

Dialectal variation in lexical borrowings in Dangme

Raymond Teye Akrobettoe

Lecturer

Department of Ga-Dangme Education

University of Education, Winneba

Email: ratuguba@ug.edu.gh

Regina Oforiwah Caesar

Senior Lecturer

Department of Ga-Dangme Education

University of Education, Winneba

Email: reginacaesar13@gmail.com

Evershed Kwasi Amuzu

Associate Professor

Department of Linguistics

University of Ghana

Email: ekamuzu@ug.edu.gh

Submitted: January 31, 2022 / Accepted: September 9, 2022 / Published: December 15, 2022

Abstract

This paper investigated dialectal variation in lexical borrowings in Dangme, a language spoken in Southern Ghana. Dangme has seven dialects (Ada, Gbugblaa, Yilɔ Krobo, Manya Krobo, Nugo, Sɛ and Osudoku), but this study concerns lexical borrowings into the first four. The language is in contact with four languages from which it has borrowed: Ewe, Ga, Akan, and English. Each dialect of Dangme is in direct contact with English, the official language of Ghana, and with at least one of the three Ghanaian languages. While Ada is in contact with Ewe and Gbugblaa with Ga, both Yilɔ Krobo and Manya Krobo are in contact with Akan and, to some extent, Ewe. The study departed from focus on phonological adaptation of borrowed words, the

subject matter of previous studies, to pursue two interrelated objectives, i.e., to find out: (i) whether, and to what extent, borrowings into a dialect from a given source language remain localized or are transferred to the other dialects and (ii) whether, and what extent, the lexical borrowings constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon or, conversely, a relexification of native words in the lexicon. Eighty (80) respondents, 20 each from the four dialects considered, were purposively sampled to participate in the data collection process and the data analysis was done within the Variationist Sociolinguistics Theory. It was found that while most Akan and English lexical borrowings have become integrated in all the four dialects of Dangme, this is not the case with lexical borrowings from Ga and Ewe. Most Ga borrowings are found only in Gbugblaa and most Ewe borrowings are found only in Ada and, to some extent, Manya Krobo. It was also found that Akan and English lexical borrowings generally constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon while Ewe and Ga lexical borrowings may be seen as subtractive borrowings or cases of relexification in Ada and Gbugblaa respectively. The study is expected to contribute to an understanding of how languages like Dangme whose dialects have geographical contact with different languages develop dialectal variation.

Keywords: Dangme, Ewe, Akan, Ga, lexical borrowing, loanwords, language contact, dialectal Variation

Introduction

The study of lexical borrowing has received scholarly attention worldwide from phonological, morphological, semantic, and sociolinguistic perspectives. Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p.37) define lexical borrowing as “the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language.” In this view, lexical borrowing is a language maintenance phenomenon because speakers from the borrowing language preserve their language under some form of pressure while enriching it with words from the language(s) they encounter (see also Winford, 2003). Dangme, like most languages, has borrowed quite a lot of lexical items from other languages. The paper investigates the sociolinguistics of lexical borrowings into the language, which is in contact with four languages: Ewe, Ga, Akan, and English.

Dangme has seven dialects (Ada, Gbugblaa, Yilo Krobo, Manya Krobo, Nugo, Se and Osudoku), but this study concerns lexical borrowings into the first four. Although each dialect is in direct contact with English because English is the official language of Ghana, the same thing cannot be said about their contact with the three Ghanaian languages. This is shown in the map below. Ada is in contact with the Anlo dialect speakers of Ewe. Some of these Ewe communities include Sogakofe, Atorkor and Aveyime. Gbugblaa is in geographical contact with Ga communities like Kpone, Tema and the surrounding communities. Manya Krobo is also in contact with the Akyim dialect of Akan in Begoro and its environs. In the case of Yilo Krobo, it is in contact with native speakers of the Asante dialect of Akan in Koforidua and with the Akuapem dialect speakers of Akan and the Guan speakers in communities such as Adukrom, Asamang, Asenema, Amanfrom, Nyamebikyere among others.

Given that dialects of Dangme are in contact with different languages, the primary objective of the study is to find out which lexical borrowings from which source languages are unique to each dialect and which lexical borrowings are cross-dialectal. To achieve this objective, every respondent, irrespective of his/her dialect was asked to give the meaning of every lexical borrowing selected for the study. Another objective of the study is to ascertain whether and to what extent the lexical borrowings constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon or are cases of relexification of the Dangme lexicon.

in these studies that vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion were the two main adaptation processes. Those operations, according to the authors, are done to break non-native clusters or to avoid codas in the borrowed words. The third work, Adomako (2018), investigated the phonology of Akan loanwords in Ga and Dangme. His focus was on how Akan words are adapted phonologically when borrowed into Ga and Dangme. He also examined how Akan source prosodic features, for example tone, is realized in the two languages in the borrowed words.

The current study, given its two objectives, goes beyond this restricted focus on the phonology of lexical borrowings into Dangme. Some studies done elsewhere touch on aspects of those objectives. One study which, like the current one, dealt with dialectal variation in lexical borrowings is Franco, Geeraerts, Speelman and Hout (2019). It is a study of loanwords borrowed from French, German and Latin into the Brabantian and Limburgish dialects of Dutch. The study found that the dialectal variation reflects variations in the sociocultural contact that speakers of the two dialects have with the three source languages. For example, it was found that because speakers of the Limburgish dialect are more oriented towards the Roman Catholic tradition than speakers of the Brabantian dialect, the Limburgish dialect has borrowed more lexical items from Latin than did the Brabantian dialect. Bodomo (1998) similarly examined how loanwords in the Dagaare language of Northwestern Ghana can be used to gain insight into the cultural history of the Dagaaba, i.e., how the loanwords signpost the Dagaaba's encounters with new items of trade and various civilizations at points in the language's history (the Dagaaba are the people who speak the Dagaare language). He did not, however, explore the issues from the perspective of dialect variation in Dagaare.

Ngom's (2000) work is another study that investigated lexical borrowing from multiple sources into one language, Wolof. He found that Wolof, a major indigenous urban language in Senegal, has borrowed words from French, Arabic and English

for different purposes. French is the official language of Senegal and in that capacity influences discourses on politics and the economy. It therefore serves as a source of borrowing of words in those domains. With over eighty percent of the population being Muslims, and with Arabic being the primary language of Islam, Wolof readily borrowed words related to religion from Arabic. And, according to Ngom, as a result of the spread of American youth culture through the media and the American movie industry, English's influence on Wolof manifests in some English loanwords in Wolof that are related to American youth culture.

As with these studies, and in line with our objectives, we shall attempt to track lexical borrowings in Dangme to their source languages and reflect on the implications for understanding contact-induced dialectal lexical variation.

Theoretical framework

This approach is associated with Labov's Variationist Sociolinguistics Theory propounded in 1966, hence its other name, Labovian Sociolinguistics (see also Labov, 1972). The central idea of this theory is that the variation witnessed at all levels of language, in the form of distributions of variants of linguistic variables, is not random, that such distributions will be found to be systematic and related to some social factors (called social variables), in this case, the dialects of Dangme spoken by respondents and their ages. The theory enabled us to see a lexical borrowing and its native counterpart as variants of a linguistic variable (what they are intended to refer to) so that we can map out which lexical borrowings are being used side by side their native counterparts and which ones are not. It also enabled us to map out, on the social front, which categories of Dangme speakers (categorized in terms of dialect and age) know and use which variant(s).

Methodology

In this study, elicitation (picture presentations and description of abstract entities) was our main data collection instrument, and it was carried out in the form of sociolinguistic interviews. During the interviews, respondents' biodata were also collected. The interviews were done in the four dialect areas: Ada and Gbugblaa communities in the Greater Accra Region, and Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo communities in the Eastern Region. In Yilo Krobo, we sampled respondents from Aboabo, Nkurakan, Somanya and Klo-Agogo. We also selected Asesewa, Akateng, Akuse and Kpong towns in Manya Krobo for the investigation. In the case of Ada, the study took place in Ada-Foah, Ayigbo and Kasseh. In the case of Gbugblaa, we sampled respondents at Prampram. These towns were selected because each of them is close to one of the three indigenous donor languages: Ewe, Ga, or Akan.

With respect to the sample size, eighty (80) respondents were sampled purposively, 20 from each dialect community. Each respondent was drilled with a set of pictures and invitations in Dangme to describe objects in the pictures. If they used a lexical borrowing, they were asked whether they also knew its Dangme equivalent. Elements in their biodata (age and dialect) were taken note of in our quantitative analysis of the data, which we report on in the next section.

Discussions

This section is in two parts. In the first part, we discuss, under various subsections, lexical borrowings that are unique to each dialect, pointing out the source languages. We also discuss lexical borrowings that are cross-dialectal and offer explanations for their spread. In the second part, we turn to the question whether and to what extent respondents who use lexical borrowings to name objects also know the native equivalents of those borrowings.

Lexical borrowings unique to a dialect

In this section, we discuss lexical borrowings that are unique to Ada, Gbugblaa, Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo.

Lexical borrowings generally unique to Ada natives

We commence with lexical borrowings that are unique to Ada. In the table below, we see that lexical borrowings that only speakers of Ada (i.e., AD) know are Ewe words. It is seen that all the 20 respondents representing 25% of the 80 respondents used **afungu** (sugarcane), **agɔmetaku** (ginger), **atɔtɔ** (pineapple), **anyekli/anyikli** (custard apple), **adiba** (pawpaw), **kpakpahe** (duck), **avutɔ** (bat), **ve** (monitor lizard), **atlaakpe** (ladder), **gatsi** (metal ladle).

Table 1

Ewe	Loanword		AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
Adaptation								
fofoŋ	afungu	sugarcane	20	-	-	-	20	25
agɔmetaku	agɔmetaku	ginger	20	-	-	-	20	25
atɔtɔ	atɔtɔ	pineapple	20	-	-	-	20	25
anyikli	anyi(ɛ)kli	custard apple	20	-	-	-	20	25
adiba	adiba	pawpaw	20	-	-	-	20	25
kpakpaxe	kpakpahe	duck	20	-	-	-	20	25
agutɔ	avutɔ	bat	20	-	-	-	20	25
ve	ve	monitor lizard	20	-	-	-	20	25
atrakpui	atlaakpe	ladder	20	-	-	-	20	25
gatsi	gatsi	metal ladle	20	-	-	-	20	25
dzamatre	atle	water melon	20	20	-	-	40	50
sɔ	osɔ	horse	20	8	-	-	28	35
(a)dade	adadee	cat	12	-	-	-	12	15
akpɔkplɔ	akpɔkplɔ	frog	9	-	-	-	9	11.25

With the exception of respondents from Gbugblaa, some of whom use the Ewe-origin words to refer to the items, respondents from Yilɔ Krobo and Manya Krobo do not use the Ewe-origin words. This is because they either have knowledge of the native words used to refer to these items or they use borrowed words from their closest linguistic neighbours to refer to those items. For example, we see that all the 20 respondents from Ada used **atlɛ** (watermelon) borrowed from the Ewe word for *watermelon*, **dzamatre**; note that the same word is used by respondents from Gbugblaa. The remaining 40 respondents from Yilɔ Krobo and Manya Krobo used the English borrowed word **watamilo/wɔtamɛlɔn** for this item. Also, all the 20 respondents from Ada used **osɔ** (horse) from the Ewe word **sɔ** (horse) whilst 8 out of the 20 respondents from Gbugblaa also used **osɔ** for horse. The remaining 12 respondents from Gbugblaa and the 40 respondents from Yilɔ Krobo and Manya Krobo used the native word **okpɔngɔ** for horse. With **adadee** (cat) and **akpɔkplɔ** (frog), borrowed from the Ewe words **(a)dadi** and **akpɔkplɔ** respectively, it is seen that 12 of the respondents from Ada used **adadee** (cat) whilst 9 used **akpɔkplɔ** (frog). The remaining respondents from Ada who did not use the borrowed Ewe words used indigenous words instead. For instance, the respondents who did not use **adadee** for cat used either **anɔ** (cat) or **wedetse** (cat). Five (5) respondents used **anɔ** (cat) and four (4) used **wedetse** for cat. Also, those who do not use **akpɔkplɔ** for frog instead used **kuɔwi** (frog). They were 11 respondents. The remaining respondents from Gbugblaa used **alɔnte** borrowed from Ga, their closest linguistic neighbours for *cat*. Those from Manya Krobo and Yilɔ Krobo used the native word peculiar to Krobo, i.e., **ati** (cat).

The picture that has emerged from this table is that Ada respondents are consistent with their borrowing from Ewe. It also emerged that when an Ewe word filters into another dialect from Ada, it is to Gbugblaa. When an Ewe loanword is not known to speakers of the other dialects, they would use a native

equivalent or another loanword from a different source language. These pictures recur in the data from the other sites, as we show below.

Lexical borrowings generally unique to Gbugblaa natives

We now turn to the data from Gbugblaa. In Table 2, we see that lexical borrowings that only speakers of Gbugblaa (i.e., GB) know are Ga words. And this is not surprising because Ga is the closest language community to the Gbugblaa speech community.

Table 2

Ga	Loanword		AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
Adaptation								
alonte	alonte	cat	-	20	-	-	20	25
akokoshi	akokooshi	coconut	-	20	-	-	20	25
aputumpata	apotompata	bat	-	20	-	-	20	25
akpokplonto	akoklonto	tortoise	-	20	-	-	20	25
sebe	sebe	garden egg	-	20	-	-	20	25
blɔfoŋme	blɛfoŋme	pineapple	-	20	-	-	20	25
akataŋwia	akatawia	umbrella	-	20	-	-	20	25

Interestingly, the Ga words that all Gbugblaa speakers have used to name the items in question (namely **alɔte** ‘cat’, **akokooshi** ‘coconut’, **apotompata** ‘bat’, **akoklonto** ‘tortoise’, **sebe** ‘garden eggs’, **blɛfoŋme** ‘pineapple’, and **akatawia** ‘umbrella’) have not filtered to any other dialect. What we found was that the other respondents either used native words or words borrowed from their closest neighbours to refer to the target items.

Lexical borrowings generally unique to Yilo and Manya Krobo natives

It was found that fewer lexical borrowings are unique to Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo (i.e., YK and MK) and that they are from Akan, their closest neighbour.

Table 3

Akan	Loanword		AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
Adaptation								
bayerɛ	baale	a type of yam	-	-	20	20	40	50
ahenemma	ohinima	native sandals	-	-	11	10	21	26.25
wodasobɔ	odasobɔ	a kind of scarf	-	-	10	8	18	22.50
(ɔ)kɔtɔ	okɔtɔ	crab	-	-	-	6	6	7.5

It can be noticed from Table 3 that not all Krobo speakers use Akan words. It was only **baale**, borrowed from the Akan **bayerɛ** (a type of yam), that all the 40 respondents from Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo used an Akan loanword. For **ohinima** (native sandals), borrowed from the Akan **ahenemma** (native sandals), 11 respondents from Yilo Krobo and 10 from Manya Krobo used it. The remaining 9 from Yilo Krobo and 10 from Manya Krobo used the native word **ablade** (native sandals) instead. Respondents from Ada and Gbugblaa also used the native word **ablade** for native sandals. Also, **odasobɔ** (a particular kind of scarf) from the Akan **wodasobo** was used by 10 of the respondents from Yilo Krobo and 8 from Manya Krobo. The remaining respondents from Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo did not have knowledge of the word and as such used the generic word for *scarf*, also borrowed from the Akan word **duku**. Those from Gbugblaa and Ada also used the generic word for *scarf* for this kind of scarf. Also, with **okɔtɔ** (crab), borrowed from the Akan word (ɔ) **kɔtɔ**, only 6 respondents each from Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo used it. The remaining respondents from Manya Krobo and those from Yilo Krobo used **agaja/akaja** for *crab*. In Ada and Gbugblaa, respondents used the native word unique to their dialects, i.e., **kaawi**, for crab.

Lexical borrowings that are cross-dialectal

In this section we discuss the lexical borrowings shared by all four dialects, tracking their source languages. We start with Ewe words borrowed into Dangme.

Table 4

Ewe	Loanword		AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
Adaptation								
akple	akple	a type of delicacy	20	20	20	20	80	100
mudɔ	mudɔ	mosquito net	20	20	20	20	80	100
atsatsa	tsatsa	mat	20	20	20	20	80	100

From the table (4), it is seen that **akple** (a staple food), **mudɔ** (mosquito net), and **tsatsa** (a type of mat), borrowed from the Ewe words **akple**, **mudɔ**, and **atsatsa** respectively, are used by all the 80 respondents. These words were borrowed because of a lexical gap in Dangme. Table 5 represents the Akan words that spread across the four dialects.

Table 5

Akan	Loanword		AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
Adaptation								
nkyenam	kenam(i)	fried fish	20	20	20	20	80	100
apɔnkye	apletsɪ	goat	20	20	20	20	80	100
opuro	opleu	squirrel	20	20	20	20	80	100
Kɔkɔbo	kɔkɔbo	fox	20	20	20	20	80	100
bonsu	boso	whale	20	20	20	20	80	100
papaho	papam(i)/ papahu	towel	20	20	20	20	80	100
ahwehwɛ	ahihwiɛ/ ahuhue	mirror	20	20	20	20	80	100
atadeɛ	tade	dress	20	20	20	20	80	100
dadesɛn	dadesɛ	cauldron	20	20	20	20	80	100
mmɔden	mɔde	to do well	20	20	20	20	80	100
abofuo	abofu	anger	20	20	20	20	80	100
okyɛame	otsiamɛ	spokesperson	20	20	20	20	80	100
sika	sika	sika	20	20	20	20	80	100

adansee	odase	witness	20	20	20	20	80	100
animuonyam	anunyam(i)	glory	20	20	20	20	80	100
nokore	anɔkuale	truth	12	20	20	20	72	90
ɔsram	oslam(i)	moon	6	20	20	20	66	82.50
nkyensee	tsesi	eating bowl	20	20	14	11	65	81.25
obubuafo	obubuafo	crippled person	6	4	20	20	50	62.50
<u>nkonim</u>	<u>kunim (i)</u>	<u>victory</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>43.75</u>

It can be observed that except for the last five words in Table 5, i.e., **anɔkuale** (truth), **oslam(i)** (moon), **tsesi** (eating bowl), **obubuafo** (crippled person), and **kunim(i)** (victory), all 80 respondents used the nativized form of the borrowed Akan words. The last five words, however, show variation in how many people used them instead of Dangme words. Apart from all the respondents from Gbugblaa, Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo who preferred to use the borrowed word **anɔkuale** (truth), 12 from Ada showed knowledge of the native word **niine** (truth). All except 14 of the respondents preferred the borrowed form **oslam(i)** (moon), with all the 14 being Ada speakers. They preferred the native word **nyɔhiɔ**. However, respondents from Gbugblaa, Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo claimed they also know **nyɔhiɔ** although they chose to use the borrowed form. Similar patterns define the situation with the last four words.

Table 6 also shows that words borrowed from English into Dangme are shared across the four dialects. These words are borrowed because of a lexical gap in the language.

Table 6

English	Loanword	AD	GB	YK	MK	Total	(%)
	Adaptation						
mobile phone	fom/fon/moba	20	20	20	20	80	100
bicycle	basikli/baisikli	20	20	20	20	80	100
iron	ayɔm/ayɔn	20	20	20	20	80	100
bag	bagi/bag	20	20	20	20	80	100
matches	matsesi/matses	20	20	20	20	80	100
plate	plæte/plet	20	20	20	20	80	100
cabbage	kabeji/kabej	20	20	20	20	80	100
carrot	kalɔti/karɔt	20	20	20	20	80	100
pear	paya	20	20	20	20	80	100
Socket	sɔkɛti/sɔkɛt	20	20	20	20	80	100
Bulb	bɔb/bɔbu	20	20	20	20	80	100
Wire	waya	20	20	20	20	80	100
Generator	jenleta	20	20	20	20	80	100
Battery	batle	20	20	20	20	80	100
Mobile phone	fom/fon/moba	20	20	20	20	80	100
Bicycle	basikli/baisikli	20	20	20	20	80	100
Iron	ayɔm/ayɔn	20	20	20	20	80	100
Bag	bagi/bag	20	20	20	20	80	100
Matches	matsesi/matses	20	20	20	20	80	100
Plate	plæte/plet	20	20	20	20	80	100
Coal pot	klopɔtu/koopɔt	20	20	20	20	80	100
Flag	aflaanga/flag	20	20	20	20	80	100

Respondents' vocabulary knowledge of lexical borrowings vs their native equivalents

This section explores respondents' vocabulary knowledge of lexical borrowings versus their knowledge of native equivalents. We try to find out whether when speakers learn a borrowed word they learn or still remember the native equivalents of those borrowed

words. The quest here is to fulfil our second objective, which is to ascertain whether and to what extent the lexical borrowings constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon or conversely result in relexification of native words in the active lexicon of native speakers. The social variable considered in the analysis is the age of respondents, and we commence with respondents' knowledge of Akan-origin words in relation to their Dangme equivalents.

Table 7 shows how many respondents (20 in each of four age groups totaling 80) claimed to know only the Akan borrowed word **obubuafo** 'a cripple', how many claimed to know only the Dangme equivalent **libɔɔ** and how many claimed to know both words. Respondents who have knowledge of only **obubuafo** were 37 whilst those who had knowledge of **obubuafo** and **libɔɔ** were 43; no respondent claimed to know only the Dangme word **libɔɔ**.

Table 7: obubuafo / libɔɔ 'a cripple'

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	obubuafo	libɔɔ	Obubuafo + libɔɔ
10-25 years	12	0	8
26-35 years	9	0	11
36-45 years	9	0	11
46+ years	7	0	13
Total	37	0	43

What this means is that there are two typical groups of respondents: those who have knowledge of the borrowed Akan words only and those who have knowledge of both the borrowed words and their native equivalents; indeed, in this case, there is a near split of the sample population along this line. However, in many of the cases we investigated, as shown in tables 8 to 11, the regular pattern is for majority of respondents to claim knowledge of both the borrowed Akan words and their Dangme equivalents:

Table 8: oslam / nyɔhiɔ ‘moon’

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	oslam	nyɔhiɔ	oslam + nyɔhiɔ
10-25 years	8	0	12
26-35 years	6	0	14
36-45 years	4	0	16
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	18	0	62

Table 9: kunimi / nguɔ / ayilɔ / manye ‘victory’

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	kunimi	nguɔ / ayilɔ / manye	kunimi / nguɔ / ayilɔ / manye
10-25 years	3	0	17
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	3	0	77

Table 10: ohinima / ablade ‘native sandals’

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	ohinima	ablade	ohinima / ablade
10-25 years	9	0	11
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	9	0	71

Table 11: aywilèho / bɔ yemi “sorrow / grief”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	aywilèho	bɔ yemi	aywilèho / bɔ yemi
10-25 years	17	0	3
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	17	0	63

The implication of this pattern is that Akan borrowed words have cross-dialectal currency and that they constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon.

A different pattern emerges with lexical borrowings from Ewe. The trend is for the majority of respondents to claim that they only know the Dangme equivalents of the Ewe borrowed words as shown in tables 12 to 15; in Table 12, for example, 67 of 80 respondents said they knew only the native equivalent of **kpakpaxe** ‘duck’ although 13 persons said they knew both the native word and **kpakpaxe**:

Table 12: kpakpaxe / dabodabo / dɔkɔdɔkɔ “duck”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	kpakpaxe	dabodabo/ dɔkɔdɔkɔ	kpakpaxe/ dabodabo/ dɔkɔdɔkɔ
10-25 years	0	18	2
26-35 years	0	17	3
36-45 years	0	16	4
46+ years	0	16	4
Total	0	67	13

Table 13: atɔtɔ / blɛfota “pineapple”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	atɔtɔ	blɛfota	atɔtɔ / blɛfota
10-25 years	5	13	2
26-35 years	5	10	5
36-45 years	5	11	4
46+ years	5	13	2
Total	20	47	13

Table 14: anyi(ɛ)kli / habuɛ “custard apple”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	anyi(ɛ)kli	habuɛ	anyi(ɛ)kli / habuɛ
10-25 years	5	15	0
26-35 years	5	12	3
36-45 years	5	11	4
46+ years	5	14	1
Total	20	52	8

Table 15: adiba / gɔ “pawpaw”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
Age range	adiba	gɔ	adiba / gɔ
10-25 years	5	14	1
26-35 years	5	10	5
36-45 years	5	10	5
46+ years	5	13	2
Total	20	47	13

A scrutiny of the data in Table 1 explains the pattern exhibited in the tables 12 to 15: the few who knew only the Ewe lexical borrowings and those who knew both the Ewe lexical borrowings and their Dangme counterparts were Ada speakers, whose dialect is in direct contact with Ewe. What this pattern therefore means is that Ewe lexical borrowings are largely localized at the Ada community where they have the capacity to replace their Dangme equivalents given that in some cases all Ada respondents claimed to remember only the Ewe lexical items; see tables 13 to 15 for illustrations.

The trend observed with Ada is similar to what is observed with Gbugblaa: Ga words borrowed into Gbugblaa are generally known to only Gbugblaa speakers who either know only the Ga-origin words or both those words and their Dangme equivalents. Respondents who speak another dialect know only the Dangme equivalents. This trend is shown in the patterns in tables 16 to 23:

Table 16: shitɔ/kuadaa “pepper”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>shitɔ</i>	<i>kuadaa</i>	<i>shitɔ+kuadaa</i>
10-25 years	5	15	0
26-35 years	5	15	0
36-45 years	5	15	0
46+ years	5	15	0
Total	20	60	0

Table 17: sɛbɛ/ga/agbitsa “garden egg”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>sɛbɛ</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>sɛbɛ+ga</i>
10-25 years	5	15	0
26-35 years	2	15	3
36-45 years	3	15	2
46+ years	1	13	6
Total	11	58	11

Table 18: alɔntɛ/anɔ/wedetɛ “cat”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>alɔntɛ</i>	<i>ati/anɔ/wedetɛ</i>	<i>alɔntɛ+wedetɛ</i>
10-25 years	3	15	2
26-35 years	1	15	4
36-45 years	0	15	5
46+ years	0	15	5
Total	4	60	16

Table 19: awale/mine “spoon”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>awale</i>	<i>mine</i>	<i>awale+mine</i>
10-25 years	3	15	2
26-35 years	2	15	3
36-45 years	3	13	4
46+ years	0	13	7
Total	8	56	16

Table 20: akatawia/ajohia/ajovia “umbrella”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>akatawia</i>	<i>ajohia/ajovia</i>	<i>akatawia+ajohia/ajovia</i>
10-25 years	2	15	3
26-35 years	1	15	4
36-45 years	0	14	6
46+ years	0	12	8
Total	3	56	21

Table 21: atsule/gbahetso “ladder”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>atsule</i>	<i>gbahetso</i>	<i>atsule+gbahetso</i>
10-25 years	4	15	1
26-35 years	2	15	3
36-45 years	0	15	5
46+ years	0	15	5
Total	6	60	14

Table 22: bale/amɔtɔ/amatade “barrel”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>bale</i>	<i>amɔtɔ/amatade</i>	<i>bale+amɔtɔ/amatade</i>
10-25 years	5	11	4
26-35 years	5	10	5
36-45 years	5	7	8
46+ years	5	8	7
Total	20	36	14

Table 23: Baiblo/Ngmami Klɔuklɔu “Bible”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>Baiblo</i>	<i>Ngmami klɔuklɔu</i>	<i>Baiblo+Ngmami Klɔuklɔu</i>
10-25 years	2	0	18
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	2	0	78

Thus, as with Ada in the context of its lexical borrowings from Ewe, it can be concluded that Ga lexical borrowings will remain localized in Gbugblaa in which they have the capacity to replace their Dangme equivalents.

We also asked respondents about their knowledge of English-origin lexical items vis-à-vis their Dangme counterparts. What we found contrasts with the pattern we observed with Ewe and Ga origin words. The pattern in this case resembles the pattern we observed with Akan-origin words: regularly, respondents either claimed knowledge of both the borrowed English words and their Dangme equivalents (see tables 24 and 25) or there was a split between those who claimed to know only English-origin words and those who claimed to know both stocks of lexicon (see tables 26 to 28):

Table 24: tela/ni kpelɔ “tailor”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>tela</i>	<i>ni kpelɔ</i>	<i>tela+ni kpelɔ</i>
10-25 years	0	0	20
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	0	0	80

Table 25: titsa/titse/tsɔɔɔɔ “teacher”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>titsa/titse</i>	<i>tsɔɔɔɔ</i>	<i>titsa/titse/tsɔɔɔɔ</i>
10-25 years	0	0	20
26-35 years	0	0	20
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	0	0	80

Table 26: polisi/jibifo no “police”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>polisi</i>	<i>jibifo no</i>	<i>polisi+jibifo no</i>
10-25 years	7	0	13
26-35 years	4	0	16
36-45 years	0	0	20
46+ years	0	0	20
Total	11	0	69

Table 27: pingasi/pikasi/aga “pick axe”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>pingasi/ pikasi</i>	<i>aga</i>	<i>pingasi/ pikasi+aga</i>
10-25 years	10	0	10
26-35 years	10	0	10
36-45 years	9	0	11
46+ years	9	0	11
Total	38	0	42

Table 28: soja/agbadagblaa “soldier”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>soja</i>	<i>agbadagblaa</i>	<i>Soja+agbadagblaa</i>
10-25 years	16	0	4
26-35 years	17	0	3
36-45 years	9	0	11
46+ years	3	0	17
Total	45	0	35

Of course, there are instances, like **pen** in Table 29, regarding which respondents claimed they knew only the English-origin word:

Table 29: pɛɛ/pɛn/adimla “pen”

	Borrowed Word Only	Native Word Only	Borrowed and Native Words
<i>Age range</i>	<i>pɛɛ/pɛn</i>	<i>Adimla</i>	<i>pɛɛ/pɛn+adimla</i>
10-25 years	20	0	0
26-35 years	20	0	0
36-45 years	19	0	1
46+ years	18	0	2
Total	77	0	3

Thus, as with Akan-origin borrowings, the implication is that English borrowed words have cross-dialectal currency and constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon although a few (e.g., **pen**) seem to have replaced their native equivalents, if any.

Regarding the correlation of age of respondents and their responses, the consistent pattern reflected in tables 7 to 29 is that cross-dialectally it is younger persons, i.e., persons in the 10-25- and 26-35-year groups, who are most likely to know only borrowed words and that it is also members of these groups who dominate persons who claim to know both borrowed words and their Dangme counterparts. What this implies is that there is growing preference among the youth for borrowed words that enter a dialect of Dangme.

Conclusion

Previous studies on lexical borrowing into Dangme have focused on phonological adaptation of lexical borrowings (from English and Akan) into Dangme. The current study departed from this focus as it pursued two interrelated objectives, i.e., to find out: (i) whether, and to what extent, borrowings into a dialect from a given source language remain localized or are transferred to the other dialects and (ii) whether, and to what extent, the lexical borrowings constitute additions to the Dangme lexicon or, conversely, a relexification of native words in the lexicon.

Dangme has seven dialects (Ada, Gbugblaa, Yilo Krobo, Manya Krobo, Nugo, Se and Osudoku), but this study investigated lexical borrowings into the first four. The language is in contact with four languages from which it has borrowed: Ewe, Ga, Akan, and English. Each dialect of Dangme is in direct contact with English, the official language of Ghana, and with at least one of the three Ghanaian languages. While Ada is in contact with Ewe and Gbugblaa with Ga, both Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo are in contact with Akan and, to some extent, Ewe. Eighty (80) respondents, 20 each from the four dialects considered, were purposively sampled to participate in the data collection process. Elicitation was the main instrument used and it was complemented with sociolinguistic interviews aimed at obtaining social information about each participant. Data analysis was done in line with Labov's Variationist Sociolinguistics Theory.

It was found that Dangme has borrowed extensively from the four languages mentioned above. Through a variationist analysis of the data from the 80 respondents, it emerged that while some borrowed words are localized in the dialect with which a source language has direct contact, some other borrowed words have spread beyond the dialect that is in contact with the source language. In other words, the borrowings generally reflect the geosocial contact that each dialect has with its neighbour(s) although there are many cases of diffusion into Greater Dangme. Specifically, it was found that while most Akan and English lexical borrowings have been integrated in all four dialects of Dangme, the situation with lexical borrowings from Ga and Ewe is quite different. Most Ga borrowings were found only in the Gbugblaa dialect, and most Ewe borrowings were found only in Ada and, to some extent, in Gbugblaa and Manya Krobo; only a few borrowings from Ewe are also cross-dialectal (as shown in Table 4).

The study also revealed that Akan and English lexical borrowings generally constitute additions to the Dangme

lexicon while Ewe and Ga lexical borrowings may be seen as subtractive borrowings or cases of relexification in Ada and Gbugblaa respectively.

A third general finding relates to how responses correlate to age ranges. It was found that cross-dialectally it is younger persons, i.e., persons in the 10-25- and 26-35-year groups, who are most likely to know only borrowed words and that it is also members of these groups who dominate persons who claim to know both borrowed words and their Dangme counterparts. The conclusion from this is that there is growing preference among the youth for borrowed words that enter a dialect of Dangme and that this signals massive borrowing in the future.

The study is expected to contribute to an understanding of how languages like Dangme whose dialects have geographical contact with different languages develop dialectal variation.

References

- Adomako, K. (2018). *The phonology of Akan loanwords in Ga and Dangme*. (PhD. Thesis). Department of Linguistics. University of Ghana, Legon.
- Adomako, K. (2008). *Vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion in loanwords: A study of Akan*. (Master`s Thesis). University of Tromsø.
- Bodomo, A. B. (1995). The contribution of loanwords to the study of cultural history: An illustration with the Dagaaba of Northwestern Ghana. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 4(2), 42-49.
- Caesar, R. O. & Adi, D. B. (2014). *Introduction to Dangme phonetic and phonology*. (Revised edition). Kumasi: Alpha and Omega Publications.
- Franco, K., Geeraerts, D., Speelman, D., Hout, V. R. (2019). *Journal of Linguistic Geography*. Vol. 7(1), pp 14-32.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania Press.
- Ngom, F. (2000). Sociolinguistic motivations of lexical borrowings in Senegal. *Studies in the Linguistic Science*. Vol. 30(2), 159-172.
- Owulah, F. T. (2014). *Aspects of Dangme phonology* (MPhil. Thesis). Winneba: University of Education, Winneba.
- Schulte, K. (2013). Loanwords in Romanian. In M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (eds.): *Loanwords in the world's languages: a comparative handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, pp 230-259.
- Thomason, S. G. & Kaufman, T. (1988). *Language contact. Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. California: University of California Press.
- Winford, D. (2003). *An introduction to contact linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.