conversational analysis viewpoints of euphemistic expressions across languages.

The second section 2.2 presents the theoretical framework adopted for the study on euphemisms in Dangme, i.e. the Conceptual Metaphor Theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Lakoff (1992). These literatures and the theoretical framework reviewed were very important in understanding the concept of euphemistic expressions in the semantic and the sociocultural domains in Dangme.




CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the methodology employed for the research. The chapter is therefore organized under the following sections: Section 3.1 looks at the research design, section 3.2 discusses the population. Section 3.3 talks about the research site, the sampling technique is discussed in section 3.4. The sample is presented in 3.5. Source of data is outlined in section 3.6. Section 3.7 talks about the data collection instruments. Section 3.8 outlines the data analysis procedure. Finally, section 3.9 summarizes and concludes the chapter.

3.1 Research Design



A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer the research questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kumar, 2011: 94). The qualitative research design was employed in this research. Owu-Ewie (2017), citing (Creswell 1998), qualitative research as an enquiry process of understanding based on a clear methodological process that uses a social or human problem by building a complex holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants and conducted in natural setting. In this study, the responses from interviews were used to explain the semantics and the sociocultural implications of the study of euphemistic expressions in Dangme.

3.2 Population

Best and Kahn (2006), citing Owu-Ewie (2017) defines population as a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and of an interest to the researcher. The main purpose of this work is to analyze the euphemistic expressions in Dangme semantically and socioculturally. However, it is not possible to use the entire population of Dangme on the phenomenon under investigation. This, therefore, made the researcher to delimit the investigation to some native speakers of Ada dialect of Dangme in four towns. Ada was chosen because it is one of the major dialects of Dangme (see Dakubu 1987: 2).

3.3 Research Site

The study focuses primarily on the Ada dialect of Dangme in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The following four towns were chosen from Ada for the study. Ada - Foah, Koluedor, Big- Ada and Kasseh. The researcher chose these communities because she is familiar with those places and the respondents. Also, she was convinced the respondents could give her the desired information for the study. Kadjanya and Gorm were the communities where the recordings were done for the contextual analysis for the euphemistic expressions.

3.4 Sample Size

Turner (2019) defines sampling as the selection of a subset of the population of interest in a research study. He explains further that the sampling from the population is often more practical and allows data to be collected faster and at a lower cost than attempting to

reach every member of the population. The size of the target population (Ada speakers) is also too large for this investigation. This research was therefore limited to a sample size of sixteen (16) participants. Out of these number, twelve (12) were males and four (4) were also females. The male respondents were more than the females because the Dangme people have the belief that in certain instances, women should be silent on some issues. So this motivated the researcher to choose a higher number of respondents for males as compared to the females. Three males and one female were chosen from each of the four towns.

3.5 Sampling Technique

This is the means by which a researcher selects his or her participants. Participants may be sampled or chosen based on the fact that each member of the population stands a good chance of being selected; this is called probability sampling. On the other hand, individuals in the population may be chosen other than by chance but by other means called non-probability sampling (see Owu-Ewie, 2017).

In this research, the purposive sampling was considered. The purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study (Owu-Ewie, 2017:31). The respondents were selected purposively from the Ada dialect mentioned above and from different social backgrounds based on the purpose of the study.

3.6 Source of Data

The researcher needs to use empirical data in a study of this kind. As a result, data were mainly drawn from primary sources and few from secondary sources. As a native speaker of Dangme, I also used my native speaker intuition to provide some data for the study. Those data generated by myself were however cross-checked with other speakers of Dangme.

3.6.1 Primary Data

Primarily, the respondents for the empirical data were purposively selected for this study. They were chosen based on what the research sought to achieve. To draw data for the different domains of the euphemistic expressions in Dangme, traders, farmers, retired educationists, non-workers, the educated, and the non-educated were all considered in this study. The ages of the respondents ranges between twenty-five (25) to eighty-five (85) years. As said earlier, twelve (12) males and four (4) females making sixteen (16) were selected to participate in the study. In each of the four towns, three males and one female were selected. The researcher interviewed and discussed with these respondents on the euphemistic expression used among the Dangme people.

The interviews were conducted between October 2020 and November 2020 at Ada Foah, Koludor, Big- Ada and Kasseh. Three days were used to collect data from each of the four selected communities of Ada. The researcher visited the Koluedor community on 5th, 8th and 10th October, 2020 and Kasseh community on 12th, 14th and 17th October, 2020. Also, the Ada- Foah community was visited on 19th, 22nd and 24th October 2020.

Finally, I was at the Big –Ada community on 28th, 30th October and 2nd November 2020.

In soliciting data for the conversational analysis for this study, the researcher went to some communities to do a recording of marriage and funeral rites. The recordings were between October 2020 and January 2021. The recordings of the marriage and the funeral ceremony were done in Gorm and Kadjanya respectively on Saturday, 3rd October, 2020. These towns were different communities aside the four selected towns. The researcher went for a funeral programme at Gorm the researcher visited Kadjanya – Ada on Saturday 8th January 2021 and recorded the marriage rites performed in the Djangmah family house. Permission was asked from the family head who happens to be the researcher’s maternal uncle before the recording was done. Lastly, the researcher recorded two radio programme namely, funeral announcements of the death and *kusumi ko laa mo* ‘know your culture’ a cultural programme held on Radio Ada.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

The secondary data was drawn from Aborchie (2011). This document was selected because it contains some of the euphemistic expressions which helped to find answers to the research questions.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Two main instruments were employed to collect data for this study on euphemistic expressions. These were interviews and contextual conversations. The *HD voice recorder* and sometimes the audio recorder of a *Tecno LC6 mobile phone* were used to record the responses of the participants. Also, I wrote some relevant information down in a *writing pad* where necessary.

3.7.1 Interview

Interview is a verbal interchange, often face to face though the telephone may be used in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinion from another person (Burns 1997:327) cited in (Kumar, 2011:144). Interviews are intended to finding reliable and important solutions to a problem under study from respondents or interviewees.

In this study, respondents were involved in free discussions on euphemistic expressions using both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Bearing in mind the open-endedness of the interview, the length of the interview sections were considered to avoid the respondents deviating from the purpose of the study or the research problem under investigation. The respondents were asked to provide instances where a person can use a mild expression to replace a harsh one during communication. And the intensions behind the usage of those expressions were also asked. In doing this, Owu-Ewie (2017) citing Denzin (1970), suggests that the researcher needs to write quality interview questions to help the interviewer get the desired result. To attain the purpose of objectives of the research, the semi-structured interview technique was used. Patton (2002), as cited in Owu-Ewie (2017) stated that semi-structured interview “is the type of interview where the researcher specifies issues and topics to be covered in an outline form and the interviewer decides the sequence and wording in the course of the interview.”

During the interview sections, issues were made clear for the respondents for them to understand the open-ended questions better in order to give adequate responses on the topic and the problem under investigation to come out with the expected results. The

respondents were interviewed on the following dates from each of the four communities selected from Ada. On Monday 5th, Thursday 8th, Saturday 10th 2020. The researcher visited the Koluedor community and had one on one interview with the respondents in various homes. A similar activity was repeated on Monday 12th, Wednesday 14th and Saturday 17th 2020 in the Kassesh community with the respondents in their homes. On Monday 19th, Thursday, 22nd and Saturday, 24th 2020, the researcher had one on one encounter with the respondents in their homes at Ada- Foah. On Wednesday 28th, Saturday 31th October and Monday 2nd November 2020, the researcher went to the Big-Ada community and had an interview with the respondents in their individual homes.

3.7.2 Conversational Analysis (Recordings)

Conversation Analysis (CA) is an inductive, micro-analytic, and predominantly qualitative method for studying human social interactions (Hoey and Kendrick, 2018). They explain that conversational analysis deals with the method of describing sociological foundations, key areas of analysis, and particular approach in using naturally occurring data. And it is devoted to practical explanations of the typical conversation analytic process for collecting data and producing an analysis. According to them, conversational analysis focuses on language as a resource for social action; and its procedure of basing analyses on the details of participants' own behaviour. They add that the method consists in the collection and curation of instances of an interactional phenomenon, the case-by-case analysis of that phenomenon, and the production of a formal account of its operation. The CA approach typically resonates with those who are interested in the specifics of human social conduct and committed to naturalistic

observation. It offers researchers a well-developed descriptive apparatus for investigating conversational interaction and a rigorously empirical procedure for supporting analyses (Hoey and Kendrick, 2018).

Seedhouse (2005) affirms that conversation analysis (CA) is a methodology for the analysis of naturally-occurring spoken interaction. In order to get data on the way the Dangme society uses euphemistic expressions in their daily conversations, the researcher decided to get recordings during funerals, marriage rites, and in programmes such as funeral announcements and *kusumi ko laa mo* ‘know your culture’ held on radio Ada. Before the recording of the programmes, ethical issues were considered. The recordings were made from October, 2020 to January 2021. The appropriate people were consulted about the need for the recordings. On Saturday, 3rd October, 2020, the researcher went for a funeral ceremony at Gorm, sought for permission and recorded the programme. On Saturday, 8th January, 2021 permission was asked from the family head of the Djanmgah family where a marriage rite was held and the proceedings were recorded. The researcher also recorded two radio programmes namely, funeral announcement and a cultural programmes (*kusumi ko laa mo*) ‘know your culture’ held on Radio Ada on Wednesday 15th December, 2020 and Sunday 19th December, 2020 respectively.

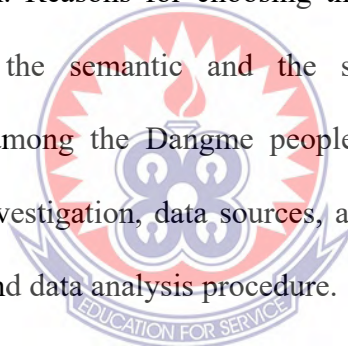
3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data drawn from the study were transcribed, coded and categorized. Different domains from the codes were categorized according to the euphemistic expressions in Dangme. With the information on the various domains of the results, I first recorded the semantics

aspect of the euphemistic expressions before the sociocultural aspects. This was done by interviewing the respondents on the semantics aspects, that is, how the euphemisms were conceptualized and their metaphorical mappings; the source domain and the target domains of the euphemism expressions before the sociocultural implications were interviewed on. I later based on the outcome of the interview and discussed the data based on the objectives of the study.

3.9 Summary

The chapter provided an overview of the methodology of the study. It adopted the qualitative research design. Reasons for choosing this design for the study was to do detailed descriptions of the semantic and the sociocultural implications of the euphemistic expressions among the Dangme people. The chapter also explained the population used for the investigation, data sources, and data collection instruments and data collection strategies and data analysis procedure.



CHAPTER FOUR

A SEMANTIC AND A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN DANGME

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the semantics and sociocultural aspects of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. It adopts Lakoff and Johnson (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereafter CMT) to explain the semantics of the euphemistic expressions in Dangme. According to Lakoff (1992), the theory focuses on explaining the underlying conceptual scenarios involved in conventional metaphors. Thus, the mapping principle in which there is the cross domain mapping involving two domains: source domain and target domain. Fernández (2006) opines that the theory involves a view of metaphor going beyond that of pointing to similarities between different entities or objects; instead, it is a means to create, structure and organize reality. Cserép (2014) affirms that CMT spirit involves metaphorical mappings between relatively concrete source domains and abstract target domains, which is not surprising, since metaphor is viewed as helping to understand abstract, not clearly delineated concepts.

The metaphor of these euphemistic expressions are rooted in the real world physical experiences. The metaphors of the expression are understood as abstract concepts in terms of physical experiences in reality. This theory is used for the analysis of the semantics of euphemistic expressions in Dangme, in order to get more insight in to the relationship between the source and the target domains. The various domains of euphemistic expressions in Dangme were identified and explained under the life cycle of

the Dangme people. The analysis takes into account each metaphorical expression and was analyzed with a view of revealing the conceptual mapping relationships involved and the sociocultural implication of all euphemistic expressions that occur during birth, puberty and death.

4.1 Euphemistic expression on birth among the Dangme

In the Dangme tradition before a woman gives birth, she needs to reach an adolescent stage, go through certain puberty rites and gets married before pregnancy and delivery. Therefore this section investigates the usage of some euphemistic expressions used before, during and after birth.

The table 1 below shows the euphemistic expressions used before, during and after birth.

Table 1: Euphemistic expressions on sex organ, sex, pregnancy and birth among the Dangme.

Sex organ related euphemistic expressions	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>Nyumu tso.</i>	‘Man’s stick.’
<i>Kpeti nane.</i>	‘Middle leg.’
<i>Yo we.</i>	‘Female’s home.’
Sex related euphemistic expressions	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>A ka sa.</i>	‘They shared a bed.’
<i>A na bɔmi.</i>	‘They got together.’
<i>A le a he.</i>	‘They knew themselves.’
<i>E fia e gblɛɛ mi tso.</i>	‘He caned her laps.’
<i>A kuɔ a he.</i>	‘They have climbed themselves.’

Pregnancy related euphemistic expressions

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E kuɔ tso.</i>	‘She has climbed a tree.’
<i>E da si.</i>	‘She is standing.’
<i>E he mi tsake.</i>	‘Her body has changed.’
<i>E ho Mawu a je pa ya.</i>	‘She has gone to God’s stream.’
<i>E kpeti tsa kpɔ.</i>	‘Her middle is knotted.’
<i>E mi mi wo kpɔ.</i>	‘Her stomach has developed lumps.’

Contemporary euphemistic expressions related to pregnancy

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E fu gali.</i>	‘She has soaked gari.’
<i>A gu tsopa ha le.</i>	‘She has been given an injection.’
<i>E tɔ.</i>	‘She is full or satisfied.’
<i>E jiɔ.</i>	‘She is heavy.’

Delivery related euphemistic expressions

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E kple.</i>	‘She has descended.’
<i>E je Mawu a je pa ke ba.</i>	‘She has returned from God’s stream.’
<i>E pe tɔ.</i>	‘She bursts the bottle.’
<i>E tɔ ɔ ywia</i>	‘Her bottle is broken.’

Circumcision related euphemistic expression

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>A pee le nyumu.</i>	‘He is made a man.’
<i>A plaa le.</i>	‘He has been wounded.’
<i>A po le</i>	‘He has been cut.’

4.1.1 Euphemistic expression for the reproductive organ among the Dangme

In the life of every human being, both the male and the female reproductive organs are very essential. Zimmermann (2018) affirms that the reproductive system is a collection of internal and external organs in both males and females that work together for the purpose of procreating. She explains further that due to its vital role in the survival of the species, many scientists argue that the reproductive system is among the most important systems in the entire body. Consider the following euphemistic expression for the reproductive organ among the Dangme. These are the *sulue* ‘penis’ which is euphemized as *nyumu tso* ‘man’s stick’ and vagina *piti* also euphemized as *yo we* ‘female’s home’.

4.1.2 Euphemistic expression for the male reproductive organ

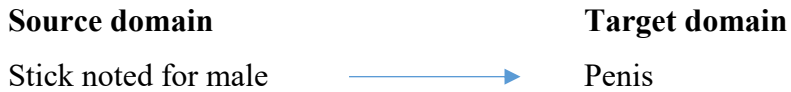
According to Zimmermann (2018) the male reproductive system is mostly located outside of the body, and these external organs include the penis, scrotum and testicles. She asserts that the male reproductive system is responsible for sexual function as well as urination. As far as the life cycle of the Dangme people is concerned, the male reproductive organ is used to perform the sexual function. Therefore the Dangme society has two different conceptualizations for the male organ *sulue* ‘penis’

4.1.2.1 Penis conceptualized as stick

The penis is conceptualized as stick due to its nature.

1. *Nyumu* *tso.*
Man stick
Man’s stick.
‘Penis’.

Metaphorical mapping



The nature of a stick is very straight. As the penis is also straight, it is considered as a stick which is associated to men. It is also seen to be only for men. The function of the penis among others is for sexual intercourse, for pleasure and for procreation purposes.

4.1.2.2 Penis conceptualized as a leg

This expression is not noted among the elderly people, instead it is used mostly among the younger generation.

- 2. *Kpeti*
Middle
Middle leg.
'Penis.'



Every human being has two legs. However, 'middle leg' in this expression is metaphorically used to mean the 'penis' which lies in between the two legs of men and is straight as the two legs human beings have. However, this third leg found in between these two legs is shorter than normal two legs. The leg is used to walk and during walking there is movement or shake. Likewise the penis which also perform some movements during sexual intercourse. Therefore the middle leg is mapped onto the penis.

4.1.2.3 Euphemistic expression for the female reproductive organ

In the human society, the female reproductive organ has a specific function that it performs. For instance, it is used for procreation purposes. That is the vagina serves as a pathway for the fertilization of the ovaries and also a path through which babies pass into this world. In this regard, Seladi- Schulman (2020) opines that the female reproductive system consists of both internal and external parts. She adds that the female reproductive organ performs several important functions including releasing of eggs which can potentially be fertilized by sperm. Producing female sex hormones, such as progesterone and estrogen, providing an environment for a fertilized egg to develop during pregnancy and facilitating labour and childbirth.

4.1.2.4 Vagina is a ‘home’ *yo we*

A home is where valuable asserts are kept for security purposes. In the same view, a respondent affirms that the vagina is said to be a home where generations are kept. This is because everybody who came to this world passed through the vagina. As far as the life cycle of the Dangme people is concerned, the vagina is conceptualized as a home or a hole where ‘water’ (sperm) can be stored during procreation. That is, water or the sperm fertilizes with the eggs to make babies. Consider the expression in 3 below:

3. *Yo* *we*.
 Female home
 Female’s home.
 ‘Vagina’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
Home noted for female	vagina

A house is a place where people live. The Dangme people do not want to mention the female reproductive organ, *piti* ‘vagina’ in plain language. According to <http://www.cancer-types>vaginal>the-vagina>, the vagina has three main functions. These are, the vagina provides a passageway for blood and mucosal tissue from the uterus during a woman's monthly period. Secondly, it receives the penis during sexual intercourse and holds the sperm until they pass into the uterus. Lastly, it provides a passageway for childbirth.

Metaphorically, the house represents the vagina because it houses many generations. Before babies are made there is the need for *bɔmi nami* ‘sexual activity’ where fertilization takes place in the womb. After nine months babies are expected to be delivered. Except in rare cases where some spend ten to eleven months, in the wombs before they are given birth to. The vagina now becomes the place where babies pass through before coming into this world and it is also seen as a treasure for women, a home which is treasured with humans.

4.1.3 Euphemistic expression for having sex

The Dangme people see sex as an activity which needs not be said in plain language. Speakers of Dangme use a number of expressions that metaphorically euphemize having sex as *sa kami* ‘sharing a bed’, *a le a he* ‘knowing of each other’, *bɔmi nami* ‘being gotten together’ and *tso fiame* ‘caning’. For example, a Dangme speaker will see *e kpa le* ‘he has had sex with her’ as being too plain language and would like to cover it up with mild expressions.

4.1.3.1 Sex is ‘sharing a bed’ *ka sa he*

Among the Dangme, sex is conceptualized as *sa kami* ‘sharing a bed’. There is the idea that during sexual intercourse, the man and the woman need to have that intimate relationship thereby leading them to sharing the same bed.

4. *A* *ka* *sa* *he*.
 3PL together. bed side
 They have shared a bed.
 ‘They had sexual intercourse.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Sharing of a bed



Target domain

having sex

In order to understand this expression better, the conception of sharing a bed has been mapped onto having sexual intercourse, and it is conceptualizing the idea of the man and the woman sleeping on the same bed and having that close intimacy during sexual intercourse. The information in the source domain aids our understanding of the euphemism in the target domain, where the man and the woman have mutual feelings during intercourse. The act of sharing one bed is therefore linked metaphorically to the activity of having sexual intercourse.

4.1.3.2 Sex is a ‘connection’ *bɔmi nami*

Making love is seen as conceptualizing the process of connection where there is a bond of intimacy between the man and the woman. This connection between the man and the woman needs an agreement before they can be together.

5. *A na bɔmi.*
 3PL get.PST join.GER
 They got together
 They had a connection.
 ‘They had sexual intercourse.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
Connecting together	having sex

During sexual intercourse, the partners are closely attached to each other, where there is connection between them with the two opposite sex organs. It is basically a physical and emotional bond with spouses where they both learn to foster intimacy by connecting on a deeper level during sex. Having sexual activity has both spiritual and spiritual connections. Spiritually, there is the need for opposite partners to have an agreement and togetherness among them. When there is that spiritual agreement among the two before sexual intimacy will manifest itself physically. This serve as a bond between them where they sometimes share believes and philosophies together, hence the connection.

4.1.3.3 Sex is ‘knowing oneself’

6. *A le a he.*
 3PL know.PST 3PL self
 They knew themselves.
 ‘They had sex’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
Knowing each other	having sex

Before opposite sex will have sexual intercourse, there is the need for them to undress themselves to see each other's nakedness. Moreover, before there will be sexual activity among the opposite sex, there is the need for consent from the other partner before embarking on that activity. Metaphorically, the act of knowing each other and seeing each other nakedness is mapped onto having sexual intercourse.

4.1.3.4 Sex is 'caned' *fia tso*

Sex is also conceptualized as caning because during sex, a similar activity of caning occurs. The youth make reference to this euphemistic expression mostly. Therefore the activity of sexual intercourse is mapped onto caning.

7. *E* *fia* *e* *gblɛɛ* *mi* *tso.*
 3SG throw.PST 3SG laps inside stick
 He had caned her in her laps.
 'They had sexual intercourse.'



Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
Caning the laps of a woman		having sex

Having sexual intercourse is conceptualized as caning. During caning there is the action of movement of the hand and the cane back and forth. Metaphorically, the manhood is seen as a stick or cane that moves back and forth in the vagina during sexual intercourse. In the process of having sexual intercourse, similar activity is seen as in the up and down movement of the penis.

4.1.3.5 Sex is ‘climbing’

In Dangme, sex is conceptualized as climbing metaphorically. This expression is mostly used by the youth. The expression *a kuɔ a he*, ‘they climbed themselves’ is also mostly used for animals that are mating. Example: *To ku ɔ kuɔ eyo ɔ*, ‘the male goat mated the female goat’. Therefore the youth has associated the process to human beings.

8. *A* *kuɔ* *a* *he*.
 3PL climb.PST 3PL self
 They climbed themselves.
 ‘They had sexual intercourse.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of climbing a person

Target domain

having sex

Sex is seen as climbing whereby the man will be on the woman and the vice versa. The youth in the Dangme society have mapped climbing to having sex. This gives the understanding of the expression without saying it in a plain language. In the natural sense, climbing is a gradual process so as in having sexual intercourse.

4.2 Euphemistic expressions for pregnancy

In actual sense, pregnancy is not a bad thing but sometimes people have negative thought for the mother and the unborn child, therefore society tries to cover it up as a form of protection. The Dangme society conceptualizes pregnancy as *e kuɔ tso* ‘she has climbed a tree’, *e da si* ‘she is standing’, *e he mi tsake* ‘she has changed physically’, *e ho Mawu a je pa ya* ‘she has gone to God’s stream’, *e kpeti tsa kpɔ* ‘her middle has been knotted’, *e mi mi wo kpɔ* ‘her stomach has developed lumps’, *a gu tsopa ha le* ‘she has been given an

injection’, *e fu gali* ‘she has soaked gari’ and *e to* ‘she has eaten to her fill’. The various conceptualizations are discussed below.

4.2.1 Pregnancy is ‘climbing a tree’

Pregnancy is conceptualized by the Dangme people as climbing. This is because before one can get to the top of a tree, that person needs to make a systematic attempt.

9. *E* *kuo* *tso.*
 3SG climb.PST tree
 She has climbed a tree.
 ‘She is pregnant.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of climbing a tree

Target domain

carrying of pregnancy

Climbing a tree, is seen as a dangerous activity that human beings perform. In climbing a tree, the person doing the climbing needs to be extra careful in order not to fall down. Also when a person is on a tree, that person’s support is not fully assured. It seen that from the time of pregnancy, the woman’s life is at stake and anything bad can happen to her. Therefore when a woman is pregnant, she needs to be handled with care so that she does not lose the pregnancy, her life or both as well. So climbing a tree is mapped onto the period of gestation to the time of delivery.

4.2.2 Pregnancy conceptualized as stagnation

The Dangme people conceptualized pregnancy as stagnation in the sense that, before a woman can get pregnant, she needs to go through the menstruation process. Immediately

a woman gets pregnant she stops seeing her menstrual flow. In that case the state of the menstruation is referred to as being at a standstill.

10. *E* *da* *si.*
 3SG stand down
 She has stood up.
 ‘She is pregnant.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
The act of standing still		being pregnant

As a result for the target domain to be understood by the source domain, the act of stagnation or the stop of menstrual flow is mapped unto being pregnant. Also, when a person is sitting down he or she could not be seen well because the height of that person is lowered. In this case when the expression *e da si* ‘she is standing’ is used, it means everybody can see her and the condition in which she is in as being pregnant. It is in this regard that the Dangme have this saying *ma ne naa yohoyo* ‘a pregnant woman is seen by everyone’. Hence the expression literally means ‘standing out’. When something ‘stands out’ it means it is conspicuous. Therefore, the act of standing is mapped onto pregnancy.

4.2.3 Pregnancy is a ‘change’

Change is something that occurs within a short period of time. Pregnancy is a condition that does not last forever. Dangme people conceptualize pregnancy as a change that occurs in women. Consider the expression below:

11. *E* *he* *mi* *tsake*.
 3SG self body change.PST
 She has changed physically.
 ‘She is pregnant’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain		Target domain
The act of a changing physically	→	being pregnant

When a woman is pregnant, there are some changes that occur in her physical appearances. Some of these changes include not being active as the woman used to be before the pregnancy, there is an increase in the size of the breast and there is an enlargement in the belly as well. Metaphorically, when these changes begin to manifest in the woman, it is then mapped onto the woman being pregnant.

4.2.4 Pregnancy conceptualized as going to the stream

The Dangme society conceptualized pregnancy as going to the stream. The expression *e ho Mawu a je pa ya*. ‘she has gone to the stream of God’ is used for someone who is pregnant. Traditionally, we go to the stream with pot, and here, the pregnancy presents the pot. *Pa a* ‘the ‘stream’ also symbolizes the baby which the woman is going to fetch. It is in this regard that pregnancy is conceptualized as going to the stream.

12. *E* *ho* *Mawu* *a* *je* *pa* *ya*.
 3SG go.PST God 3PL POSS river PRT
 She has gone to God’s stream.
 ‘She is pregnant.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain		Target domain
Going to the stream	→	carrying pregnancy

According to CMT, the target domain is understood by the source domain. In helping to achieve the meaning of this expression, the stream is linked to the baby the woman is going to fetch or bring home. When one goes to the stream to fetch water with an empty pot or bucket, he or she comes back with a pot or bucket full of water. A pot or bucket said to be full is mapped onto the development of the blood clot into the fetus and then into a baby. Metaphorically, this activity of going to the stream is mapped onto carrying pregnancy.

4.2.5 Pregnancy conceptualized as being knotted

When a rope is knotted there is that blockage for easy movement so it is in pregnancy.

Pregnancy is conceptualized as being knotted.

13. *E* *kpeti* *tɔ* *kɔ*.
 3SG middle tighten knot
 Her middle has tighten a knot.
 ‘She is pregnant’.



Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Target domain

Being knotted



carrying of a pregnancy

When there is a knot holding two parts together, it is not easy for any object to come in between the knot. As a woman becomes pregnant, it is seen that there is a knot holding or tightening her menstrual cycle. In this case there cannot be any menstrual flow as she used to have it every month. The case where a woman is knotted and she cannot have her monthly flow (of blood) is mapped onto that woman being pregnant.

4.2.6 Pregnancy is ‘developing a lump’

14. *E mi mi wo kpo.*
 3SG stomach inside delevop.PST lump
 Her stomach has developed lumps.
 ‘She is pregnant’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Target domain

The act of developing lumps → carrying of a pregnancy

It is seen that blood clots form babies. This blood clot goes through a process before it is formed into a baby. The lump symbolizes the blood clots. Therefore at the first stage of pregnancy where the blood clots develop into babies is known by Dangme people as the woman’s stomach has developed a lump and it is mapped onto a woman carrying pregnancy.



4.2.7 Pregnancy is an ‘injection’

Pregnancy is conceptualized as an injection giving. This euphemistic expression was given by the youth. It is affirmed by the respondents that before a woman gets pregnant, she needs to have sex for the sperm to be fertilized with an egg to form the embryo.

15. *A gu tsopa ha le.*
 3PL inject.PST medicine give 3SG.OBJ
 She was given an injection
 ‘She is pregnant.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Target domain

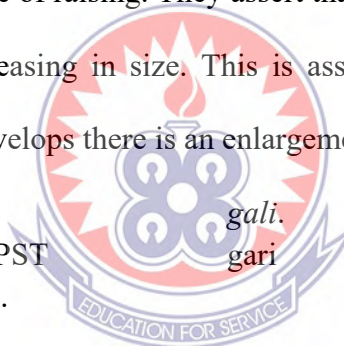
Giving of an injection → becoming pregnancy

In giving an injection, the fluid-like medicine needs to be drawn into the syringe in order to be injected into the veins of the body. In this case the penis is metaphorically linked to the syringe and the sperm to the fluid-like medicine whilst the vagina is the location for depositing the fluid. So when these fertilization process takes place, giving injection is mapped onto the process of sexual intercourse that leads to pregnancy.

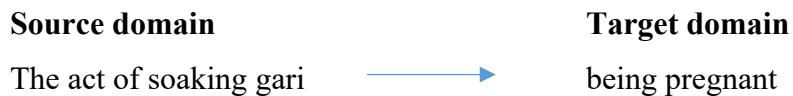
4.2.8 Pregnancy is ‘bloating’

The use of this euphemistic expression was noticed among the younger generation. They conceptualized pregnancy as bloating of the belly or the stomach as it occurs in soaked gari where there is evidence of raising. They assert that when water is added to gari, in no time the gari will be increasing in size. This is associated with the various stages of pregnancy. As the baby develops there is an enlargement of the woman’s belly.

16. *E* *fu*
 3SG wet.PST
 She has soaked gari.
 ‘She is pregnant.’



Metaphorical mapping



The source domain which is the act of wetting gari is mapped onto pregnancy. This is because when a woman gets pregnant and the embryo starts to develop, (first trimester, 2nd trimester and the 3rd trimester), the pregnant woman’s belly starts to enlarge as in soaked gari.

4.2.9 Pregnancy is ‘satisfaction’

This euphemistic expression was noticed among the youth. They indicated that normally, when a person eats and gets satisfied, the belly protrudes. In this case, the expression is linked to pregnant women as a form of mocking them that food which is meant to be eaten in bits, they have eaten all and are fully satisfied.

17. *E* *to*.
 3SG satisfy.PST
 She is full.
 ‘She is pregnant’.

Metaphorical mapping

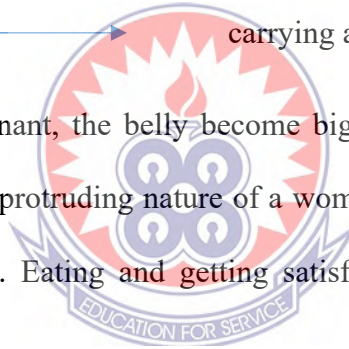
Source domain

Satisfying of oneself

Target domain

carrying a pregnancy

When a woman gets pregnant, the belly become big like someone who has eaten and gotten satisfied, hence the protruding nature of a woman’s stomach is linked to someone who has eaten to the full. Eating and getting satisfied is mapped onto carrying of a pregnancy.



4.2.10 Pregnancy is ‘being heavy’

18. *E* *jiɔ*
 3SG heavy
 She is heavy
 ‘She is pregnant’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Being heavy

Target domain

carrying of a pregnancy

There are times where some pregnant women in their early stages are not active in performing their daily activities. Some of these women find it difficult in executing their chores. These activities make the society see these pregnant women to be heavy and unable to carry out their duties.

Also, in weight wise, because pregnant women are not alone, the heaviness has to do with the additional load (baby) they carry. Hence society make fun of them by saying they are heavy. Therefore, the act of being heavy is mapped onto carrying of a pregnancy.

4.3 Euphemistic expression for delivery

Dangme people consider the act of safe delivery as good news or a success story. When a woman is delivered of a baby, she is seen as a victorious person who has come out of troubles and complications. The Dangme see pregnant women as people whose lives are in danger. Therefore, when they are delivered of their babies safely, the following euphemistic expressions are used for. For example: *E kple* ‘she has descended’ and *e je Mawu a je pa ke ba* ‘she has come back from God’s stream’ and *e pe to* ‘she bursts the bottle’ *e to ɔ ywia* ‘she has broken the bottle’.

4.3.1 Delivery is ‘descending’

When one climbs a tree that person is expected to descend from the tree. In this case every pregnant woman is required to deliver safely. Therefore the act of giving birth is conceptualized as descending from a tree.

19. *E* *kple.*
 3SG descend.PST
 She has descended
 ‘She has delivered of a baby.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
The act of descending	delivery

It is expected that when a person climbs a tree, he or she needs to get down from the tree safely without being hurt, so it is in pregnancy, where a pregnant woman is required to deliver safely. It was noted that when a person climbs a tree there are certain things that he/she cannot do while on the tree, because if care is not taken the person could fall and die. Similarly, when a woman is pregnant she is not expected to be doing certain things such as insulting people and talking or acting in a disrespectful manner in the community, for example, being disrespectful to her chiefs, certain physical activities like bathing late in an unroofed bathroom and postures such as sleeping on the stomach and squatting during pregnancy since it might suppress the baby in the womb.

The physical activities that pregnant woman should not do, which include not sitting on mortar because when she does that and she delivers, the baby’s head will divide into two. Also, when she bathes and some of the water remains, she is not expected to pour it outside the bathroom where people can walk through it. This is because, it is believed that some women face difficulties in their delivery so when such people walk in the water, they might transfer that difficulty to her during delivery. When a pregnant woman

sits and always crosses her legs, the Dangme people believe that during delivery the baby will be doing this activity and may delay her delivery process.

Another physical activity related to the sitting of a pregnant woman is that, when she sits people are not supposed to pass behind her. This is because when she sits and any woman with delivery complications passes behind her, she might also face those challenges during her delivery.

So all these disrespectful acts, physical activities and her posture during pregnancy are beliefs that may hinder her safe delivery. Hence, the act of descending from the tree is metaphorically mapped onto safe delivery.

4.3.2 Delivery is ‘returning from the stream’

In the Dangme society, a pregnant woman is considered as someone who is going to the stream especially created by God for water. Travelling to and from that river comes with some challenges for most women. Therefore, when she comes back successfully with water symbolizing the by-product, a baby, it is conceptualized as returning from the stream.

20. *E je Mawu a je pa kε ba.*
 3SG leave.PST God 3PL POSS river CONJ come.PST
 She is back from God’s stream.
 ‘She has been delivered of a baby.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

One returning from the stream



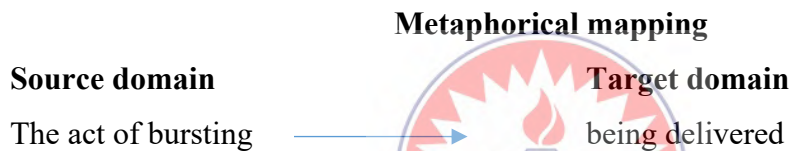
Target domain

being delivered of a baby.

When the woman delivers, she is seen as someone who has come back from death to life. She has gone through the challenges of pregnancy that is, returning from the stream successfully. Hence returning from the stream is mapped onto being delivered of a baby safely.

4.3.2 Delivery is ‘bursting’

21. *E* *pɛ.* *tɔ.*
 3SG burst bottle
 She burst bottle.
 ‘She has been delivered of a baby’.



The form of a bottle is linked to physical appearance of a pregnant woman’s stomach. When things are kept in a glass bottle and that bottle is broken, whatever is kept in that bottle will eventually pour out. The bottle here symbolizes the belly of the pregnant woman. So when a pregnant woman gives birth, it is seen that her bottle which is metaphorically linked to the pregnancy has burst for the baby to come out.

4.3.2 Delivery is ‘breaking of a bottle’

22. *E* *tɔ* *ɔ* *ywia.*
 3SG bottle DEF break. PST
 Her bottle has broken.
 ‘She has delivered of a baby’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of breaking a bottle



Target domain

being delivered

A pregnant woman being delivered of a baby is not a planned event but the woman delivers the baby suddenly. The bottle symbolizes the pregnancy and the breaking represents the sudden delivery of the baby. Therefore the act of breaking a bottle is mapped onto being delivered of a baby.

4.4 Euphemistic expression for circumcision

Every male child is expected to be circumcised as demanded by the Dangme culture and even across some cultures.

4.4.1 Circumcision as being complete

When a male child is born into a community, he needs to be circumcised. By so doing the child is being ushered into manhood.

23. *A* *pee* *le* *nyumu.*
 3PL make.PST 3SG man
 He has been made a man.
 ‘He has been circumcised.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Making a man complete



Target domain

circumcising a male

The act of circumcision is metaphorically linked to being made a man. The source domain of circumcising a male is inversely mapped onto making a man complete.

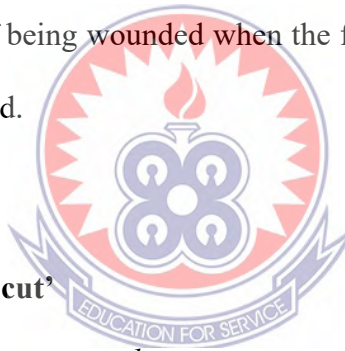
4.4.2 Circumcision as ‘being wounded’

24. *A* *pla* *le.*
 3PL wound.PST 3SG.OBJ
 He has been wounded.
 ‘He has been circumcised.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
Being wounded	→	circumcising a male

When a person is wounded there is the possibility of blood oozing out. Likewise when a male child is circumcised and the foreskin is removed from the penis, there is a flow of blood. Therefore the act of being wounded when the foreskin is removed is mapped onto circumcision of a male child.



4.4.1 Circumcision as a ‘cut’

25. *A* *po* *le.*
 3PL cut 3SG
 He has been cut.
 ‘He is circumcised’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
Being cut	→	circumcising a male

In circumcising a male child, sharp objects such as knife or blades are used. In the process of removing the foreskin from the male penis, any of these sharp objects are

used. Therefore, the process where sharp objects are used to cut the foreskin on the male's penis is mapped onto circumcision of the male.

4.5 Sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions on birth among the

Dangme

This section discusses the sociocultural aspect of the euphemistic expressions used in the first stage of the life cycle of the Dangme. These include the representative organ, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, delivery and circumcision.

4.5.1 Sociocultural implication of euphemistic expression for reproductive organ

The culture of the Dangme people forbids the society to be mentioning the male and the female reproductive organs *sulue* 'penis' and *piti* 'vagina' respectively in plain language. So they have deployed several ways in saying them *nyumu tso* 'man's stick' and *yo we* 'females's home' to save both the speaker and the hearer's face. Also during communication, if people mention these reproductive organs *sulue* 'penis' and *piti* 'vagina' without euphemizing them, those people are considered as not being knowledgeable in the culture and the tradition of the Dangme people.

4.5.2 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Having Sex

The Dangme people see *no kpami* 'sex' as a taboo word and the use of euphemistic expressions when applied bring dignity into the society. The society also see sex as something that is holy and for mature person only and not for children. So different ways are employed in expressing the word sexual intercourse in the Dangme society. These ways include *a ka sa* 'sharing of a bed', *a na bɔmi* 'they got together', *a le a he* 'they

know each other’, *e fia e gbleε mi tso* ‘he caned her laps and *e kuɔ le* ‘they climbed themselves’. These expressions also bring pleasantness into the communicative event. It is a signal that an individual knows how to communicate with other people and to maintain each other’s image in the society. This supports the assertion of Katamba (2005), that avoidance of hurting someone is not the major reason for the use of euphemisms. In his opinion, people use euphemisms to deal with social taboos that are in every individual’s culture. Social taboos constitute topics respected by people. The use of such euphemistic expressions with regard to sex serves as a shield to protect morality during conversation. It prevents children from understanding the intended meaning of the statements.

4.5.3 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for pregnancy

Pregnancy is seen as a good thing among the Dangme because it is a form of increasing the population. Due to the negative attitudes of some people in the community such as people having bad spirits to harm either the unborn baby or the mother, when a woman is pregnant, especially in the early stages, pregnancy is not mentioned in a plain language. The usage of these euphemistic expressions reduces the contempt that comes with saying them in plain language and to make it less obvious. This will prevent non-native speakers of Dangme from understanding the meaning of issues discussed when euphemisms are used among communicators.

4.5.4 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Circumcision

It is believed by the Dangme people that before a male child could be seen as clean and a complete man, he needs to be circumcised. This is because the Dangme people believe

that they are from Israel and the people of Israel see males who are not circumcised as unclean. Therefore the Dangme society also practice that culture and every male child is circumcised for them to be regarded as clean.

4.5.5 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expressions for Delivery

The Dangme society sees delivery as being victorious. When a woman is pregnant she goes through a lot of complications and health issues. Some go through complications and sometimes lose the child prematurely or during delivery. Sometimes the mother goes through complications and some cases, both the mother and the child die. So when a woman delivers successfully irrespective of these challenges, she is seen as a victorious woman. When it happens that way, the family and the society at large expect her to be wearing white clothes for at least three months. Among the Dangme people, the colour white symbolizes victory and good fortunes. This is to show that the woman has won victory in the nine months journey of pregnancy.

Also, when a woman is delivered of a child, it is euphemized because it is believed that some people have some spirits that can destroy the new born baby. These bad people could possess some sprits such as sicknesses noted for animals. When they see the baby, they could transfer the sickness to the baby for them to be behaving abnormally. In order to prevent bad people from transferring sickness to the baby to harm them or kill them, the Dangme people do not say *e fɔ* ‘she is delivered of a baby’ in a plain language.

4.6 Euphemistic expression for puberty rites among the Dangme

Puberty rite is a phenomenon that occurs across cultures. According to Nhlekisana (2017), rites of passage are rituals that mark or accompany the important changes in the life cycle of individuals such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. She adds that girls' puberty rites mark the transition or change in status from childhood to adulthood and explains further that people throughout the world have ritual ceremonies intended to mark this transition. Similarly, the Dangme people have the belief that during the puberty stage in the life cycle, individuals go through changes that transition them into adulthood. In the case of the women, during the period, they go through menstruation before they are initiated as fully grown adults who qualify to marry. The males however, are given working tools such as cutlasses, pickaxes, hoes, axes, mattocks, among many others, which symbolize maturity and their strength to work. This means that the men have the capability to work and can fend for their family if they eventually marry.

Another way of initiating the male child into adulthood is to give them domestic animals such as fowls, turkeys, ducks, goats and sheep to rear. This activity is done for the family to check whether the man will be responsible when he marries, in the sense that the way he will cater for these birds and animals is the same way he will treat his wife when he marries. These birds and animals that are given to the male have some character traits in them which include calmness, dullness, worrisome, stubbornness, smartness and troublesome, among others. In this process, the family uses the character traits in these birds and animals to test the patience level of the young man. These traits of these domestic animals are similar to traits of women. So the belief is if the man is able to

accommodate and tolerate the character traits in these animals without hitting them or treating them badly, then he can handle a woman with any of such traits. The table below shows the euphemistic expressions used in the second stage of the life cycle of the Dangme people.

Table 2: Euphemistic expressions on menstruation, marriage, impotency and divorce among the Dangme.

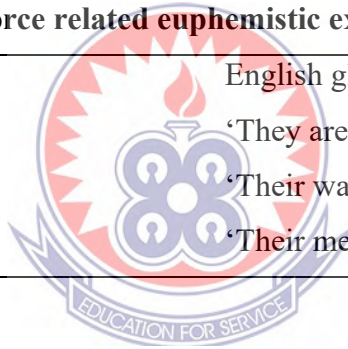
Menstruation related euphemistic expressions	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E ho we se ya.</i>	‘She has gone behind the house.’
<i>Hlami nu le./ Hlami gbe le.</i>	‘She has been caught up by the moon.’
<i>E je we mi.</i>	‘She has left home.’
<i>E fia nine si.</i>	‘She has hit the back of the palm on the ground.’
<i>E nge yihi a ni pee.</i>	‘She is doing women thing’.
<i>E je la te no.</i>	‘She has gone out of the hearth.’
Contemporary euphemistic expressions related to menstruation	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E gbe to.</i>	‘She slaughtered a goat.’
<i>Nubwo ba to le.</i>	‘She has received a visitor.’
Marriage related euphemistic expressions	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>A hia blo.</i>	‘They have travelled.’
<i>A pee me kake.</i>	‘They are joined as one.’
<i>A wo weku.</i>	‘They have been made a family.’
<i>A tsa me suomi kpa.</i>	‘They have joined their love together.’

Impotent related euphemistic expressions

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E la a tsui / E laa gbo.</i>	‘His fire does not sparkle.’
<i>E tu ɔ kpɛ we la</i>	‘His gun misfires.’
<i>E ho anyamaa mi ya.</i>	‘He has gone into the state of <i>anyamaa</i> , a type of plant.’
<i>E ho a nyɛmɛ a ma mi ya.</i>	‘A travel to the world of women.’
<i>E matsesi ɔ nɔ nyu mi</i>	‘His matches has fallen into water.’
<i>E ka e bo ɔ ngɛ lalɛɛ nɔ.</i>	‘He dried his cloth on the <i>lalɛɛ</i> ’, a type of grass.’

Divorce related euphemistic expressions

Dangme	English gloss (Literal Meaning)
<i>A kpeti pue.</i>	‘They are separated.’
<i>A nyɛmi ɔ nya ta.</i>	‘Their walking has ended.’
<i>A kpe ɔ gbɛ.</i>	‘Their meeting has collapsed.’



4.6.1 Euphemistic expression for menstruation

Menstruation is what shifts a girl into a woman (Ruble and Brooks- Gunn (1982). The Dangme people see menstrual blood as something which is highly impure to be seen around, so euphemistic expressions such as relocation, being caught up with the moon, being absent from home, hitting the back of the palm on the ground, being out of the hearth, and many others, are used to cover up the mention of menstrual blood in plain language. From the data it shows that the Dangme people conceptualize menstruation as the following: *E ho we se ya* ‘she has gone behind the house’, *hlami nu le* ‘she has been caught up by the moon’, *e je we mi* ‘she has left home’, *e fia nine si* ‘she has pressed

down the hand’, *e nge yihi a ni pee* ‘she is doing women thing’, *e je la te no* ‘she has gone out of the hearth’, *e gbe to* she slaughtered a goat’ and *nubwo ba to le* ‘she has received a visitor.’

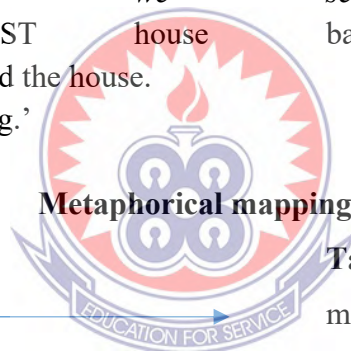
4.6.1.1 Menstruation is a ‘relocation’

The Dangme people conceptualize menstruation as a relocation. This is because the people believe that when a woman is menstruating, she is regarded as someone who is not supposed to be in the house; instead she goes outside the house because she is seen as not clean.

26. *E* *ho* *we* *se* *ya.*
 3SG go.PST house back PRT
 She has gone behind the house.
 ‘She is menstruating.’

Source domain

Going behind the house



Metaphorical mapping

Target domain

menstruating

The perception of the Dangme people about menstrual blood is that any woman in her menses is seen as not clean. The woman is also expected to do her house chores outside the house since she is considered as someone who is not in a clean state to be in the house with others. Metaphorically, travelling outside the house is mapped onto menstruation among the Dangme society.

4.6.1.2 Menstruation conceptualized as being caught up by the moon

The Dangme people see the menstrual blood that flows from females as not pure. In this regard, the following conceptualizations in (27) are used.

27. *Hlami nu lɛ.*
 Month catch.PST 3SG.OBJ
 The moon has caught her up.
 ‘She is menstruating.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
Being caught up by the moon	menstruating

With the intension that menstruation comes every month, when a female is experiencing her menstrual flow then she is considered as someone whom the moon has caught up with. The act of being caught up by the moon is mapped as the end of one’s menstrual cycle and the beginning of another cycle.

4.6.1.3 Menstruation conceptualized as absence from home

When a woman is in her menstrual period, she is seen as someone who is not in the house at that very moment. The woman is regarded as a person who is not in the state of cleanliness and then cannot be expected in the kitchen to prepare food for the family.

28. *E je we mi.*
 3SG leave.PST house inside
 She has left home.
 ‘She is menstruating.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	Target domain
Absence from the house	menstruating

The Dangme people have the feeling that when a woman is menstruating, she is not clean. The woman is allowed to leave the house for the period of the menstruation. She

only comes in only when the menstruation is over to perform her duties to the family. Metaphorically the absence from the house is mapped onto menstruation.

4.6.1.4 Menstruation conceptualized as hitting the back of the palm on the ground

Mostly when a woman is menstruating in Dangme, she is seen as someone whose palm is turned down and pressed on to the ground. This is because the moment the woman starts her period, she is not expected to cook or perform any activity or house hold chores that involves using the hand. A woman's palm pressed down during her menstruation means at the moment in her life, she is restricted from using her hand to cook for the family. When this is mentioned to a hearer, he or she understands that the woman is menstruating. It could also be that the 'woman is resting her hand.' When the hand is resting, it is not used to do anything.

29. *E* *fia* *nine* *si.*
 3SG press.PST hand down
 She has pressed her hand down.
 'She is menstruating.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Pressing one's hand down



Target domain

menstruating

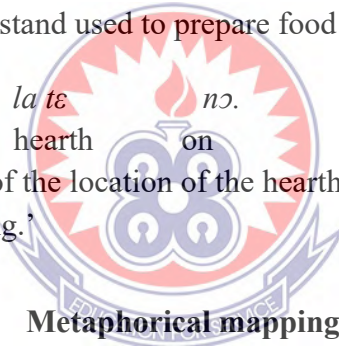
In the Dangme tradition, as in any other cultures, the hand is used to perform almost all functions. When a person's hand is turned and pressed down, such a person could not hold things firmly or perform any activity with it. With regard to this, that woman is not allowed to perform certain house chores especially cooking for the family. When the condition is over, the woman is seen to have lifted up the hand from the ground. This

means she can now perform her daily routines. Also, in the olden days women used *subue* ‘loincloth’ during menstruation. When such clothing is used the woman is expected to wash it. Metaphorically, the woman’s hand is seen not to be clean to perform the duty of cooking. The woman does not share bed with her husband or have sexual intercourse with her husband because she is restricted from those activities as she has turned and pressed the back of her palm down. Hence the act of a woman to turn and press the back of her palm down is mapped onto menstruation.

4.6.1.5 Menstruation is being out of the ‘hearth’

The ‘hearth’ is molded as a stand used to prepare food among the Dangme.

30. *E je la te no.*
 3SG leave.PST hearth on
 She has gone out of the location of the hearth.
 ‘She is menstruating.’



Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Getting out of the ‘hearth’



Target domain

menstruating

For a woman to be on the hearth indicates that she is liable to cook, while being out of it translates that she is not in the position to cook. Women who are menstruating are denied the privilege of cooking for their husbands and others, therefore are seen as being out of the ‘hearth’. On the other hand, when a woman is seen as being inside the ‘hearth’, it means she is free to do any form of cooking, which eventually means that she is not in her menses. So getting out of the hearth is mapped onto menstruation.

4.6.1.6 Menstruation conceptualized as woman's thing

Mostly it is women who menstruate, therefore the act of menstruation is attributed to women and it is conceptualized as something that is solely for women.

31. *E nge yi-hi a ni pee.*
 3SG COP woman-PL 3PL.POSS things do.
 'She is doing women thing.'
 'She is menstruating.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
Doing women thing		menstruating

The Dangme attribute the state of menstruation as something that is not pure, based on the philosophy that menstrual blood is dirty. It is not possible for a man to menstruate, therefore the act is reserved for women only. A person hearing from a woman that she is doing 'women's thing' will understand that the lady is in her menses. Therefore, among the Dangme, the 'women thing' metaphor is inversely mapped onto the state of one being in her menstrual cycle.

4.6.1.7 Menstruation is 'slaughtering'

Menstruation is conceptualized as slaughtering of animals in which there is a flow of blood (from the slaughtered animal).

32. *E gbe to.*
 3SG slaughter.PST goat
 She slaughtered a goat.
 'She is menstruating.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Blood from an animal



Target domain

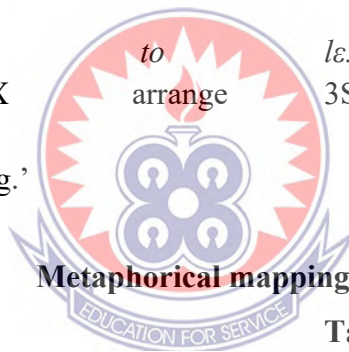
menstruating

The flow of blood is metaphorically mapped onto menstruation as in slaughtering which involves blood oozing out of the cut throat of the animal being slaughtered.

4.6.1.8 Menstruation is a ‘visitor’

This euphemistic expression was given by the youth in the visited communities for the research. As a result, the monthly flow of blood is conceptualized by the natives as a visitor.

33. *Nubwɔ ba to lɛ.*
 Visitor AUX arrange 3SG.OBJ
 She has a visitor.
 ‘She is menstruating.’



Source domain

Receiving a visitor



Target domain

menstruating

Menstrual flow lasts for a number of days in the month. Likewise, visitors do not stay forever, they come and go when their time is due. Therefore, the behaviour of a visitor is conceptualized into the domain of a woman in her menses which does not last in her forever. In the case of visitors, they only stay for some times and then return.

4.7 Euphemistic expression for marriage

The Dangme people cherish and adore marriage a lot. At this stage, the man and the woman are to leave their respective parents and be joined together as husband and wife (Matthew chapter 19 verse 5). The couple are expected to make a family to continue with their parent's generation. Other euphemistic expressions used for marriage would be analyzed in chapter five.

4.7.1 Marriage is a 'journey'

Marriage is conceptualized as a journey because both the man and a woman are journeying together to a particular destination and are seen as each other's help mate in life.

34. *A* *hia*
 3PL *travell.PST*
 They have traveled.
 'They are married.'



Source domain

Travelling together



Target domain

married couple

Marriage is a journey which couples are supposed to embark on together. In the course of the journey they will encounter challenges and other troubles such as fertility problem, financial difficulties, among many others, on their way but in everything they need to stand firm to endure those difficulties.

4.8 Euphemistic expressions for the impotent

Walker (1978) defines impotence as the inability to have a satisfactory erection and discharge or ejaculate into the vagina at the desired time during the wife's menstrual cycle. When a man and a woman get married, society expects the man to impregnate the woman. When, to some extent, the woman is not picking seed, the family and the society see the man not to be potent. The following are example of euphemistic expressions regarding men who are impotent among the Dangme: *E la a tsui* 'his fire does not light', *e tu ɔ kpɛ we la* 'his gun does not produce fire', *e ho anyamaa mi* 'he has gone into *anyamaa mi* (a type of creeping plant)', *e ho a nyɛmɛ a ma mi ya* 'he has gone to the world of women', *e matsesi ɔ nɔ nyu mi* 'his matches fell into water' and *e ka e bo ɔ nɛ lalɛ nɔ* 'he dried his cloth on *lalɛ*, a type of grass'.

4.8.1 Impotency conceptualized as a fire being incombustible

The Dangme people conceptualized a man who is impotent as someone whose world has come to an end or who is doomed.

35. *E la a tsu-i.*
 2SG fire DEF combustibile.NEG
 His fire is incombustible
 'He is impotent.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
A fire being incombustible	→	impotency

In a natural sense, when fire is being lighted, there must be a flame to sparkle it. Likewise when a married man has an affair with his wife, the wife is expected to conceive. If the woman is medically proven to be fertile and the man is not able to impregnate the

woman, it means he is not able to perform a complete task by lightening the fire to sparkle. Hence not being able to impregnate the woman is mapped onto a fire being incombustible.

4.8.2 Impotency is ‘not shooting’

Shooting is done in order to kill a person or an animal. In doing the shooting both gun and gunpowder need to be used to have a complete operation or exercise.

36. *E tu ɔ kpe we la.*
 3SG gun DEF sparkle NEG fire
 His gun does not produce flame.
 ‘He is impotent.’

Source domain

A gun being nonflammable

Metaphorical mapping

Target domain

impotency



Among the Dangme people, when a man is not able to impregnate a woman, it means something is wrong. Here, the penis is conceptualized as a gun while the gunpowder is also conceptualized as the sperm. These two organs need to be strong in order to be able to cause a woman to be pregnant. If one presses a trigger but no shot is released it means the gun misfires, hence it is mapped onto impotency.

4.8.3 Impotency is ‘a travel’

Impotency among the Dangme people is also conceptualized as a travel to *anyamaa mi* (a creeping plant). The *anyamaa* is always lying on the floor while growing, which is used to represent a penis that cannot stand upright. Therefore, when a man is likely to travel to

anyamaa mi, he becomes more like the *anyamaa* where his penis cannot stand upright. When this happens the man cannot have erection to (have sexual intercourse) with the woman. Therefore, his travel to *anyamaa mi* is conceptualized as being impotent.

37. *E ho anyamaa mi ya.* (Aboorchie, 2011: 58)
 3SG go.PST *anyamaa* inside PRT
 He has gone into *anyamaa mi* (a type of creeping plant).
 ‘He is impotent.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

A travel to *anyamaa mi*



Target domain

impotent

Anyamaa mi is a type of creeping plant. Normally, the state of this grass is always lying on the ground though it is fresh. In order to understand the target domain better, the source domain is used. Metaphorically, the state of the grass is linked to the state of the penis. When a man is not able to impregnate a woman then his penis is compared to that grass which is always in a lying position. Hence a travel to *anyamaa mi* (a type of creeping plant) is mapped onto impotency.

- 37b. *E ho a nyeme a ma mi ya.*
 3SG go.PST 3PL mother.PL 3PL town inside PRT
 ‘He has gone to the world of women.’
 ‘He is impotent.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

A travel to the world of women



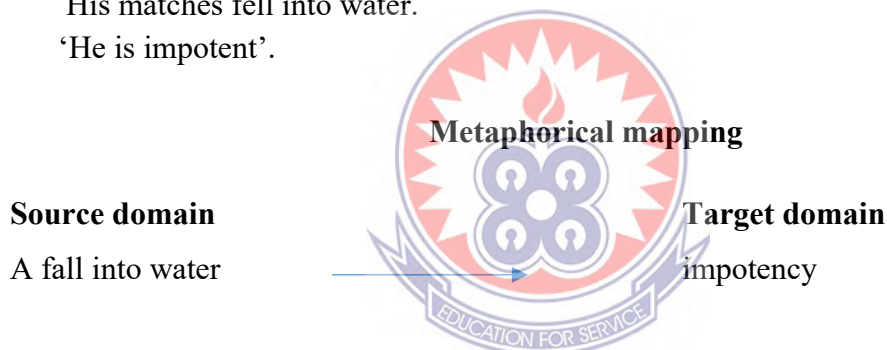
Target domain

impotency

It is believed that men who are impotent are seen as women. This is because during sexual intercourse with their partners, they do not perform their function as expected of them as men in bed. In this regard, those men are considered as being the same as the woman on the bed at that moment. Therefore, men who are identified in such category, are seen that they have traveled to the world of women and it is metaphorically mapped onto impotency.

4.8.4 Impotency is ‘a fall into water’

38. *E matsesi ɔ no nyu mi.*
 3SG matches DEF fall.PST water inside
 His matches fell into water.
 ‘He is impotent’.



When a man has an affair with a woman who is medically proven to be fertile, society expects that the man should be able to impregnate the woman. If the unexpected happens then the man is referred to as having his matches has fall into water. This is because a stick of match is required to produce a flame when it is ignited. When a stick of match falls into water, it will eventually become wet. Hence it cannot produce flame to perform a desired task. Metaphorically, matches which is wet symbolizes manhood which cannot function properly to impregnate a woman.

4.8.5 Impotency is ‘drying cloth on *lalɛɛ*, a type of grass’

39. *E ka bo nge lalɛɛ nɔ.*
 3SG dry.PST cloth COP *lalɛɛ* on
 He dried his cloth on *lalɛɛ*.
 ‘He is impotent’.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Drying on a grass



Target domain

impotency

Lalɛɛ is a type of grass which normally grows on a salty land and mostly at plain areas. Since it grows at an open place, people used to dry clothing on it. It is also used in fish smoking. Due to its benefits to society, everybody makes use of it. It is believed that women are mostly involved in fish mongering so they frequently go for the grass to process their fish. The cloth is metaphorically linked to the man’s manhood which is not supposed to be exposed to every woman. Also, *lalɛɛ* symbolizes the man, who is a useful tool in the human society. Therefore a man who is impotent is referred to as someone who dries his cloth on this grass *lalɛɛ* with the reason being that he can be lured by every woman for their sexual desires without the man getting them pregnant, since the man is known to be incapable of impregnating anybody. Metaphorically, the man’s manhood is now exposed to every woman who wants to make use of it. Hence drying a cloth on *lalɛɛ*, a type of grass is mapped onto impotency.

4.9 Euphemistic expressions for divorce

Among the Dangme people, there are many instances where either the woman or the man can ask for divorce. This usually occurs in cases of infidelity on the side of the man or the

woman. Another instance is the absence of child birth between the couple, and sometimes the social conduct of either the man or the woman. These conditions result in divorce for which the Dangme have some euphemistic expressions. Consider the following euphemistic expressions for divorce in Dangme: *A kpeti pue* ‘they have separated’ and *a nyɛɛmi ɔ nya ta* ‘their walking has ended’.

4.9.1 Divorce is ‘separation’

When married couple divorce, it is conceptualized as separation. This is because in marriage both the man and the woman come from their individual backgrounds to stay together as one, where there is a kind of bond that binds them together. Therefore at the point of divorce, they come out of that bond and stay separately. The following utterance justifies this in Dangme:

39. *A* *kpeti* *pue.*
 3PL middle spoil.PST
 The relationship between them has spoiled.
 ‘They are divorced.’



Metaphorical mapping

Source domain	→	Target domain
The act of separation		divorce

When there is a separation between two people especially married couple, it means there is no connection or nothing is binding them together again. In this sense the couple now live their separate lives. The act of separation is mapped onto divorce among the Dangme people.

4.9.2 Divorce is a ‘stagnation’

In marriage, the couples are together are conceptualized as walking together. Likewise, when they are no longer married, it is conceptualized as ending their walk.

40. *A* *nyɛɛmi* *ɔ* *nya* *ta.*
 3PL walk.GER DEF mouth end.PST
 Their walking has ended.
 ‘They are divorced.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

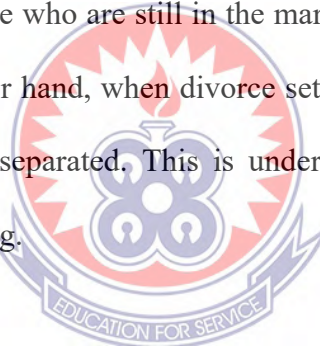
End of a walking



Target domain

no more in the marriage

Among the Dangme, a couple who are still in the marriage are seen as people who are in motion together. On the other hand, when divorce sets in, they are seen as people whose journey has ended and are separated. This is understood from the information in the source domain of the mapping.



4.10 Sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions on puberty among the

Dangme

This section discusses the sociocultural aspect of the euphemistic expressions used in the second stage of the life cycle of the Dangme. These include menstruation, marriage, impotency and divorce.

4.10.1 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Menstruation

Among the Dangme, menstrual blood is seen as not being pure or clean in menstruation. To avoid the use of plain languages, menstruation is then euphemized as *e ho we se ya*

'she has gone behind the house', *hlami nu le* 'she has been caught up by the moon', *e je we mi* 'she has left home', *e fia nine si* 'she has pressed down the hand', *e nge yehi a ni pee* 'she is doing women thing', *e je la te no* 'she has gone out of the hearth', *e gbe to* she slaughtered a goat' and *nubwo ba to le* 'she has received a visitor' to bring decency among communicators.

It is prominent from the survey conducted that euphemistic expressions for menstruation cover the secret around every individual experiencing it as demanded by nature. It is noted that euphemistic expressions for menstruation are seen from two points of view. that is, menstruation is considered as both negative and positive. Based on the Akan's perception of menstruation, Agyekum (2002) outlined two models of menstruation taboo, namely, negative and positive. He based these models on (1) the filth (pollution) and (2) the importance (power, purification, and fertility) of menstruation.

Firstly, on the failed of production, there is an aspect of negative assumption of what a menstruating woman represents. The Dangme believe that menstruation is a barrier to conception and procreation. This is due to the reason that when a woman is menstruating, it is a clear signal that she is not pregnant, unless in rare cases of ill health. In a situation whereby married couples are trying to conceive and have a baby, when the woman sees her monthly flow of blood, then menstruation is seen as a curse. Among the Dangme tradition, childbirth is prestigious to every married couple as in other African cultures, so the metaphor of failed production is not always expected. According to Agyekum (2002), the Akans see menstruation as positive for health reasons. He explains that a woman who

has just given birth can only have sex with her husband after she has her first menstruation after the birth. In the case of Dangme, when a woman gives birth she can have sex with her husband if her wound is healed, that is, at least after three months, not necessarily after she has her first menstruation after birth, because some women have their menses a month after child birth.

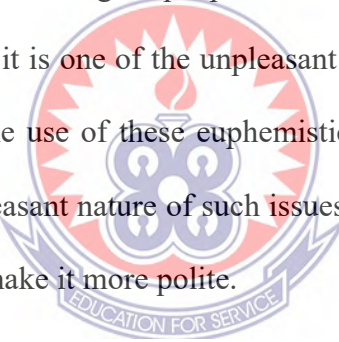
Secondly, menstruation is seen as a sign of fertility and transition, from the positive point of view. In other words, menstruation signifies fertility among women. Among many cultures in which Dangme is not an exception, menstruation introduces a girl into real adulthood. Ruble and Brooks- Gunn (1982) opine that there are certain points in an individual's life which are imbued with psychological and or sociocultural significance because they signal a need for change in self-identity. According to them, the first menstruation or menarche may be of a particular importance because it presents a concrete symbol of a shift from girl to woman. Also when a lady starts menstruating, it means that lady is fertile and can get pregnant when she has sex with the opposite partner.

4.10.2 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Marriage

The Dangme people have the belief that a matured man and a woman should join hands as husband and wife. Both adults are to leave their parents to be in their marital home for purposes of procreation and to provide assistance to each other. The euphemistic expression *a hia blo* 'they have travelled' which is used for marriage brings dignity to the individual getting married and also brings some respect to the general society at large.

4.10.3 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Impotency

The euphemisms *e la a tsui* ‘his fire does not sparkle’, *e tu ɔ kpɛ we la* ‘his gun cannot shoot’, *e ho anyamaami ya* ‘he has gone into *anyamaa mi* (a type of creeping plant)’ and *e ho a nyɛmɛ a ma mi ya* ‘he has gone to the world of women’, *e matsesi ɔ nɔ nyu mi* ‘his matches fell into water’ and *e ka e bo ɔ ngɛ lalɛɛ nɔ* ‘he dried his cloth on *lalɛɛ*, a type of grass’ are applied in Dangme because it places a great deal of importance in the Dangme community. It brings joy and happiness to the users of such euphemisms because it prevents other people such as non- natives and those who are not culturally inclined from knowing their secrets. The use of these euphemisms prevent face threat to both the listeners and the hearers. The Dangme people believe that if a man is not able to give birth to children in his life, it is one of the unpleasant things to talk about when it comes up in the society. Hence the use of these euphemistic expressions to refer to them will always tone down the unpleasant nature of such issues in the language, hence the need to beautify the language and make it more polite.



4.10.4 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for divorce

Due to the belief of the Dangme people, the divorce of married couples is not said in plain language to prevent children and the society from noticing it at the early stage of the separation. It was made known by the respondents that when there is a divorce it is covered up to protect the image of the children involved at the initial stage. Instead it is euphemized by saying *a kpɛti puɛ* ‘they have separated’ and *a nyɛɛmi ɔ nya ta* ‘their walking has ended’.

4.11 Euphemistic expression for death among the Dangme

The third stage in the life cycle of human among the Dangme as in other cultures is death. The notion of death frightens most people, so the word *gbenɔ* ‘death’ is usually euphemized to lessen the fear that comes with it. The Dangme society has different ways of using death related euphemistic expressions, which are used based on the caliber of the deceased, his or her occupation and status in the society. This section presents euphemistic expressions of death in the following categories: death of children, adults: death of twins, death of kings and queens, death of prominent people, death through sickness, death during child birth and death of ordinary people. The table 3 below shows the euphemistic expressions used for death in the Dangme society.

Table 3: Euphemistic expressions for death among the Dangme.

Death related euphemistic expressions	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
Death related euphemistic expressions for children	
E plɛ e se. / E kpale.	‘He/ she has returned.’
Euphemistic expression for death of an adult	
E ho ba tsɔmi ya.nɛ e kpale we hu	‘He has gone to pluck leaf and never returned.’
E si ngo tɔ ɔ nane/atiaa.	‘S/he has kicked the salt bottle.’
Tso je e dɛ.	‘The stick has fallen off his or her hand.’
E hia blɔ.	‘S/he has travelled.’
E ho wo se ya.	‘S/he has gone behind the sea (Travelled oversea).’
E nɔ si.	‘S/he has fallen down.’
E ma e nya.	‘S/he has closed his or her mouth (Breathed his or her last).’
E ho we ya	S/he has gone home.’
E kua ku.	‘She has refused food.’

Death related euphemistic expressions for twins

E ho sowu hlami ya nɛ e bɛ. ‘He is gone to seek for *sowu* (a kind of fruit) and did not return.’

Euphemistic expression for death of ruling Kings or Queens

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
E kpa sɛ.	‘He/ she has turned the chair upside down.’
E je nane ngɛ tokota mi.	‘He/ she removed his/ her leg in the sandals.’
E ya tlo nimeli a abo ɔ mi.	‘S/he could not come out of the garden of the ancestors.’
E sa nya dɛ lɛ.	‘S/he did not sleep well.’

Euphemistic expression for death of a prominent person

Tso ngua a ko hule. ‘A huge tree has fallen.’

Euphemistic expression for death through sickness

Sa a ngmɛɛ e he.	‘The mat has rejected him/her.’
E ho he joomi ya.	‘S/he has gone to rest.’
E na he ko gu.	‘S/he has passed somewhere else.’
Euphemistic expression for death during childbirth	
E tlo mi.	‘She has remained in a situation.’
E he be ni.	‘She has not been fortunate.’
E je kuasia	‘She has been foolish.’

Euphemistic expression for death of the ordinary

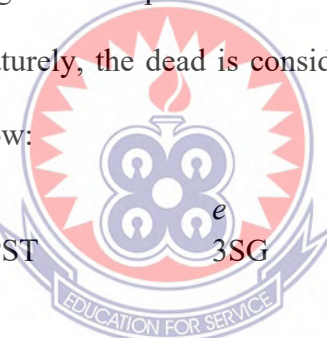
E laa pu.	‘S/he has hidden from the sun.’
E boni he kake hyɛmi.	‘S/he starts looking at one direction.’
Diblii wo lɛ.	‘Darkness has befallen him/her.’
Amanepɛe wo no.	‘ <i>Amane</i> ’ ‘death’ has caused us pain.’
Amane ba to wo.	‘ <i>Amane</i> ’ has visited us.’
E hwo si nɛ e ti si hu.	‘S/he slept and could not wake up again.’

4.11.1 Euphemistic expression for death of children

The Dangme community adores procreation just as other cultures. New born babies are recognized as strangers who have come to the world to stay or on a visit and may go back. It is however, parent's hope that every new born baby stays with them in this world. The child may die for one or two reasons at the point of delivery or within a few days after birth.

4.11.1.2 Death conceptualized as a returning

When a child dies at birth or a few days after birth, the death of that child is conceptualized as 'returning.' It is expected that every child born stays so when the unfortunate happens pre-maturely, the dead is considered as returning to where it came from. Consider the data below:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|--|--------------------|
| 41. | <i>E</i>
3SG
She/ he has returned.
'She/he is dead.' | <i>plɛ</i>
turn.PST |  | <i>se.</i>
back |
|-----|---|------------------------|--|--------------------|

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

A child returning



Target domain

death of a child

When a child dies within zero to seven days, he or she is considered as a stranger or visitor who is just passing by. The death of that child is therefore mapped as returning to the maker or to the ancestral world.

4.12 Euphemistic expression for death of an adult

Euphemistic expressions used to communicate the death of adults in Dangme are not the same due to the person's status in society that is, be it an ordinary person or a prominent person. However, the death of these people are conceptualized differently depending on the age, status or prominence.

4.12.1 Death is 'not returning from leaf plucking expedition'

Leaves play very important role as far as medicinal purposes are concerned among the people of Dangme and among other cultures.

42. *E ho ba tsomi ya ne e be.*
 3SG go.PST leaf plug.GER PRT and 3SG come.Neg.
 He has gone to plug leaf.
 'S/he is dead.'

Source domain

S/he has not returned from
 the leaf plucking expedition

Metaphorical mapping

Target domain

death of a person

The expression in (42), talks about a person who is sick and has gone in search of leaves or herbs as antidote for his or her sickness. It is believed that a person who is ill and has gone in search of leaves to cure his or her illness is supposed to return home. If he or she dies without being healed, the demise is announced as a person who has gone to pluck herbs and has not returned. Hence the act of going to pluck a leaf and not returning is mapped onto the death of a person.

4.12.2 Death as an action

Death is also conceptualized as an action of either breaking or cutting an object, covering something or burning something, among the Dangme. This action can either be done by an adult or a child. The data below affirms this in Dangme utterances:

43. *E si ngo to ɔ nane/atiaa.*
 3SG kick.PST salt bottle DEF leg
 S/he has kicked the salt bottle.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Target domain

The act of kicking a salt bottle → death of an old person

The expression in example (43) above literally describes a person who kicks a bottle containing salt. When such action is performed, the salt in the bottle pours out and the bottle is left empty. The bottle represents the human being while the salt symbolizes the life in the person. When the salt is poured out, it is assumed that the person's life has gone out of him or her. Kicking the ‘salt bottle’ is conceptualized as death among the Dangme. Consider the following data as well:

44. *Tso je e de.*
 Stick leave.PST 3SG palm
 Stick has left his/her hand.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Target domain

Dropping the stick → life out of an old person

The expression in example (44) above is used when an old person is dead. Old people usually use walking stick to support their walking due to their being weak.

Metaphorically, *tso* ‘stick’ used in the expression stands for life in the person. And so if that stick drops from the persons hands, the old person will eventually fall down. The falling of the stick metaphorically mapped onto the life in the person that is lost. The following data describes another action conceptualized as death:

45. *E ho sowu hlami ya ne e be.*
 3SG go.PST furi seek.GER go CONJ 3SG come.NEG
 He is gone to seek for *sowu* (a kind of fruit) and did not return.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of seeking for fruit unsuccessfully

Target domain

death of a twin

The euphemistic expression for example (45) is used to announce the death of twins. Among the Dangme, twins are referred as *kua /ague* or *hawi* ‘monkey’ or *tso no bime* literally, ‘children who dwell on trees.’ They are called *kua* ‘monkey’ or *tso no bime* ‘children who dwell on trees, the reason being that *kua* ‘monkeys’ are mostly found on trees. Since fruits are found on trees, when they die their death is announced that they have gone to seek for *sowu* ‘a kind of fruit’ and has not returned. However, *sowu* is a kind of unedible fruit. Hence seeking for *sowu* without returning is metaphorically mapped onto the death of a twin.

4.12.3 Death is ‘travelling’

Death is also associated with travelling. If a person travels, he or she is expected to return. The Dangme believe in reincarnation. When someone dies, he or she is considered to have travelled for some time and shall definitely come back (the belief of

reincarnation). Based on this, the Dangme conceptualize death as an act of travelling.

Below is an illustration:

46. *E* *hia* *blɔ.*
 3SG travel.PST ways
 S/he has travelled.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

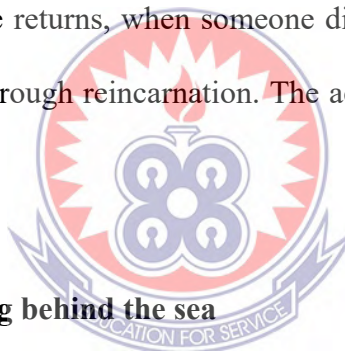
The act of travelling



Target domain

death of a person

According to the CMT, the target domain is understood by the source domain. When a person travels, he or she is expected to come back. Due to the belief of the Dangme that when one travels he or she returns, when someone dies, she or he is considered to have travelled and will return through reincarnation. The act of travelling is therefore mapped onto a death of a person.



4.12.4 Death as travelling behind the sea

It is believed among the Dangme society that when a person dies he or she goes to join the ancestors. These ancestors live in a land very far away from this world which requires adequate preparation (just as embarking on an expedition) before one can get there. Thus, before one joins the ancestors he or she needs to die. This land of the ancestors which is believed to be far away, is likened to the end or behind the sea since no one knows where the sea actually ends. Therefore when a person dies, he or she is said to have travelled to behind the sea.

47. *E* *ho* *wo* *se* *ya.*
 3SG go.PST sea back PRT
 S/he has gone behind the sea.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Travelling beyond the sea



Target domain

death of a person

In example (47), death is conceptualized as movement beyond the sea. It is noted that nobody lives behind the sea so when a person dies, he or she is to have moved to the place where no living being lives. So travelling beyond the sea metaphorically mapped onto death of a person (usually an old person).

4.12.5 Death is 'falling'

Mostly, when an elderly person dies, the person is said to have fallen down. Due to their health conditions and strength level, when the aged fall down, it is difficult for them to get up.

48. *E* *no*
 3SG fall
 S/he fell down.
 'S/he is dead.'



Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Falling of a person



Target domain

death of an old person

When the aged fall, it is usually difficult for them to rise to their feet by themselves just as it is difficult for someone to come back to life (not through reincarnation) after death. Therefore, the act of falling of an aged person is metaphorically mapped onto their death.

4.12.6 Death is ‘closing of the mouth’

Talking ceases when a person closes his or her mouth. When a person dies, the lips are closed permanently and that will not permit the person to talk or eat. The concept of not talking and eating is conceptualized as death among the Dangme. Below is an example to illustrate that:

49. *E* *ma* *e* *nya.*
 3SG close.PST 3SG mouth
 S/he closed his/ her mouth.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

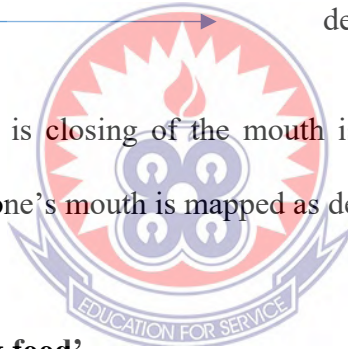
Source domain

Closing of one’s mouth

Target domain

death of a person

The source domain which is closing of the mouth is mapped onto death in the target domain. Hence closing of one’s mouth is mapped as death of person.



4.12.7 Death as ‘refusing food’

When a person dies, he or she stops eating food substances. This euphemistic expression is commonly noted among the youth.

50. *E* *kua* *ku.*
 3SG refuse.PST 3SG food
 S/he has refused food.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Refusal of food

Target domain

death of a person

Death is seen as a result of not being able to eat which is referred to as refusing food. Anyone who does not eat for a period of time may not survive. Among many traditions including the Dangme, no human being eats when he or she is dead. Therefore the idea of not able to eat is associated to death in the sense that when someone is dead it implies that person has refused food.

4.12.8 Death as ‘arriving at a destination’

Every journey that begins has an end. It is in this regard that the Dangme conceptualize death as arriving at a destination.

51. *E* *ho* *tse* *we* *ya.*
 3SG go.PST father house PRT
 S/he has gone to the Father’s home.
 ‘S/he is dead.’



Death is the final stage of every living creature. From childhood, humans go through a process of adulthood and eventually old age. At old age the next possible expectation is death, where it is believed that the person goes to rest finally. This stage of the life cycle of humans is mirrored into the domain of getting into one’s father’s home from a journey. The journey a person embarks on represents the period from birth to old age where he or she finally dies which marks the end of the roadmap in life. Hence arrival at the final destination is mapped onto the death of a person.

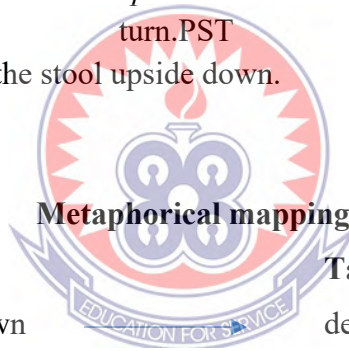
4.13. Euphemistic expression for death of Kings or Queens

The announcement of the death of kings and queens is not done anyhow because of the caliber of persons they are and the roles they play in the society. Their deaths are actually euphemized just as other deaths in the society.

4.13.1 Death as ‘an activity’

The euphemistic expressions in (52-53) describe death. They express the death of a king or a chief or a queen mother. The stool, *se* represents the authority of the leader (chief or queen). Consider the expression below:

52.	<i>E</i> 3SG He/ she has turned the stool upside down. ‘S/he is dead.’	<i>kpa</i> turn.PST	<i>se.</i> stool
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Source domain

Turning a stool upside down

Target domain

death of a ruling king/queen

When kings or queen mothers are not sitting on their stool, the stool is either covered with cloth or turned upside down. This is done to prevent any other person from sitting on the stool. This shows the authority and respect society has for them as leaders. Moreover, when a king or queen dies, it is seen that they have stood up from the stool so the stool has to be turned upside down. By so doing, it is metaphorically linked to the death of the kings or queen mothers. Below is another activity used to conceptualize death:

53. *E je nane nge tokota a mi.*
 3SG remove.PST leg COP sandals DEF inside
 He/ she removed his/ her leg in the sandals.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Removal of feet from sandals



Target domain

death of a ruling king or queen

Chiefs and queens are always expected to be in their sandals all the time as part of their royal regalia which signifies authority and commands respect. When it happens that a chief or queen dies in discharging their duty as a leader of that community, their demise is seen as forsaking the royal authority or power since that will result in leaving behind the regalia that signifies their authority.

4.13.2 Death as ‘not returning’

Death is conceptualized as remaining in the garden of the ancestors.

54. *E ya tlo nimeli a abo ɔ mi.*
 3SG AUX remain.PST ancestor.PL 3PL garden DEF inside
 S/he has remained in the garden of the ancestors.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Not returning from the garden



Target domain

death of a chief/queen

Kings and queens usually consult the ancestors in their reign as leaders of their communities. The consulting room where they meet with the ancestors is the supposed garden which metaphorically represents the life of the unseen world (cemetery), mostly

found at the outskirts of a town. The idea of where a person is buried and the act of not returning from the garden is mapped onto the death of a chief or a queen mother.

4.13.3 Death as ‘not sleeping well’

Death is conceptualized as not sleeping well among the people of Dangme.

55. *E sa nya dε lε.*
 3SG bed mouth wrong 3SG
 S/he did not sleep well.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of not sleeping well



Target domain

death of a chief/queen

In many cultures of Ghana, the death of chiefs and queen mothers is not to be announced to the general public because they are not ordinary people in the society. Therefore, when they die the expression *e sa nya dε lε* ‘s/he did not sleep well.’ is used to communicate to the society for them not to realize early that the king or the queen is dead. Hence the act of not sleeping well is mapped onto the death of chiefs and queen mothers.

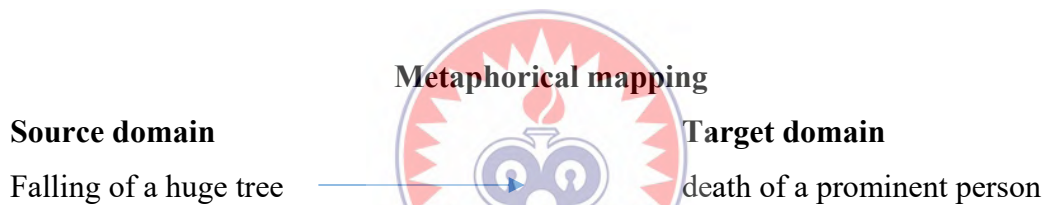
4.14 Death of a prominent person

A prominent person is someone who society values and cherishes in all aspects of his or her life. That person could be a shelter provider and saviour to a particular group of people. Chiefs and queen mother are also prominent people the society.

4.14.1 Death is ‘uprooting’

This expression is used to announce the death of prominent persons in society. The death of such persons is conceptualized as a big tree being uprooted. Trees serve a lot of purposes to humans just as some prominent people do to their communities. The importance of prominent people to their communities is likened to the usefulness of trees to the human race. For this reason, the death of such prominent people is conceptualized as the uprooting of a tree.

56.	<i>Tso</i>	<i>ngua</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>hule.</i>
	Tree	big	INDEF	fall.PST
	A huge tree has fallen.			
	‘S/he is dead.’			



Trees serve many purposes to people in the communities. They provide shelter for the people, used for furniture, as medicine, as fuel, and many others, to the community. Therefore, when a tree which contributes to the well-being of the people in the community has fallen, it suggests the life of a particular group of persons will become miserable. When a prominent person in the community such as a chief or queen mother dies, his or her demise affects the provision of the good services rendered to individuals and the community as a whole. Also family heads are like trees that provide shade for such families; when they are no more, the comfort they give to the family members will no longer be available.

4.15 Euphemistic expression for death through sickness

Sickness is known to be a stranger to the body which does not make the individual to feel comfortable in life. People fall sick and die through such sicknesses. When it happens like that the Dangme society has various ways of announcing the death. The following euphemistic expressions such as *sa a ngmɛɛ e he* ‘the mat has rejected him/her’, *e ho he jɔɔmi ya* ‘s/he has gone to rest’ and *e na he ko gu* ‘s/he has passed somewhere else’ are used to announce their death in the society.

4.15.1 Death conceptualized as a condition

Mostly when someone is sick it is the expectation of the family that he or she will get healed. If for any reason the person does not recover, he or she is said to be in a critical condition especially when the ailment keeps worsening. If later the person passes on, such a demise is announced as ‘he or she could not withstand the sickness.’ The euphemistic expression in example (57) describes the death of a person who has been bed-ridden due to sickness for some time.

57.	<i>Sa</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ngmɛɛ</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>he.</i>
	Mat	DEF	leave.PST	3SG	self
	The mat has rejected him/her.				
	‘S/he is dead.’				

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Being rejected by mat



Target domain

death of a sick person

Among the Dangme community when a person has fallen sick for some period and dies, it is said that such a person has been rejected by the mat on which he or she sleeps.

Immediately the expression *sa a ngmɛɛ e he* ‘has been rejected by the mat’ is used, everybody knows the person was facing health challenges prior to his or her demise.

4.15.2 Death as ‘resting’

Death is viewed in terms of a peaceful rest after an earthly existence. The euphemistic expression for such incidents shows a positive judgment of death. The most frequently used term *he jɔɔmi* ‘rest’ maps onto eternal rest.

58. *E ho he jɔɔmi ya.*
 3SG go.PST self relax.GER PRT
 S/he has gone to rest.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of resting

Target domain

death of an old person



Death is conceptualized as rest because when a person is sick he or she is considered as someone who has gone through pains and sufferings. So when he or she dies, his or her death is announced as *e ho he jɔɔmi ya* ‘s/he has gone to rest. Metaphorically, the death is seen to provide some sort of relief for the dying person.

59. *E na he ko gu.*
 3SG see.PST place INDEF pass.PST
 S/he has seen somewhere and passed.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of going somewhere

Target domain

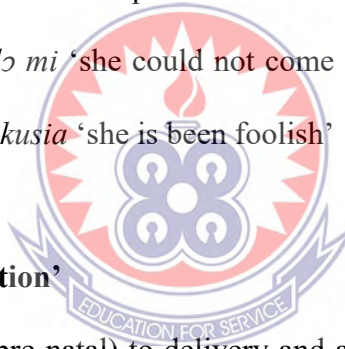
death of a sick person



A sick person is expected to get well when medications are applied. If the sick person does not recover but dies with the sickness, the death is announced as ‘finally, he or she has found somewhere else and passed.’ Immediately such expression is used, the people understand that the person has been sick prior to his or her death.

4.16 Euphemistic expression for death during childbirth

Society expects every pregnant woman to deliver safely in the ninth month of their pregnancy. If unfortunately a mother or the baby could not survive during delivery, there are euphemistic expressions that are used to announce their death in Dangme as in other cultures. The following sub-sections present the conceptualization of such deaths among Dangme. They include *e tlo mi* ‘she could not come out of the process’, *e he be ni* ‘she has not fortunate’, and *e je kusia* ‘she is been foolish’



4.16.1 Death is a ‘stagnation’

The period of pregnancy (pre-natal) to delivery and also through post natal is a process. Unfortunately if a pregnant woman could not make it during delivery, it is considered as not progressing to the next level in the series or process. Therefore her death is conceptualized as being stagnant in her delivery since she could not come out successfully as expected by the family and society.

60. *E* *tlo* *mi*.
 3SG remain.PST inside
 She remained inside.
 ‘She is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of remaining in a situation

Target domain

death during delivery

Every pregnant woman is supposed to bring forth the unborn baby to this earth when her time is due. However, there are instances when a pregnant woman unfortunately dies during labour. The act of remaining in the process of child birth is mapped onto the death of pregnant women during delivery.

4.16.2 Death as a 'misfortune'

Death is conceptualized as a misfortune among the Dangme because it is an unforeseen circumstance that pregnant women cannot predict during child birth.

61. *E* *he* *be* *ni.*
 3SG self NEG fortunate
 She has not been fortunate.
 'She is dead.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Not being fortune

Target domain

Accidental death

In the case when someone dies through an accident or death that is not natural, it is conceptualized as an unfortunate death. If the euphemistic expression *e he be ni* 's/he has not been fortunate' is used, anyone who is competent in the language can say that the death was accidental.

4.17 Euphemistic expression for the death of ordinary people

These euphemistic expressions are associated with the death of ordinary people in the society, but more specifically adults and grown-ups. Unlike what was discussed previously, this category is about any other person apart from prominent people.

4.17.1 Death as ‘not seeing the sun’

Death is conceptualized among the Dangme as not seeing the sun. This is because the sun is useful to all living beings and the dead is considered not to be living.

62. *E* *laa* *pu* (Aborchie, 2011).
 3SG loss sun
 ‘S/he has been hidden from the sun.’
 ‘S/he is death.’



When the sun shines it overcomes darkness. When a person dies, he or she is considered to be in darkness and will no more see the sun. Metaphorically, the sun is linked to the life that exists in a person when he or she is alive. Therefore, the idea of not seeing the sun describes the idea of lack of life.

4.17.2 Death as ‘looking in one direction’

Among the Dangme, death is conceptualized as looking at one direction. Once a person dies, he or she has no control over the direction of looking again.

63. *E boni he kake hyɛmi.* (Aborche, 2011).
 3SG start.PST place one look.GER
 S/he started looking at one direction.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Looking in one direction



Target domain

Death of a person

If a person dies he or she has no control over the body anymore. The position in which a corpse is placed is always the same. Therefore the source domain which is ‘looking at one direction’ maps onto death. Metaphorically, the idea of the dead looking at one direction is linked to death.

4.17.3 Death as ‘darkness’

Light helps one to see if there is darkness, so a dead person is conceptualized in Dangme as someone who has been overshadowed by darkness.

64. *Diblii wo le* (Aborchie, 2011).
 Darkness wear.PST 3SG.OBJ
 Darkness has befallen him/her.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

A person in darkness



Target domain

death of a person

In this case light in the person corresponds with the life in the person and darkness also corresponds with the death of a person. So death is mapped onto the darkness that has befallen the person, and this means that the person is dead.

4.17.4 Death conceptualized as a *amane* ‘misfortune’

In the expressions (65-66) below, death is seen as an animate (human) that can be wicked. When death visits a family it brings pain and affliction upon them. The torture the family undergoes before, during and after the funeral of the dead makes death to be seen as wicked like a human being. Consider the data in (65-66) below:

65. *Amane pee wo no.*
 Amane do.PST 2PL.OBJ thing
 ‘Misfortune/ trouble has befallen us.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Misfortune



Target domain

death of a person

For this euphemistic expression, death is personified. It is seen as a human being who is wicked. For this reason when death occurs in a family and the family wants to prove that indeed death is a person, it is announced to the people that *amane* ‘trouble’ has befallen the bereaved and it is mapped onto the death of a person. In support of the illustration in (65-66), the song below is sung among the Dangme which confirms that death is a person and a visitor.

- Amane ba wo ngo to ɔ* ‘Misfortune has taken away the salt bottle’
Ke je motu ɔ ‘Since morning’
Wa yi ngo no ‘We have not eaten any salty food’

The above song confirms this euphemistic expression that indeed death is a person. The use of *ngo to* ‘salt bottle’ symbolizes the deceased as the bread winner for the family. Also, salt adds taste to food so if there is no salt in food it becomes tasteless. In this case as the bread winner has been taken away by death, the livelihood of the people left behind becomes miserable.

4.17.5 Death conceptualized as a visitor

Death is conceptualized as a visitor among the people of Dangme. This is because death appears suddenly.

66. *Amane* *ba* *to* *wɔ.*
 Amane AUX visit.PST 2PL
 Misfortune has visited us.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

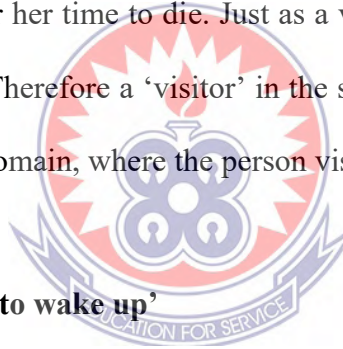
Visit of a misfortune



Target domain

death of a person

Death has been personified as a visitor that does not stay at one place. An individual only sees death when it is his or her time to die. Just as a visitor, death does not stay when its mission is accomplished. Therefore a ‘visitor’ in the source domain metaphorically maps onto ‘death’ in the target domain, where the person visited is the deceased.



4.17.6 Death as ‘inability to wake up’

Routinely, as nature ordained, a person who sleeps is expected to rise from bed. In the case where the person sleeps and does not wake up again, then such person is considered as dead.

67. *E* *hwɔ si* *nɛ* *e* *ti* *hu* (Aborchie, 2011).
 3SG sleep.PST CONJ 2SG wake again
 He/ She slept and could not wake up.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Inability to wake up from a sleep



Target domain

death of a person

It is expected for every individual to wake up when he or she sleeps. Once a person sleeps and he or is not able to wake up again, the person is considered dead. The demise is announced as he or she being unable to wake up from the sleep, which implies to the death of the person.

4.18. Sociocultural implications of death among the Dangme

This section analyses the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions used for death; the third stage of the life cycle among the Dangme.

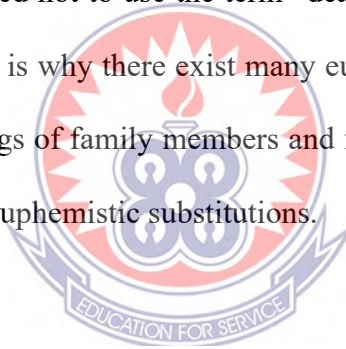
4.18.1 Sociocultural Implication of Euphemistic Expression for Death of Chiefs and Queens

The passing on of a chief is something that is usually kept secret for a period of time. Because of the status of chiefs and queens in the society, tradition has it that they really do not die but have transitioned to another state of existence in the spirit realm. Euphemisms for death for chiefs and queens such as *e kpa se*, 's/he has turned the stool upside down', *e je nane nge tokota mi*, 's/he has removed his or her sandal' *e ho nimeli a abo o mi ya* 's/he has gone to the garden of the ancestors' and *e sa nya de le* 'being uncomfortable in one's bed' are therefore used to accord them respect; minimizing the impact of their demise on their relatives and to prevent children and society from knowing about it too soon. It is in this regard that Allan and Burrige (1991) argue that the theme of death is tabooed because people have always been scared of dying. In their view, the fear is motivated by worries of losing relatives or close friends. People are afraid of what will follow after death, frustrated or disgusted of the dead body and scared of evil spirits.

4.18.1.2 Sociocultural implication of euphemistic expression for death

The Dangme society has the belief that death is a painful event. They have the belief that death is one of the stages of the human life cycle and therefore one must die before transitioning to the ancestral world. The use of euphemisms of death accords some respect and dignity to both the deceased and the family. These euphemisms also tend to prolong the lives of the living ones as they are less overwhelmed by the sorrows a relative's demise bring.

Enright (2005) asserts that the word “death” is one of the oldest taboos. For centuries people have been determined not to use the term “death” directly and, till date, they still search for substitutes. That is why there exist many euphemisms for the topic. He claims that consideration of feelings of family members and fear of the unknown constitutes the motivations for the use of euphemistic substitutions.



4.19 Summary

This chapter investigated the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. That is, the various conceptualizations of the expressions relating to death and the metaphorical mapping showing the correspondence between the source and the target domains of the euphemistic expressions. It has been established that the target domain helps to understand the source domains according to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The chapter finally discussed the sociocultural implications of the euphemistic expression in Dangme. It was seen that the Dangme society use euphemistic expressions based on the topic for discussion. Also, in order to protect ones image during conversation, euphemistic expressions are used.

CHAPTER FIVE

EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS FROM CONVERSATIONAL DATA

5.0 Introduction

This section did analyses on euphemistic expressions that were found in recorded conversation. It examines the semantics of the euphemistic expressions. The CMT was used to analyze the data. The chapter is under four sub-headings. Section 5.1 presents the euphemistic expressions that were gotten from the recording done during the marriage ceremony at Kadjanya. Section 5.2 talks about the euphemistic expressions from funeral and burial rites at Gorm. The Section 5.3 presents the analysis of the recordings obtained from funeral announcements. Final section analyses the euphemistic expression that came up during a cultural programme on *kusumi ko laa mo* ‘know your culture’ on Radio Ada. The table 4 below shows the presentation of data from the recording.

Table 4: Euphemistic expression found in a marriage programme, funeral rite, funeral announcement on radio and a culture programme on radio.

Euphemistic expressions found in the marriage programme	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>A pee mε kake.</i>	‘They are made as one.’
<i>A wo a he bua.</i>	‘They should entertain themselves.’
<i>Nyεε wo nyε he latsa.</i>	‘They should warm themselves up.’
<i>Nyε ya wo yiblii babauu ke ha weku ɔ.</i>	‘You should bear more fruits for the family.’
Euphemistic expressions found in the funeral programme	
Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E laa wo.</i>	‘We have lost him or her.’

Euphemistic expressions on radio during funeral announcement

<i>E si.</i>	‘S/he has left/gone.’
<i>Tse ɔ ba tse le.</i>	‘The father has called him or her.’
<i>E ho we ya</i>	‘S//he has gone home.’
<i>E nye we e hiɔ hu.</i>	‘S/he could not withstand the sickness.’

Euphemistic expressions found in the radio programmes

Dangme	English gloss (Literal meaning)
<i>E ho jua a se ya.</i>	‘S/he has gone behind the market.’

5.1 Euphemistic expressions used during marriage rite

At a marriage ceremony at Kadjanya, certain euphemistic expressions were used to advise the couple in the journey they were embarking on as husband and wife. These include *a pee me kake* ‘they are made as one’, *a wo a he bua* ‘they should entertain themselves’ *nyεε wo nye he latsa* ‘they have warmed themselves’ and *nye ya wo yibli babauu ke ha weku ɔ* ‘you should bear more fruit for the family.’ Consider the data below:

5.1.1 Marriage conceptualized as being made one

In the Dangme culture, marriage is conceptualized as joining. This is because before a man and a woman come together as one, they need to be joined.

68. *A pee me kake.*
 3PL make.PST 3PL one
 They are made as one.
 ‘They are married.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Being made as one



Target domain

being married

During the initiation of the marriage the initiator made the gathering to be aware that marriage is made for matured adults. These adults need to understand themselves that they can no longer live individual or independent lives but depend on each other. That is, they are coming together as a unit and there is the need to adjust in order to accommodate each other's differences. Hence the act of joining a man and a woman is mapped onto marriage.

5.1.2 Sex related euphemistic expressions

It is believed among the Dangme people that sex is not meant for children but for adults. Due to this, when talking about sex in public is involved, it is euphemized to prevent children from understanding the topic under discussion. Sex is then considered as *a wo a he bua* 'they have to entertain themselves' and *nyε wo nyε he latsa* 'they have to warm themselves up'. Consider the data below:

5.1.2.1 Sex is 'entertainment'

69. *A* *wo* *a* *he* *bua.*
 3PL wear 3PL self happy
 They have to entertain themselves.
 'They will have sexual intercourse.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

Entertaining each other



Target domain

having sex

Sex is conceptualized as a form of entertainment. The use of the expression *a wo a he bua* ‘they have to entertain themselves’ is used in every ordinary communication situation. However, its usage in the sexual context is to prevent mentioning the sexual act plainly. During the marriage ceremony, the couple is advised to entertain each other in bed. The marriage initiator makes the couple to understand that sometimes sexual intercourse ends misunderstanding or quarrel so it must be part of them in order for them to live happily. The idea of entertainment is mapped onto partners having sexual intercourse.

5.1.2.2 Sex is ‘warming’

70. *Nyεε* *wo* *nyε* *he* *latsa.*
 3PL wear 3PL self sweat
 They have to warm themselves.
 ‘They will have sexual intercourse.’



Source domain

Warming each other



Target domain

having sex

In the marriage proceedings, the couple were advised that they needed to warm each other up. Mostly, sex is an activity that requires more energy, where both partners are involved in vigorous activities of shaking themselves and pushing. This eventually results in generating heat and sweat where their bodies become wet, hence warming themselves. This vigorous activity during sex may be responsible for this euphemism. So the idea of sexual intercourse is conceptualized as ‘warming the body’.

According to CMT, target domains are understood by source domains. To have sexual intercourse can be expressed in the euphemistic manner as warming each other. What happens to individuals when they are engaged in sex is metaphorically linked to warming each other.

5.1.3 Child bearing conceptualized as a fruit bearing

In most societies, marriage couples are expected to bear children. In the course of the marriage initiation in Dangme, the expression in data 71 below on child bearing is used.

71. *Nye ya wo yibli babauu ke ha weku ɔ.*
 3PL go bear fruit plenty to give family DEF
 You bear more fruits for the family
 ‘Bringing forth many children into the family.’



The Dangme people value children very well. Therefore, it is expected of every family to reproduce many children for the family. As trees bear more fruits, the husband and wife are metaphorically linked to the trees that will produce more children (fruits). Hence bearing of fruits is mapped onto giving birth to children.

5.2 Euphemistic expressions used during funeral rite

A euphemistic expression used at a funeral and a burial grounds in Dangme include *e laa wo* ‘we lost her or her.’

5.2.1 Death conceptualized as a loss

When you lose something, there is no way one can get that thing back. It is in this regard that Dangme society sees death as a loss to them. In order to show respect to the deceased family and sympathizers, the mild expression *e laa wo* ‘she lost us’ is used instead of *e gbo* ‘she is dead.’

72.	<i>E</i>	<i>laa</i>	<i>wo.</i>
	3SG	lost.PST	2PL
	We	lost	him or her
	‘She is dead.’		

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of losing a person

Target domain

death of a person

This expression was used as a family member was expressing the sorrow their beloved person has put them through. In this sense the family member wanted the people present to be aware that the deceased has departed this earth and they will not see her again. Therefore, the act of losing a person is mapped onto the death of a person.

5.3 Euphemistic expressions used during radio announcement programmes

As noticed earlier, death is a natural phenomenon that occurs among every culture of which the Dangme culture is not an exception. During funeral announcements on radio, euphemistic expressions are not left out. They are used to lessen the grief and panic on the relatives of the deceased and the general public upon hearing the message. These expressions are put in metaphorical terms; however, they vary based on the age of the individual, the nature of the death and social status. Consider the following data: *e si*

‘he/she has left/gone (leaving something behind)’, *Tsɛ ɔ ba tsɛ lɛ* ‘the father has called him or her’, *e ho we ya* ‘s/he has gone home’ and *e nyɛ we e hiɔ hu* ‘s/he could not withstand the sickness.’

5.3.1.1 Death conceptualized as leaving

73. *E si.*
 3SG leave.PST
 He/she has left/gone
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain
 Leaving behind



Target domain
 death of a person

In example (73) it is seen that the euphemistic expression can be associated with two meanings. Firstly if a person dies, such expression is used to announce his or her demise for society to know that he or she has left children, siblings and parents behind. Secondly, it is believed that the deceased has started a good project that will either be of a benefit to the nuclear family, extended family or the society at large and the person could not complete that good project before death laid its icy hands on him or her. The act of leaving something behind is mapped as the death of person leaving behind children, parents, siblings and sometimes uncompleted projects.

5.3.1.2 Death conceptualized as a calling

74. *Tsɛ ɔ ba tsɛ lɛ*
 Father DEF AUX call.PST 3SG.OBJ
 The father has called him/her.
 ‘S/he is dead.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

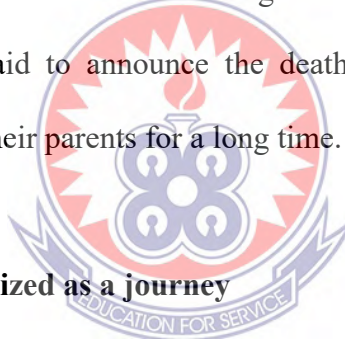
Father's calling



Target domain

death of a person

When a person is being called, there is the need for that person to respond to the call. In this case when a person is dead it is conceptualized as he or she being called by the father (ancestors) within the typical Dangme tradition. However, the father can also be referred to as heavenly God in context of Christianity. The death of such a person is mapped as a calling by the ancestors. In this situation, the person leaves the physical world and joins the ancestors just as someone who is invited to come to another place. This is what motivates this conceptualization of death being a call. It is crucial to mention that this particular expression is said to announce the death of the aged in the society, who probably might have lost their parents for a long time.



5.3.1.4 Death conceptualized as a journey

The use of the expression *e ho we ya* 'he or she has gone home' is actually used for the death of the aged among the Dangme, where dying corresponds to the act of going home; where the deceased goes to, (where the ancestors are or to the heavenly father).

75. *E* *ho* *we* *ya*.
 2SG go.PST home PRT
 S/he has gone home
 'S/he is dead.'

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of going home



Target domain

death of the aged person

Among the Dangme speaking community, as in most African countries, man is a stranger in this world and he will proceed to his or her permanent home just as visitors do in the physical world. Metaphorically, going home is mapped onto death (of an aged person).

5.3.1.5 Death conceptualized as giving up

Giving up in a situation shows one's inability to cope with whatever situation he or she finds him/herself. Among the Dangme dying through an ailment is conceptualized as giving up. The ailment is seen as the situation that torments the life of the deceased.

76. *E nyɛ we e hiɔ hu.*
 3SG could NEG 3SG sickness again
 S/he could not withstand the sickness.
 'S/he is dead'.

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

The act of giving up

Target domain

Death of a sick person

A sick person who is not able to recover from his or sickness eventually dies. Since that person is not able to overcome that particular sickness, when such a person dies his or her death is announced as could not withstand the sicknesses. The situation of not being able to withstand a sickness is metaphorically mapped onto the death of a sick person.

5.4 Euphemistic expression from the cultural programme *kusumi ko laa mo* 'know your culture'

Kusumi ko laa mo 'know your culture' is a cultural programme which is done to enlighten the minds of the society through radio broadcasting on Radio Ada. During a discussion on sharing of inheritance among relatives, only one euphemistic expression

came up which was *e ho jua a se ya* ‘she has gone behind the market’. This expression was used for the death of the person during the discussion.

5.4.1 Death conceptualized as location

77. *E ho jua a se ya.*
 2SG go.PST market DEF back PRT
 S/he has gone behind the market.
 ‘S/he is death.’

Metaphorical mapping

Source domain

A travel behind the market



Target domain

death of a person

The market is noted to be a place where buying and selling take place. However, this cannot happen without the exchange of words, thereby making the market place noisy. This means that everyone in the market does some form of talking. Going behind the market means that the person does not do things involving talking anymore. This phenomenon is linked to a dead person. The deceased cannot be involved in this interaction, therefore they are seen as people who have gone behind the market.

5.5 Summary

This chapter looked at the semantics of euphemistic expressions found in conversations through recordings of programmes. These programmes include marriage ceremony, funeral rites, funeral announcement of death on radio and a cultural programme, *kusumi koo laa mo* ‘know your culture’ held on radio. It was revealed that in performing these

programmes, the use of euphemistic expressions were used to describe marriage, having sexual intercourse, child bearing, and death in Dangme.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the general conclusions of the thesis; it summarizes the thesis by highlighting the major findings of the study on the semantic and sociocultural implications of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. It also looks at euphemistic expressions found in conversational data in some programmes that are held in Dangme. Again, the study provides some recommendations for further investigations in Dangme.

6.1 Summary

This thesis set out to investigate the semantic and sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. It adopted Lakoff and Johnson (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory to explain the semantics of the euphemistic expressions in Dangme in chapters four and chapter five. The theory focuses on explaining the underlying conceptual scenarios involved in conventional metaphors. Thus, the mapping principle in which there is the cross domain mapping involving two domains: source domain and target domain. In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the meanings of euphemisms in Dangme?
2. What are the sociocultural implications of euphemistic expressions in Dangme?
3. What are some euphemistic expressions used in certain programmes in Dangme?

The questions were addressed in the preceding discussions in chapters four and five.

The thesis is organized in six chapters. Chapter one gives the general background to the study.

Chapter two reviewed related literature on the study of euphemistic expressions from different perspectives across languages. The chapter is divided into two major sections, the literature review and the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The first section (2.1), reviewed related literature on the concept of euphemism, euphemism and language, euphemism and culture, works from semantic and the sociocultural viewpoints and works on conversational analysis viewpoints of euphemistic expressions across languages. The second section 2.2 presents the theoretical framework adopted for the study on euphemisms in Dangme, i.e. the Conceptual Metaphor Theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1992). The literature review and the theoretical framework were very important to understanding the concept of euphemistic expressions in the semantic and the sociocultural domains.

Chapter three provided an overview of the methodology of the study. It adopted the qualitative research design. Reasons for choosing this design for the study was to enable detailed descriptions of the semantic and the sociocultural implications of the euphemistic expression among the Dangme people. The chapter also explained the population used for the investigation, data sources, data collection instruments, data collection strategies and data analysis procedure. Chapter four investigated the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions in Dangme. That is, the various conceptualization of the expressions and the metaphorical mapping knowing the

correspondence between the source and the target domains of the euphemistic expression. Finally, chapter five discussed euphemistic expressions found in some conversational programmes in Dangme. The final chapter; chapter six, summarized the study, outlined the findings, concludes the study and also made some recommendations for future studies.

6.2 Findings of the Study

The findings from the study reveals that Dangme has euphemistic expressions across the life cycle of the human being ranging from birth to death. The conversational data also revealed some euphemistic expressions. Also, these euphemistic expressions were conceptualized in various ways.

The findings also reveal that these euphemistic expressions are metaphorical. In addition, the data showed that sex related euphemistic expressions of the Dangme follows almost the same trend with those in the Gĩkũyũ language. Gathigia, Ndung'u and Njoroge's (2015) investigation sets out to identify the sexual intercourse euphemisms used in Gĩkũyũ, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. It was noted from their discussion that men generally look at sexual intercourse more as work, a game, war, food and utility, while women look at it mainly as a form of companionship which is similar to the view point of the people of Dangme. That is, the Dangme also see sexual intercourse as *bɔmi nami* 'connection', *sa kami*, 'sharing of a bed' *latsa womi*, 'the act of warming up the body' *bua jɔmi*, 'entertainment' *kpa fiami* 'caning' among others,

The data also revealed that death related euphemistic expressions of Dangme are similar to that of the Akan and Hebrew languages as noted by Owiredu (2020), where death is seen as a loss, an end, a sleep, a journey and person. Similarly, in Dangme, death is conceptualized as ‘returning’, ‘an occupation’, ‘an action’, ‘travelling behind the sea’, ‘falling’, ‘closing of the mouth’, ‘refusing food’, ‘arriving at a destination’, ‘an activity’, ‘not returning’, ‘not sleeping well’, ‘uprooting’, a condition, ‘resting’, a ‘stagnation’, ‘misfortune’, ‘not seeing the sun’, ‘looking at one direction’, ‘darkness’, ‘a visitor’ and ‘inability to wake up’

Furthermore, the study has shown that in Dangme, death euphemistic expressions appear to be more than its counterparts such as the stages of birth and puberty. This may be motivated by the fact that the announcements of death in many African cultures employs euphemisms of which Dangme is not an exception. Also, death is not pleasing to be heard of by a person in plain language. Therefore, the numerous euphemistic expressions are used as a mechanism associated with the message of death.

6.3 Recommendations for future studies

This study discussed the semantics and the sociocultural implication of euphemistic expressions taking into consideration the life cycle of the Dangme people.

Other researchers can research into euphemistic expressions regarding the installation of traditional leaders such as chiefs and queen mothers.

Also, other researchers can research into euphemistic expressions used during the initiation of the *dipo* rites.

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