

**ASSESSING LANGUAGE VITALITY AND LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT OF**

**LÈTÈ (LARTEH)**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a result of my own work, an output of a research undertaken under supervision. Quotations and references to scholarly works have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that this work has never been submitted to any other institution for the award of any degree or certificate. I am however responsible for any omission or commission that may be identified with this study.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving husband, Prophet Emmanuel Twum-Antwi, who gave me all the needed advice, encouragement and time to undertake this study. God bless you. To my children, Emmanuel and Uriel, I love you.

Also to my loving mother, Ms. Dianah Mensah and my sisters Bello Madinatu, Afusatu, Fatimatu, Risikatu and Selia for the love and support they gave me during this research.



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Unto the Lord be the Glory, great things He has done. Great is thy faithfulness. Blessing, honour, glory and power be to Almighty God, the ancient of days for giving me wisdom, knowledge, understanding and protection throughout this research.

## ABSTRACT

The need to protect languages from extinction cannot be overemphasized. Language is an essential element of culture, and a means of communication. Through language, people build and express their emotions, intentions, values, norms, notions, practices, and this helps build understanding among them, and strengthen their relationship. Language is therefore the underlying factor for determining the identity of individuals and groups. Language is strategically important for the attainment of several development goals and for progress towards sustainable development.

African languages in particular can give us vital clues about history (Childs 2003). According to Tsunoda (2005: 162) a people's language contains "knowledge of ceremonies, mythology, environment, technology, language skills, songs, and linguistic artifacts". Therefore, we can say that language embodies the totality of a people's past, present and future. Any interference with the language of a people leads to a loss of some important aspects of the knowledge base of these people. Harrison (2007:7) also believes that languages are "repositories for cultural knowledge" which implies that the loss of languages means the loss of "treasures" within these languages (Crystal 2000:32).

Presently the threat posed to language vitality is now recognized as a worldwide crisis. There is no precise number of languages that are threatened in the world.

It has been observed that the location of Larteh, the study area, is a potential breeding ground for language assimilation. Since Larteh is located within an area where Akuapem Twi is widely spoken, there exists a kind of competition between these two languages; the Lete language (minority language) and Akuapem Twi (regional lingua franca). This situation is exactly what Wurm (1991) describes as stronger language communities exerting their

influence over minority language communities which to him, leads to language endangerment.

Again, the relative utility of the Akuapem Twi is accelerating the process of language shift and Lete is gradually losing its speakers. It is a fact that government, through its policies on language, is encouraging the use of selected languages as a means of communication and medium of instruction in schools. Children with limited proficiency in these languages of instruction are strongly disadvantaged. These children are “unable to develop their cognitive, in-depth and creatively independent skills and techniques” (Batibo, 2005) in these educational language mediums. They are disadvantaged culturally, politically, socio-economically, educationally, and are unable to contribute to national development.

The study will investigate language use in Larteh town, the study area.

The study will also attempt to assess the vitality and the extent of endangerment in Larteh with reference to the criteria suggested by UNESCO (2003).

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The need to protect languages from extinction cannot be overemphasized. Language is an essential element of culture, and a means of communication. Through language, people build and express their emotions, intentions, values, norms, notions and practices which help to build understanding among them and strengthen their relationship. Language is therefore the underlying factor for determining the identity of individuals and groups. Language is strategically important to the attainment of several development goals and for progress towards sustainable development.

African languages in particular can give us vital clues about history (Childs, 2003). According to Tsunoda (2006: 162) a people's language contains "knowledge of ceremonies, mythology, environment, technology, language skills, songs, and linguistic artifacts". Therefore, we can say that language embodies the totality of a people's past, present and future. Any interference with the language of a people leads to a loss of some important aspects of the knowledge base of these people. Harrison (2007:7) also believes that languages are "repositories for cultural knowledge" which implies that the loss of languages means the loss of "treasures" within these languages (Crystal, 2000:32).

Presently, there is no precise number of languages that are threatened in the world. Scholars such as Fishman (1991), Krauss (1992), and institutions such as UNESCO, Ethnologue and many more have attempted to find out the actual number of endangered languages of the world, yet there is either an underestimation or overestimation of these languages. It can be contended that a number of issues might have influenced the results of these findings. One of these influences might be the fact that, a language might have different

other names. Despite the difficulties in establishing the exact number of endangered languages of the world, an approximation has been reached.

According to Krauss (1992:7-10), about half of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken on earth are spoken only by adults who might not, or no longer teach these languages to the next generation. The elderly in the society (in communities where languages are under threat of extinction) possess the linguistic knowledge of their languages, but for one reason or the other, fail to transmit this knowledge to younger generations. He goes on to say that an additional 40% may soon be threatened, because the number of children learning their languages is declining measurably. Adults such as grandparents, parents, and the aged in the society do not communicate with their children in their native languages. Children's communication needs are not met therefore they learn and use other languages, especially those that are widely spoken. The effect of the above action is the decline in the use of their native languages, leading to a decrease in the linguistic competence of their own native language.

There are many different definitions of an endangered language in the literature. Wurm (1998: 192) gives five-level parameters of language endangerment:

*Potentially endangered* – communities that are under pressure from another larger language and are beginning to lose child speakers

*Endangered* – communities that have few or no children learning the language

*Seriously endangered* – the youngest good speakers are over 50 years of age

*Moribund* – communities that have only a handful of good, but very old speakers left

*Extinct* – communities that have no speakers left

Wurm (1998) agrees with Batibo (2003) that, language endangerment involves two or more languages where the stronger in the very end overpowers the weaker one. When this situation occurs, the stronger language assimilates the weaker one or the weaker language speakers can decide to shift to using the stronger language. In his study of language endangerment, Krauss used the term 'Moribund' to signify that the language is 'no longer being learned as mother-tongue by children' (Krauss1992:4). This means that there is a gap in the intergenerational language use, an important parameter, in assessing the vitality or otherwise of the Lete language. It is evident that scholars are very much interested in the intergenerational factors underpinning the process of language endangerment. Krauss (1992), Fishman1991) and UNESCO (2003) have stated the importance of the intergenerational factor in sustaining languages of the world.

### **1.0.1 THE LANGUAGE**

Lewis (2009) sub classifies Guan into two language clusters, North Guan and South Guan. Lete is a member of the south Guan group. Other languages of the South Guan group are Awutu, Cherepon and Gua. Lete is a South Guan (Kwa, Niger-Conger) language according to Lewis (2009) spoken in Larteh in the southeastern part of Ghana. Lete is spoken by about 8,310 people (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2000). This obviously does not represent the exact number of Lete speakers because of the presence of immigrants in the town.

A majority of the Larteh population speak Lete and Akuapem Twi. The establishment of Akim rule and administrative processes, led to the dominance of Akan in Guan towns (including Larteh) resulting in a total linguistic acculturation and assimilation of some Guan towns. Lartehrians who were so attached to their language became bi-lingual with Akuapem

Twi as their L2 (Kwamena-Po, 1972). Akuapem Twi is the language of communication, education, religion and trade in Larteh. Lete language is not written, it has no official orthography and it is not used in any official function. Brokensha (1966: 25) sums up the multilingual situation in Larteh in the following words:

Three languages are in common use in Larteh; Guan, Twi and English. Guan is generally the domestic language. At school, children learn English and they also have lessons in what is called 'vernacular', which is in fact Twi, for Guan is not taught at any school. Twi to some extent occupies the position of a prestige language.

The people of Larteh call their language Lete but in the literature, Larteh is used for both the people and their language. In this thesis, Larteh stands for the name of the town, Lartehs/Larteh people represent the people and Lete is the language they speak.

Lewis (2009:26-32) gives the most recent classification of the genetic relationship that exists between Lete and other Niger-Congo languages. He classifies Guan languages into two distinct groups: North Guan and South Guan. Lete, Awutu, Cherepon and Gua are members of the South Guan group. Figure 1 illustrates the genetic affiliation of Lete. The map of Ghanaian languages (figure 2) shows the list and classification of indigenous Ghanaian languages. Under the eastern Guan, we have Lete which is numbered 32 on the map. There is also the map of Larteh, (figure 3) the study area, which shows its general layout and the divisions of the town.

**Fig. 1 Genetic Affiliation of Lɛtɛ**Niger-CongoAtlantic-CongoVolta-CongoKwaNyoPotou-TanoTanoGuanNorth Guan

Chumburung (Ghana)

Dompo (Ghana)

Dwang (Ghana)

Foodo (Benin)

Gikyode (Ghana)

Ginyanga (Togo)

Gonja (Ghana)

Kplang (Ghana)

Krache (Ghana)

Nawuri (Ghana)

Nchumbulu (Ghana)

Nkonya (Ghana)

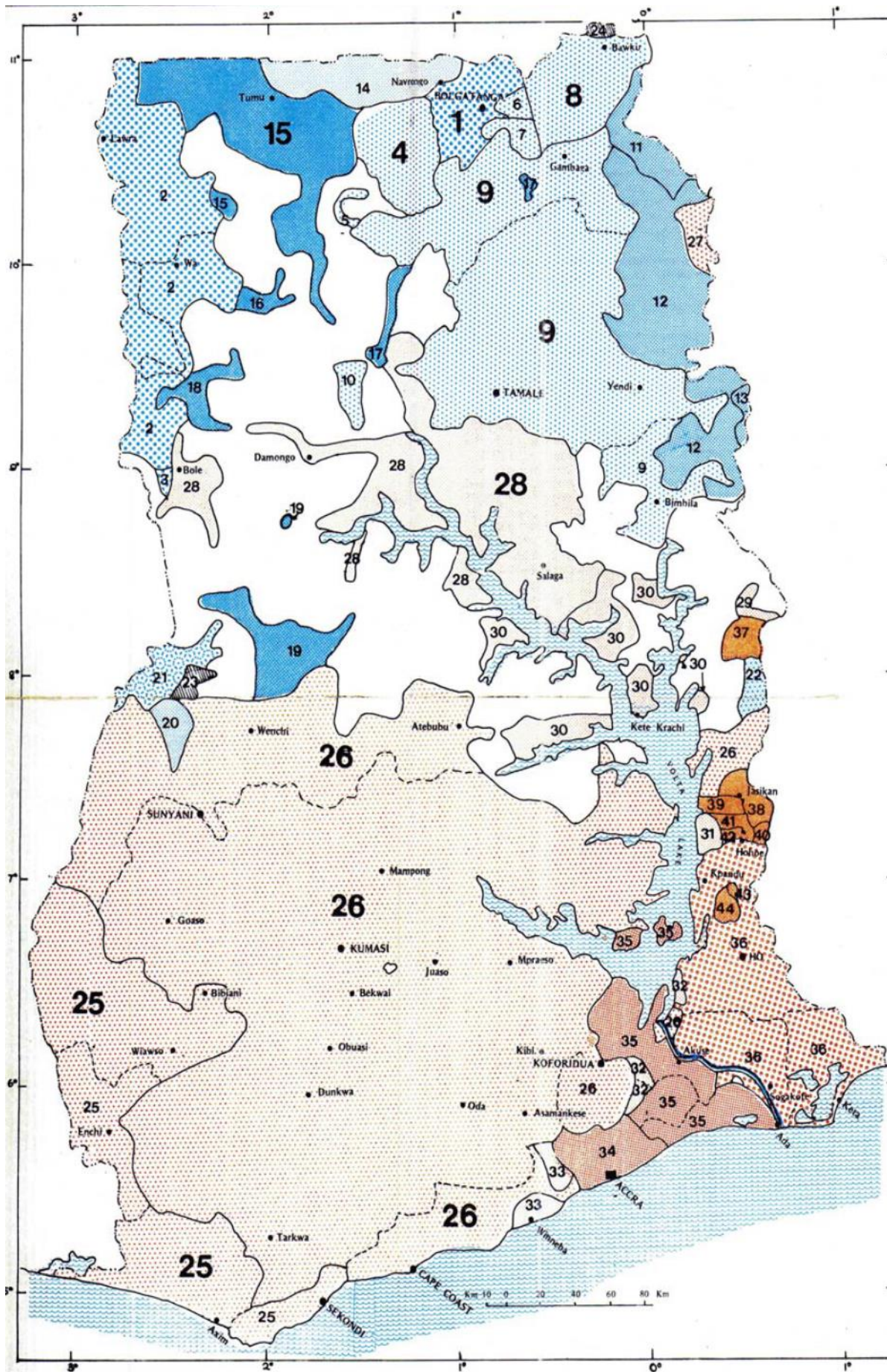
**South Guan**

Awutu (Ghana)

Cherepon (Ghana)

Gua (Ghana)

**Lɛtɛ (Larteh) (Ghana)**<http://www.ethnologue.com/>.



# MAP OF GHANAIAN LANGUAGES

## LIST AND CLASSIFICATION OF INDIGENOUS GHANAIAN LANGUAGES

### 1 GUR

#### A MOORE-GURMA



- a WESTERN  
1 Frafra  
2 Wali-Dagaare-Birifor  
3 Safalba



- b CENTRAL  
4 Buli  
5 Komung  
6 Nabt  
7 Talni  
8 Kusaal  
9 Dagbanli-Mampruli-Nanuni  
10 Hanga-Kamara



- c EASTERN  
11 Bimoba  
12 Konkomba  
13 Bassari

#### B GRUSI



- a NORTHERN  
14 Kasem



- b SOUTHERN  
15 Sisaala  
16 Chakali  
17 Tampilma  
18 Vagla  
19 Mo

#### C OTHER GUR



- a KULANGO  
20 Nkuraeng



- b SENUFO  
21 Nafaanra



- c TEM  
22 Ntrubo-Chala

### 2 MANDE



- 23 Ligbi  
24 Bisa

### 3 KWA

#### A VOLTA-COMOE



- a CENTRAL (TANO)  
25 Sehwi-Aowin-Nzema-Ahanta  
26 Akan  
27 Chakosi



- b EASTERN (GUAN)  
28 Gonja (Gbanyito)  
29 Achode  
30 Yeji-Nchumburu-Krachi-Nawuri  
31 Nkonya  
32 Cherepong-Lete  
33 Awutu-Efutu

#### B GA-DANGME



- 34 Ga  
35 Dangme (Ada-Shai-Krobo)

#### C EWE-FON



- 36 Ewe

#### D CENTRAL VOLTA REGION (TOGO RESTSPRACHEN)



- 37 Adele  
38 Buem (Lelemi; Lefana)  
39 Bowiri  
40 Sekpele (Likpe)  
41 Siwu (Lolobi-Akpafu)  
42 Santrokofi  
43 Logba  
44 Avatime-Nyangbo-Tafi



Language boundaries



Some dialect boundaries



National boundaries

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Designed by Joshua Adjabeng



### **1.0.2 LOCATION OF LARTEH TOWN**

Larteh is situated on the Akonno Hills of the Akuapem Ridge. The Hill is separated from the main part of the ridge by a valley. The Akuapem ridge continues north-eastwards to Togo where it is called Togo-Atakora Mountains and even to Niger (Kwamena Poh, 1972). It is bordered in the North by the Mamfe-Akropong road; in the south by the Shai Hills, in the east by the towns of Abonse and Aseseeso, and in the west by the Apopoano Hill near Dodowa. Other towns on the ridge connect to Larteh town by a branch road joining the Mamfe-Akropong main road after passing through the valley; the road winds down the scarp to Ayikuma on the Accra-Dodowa road. The town is seen as a secluded town from all the Akuapim Ridge towns, and even the surrounding towns and villages. Larteh is situated in the Akuapem North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana, approximately 24 kilometres from Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

### **1.0.3 HISTORY**

There are many migration stories in the literature and this account represents one of the versions. The history of Larteh is to a large extent inseparable from the history of the Guans, and also from the history of the whole Akuapim state. According to Kwamena Poh (1972), the Lartehs migrated to their present location due to the pressure from the Mossi who were moving southwards from the Almoravid invasion of old Ghana, and also from the Jihads of Askia Mohammed of Songhai. He also reports that, the migration was due to the fact that the Larteh people wanted fertile land to farm, because they were increasing in population.

The migration according to Kwamena-Poh (1972) might have been in “successive waves” and the first to arrive were the Kyerepon Guan groups. According to Kwamena-Poh, (1972:

33-36), a possible route of migration might have been south-eastwards of the Volta valley through the grassland region of present-day Togo and Benin to the coast where they met groups of Ewes and Ga-Adangbes who had already settled. The Larteh community continued to move until finally they settled on the Akuapem ridge where the Kyerepons, had already settled in about fifty towns. This is evident according to him by Larteh oral tradition which says that the Kyerepons were already settled in 50 towns when they (Lartehs) arrived. According to Larteh traditions, the original settlements for Larteh people numbered 30 towns, and it seems most of the present day towns in the Benkum division of which Larteh is the capital were all included.

Larteh engaged in wars for supremacy over the ridge. They were conquered by the Akwamus by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and came under the rulership of the Akwamus (Kwamena-Poh 1972). Larteh oral literature posits that, the Akim or Akyems helped the Guan states to overthrow the government or the rule of the Akwamus who were reported to have been very wicked and had ruled the Guans with iron hands.

The reign of the Akwamus saw the disintegration and reduction of the Guan towns and communities. Larteh communities which used to be thirty (30) were reduced to five (5) towns. The Akan chieftaincy system was adopted where Larteh Ahenease became one of the 'stool towns' at the time. It was during this time that the Akwamus forced the Guans to speak Twi, the language of the Akwamus.

The wickedness of the Akwamus led to a revolt by the Guan people who joined forces with the Akyems to destroy the Akwamu state around 1730. After the defeat, a school of thought says that the Akyems demanded a compensation for their help in defeating the Akwamus, and therefore the Guan people made the Akyems overlords of the ridge. Another school of thought also says that, the Guans fearing the return of the Akwamus asked the

Akyems to stay with them which led to the ‘Concord of Abotakyi’ where the Guan people including Larteh swore an oath of allegiance at Obosomase to the Akyem overlords. Present day Akropong became the seat of the Omanhene of the Akwapim state till date.

The (Nifa) Right wing state constituted the Kyerepong-Guan group with Adukrom becoming their capital therefore the Adukrom chief became “Nifahene”. The Left wing (Benkum) states were the Larteh-Guan group with Larteh town as the capital and the Lartehene as the “Benkumhene”. The Akuapem people of the ridge speak an Akan dialect called Akuapem Twi which is also different from the Akwamu Twi. Through the strict and wicked rule of the Akwamus, most of the Larteh towns such as Mamfe, Tutu and Obosomase lost their language to the Akwamu Twi. All Lɛtɛ speaking towns were lost except Larteh town, but other Kyerepon towns (about seven of them) are still in existence.

Oral tradition has it that at a point in time, the Larteh people with their Chief wanted the Larteh state to be an autonomous state therefore he (Chief Kwasi Akrofi Oworoe) on his enstoolment as Benkumhene, assumed the title ‘King’ which in the existing laws and customs of the Akuapem state constituted a contravention, because the only recognized Omanhene was the Akropong overlord. This act developed tensions along the ridge, but in 1896 according to Kwamena-Poh (1972) Chief Akrofi changed his title to “the King of Larte” but in 1899 Akrofi appointed his linguist from Mamfe (formerly a Larteh town) which led to the detention of the Larteh Chief in James Fort (Accra) but he was later released by the colonial authorities. The action taken by the Larteh chief was likely meant to reassert their political independence since they are believed to have been the first people to settle on the ridge. Secondly, it was also a way to protect and preserve their identity as an ethnic group. Presently, Larteh is independent of Akuapem state.

#### 1.0.4 ECONOMY

The Larteh community is predominantly a farming population. For instance Brokensha (1966, 1972) states that, with the introduction of cash crops such as cocoa, palm oil etc. the people could earn a lot of money to develop the town. Through the introduction of these cash crops, companies and plantation were established. The establishment of these companies gave a lot of people work to do, and therefore agricultural production went up. Some of these earliest companies are Larteh Planters' Union 1908 and Ofori Brothers Trading Company 1909 as recorded by Kwamena Poh (1972). Some of these companies brought a lot of development into the town.

Presently, the economy of the people is mostly subsistence farming; the main crops grown are maize, plantain, yam, cassava, cocoyam, citrus, and cocoa (not a major crop as in the early days). The present state of the economy in Larteh is as follows:

Professionals: Teachers, Nurses, Clinic staff, Bankers (Akuapem Rural Bank), District Assembly workers, Pastors and Policemen/women.

Artisans: Carpenters, painters, seamstresses, tailors, shoemakers (cobblers)

Drivers and mechanics

Businessmen and women:

Land lords / land ladies

Petty Traders: These include those who market their wares (vegetables, cereals, fish, clothes, food crops (cassava, yam, rice, water and others) in the markets, streets, homes, schools and those who sell food in front of their houses, Kiosks and other places.

**Shops:** These shops popularly called “Supermarkets” are stocked with different kinds of items. There are others called “container” which is also different from the shops. These “containers” are made of steel (just like containers used by shipping companies to ship goods at the ports) and are mobile.

Observing the economy of the town, it is observed that a lot of people in the town are unemployed, due to the fact that there are few economic activities in the town. Most people travel outside the town to seek greener pastures. There are no manufacturing companies or industries in the town to employ the people. Economic activities are very few as people do not patronize the market, and even on market days, most of the traders are foreigners from neighbouring towns.

#### **1.0.5 DIVISION OF THE LARTEH TOWN**

The town is divided into two (2) distinct groups or areas called Antere (Kubease) and Amkpeni (Ahenease). According to Johnson (1973), there was a clear distinction between the two (2) divisions (Kubease and Ahenease), but the Basel mission established Christian quarters (Presbyterian and Methodist quarters) between the two sections which grew until there was no demarcation between these sections. There is a Zongo community (including Muslims) in the town which is mostly made up of migrants from the northern part of Ghana.

The town is also divided into different traditional quarters (lineages) and these quarters trace their descent from a particular ancestor. These traditional quarters have similar rituals, ceremonies, leaders and traditional priests (called “osofo” by the Larteh people). These quarters (called ‘brongs’ – Akuapem, “boron”- Letε) have their own lands which they work on to sustain the lineages.

At Ahenease, (Amkpeni) there are (brongs) quarters such as Asode which has three lineages (Asode Kponkpo, Mantiase and Akote Bronte), Agyebide, Awurade, and Ekumide. Kubease (Antere) comprises Asantede and Akantsane. Kubease (Antere) is now the seat of the Akuapem Guan Paramountcy. Some traditions and customs of some of the quarters such as Asode, Agyebide, Asantede and Akantsane are deeply rooted in the Akan (presumably, Akyem now Akuapem) tradition (Larteh oral tradition, Kwamena-Po, 1972).

### **1.0.6 RELIGION**

Larteh used to be purely traditional religious towns with the Akonnedi god being the most powerful of them all, but currently other religions have been established in the town. The Akonnedi god is well-known worldwide, and great men and women from all walks of life visit it for help. There are other gods in the town, but any figure given would be an estimate. These gods may be family gods, personal gods and or state gods which are worshiped through sacrifice, libation and offerings during special festivities. This is because; it is believed that, these gods oversee the activities of individuals, and even groups of people in the society. These traditionalists still exist in the society and perform their rituals to these gods. Though the traditionalists go to church they have not forgotten their gods. During festivals, the priests/priestesses perform rituals and sacrifices to these gods to ask for their protection, forgiveness, prosperity, good health, a good yield and more.( according to oral tradition).

However, the religion that most people in the town profess is Christianity. The coming of the Basel missionaries and the Wesleyan missionaries has spread Christianity to most of the people in the town. The leading Christian groups in terms of church members are the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Anglican Church. Apart from these

churches, there are other churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Pentecost, the Assemblies of God Church, the Salvation Army, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lighthouse Chapel, Musama Disco Christo Church and more. In addition, there is a community of Muslims who are mostly from the Northern part of Ghana; these have their mosque in the Zongo where they worship.

### **1.0.7 EDUCATION**

The missions have been the bedrock of the development of education in Ghana. The Basel missionaries established the first school at Larteh. These mission schools have developed over the years and have reached higher levels of education such as Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools which are managed by the Ghana Education Service, under the Ministry of Education. Larteh has nine Primary Schools, six Junior High Schools and Two Senior High Schools. Many children have therefore had an opportunity to go to school.

### **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Presently the threat posed to language vitality is recognized as a worldwide crisis. According to Krauss (1992), about half of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken on earth are spoken only by adults who might not or no longer teach these languages to the next generation. He goes on to say that an additional 40% may soon be threatened, because the number of children learning their languages is declining significantly. Adults such as grandparents and parents in the society do not communicate with their children in their native languages.

Larteh is isolated from other Guan-speaking groups, and surrounded predominantly by Akuapem Twi speaking towns. There is therefore a lot of social and commercial interaction between these two language groups. Akuapem Twi is the dominant language spoken by the people on the Akuapem ridge, yet in addition to the Akuapem Twi, some Guan languages continue to be spoken in some towns of the Akuapem state.

Christianity was introduced on the Akuapem ridge by the Basel missionaries whose language policy was to develop and use the local languages. Akuapem Twi was adopted as the literary standard for use in church activities in Larteh, relegating Lete to the background. The missionaries started developing the Akuapem Twi dialect (Kwamena-Poh 1972). They used the Akuapem Twi in their evangelical mission work and produced church and religious literature in it. They also introduced the Akuapem Twi in schools and eventually reduced the language to writing, with an official orthography and writing conventions.

According to Kwamena-Poh (1972), by 1875 there were 43 publications in Akuapem Twi, including a translation of the Bible in 1871, religious tracts, textbooks and grammars. Eventually Akuapem Twi became the language of the entire Akuapem state. Schools were built where these textbooks were learnt. Religious tracts and the Bible were used in the churches the missionaries had established. However, Lete was neither written nor documented. Children from Lete communities are therefore forced to learn the predominant language (Akuapem Twi) in school. Ghana's official language and lingua franca is the English language which is also a compulsory subject in schools.

There are more than sixty languages in Ghana (Lewis, 2009). However, only ten out of these languages have been approved by the government to be used as medium of instruction in schools and also studies as subjects. The Ministry of Education (2008) stated that, in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the

local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, while English is studied as a subject. From Primary four and above, English language becomes the medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language is then studied as just another subject on the time table. The use of Akuapem Twi as the medium of instruction at the basic level of education in Larteh and surrounding towns puts the responsibility of learning Akuapem Twi on speakers of Lete.

It has been observed that the location of Larteh, the study area, is a potential breeding ground for language assimilation. Since Larteh is located within an area where Akuapem Twi is widely spoken, there exists a kind of competition between these two languages; the Lete language (minority language) and the Akuapem Twi (regional lingua franca). This situation is exactly what Wurm (1991) describes as 'stronger language communities exerting their influence over the minority language communities' which to him leads to language endangerment.

Again, the relative utility of the Akuapem Twi and English language is accelerating the process of language assimilation, and Lete gradually losing its speakers. It is a fact that government, through its policies on language, is encouraging the use of selected languages as a means of communication and medium of instruction in schools. Traditional rulers and other stake holders are also contributing to this problem. This is because, during their annual durbars, most of these traditional rulers deliver their speeches in English instead of their own local languages. The study attempts to assess the vitality and level of endangerment in Larteh with reference to the criteria suggested by UNESCO (2003).

## **1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The world is experiencing an unprecedented wave of language extinctions resulting in the loss of cultural identities, knowledge systems, and a variety of data needed to understand

the structure of languages. Language is a key tool for development, and as such, every society should place premium on its language to help maintain its rich culture, artifacts, and other essential elements.

The study would serve as a guide to linguists, anthropologists, traditional rulers, parents, and government to be conscious of the state of minority languages in our country. It would also serve as a wakeup call to all stake holders to put in place structures that would maintain these minority languages, and also help to document the threatened ones to keep them from extinction. The study will form an empirical basis for further research into Lete and other minority languages.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to do the following:

Examine the domains of use of Lete language in Larteh town.

Examine the vitality and endangerment of Lete language by exploring factors set out by UNESCO (2003).

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- To what extent is Lete currently being used and passed on?
- What factors account for the vitality or endangerment of Lete?
- What maintenance strategies can we employ to keep Lete if endangered?

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### **1.5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY**

The methodology for this research work is qualitative. This has become necessary because of the nature of the research questions and the objectives of the study. In this quest, the researcher would go to the field to collect primary data. The researcher intends to use the case study, because it usually focuses on smaller units like a specific programme or an individual. In case studies, the participant is identified, data is collected, and a detailed description of the case is given. Data would be collected through observations, interviews, documents, and oral texts. Case studies are contextualized within their physical, historical, and socio-economic setting (Stake, 1995).

Research of this sort is qualitative (holistic, subjective and descriptive) in nature and highly action-based; which required the researcher to go to the study area to have face-to-face interaction with respondents. The researcher used unstructured interview because it allowed for further probing, got firsthand information from the insiders perspective which is very important for qualitative research. The researcher used semi-structured interviews which had some pre-set questions, but allow more scope for open-ended answers. As part of the interview process, the researcher used Focus Group Discussion. The questions were based on the demands of the project objectives and research questions. In this investigation there were in-depth interviews with chiefs, queen mothers, and children, the aged and ordinary men and women in Larteh town. The interviews were tape recorded for later transcription. The medium of conversation depended on the language that the informant is most comfortable with. This was the mother tongue or first language or the language of wider communication, i.e. Akuapem Twi or even English, if the informant preferred this. The languages used for the data collection are English and Twi. Care was taken to avoid leading or suggestive outcomes.

Attention was paid to where the interviews were held, how the researcher dressed, manner of approach, all in the interest of impartiality.

The researcher collected texts (oral and written) in order to ascertain the extent to which Lete has borrowed words and expressions from these languages.

The researcher also used participant observation as a method for gathering data for the study. It is possible to observe language choices in the speech communities and the extent to which people use or do not use Lete. The researcher visited places such as the chief's court, to observe arbitration sessions. The researcher also stopped over at some homes, schools, churches and shrines. Language used in the streets was observed. This is because, I intended to get a wide range of data from different people at a sitting so as to analyze them and finally draw my conclusions.

### **1.5.2 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE**

Samples were drawn from the population using non-probability sampling techniques. With non-probability sampling, purposive technique and accidental sampling techniques were adopted. The reason for the accidental sampling has to do with giving everybody the equal chance to contribute to the study, so that I could get different responses on language use in the town. Hence, the accidental sampling technique was the basis for the use of Focus Group Discussion. With the purposive sampling technique, the need to collect data from specific individuals who would affect the study was necessary. Specific individuals such as the *Guanmanhene* himself, his sub-chiefs, the linguists, priests/priestesses, elders and the queenmothers could not be left out of this research, hence the need for purposive sampling. Again teachers, pastors, drivers, traders and the students were also not left out.

In all, fifty (50) people were interviewed including chiefs, queenmothers, and some members of the general populace. Also, with the permission of the respondents, the researcher documented their responses on a tape recorder as a form of evidence.

### **1.5.3 SECONDARY SOURCES**

The researcher accessed reports, articles, books and other written materials on the Guans which Larteh people are part of. Documents on the Akwamus who once colonized the present Akuapem state (which Larteh was part of) was consulted. I believe all these actors mentioned above have something which makes them interrelated; history and culture. Again, I analyzed available publications on causes of language endangerment, endangered languages and how to assess a threatened language.

### **1.5.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the field were transcribed first. The researcher went on to analyze the data through qualitative methods such as abstraction and literary writing. By literary writing, I mean the writing was done in a story telling format. Language use in Larteh was analyzed using literary writing. The secondary data was also analyzed through critique and evaluating news articles and reports to meet the objectives of this research.

### **1.6 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

I must admit that there were certain constraints during the field work. One of such limitations was financial. It also happened that some of the resource people were not always available due to certain circumstances and this hindered the effectiveness of the research. In

addition, it also occurred that some of the informants were not willing to furnish me with the needed information for security reasons and this adversely affected the research.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one comprises the introduction, statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions, study area, significance of the study, the research methodology, and the organization of the study. The chapter two deals with literature review and theoretical framework within which the research was conducted. Chapter three focuses on language use in different domains in Larteh community. Chapter four concentrates on assessing the vitality and endangerment of Lɛtɛ language with the help of the language use survey in chapter three but also using the UNESCO, (2003) assessment framework. Chapter summarizes and concludes the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter intends to discuss the theoretical framework within which this research was conducted. It also reviews the related literature on language endangerment, endangered languages, and causes of language endangerment.

### 2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Many linguists have proposed different schemes to determine the level or extent of language threat (Crystal 2000: 11-26). Various linguists have propounded different taxonomies in relation to the exact level of endangerment. Fishman's GID scale has been used widely for two decades as a reliable evaluative framework of language endangerment. Though it focuses only on intergenerational transmission of language, the GIDS gives a clear picture of the status of transmission from generation to generation. The UNESCO framework is also widely used by linguists and so reliable. It provides a more expanded scheme as compared to Fishman's GIDS. I adopted UNESCO, (2003) in assessing the vitality and endangerment of Lete language because it has new elements and an improvement on the other schemes.

Wurm (2001) proposed a five-level system while Grenoble and Whaley (2006:18) grouped languages under six groups: "safe, at risk, disappearing, moribund, nearly extinct, and extinct."

Crystal (2000: 68 – 90) and Grenoble and Lindsay (2006:3) agree that the number of speakers for a particular speech community cannot determine the actual state of that

language. Other linguists have proposed different models for assessing factors contributing to language vitality and language endangerment (Brenzinger et al 2003; Lewis, 2008). Ethnologue has applied other schemes to categorize the language vitality status for each language they report on. Dixon (1991:237) gives five (5) stages in the loss of an indigenous Australian language which was replaced by English. His classification refers to “Functions of Language”, “Number of Speakers” and “Age of speakers.”

Fishman (1991) introduced the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) as a foundational model for determining the status of language. The GIDS genre by Fishman (1991: 87-109) looks at the intergenerational transmission of language as the key to maintaining a language. If parents do not transmit their language to their children, and children also do not learn their native language there will be a break in the intergenerational transmission. The GIDS also identified what Fishman term as “domains of use” which he believes is very important because these “domains of use” are ‘products of societal and institutional choices that influence parents on language behavior in relation to their children’. As the “domains of use” of a language dwindle or diminishes, speakers of that language may decide to shift to the use of another ‘valuable’ language and transmitted to their children. Whiles the GIDS provide new perspectives into the fundamental forces of language shift, some weaknesses have been identified. King (2001) for instance has advocated for the reformulation of the levels to encompass for example ‘nature of education’.

First, the levels as defined in the GID scale may not be adequate to distinguish a threatened language from one that is being maintained. Thus the levels of disruption are fixed and need to be expanded. The scale does not provide all possible statuses of a language because we see few strong languages at the top of the scale and extinct languages at the bottom of the scale. I believe other levels should be added to the scale in order to determine a language’s real status. Again, the GID scale focuses on only the intergenerational

transmission as the single most important factor in language shift. Other factors outside the home and community are not considered although they can also hinder the progress of a language. Instrumental as this model might seem, there are some challenges with it.

Furthermore, Ethnologue (2009) assesses language vitality based on a 5-level scale:

Living: these are cases featuring a significant population of first language speakers.

Second Language Only: cases in which the language is used as a second-language only. No first-language speakers.

Nearly Extinct: Characterizes cases with fewer than 50 speakers or very small and decreasing fraction of an ethnic population

Dormant: Cases where there are no known remaining speakers, but a population links its ethnic identity to the language

Extinct: Where there are no remaining speakers and where no population links its ethnic identity to the language.

Deducing from this framework, we have “Living” languages (Level 1) and “non-living” languages (Level 2 to 5). This scheme is somehow ambiguous. Factor 2 gives the impression that the language has already been replaced by another mother tongue. Again, level 3 has concluded that a language with fewer than 50 speakers is nearly extinct which I believe is misleading.

Lewis and Simon (2009) 13-level scheme (EGIDS) has some similarities with Fishman’s GIDS and Ethnologue’s frameworks but different in a way. In comparison with other frameworks, the levels 6a and 6b correspond to Fishman’s GIDS Level 6. Level 8a and 8b correspond to Level 8 in GIDS. They added 3 different new levels: levels 0, 9, and 10.

As already indicated, UNESCO has seen the need to provide a more elaborate framework or scheme to assess language vitality and endangerment (Brenzinger et al 2003).

UNESCO establishes six factors to assess vitality, but in assessing the status of a language, the scheme provides nine (9) factors that can be applied to determine the status of a language.

These are:

Factor 1: Intergenerational language transmission;

Factor 2: Absolute number of speakers;

Factor 3: Proportion of speakers within the total population;

Factor 4: Trends in existing language domains;

Factor 5: Response to new domains and media;

Factor 6: Materials for language education and literacy;

Factor 7: Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies;

Factor 8: Community members attitudes towards their own language; and

Factor 9: Amount and quality of documentation

In operationalizing these factors, UNESCO (2003b) suggests a 5-point score for each factor (except factor 2). Lewis (2005:28) tested the framework with 100 of the languages of world and applied the UNESCO framework and from his findings, he stated that:

“It provides not only a clear framework for assessment but also delineates a very useful research agenda for investigators of the world’s languages that is based on a sound theoretical orientation to language maintenance and shift.”

Though the framework has yielded significant results yet there are problems associated with it. For example, factor 2 (absolute number of speakers) is information which is hard to find and interpret. The “speakers” in factor 3 is ambiguous. Does the “speakers” refer to L1 speakers or those who also speak the language as their L2? Furthermore, attitudes of people in an entire community are not easy to assess. Overall, as a guide, it is useful to

linguists, researchers, language communities and organizations in assessing language endangerment or vitality.

## 2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguists are becoming increasingly alarmed at the rate at which languages are dying out. Krauss (1992:7-10) estimated that 90% of the world's languages would be severely endangered by 2100. According to Nettle & Romaine (2000) and Crystal (2000), 'only' 50% will be lost.

According to Batibo (2005:155), at least 74.8% of the African languages are either moderately or severely endangered and 9.4% are extinct or nearly extinct, as shown in Table 2.1:

**Table 2.1: The Position/Status of Languages in Africa (Batibo, 2005:155)**

Category of language	No. of languages	% of Category
Relatively safe	336	15.8%
Moderately endangered	1,287	60.4%
Severely endangered	308	14.4%
Extinct or nearly extinct	201	9.4%
Total	2,132	100%

A number of initiatives have been launched, including:

The Hans Rausing Endangered Language Project, which funds documentation projects, maintains an archive of recordings, transcriptions and metadata, and runs an academic programme to train linguists and researchers;

The US National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and National Science Foundation (NSF) Documenting Endangered Languages initiative (DEL) has ‘a new, multi-year effort to preserve records of key languages before they become extinct’;

The European Science Foundation Better Analyses Based on Endangered Languages programme (Euro BABEL) whose main purpose is ‘to promote empirical research on under described endangered languages, both spoken and signed’;

ELF/The Endangered Languages Fund provides grants for language maintenance and linguistic fieldwork. The work most likely to be funded is that which serves both the native community and the field of linguistics;

Volkswagen Stiftung funds Documentation projects which use the DobeS archive for scientific purposes for example for comparative studies but also to detect new research questions connecting documentation linguistics with other branches of linguistics.

### **2.2.1 WHAT IS LANGUAGE DEATH?**

“Language death” is used in a figurative sense. According to Pande (1965), “Languages neither live nor die. They are used or ceased to be used”. However this is not an easy issue. A lot of scholars have come out with different definitions of language death, but no consensus has been reached as to when a language should be considered as dead. In the

view of Crystal (2000), when a man dies, a language also dies. He believes that there is no language in this world that exists in isolation, but man created it.

Again when we say a language is dead then there is a total wipe out of a speech community or a population. This can happen through warfare, tsunami, genocide, volcanic eruptions, epidemics and more (Brenzinger and Dimmendaal, 1992; Hill, 1983). For instance, Europeans conquered Australia and Americas leading to the loss of indigenous languages. The Bantus wiped out the Khoisan groups in southern Africa as they moved in about 1000 years ago.

A language may also die due to language shift. This may result from speakers of a particular language, shifting to use another language leading to their language dying out. For instance, in 1932 there was a massacre in El Salvador when thousands of Indians who speak Lenca and Cacaopera were killed. In order not to be identified and killed, survivors of these two languages resorted to speaking another language (Campbell and Muntzel, 1989:191-2). This phenomenon is termed as sudden language shift or “sudden death”, a case where a language abruptly disappears because almost all of its speakers suddenly die or are killed.

There is also gradual language shift where a speech community gradually shifts to using another language (a dominant language). This happens when there are two languages of different status in the same place. The dominant language replaces the minority language in an increasing number of contexts (Dorian, 2001b). A language may die when its speakers decide to abandon the language. Language abandonment is referred to by Dorian (1977) as “suicide language death”. For instance, Gal (1979) reports of immigrants from Hungary who moved to Austria and eventually abandoned their language.

### 2.2.2 WHAT IS LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT?

The term ENDANGERED does not have a consistent meaning across the linguistic literature. According to Krauss (1992), about half of the estimated 6,000 languages on earth are spoken only by adults who have refused to teach their languages to their younger generation. In other words, 90 percent of existing languages today are likely to die or become seriously threatened within the next century. This means that only about 600 languages, 10 percent of the World's languages, remain relatively secure currently. This assessment is confirmed by linguists reporting the decline of languages on a global scale, but especially in the Americas, Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia (Robins & Uhlenbeck, 1991; Brenzinger, 1992; Schmidt 1990). Thus this notion of endangerment extends to languages that are still viable at present, but that are in danger of becoming moribund by the end of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to Batibo, (2003b) language endangerment occurs when two different languages of unequal status co-exist in a community and where one of these languages is widely spoken and well recognized (for instance, Akan language in Ghana) but the other is spoken by a small group of people or by virtue of the fact that it is not used in different domains (such as Education, Media, not documented etc.). In my study, I found out the status of Lete with respect to what Batibo says. Again there are minority languages that a country does not recognize as part of its national languages. Therefore the country does not approve these languages to be studied in schools even in the community of such languages. This situation leads to the stronger language dominating the weaker one. In most cases, L1, that is the mother tongue would be overpowered by L2 that is the second language, gradually giving way until language shift takes place.

The environment in which a language is used can pose a problem, that is, a dominant language (language understood by a lot of people in a given society) is regularly used in the community instead of the native language. Because this dominant language is understood by

the larger population it has the potential to gradually push the native language to some specific domains of language use (the home, chiefs' court, shrines etc.) while it takes over the other important domains of language use such as the school, literacy, community, verbal art or traditions and even government. For example, the people of Shamaa Ahanta, Sekondi, and Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana are Ahantas who spoke Ahanta language but presently most of them speak Fanti, an Akan language of the Central Region people of Ghana. The Fanti people share borders with the Ahantas. Fanti has been the dominant and vibrant language spoken in the area because it is learnt in schools which the Ahantas learn because Ahanta language is not learnt in schools. Gradually, the Fantis took over almost all the domains of language use in Ahanta society till date and even some Ahantas think they are Fantis.

To Batibo (2003b), an endangered language is a language that is threatened by extinction. The threat may come because the number of speakers is declining rapidly. This is because the younger generation is not learning to speak it, or because the language is not used regularly in the language community (that is the location where the language is spoken). This can mean that the children of that language group have refused to learn their own language. This can result when parents want their children to learn an international language (French, English, Spanish and more recently Chinese and Arabic) in order to be abreast with time.

Any of the above cases can lead to language endangerment, and at worst language extinction. In my view, the most threatening issue that Batibo (2003) talks about is the fact that the younger generation refuses to learn their language. Language as we know is like a 'gourd in which knowledge is scoped out'. Therefore through a person's language, different ideas are generated and innovations are couched out. Refusal to teach and or learn one's language is depriving oneself of the knowledge to create, develop and even function properly in the society in which the person lives.

Language attitudes of people also account for the extinction of languages. I agree with Batibo (2003) that some language communities feel ashamed to speak their own language. They feel inferior to some other language communities and therefore prefer to associate themselves with these 'superior' languages by learning those languages. This inferiority stems from the fact that some language communities make fun of other language communities in relation to intonation. For instance the Hill Guans are most often referred to non-speakers as '*mente mentefo*' which literally means that people who speak '*mente mente*'. '*Mente*' in Larteh language means 'what' and this word is somehow mostly used as they speak or communicate with themselves. Such derogatory names create a certain image of the people and give a different status to the language.

In the view of Bobaljik et al (1996), an endangered language will be considered as a language that will have no speakers left within few generations. This may be due to the fact that, the speakers of that language do not transmit the language to their younger generation or might be due to the fact that the language community is shifting to the use of another language which they consider as more prestigious. We might also think of children refusing to learn their language just because they think it cannot push them high in their academic endeavours. With these reasons in mind, definitely a language will start losing its speakers gradually until one day their language will cease to be used. This I believe is gradual language death which is currently being experienced by quite a number of African languages (Batibo, 2005).

If we go by the predictions of scholars such as Krauss (1992), Batibo (2003) and others, we might conclude that some languages, most especially minority languages such as Ainu in Asia, are at risk. This is because widely spoken languages such as English and French are dominating the international scene. Most countries have abandoned their native languages and made English a compulsory language or their lingua franca. This problem

translate from the national level to our regions, states, districts and more in countries where widely spoken languages are swallowing or assimilating the less spoken languages

Grimes (2000) agrees with the predictions of Krauss (1992) saying that going by these predictions of Krauss, by the year 2100 the world will have only 650 of the present 6528 languages left. Since Africa has over 30% of the world's languages, only about 200 languages would remain which is less than 10% of the present number. Looking critically at these statistics, it will be noted that some widely spoken languages are replacing minority languages, and if this persists then the world is going to experience the extinction of the majority of the less-known languages. In Africa, dominant African languages are replacing minority African languages, contrary to what is happening in other parts of the world. Languages such as Swahili in southern Africa and Hausa in parts of western Africa are gradually pushing their way through into minority language communities, posing a threat to these languages. This will contribute to the death of some people's history, identity and more.

Grimes (2000) has mentioned that, the present trends of the world and the rapid changes in the economic, political, religious and social sectors demand that a uniform language is used. That is, before anyone can climb the higher ladders of education, one must be fluent in one of the widely spoken languages of the world. I believe this situation might be compelling individuals, families, and nations to abandon their native languages because of their desire to move with the changing world.

Endangered language to Brenzinger (1992) is not a language with few speakers though a language with few speakers is vulnerable. He believes attitudes of speakers contribute to language vitality. If a language community values their language, they will do everything to preserve it. If speakers of a language see their language as not important or useful, then language shift sets in and gradually these speaker shift to using another language.

He posits that the most important trait of a viable language is adults teaching the younger ones their native language. For example, Suruaha is a language found in Brazil and about 150 people speak the language, but according to Brenzinger, speakers including children hold their culture and language in high esteem. With an attitude such as this, any speech community can preserve their language. However, in other large language communities where it is only elderly people who speak the language, the language might be considered as endangered, because the younger generation is not learning the language. Soon when the old members die, the language dies with them.

Grenoble & Whaley (1998) think that the world is under serious revolution and everything in it is changing at a fast rate. One particularly striking feature of this transformation is the number of languages which will simply cease to be spoken in the next fifty to hundred years to come. This means that languages are undergoing serious change (through globalization, modernization and urbanization) and many minority languages are at a risk of endangerment because the powerful nations are influencing the world and the less powerful nations in particular with everything that they have — policies, culture, education, technology and their languages.

It is also a fact that less powerful nations are trying to be abreast with the pace at which these powerful nations are moving. In so doing, these less powerful nations (for example, African countries) are adopting the policies, education, technology, culture (which language is a primary element) of these powerful nations totally as part of their way of life. In this way, most of the things that give us identity, especially our native languages are marginalized.

## **2.3 CAUSES OF LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT**

Batibo (2003) argues that under normal circumstances no community would like to see its language die as a language provides a ‘communicative and interactive lifeline’ for its speakers. Also, in a normal situation, no society or community would be prepared to abandon its language in favour of another since a language is also the symbol of one’s identity and self-expression. People communicate via their language. A community would abandon its language due to circumstances beyond their control usually an external force that is propelling them to do so.

Language endangerment can be induced by various factors (Wilson, 1992). The literature proposes factors such as natural (epidemic, flood), political/military (warfare, genocide), social, historical, ethno-historical, economic, environmental, cultural, religious, and sociolinguistic. We can never exhaust all these factors because of time and space yet eight of these factors are discussed.

### **2.3.1 GEOGRAPHIC AND GEO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

Demographic causes, according to Batibo (2005) comprise a number of geographical and demographic factors. These include the high “concentration of languages in certain areas, which brings about too many contacts, overlap, competition and conflict”. This unevenness in the size of the languages will cause some languages to dominate the others. Each of these languages competes for supremacy, but the stronger in terms of size may assimilate the others. The isolated and scattered groups and their languages may be “swallowed up” by larger groups and their languages. This is because the more isolated a language group is, the less language contact therefore the presence of a stronger language may induce assimilation.

Another situation in connection with geography will be the rural-urban nature of a speech community (Edwards, 1992; Fishman, 1964:52-53). If a speech community is closer to urban centres or cities, the likelihood of exchange is very high and as these exchanges go on, the possibility of language to change is high. On another front, the isolation of a speech community can either maintain a language or otherwise (Fishman, 1964:52; Krauss, 2001:23). An isolated language can be maintained in their community if the intergenerational transmission is sustained, no contact with other languages and the language used in every domain in the community.

According to linguists such as Edwards (1992), geography is one of the catalysts that can fuel the process of language loss. He believes that if a minority language shares boundaries with dominant languages, proximity can accelerate the loss of a language. This I believe will come about as the dominant language if not resisted by the minority language, will gradually assimilate the language as day in and day out there is constant interaction between these language speakers. The dominant language because of its varied use will overpower the minority one.

In the view of Batibo (2005), the main cause of language shift and death is the pressure that the weaker language experiences from a more powerful or prestigious language. This pressure, according to him, may be caused by demographic superiority, socio-economic attractions, political predominance or cultural forces. Demographic superiority results when a language with the highest number of speakers comes into contact with a language with few speakers. The risk involved is that the speakers of the minority language would like to identify themselves with the dominant language. I believe they abandon their languages and cultures in the bid of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood, and enhance social mobility. For instance Hausa in west Africa, Kiswahili in eastern Africa and Setswana in

southern Africa which have attracted a lot of minority language speakers because of their demographic superiority.

A decrease in population also causes a language to lose its speakers. Population decrease can come about in various forms such as natural catastrophes in the form of volcanic eruption, floods, earthquakes, famine and many more. Hudson and McConnell (1984) believe that diseases such as STDs, small pox, measles, influenza, leprosy can also kill a lot of speakers of a language thereby reducing or even wiping out an entire population. For example, the Mastuthunia community of Australia was wiped out by a deadly disease (Bobaljik et al., 1996). Furthermore, European conquests of North America led to the decline of Native Americans languages. A disease such as small pox was intentionally and unintentionally transmitted to kill Native American. The aim of this action was to totally wipe out the natives.

### **2.3.2 SOCIAL FACTORS**

The way of life of a group of people can encourage language decline. The more groups keep their traditional way of life, the stronger their language will be. Most of the customs, beliefs and traditions are embedded in their language, and as we transmit these to the younger generation the language grows stronger. Ignoring old traditional ways of life and adopting modern ways of doing things will make it difficult for a language to be preserved (Kibrik 1991). Contact with other languages and culture tend to affect a language due to the fact that there are always exchanges between these languages and cultures. Borrowing becomes evident which can lead to the adulteration of a language.

Marriage patterns can also endanger or maintain a language. Same group marriages have the potential to preserve languages, because both parents speak the same language and

children will not have difficulty in learning their language. Mixed marriages or inter-ethnic marriage on the contrary, may lead to language shift (Brenzinger, 1997; Wurm, 1991; Schmidt, 1990). If parents are not of the same ethnic background, the possibility that children will learn their mother's language is very high, relegating the father's language to the background. As much as Kibrik (1991) agrees with Brenzinger (1997), Wurm (1991), and Schmidt (1990), he believes that it is not always the fact that intermarriages endanger languages. He gives example of marriages between Jaru and Kija people of Kimberley in Western Australia, but none of the two languages is threatened.

### **2.3.3 THE SIZE OF LANGUAGE SPEAKERS**

The density of population of speakers can also induce language shift leading to language loss. Dense populations of speakers have a better chance of maintaining their language (Fishman, 1972; Edwards, 1992). If the size of speakers is small there is a high risk of the language dying. This is because when people are scattered without regular contact, language decline sets in. For instance, Chinese-Americans that shift to English are slower among Chinatown residents than among non-Chinatown residents (Tsunoda, 2006).

The proportion of speakers of a particular language to those of other languages can lead to language decline (Brenzinger, 1997). If a language with a larger number of speakers comes into contact with one that has fewer speakers, the probability of the former assimilating the latter is very high. Because speakers of the other language overpower them the possibility of these speakers shifting to the use of the larger language is high. If the language has more contact with other languages the less viable the language will be.

### **2.3.4 AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION**

UNESCO (2003) asserts that a language should have a lot of “well documented, transcribed, translated and analyzed materials such as dictionaries, comprehensive grammars, extensive texts and abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings” to be considered as vibrant. Dwyer (2011) agrees that for a language to be strong there must be a lot of historical and contemporary language materials. Schmidt (1990:100, 108, 111) posits that, for a language to be strong, a grammar, dictionary and texts are indispensable.

### **2.3.5 DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE**

Domains of use of a language can influence language endangerment. Fishman (1972:442) defines a domain as "a sociocultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of a speech community". The kind of language used in domains available in a speech community is very important for the sustenance of a language (UNESCO 2003b). A language is stronger when it is used in all domains in the community, but where a language different from the mother tongue dominates the domains of use, then the mother tongue is threatened. It is observed that the number and type of domains of use determines the viability of a language (Brenzinger and Dimmendaal, 1992; Batibo, 2005).

According to Austin (2004) “domains and functions of use”, that is, the context and situations where the language is regularly used can facilitate language loss. Some languages are restricted just to the family domain for personal communication among relatives whilst a dominant language is used outside the house. In such a case, other languages are used in a wide range of contexts including education, religion, trade and business, and government.

The domains and functions can lead a language to death particularly when dominant languages begin to encroach on the domains of use of smaller languages. This is as a result of young people switching to the language of wider communication and transferring it with them into the social and family domain.

### **2.3.6 HISTORICAL FACTORS**

The history of a people may also be a contributing factor to the vitality of a language or otherwise. Whether the people (the speech community) are the indigenes of their present ‘habitat’ or they are migrants? If they are migrants, their history of migration is also important. Further questions that could be asked are as follows: are their ethno-linguistic lives linked to their history? For example, are they (a speech community) fighting for recognition? Are they fighting against oppression and many more?

Historical factors that may endanger minority languages may include, conquests, colonization and boundary disputes. This is seen in the Arab invasion of Northern Africa where indigenous languages were replaced by Arabic. Colonialism on the other hand has a hand in the loss of languages across the world. The Europeans conquered Northern Americas and through different tactics or policies, killed the Native American languages. Through genocide, diseases and forceful resettlement of most of the Native American languages were wiped out and English became their mother tongue (Brenzinger, 1997). A language can be threatened through boundary disputes and the rise of one group and their language variety to political and cultural domination.

### 2.3.7 POLITICAL FACTORS

Relocation of people voluntarily or involuntarily from their homelands can cause language loss. For instance Tsunoda (2006) gives a situation where the government of Japan forcefully relocated Tokuyama-Mura village people because the government wanted to build a dam on their land. Most of these people got scattered and their language lost a lot of speakers.

Batibo (2005) agree with Brenzinger and Dimmendaal (1992) and argue that the pressure from the stronger or majority language could take the form of political domination. That is to say, if the speakers of the majority language dominate the political scene where they have most of their people in authority, they will make policies that will favour their languages. Again most of these national and regional lingua franca used in inter/intra ethnic trade, education, administration and the mass media tend to attract other language speakers, because of the economic and social privileges they enjoy. They continue that if the amount of resistance by the weaker language is greater than the pressure from the stronger language, then the weaker language is not in danger. That is, if a minority language does not yield to the threats of a majority language and put protective mechanisms in place, the majority language will not swallow it.

Batibo (2005) posits that when a language is associated with power and comes into contact with a language with no political influence; there is pressure on the latter. In this case the minority speakers would like to identify themselves with the language of political influence and this situation creates dependency of the weaker language on the language of power. For instance, weaker languages in Botswana want to associate themselves with Setswana language. This is because Setswana chiefs rule over other ethnic groups; they are responsible for administration of customary law and the distribution of land. Therefore, the weaker languages see Setswana as a language of power. Languages such as Shiyeyi, Shua

and other language speakers are shifting to Setswana. He further states that there are some languages with some powerful traits, mostly associated with religion and when these languages come into contact with another language, these cultural traits put pressure on the weaker language. The weaker language may be subdued by the stronger language. For instance, the powerful traits of Arabic and Hausa associated with Islam have influenced or in some cases, swallowed languages in parts of Africa.

Childs (2003) assert that the political factors like the promotion of certain languages to a new status, such as national or official language, confers power and privileges on such languages. This situation eventually permits these powerful languages to dominate or better still suppress other languages. He further states that some speech communities are also seen as hospitable to other languages, that is they welcome ‘interaction and intermingling’ with other groups and this may result in adopting other languages. The Negrito languages of the Philippines are an unfortunate case in point.

Language policies promote dominant languages at the expense of minority languages. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) believes that ‘official language policies restricting the use of certain languages are agents of language assimilation’. Though I agree with her, giving an official status to a language may not necessarily maintain the language. This is because government and other external forces do not have control in the home (Nettle and Romaine, 2000).

Again, people have also attributed the current problems African languages are facing to colonialism. Batibo (2007) affirms that “the post-colonial social, political, and economic development policies of Africa have been major contributing factors on the observed current situations”. Currently, colonial languages dominate most African countries in terms of official national language though these African countries are independent. Language policies of most African countries empower European languages marginalizing African languages.

Children of minority language homes have to use a language other than their first language (mother tongue) in school. Consequently, such children are always challenged when they begin to develop their thinking and creative skills. In this wise, most African are unable to contribute their knowledge in national development, because they have limited knowledge of the official/dominant language. For instance, in Kenya, obtaining a job depends on your linguistic background. English is the essential language for 'high-level jobs'.

In any case, one would have thought that promoting African languages as national languages and medium of instruction/communication (for instance, Akan in Ghana and Yoruba in Nigeria) would have facilitated learning for the African child, but children who have limited knowledge in such indigenous language medium have been disadvantaged in school (Batibo, 2007).

However, developing minority languages in African countries is also seen as a threat to national development. Promoting the use of minority languages breeds tribalism and ethnicity which can be a recipe for conflicts and wars in Africa. Each language speakers would want their language to acknowledge as important inducing competition. When this happens, the tendency of tribal or ethnic conflict occurring is high leading to the destruction of lives, sometimes wiping out an entire language group. Eventually, development is retarded. Batibo (2007:57-58) confirms this fact that, "the highest concentrations of language diversity are found in less economically developed countries". Allowing all languages to function will retard development yet selecting some languages over other will also prevent the other language speakers from sharing their knowledge and skills in national development because they will feel marginalized.

### 2.3.8 ATTITUDES OF SPEAKERS

According to Crystal (2003), the use of a particular language can lead to attitudes that consider other languages unnecessary. Such an attitude can lead to the disappearance and death of minority languages, because if little or no respect is accorded a minority language definitely this will affect the speakers. If this situation persists, speakers of such a language would prefer to associate themselves with the majority language, thereby abandoning their native language.

To Austin (2004) attitudes and language ideology of a community and of their neighbours is a very important factor to language loss. A community's attitudes and ideology that value multilingualism and variety are less likely to lead to language loss than one that sees monolingualism as normal and multilingualism as a threat to their local or national social and political status. This will boil down to the fact that communities who positively value their language as an expression of their culture and identity are typically less likely to give it up than those who negatively evaluate their language and do not consider it worthy of learning or speaking in out-group contexts.

Language stigmatization also endangers certain languages (Dorian, 1986). There are situations where dominant languages look down upon the minority language and make derogatory comments about them. Because of regular stigmatization, parents may refuse to teach their children their mother tongue. For instance the "inferiority" attached to speakers of Irish as against English in Ireland prevented people from speaking the Irish language. Eventually Irish was lost (Cahill, 2007:115-122).

Attitudes of language communities can induce language endangerment. For example, some minority languages may be associated with poverty, illiteracy and hardship, while the dominant language is associated with development and affluence. This situation may propel

the minority language to shift to the majority language in order to enjoy the privileges the majority language holds.

### **2.3.9 SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS**

Sociolinguistic circumstances include how languages are used in the daily lives of the people and factors such as inequality in the public use of such languages will favour certain languages but may cause others to become redundant or marginalized. The use of a particular language in all domains of use thwarts the development and use of other languages rendering them redundant. For instance, Twi is not the lingua franca of Ghana yet it has become a convention that during official functions people speak English or Twi even when they are in a different speech community.

Crystal (2000) also thinks that sociolinguistic factors may play a role in language death if the structures laid down by the said society do not favour all languages. Some languages are restricted just to the family domain for personal communication among relatives. In this instance, a dominant language is used outside the house. This situation may also come about when there is unequal use of languages in public domains. These patterns of language use may favour some languages and other languages may be sidelined. He further states that cultural values, norms, customs, among others can preserve and even promote a minority language. He thinks that overwhelming economic value of the stronger languages may accelerate language death.

### **2.3.10 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

Batibo (2005) on his part thinks that socio economic pressure arises when a language that is frequently used in daily activities (economic and social etc.) comes into contact with a language with little or no socio-economic power. Batibo (2005) states that usually, languages of national, regional status that are used as inter-ethnic media of communication, for example Akan language of Ghana, for trade, education, administration, mass media tend to attract speakers of other languages. He further states that socio economic circumstances, such as migration into other communities, will cause economic dependence on the host communities. The migrant will have to adjust to his/her new environment, this will include learning the language of that community in order to communicate with others. Again for security sake migrants will like to learn the language of their new community in order to identify with and also to develop trust.

Again, these regional and national languages have economic dominance (Blench, 1998) because they are used for inter-ethnic trade. This situation propels other language speakers to shift to learning such languages in order to transact business with clients. For example, in Kenya, obtaining a job depends on your linguistic background. Fluency in Kiswahili is essential in obtaining certain job but English is the indispensable language for 'high-level jobs' (Batibo, 2007). This means that people are denied jobs because of their linguistic background.

### **2.3.11 INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION**

Fishman (1991) shares the view that, "intergenerational language transmission" is an important factor of language survival. Whether or not children are learning the language from their parents is important. If parents communicate with their children in a language that is spoken by a larger population (socially, politically and economically) then their language is

bound to lose speakers. This is because low transmission of mother tongue leads to language shift towards the dominant tongue. The fact is that, the language in which a child is brought up becomes his/her L1 whether it is the actual L1 or not. He further states that, Language loss is most often associated with reducing proportion of a given population using the language. We must also note that there are small languages with 1,000 or less speakers, but are not currently facing language shift because all the people use the languages on a daily basis, for example, some languages in the Asia – Pacific while other larger languages such as Quechua (which have millions of speakers in South America are lost because many of their young people are dominant or monolingual in Spanish (Austin, 2006).

### **2.3.12 GLOBALIZATION/MODERNIZATION AND URBANIZATION**

Wilson (1992) states that ‘modern cultures with new technologies are encroaching on once isolated people or minority peoples with drastic effects on their way of life and on the environment these minority groups inhabit’. He also feels that impositions of western values on indigenous groups are among the factors intimidating language multiplicity in the world.

Improved communication and mass media in dominant languages tend to disenfranchise minority languages. Mass media, such as television, radio, films, video CDs, newspapers, magazines, and books most often use languages that are understood by a majority of their target population. The main aim of these media is to sell their ideas and make money; therefore without the ‘right’ language their aim is squashed. As these media improve, the said language also gains grounds and people will be forced to learn the language of the media to access information. Some of these media have replaced traditional pastimes such as storytelling, puberty rites and more through which elders in the society transmit traditional norm and values, history and culture (Crawford, 1995). To Krauss (1992), the television is the worst of all the mass media.

Modernization and urbanization are partners in endangering a lot of languages. As cities develop rapidly, the tendency of using a common language is high due to economic and social actions. Movement to urban centres places strong pressure on migrants to become bilingual in the dominant language of the urban area. This strong drift towards urban development has two implications for a language: Language groups are drawn to employment opportunities in which ways of life may be more closely associated with a different language.

Secondly, single persons other than families migrate to these urban centres. Gradually, single people find their spouses among persons of different native languages. It is now commonplace for a couple who are native speakers of different languages to communicate in the new language.

From the views expressed by the various authors on the causes of language endangerment, it is explicit that the less powerful languages suffer from so many debilitating circumstances that endanger them. The main cause of language endangerment according to the literature is the break in the intergenerational language transmission. Other causes may be demographic, socio economic, environmental, political (government's policy on language), cultural, and sociolinguistic. Domains of language use are also seen as crucial to the maintenance of a language and so is the size of speakers of a language vital. The amount and quality of documents on a particular language and the attitude of speaker towards their own language maintains or endangers the language.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 LANGUAGE USE IN LARTEH**

This chapter presents the findings collected during the research. The UNESCO (2003) approach to assessing the vitality and endangerment of a language requires that an on-site survey of language use is done. Because the last three factors of UNESCO framework assess language attitudes and documentation, other secondary materials were also looked at in order to investigate these three factors. Therefore, before assessing Lete language, I looked at ten (10) domains of use of the language. Based on the outcome of the survey I assessed the language.

The patterns of use of the languages in Larteh are described in this section. The areas to be considered are: language use and the characteristics of language users.

### **3.1 THE HOME**

Lete is the mother tongue of most families in the study community. Many families were interviewed, but ten (10) out of these were chosen because of their homogenous nature. These ten families have three or more generations (grandparents, parents and children) living together in the home. This helped to give the real picture of intergenerational language transmission in the home.

Some families have strict adherence to traditions and no one can go contrary to these traditions. Other families are liberal in the home and family members do not care what other members of the family do. These two kinds of families or homes were discovered during this research. In the first homes (rule-bound home), I found out that Lete language is compulsory in the home. When members of the family are home, Lete language is the only language

spoken by members. It was observed that both parents are from Larteh. That is not to say that all families whose parents are from Larteh speak only Lete language at home. These families believe that their language gives them identity, and they do not want to lose that. They also said that they are proud of their ethnic group and their language. In these families, grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren speak the Lete language. There was one of these families where some of the grand children could not speak Akuapem Twi at all, and did not speak English either. They spoke Lete language alone, but I think this is due to the fact that these children do not attend school. One of the families I spoke to is a well-educated family. Both parents are from Larteh and so are their parents. The woman is a midwife, the man is a medical doctor and their children are all in school, but they have made it a rule that Lete language is the language of the home. This is because they do not want their children to be the odd ones when they meet family members at home (Larteh). They gave another reason such as “our parents are very particular about our children learning and speaking Lete irrespective of their educational level. They (grandparents) uphold our traditions, customs and language and will be highly disappointed if their grandchildren cannot speak their language. They believe that as their children socialize with others they will learn the Akuapem Twi and English at school.

Nana Akua Darkoa Ampem II, the Guan Omanhemaa said that, she speaks Lete language at home with her children and believe that Twi must not be taught, but as we socialize with people it can be acquired. According to her, all her children speak the Lete language and she would insist on her grandchildren speaking it. Table 3.1 shows the languages used in the home and the number of families interviewed.

**Table 3.1: Language use at Home**

Languages	No. of Families
Letɛ only	2
Akan (Akuapim) only	1
English only	0
Letɛ and Twi only	5
Letɛ and English only	0
Letɛ, Twi and English	1
Twi and English	1
Total	10

From table 3.1, ten (10) families were interviewed. Out of the ten (10) families, two (2) families said that they speak only Letɛ language at home. One family speaks Akuapem Twi alone at home. No family speaks only English or Letɛ and English at home. Five families use Akuapem Twi and Letɛ at home whiles one family speaks Letɛ, Akuapem Twi and English in their home. One family speaks Akuapem Twi and English in their home. To the great grandparent of the two families (who speaks Letɛ alone), speaking Akuapem Twi is a sign of disloyalty. One of the families said they use Akuapem Twi in the house and this I realized was due to the fact that the mother of the house is not a native of Larteh, but the father is. As the table shows, the majority of the families interviewed speak both Letɛ and Akuapem Twi at home. Some of these families explained that they stay in the same house with people who are not from Larteh and they speak Letɛ language for confidentiality sake. Akuapem Twi is for communicating with people outside their family. The use of English language in the home might be seen as insignificant, but it is gradually gaining grounds in homes.

Johnson (1973) talked about the fact that in the Larteh society, a family which uses Twi or English in their homes may be said to be snobbish or disloyal. This might have been

so in the past, but today with the changes in the society, the world and in the educational setup has changed such perceptions. With English language as a globally accepted language, children will not cease to learn it. Now the speaking of English language at home is not for fun or for practice, but regarded as important towards educational advancement. It is no longer a sign of disloyalty, disrespect, though I agree that in some homes for instance, grandparents who never went to school feel betrayed. Another fact is that Akuapem Twi is inevitable in the home. It has become the tool for communicating with a larger group of people. For instance for most of the homes that I visited, there were immigrants. Just a few of these people have learnt the Lete language and the obvious reason is that it is not their language and more so, it is not a language that they “fancy” to learn because it is not spoken elsewhere. There are strangers who have also learnt the language because they want to be identified with Larteh people, and others feel that they are accepted in the community if they can speak the Lete language. Table 3.2 shows the generations and intergenerational language use in families the researcher interviewed. This is required by UNESCO factor one to assess how the generations in the families transmit Lete language in the home. The figures in table 3.2 represent the number of people in each family that speak the particular language indicated. The total column shows the total number of people in a particular generation in all the families interviewed

**Table 3.2: Generational Language Use in the home**

Generations/Language use	Lɛtɛ Only	Akuapem Twi Only	English Only	Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi	Twi And English	Total
1st Generation (Great grandparents Grandparents 60yrs and above)	2	1	0	5	2	10
2nd Generation (Parents: Fathers, Mothers)36- 59yrs	4	2	0	7	3	16
3rd Generation (Children10-35yrs)	6	7	0	12	4	29
4th Generation (Grandchildren <14yrs)	3	5	0	8	3	19

In the first generation (grandparents), two grandparents speak Lɛtɛ only, one speaks Akuapem Twi only, and five speak Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi at home. Two grandparents use Akuapem Twi and English in their homes. There was no grandparent who speaks only English. The second generation (parents: mothers and fathers) revealed that there are four parents who speak only Lɛtɛ, two speak Akuapem Twi and seven speak both Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi in their various homes, but three parents use Akuapem Twi and English at home.

The third generation (children) gives a different picture from the first and second generations. Six children speak Lɛtɛ only while seven speak Akuapem Twi only. Twelve speak both Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi and four speak Akuapem Twi and English. Three grandchildren speak Lɛtɛ only while five speak only Akuapem Twi. Eight grandchildren

from the families interviewed speak both Lete and Akuapem Twi but three of these grandchildren speak both Akuapem Twi and English.

According to table 3.2, the use of Lete language has gained strength from the first generation (grandparents) through to the third generation (children), but there is a decrease in the fourth generation. It can also be said that there is increase in the use of Akuapem Twi at home even where parents are from Larteh and speak Lete language. It is also observed that English is not used at home as the only language or mother tongue. The picture painted by the table 3.2 depicts the linguistic situation in the town, thus the town is a bilingual town as most of the people use both Lete and Akuapem Twi at home. However, English is also gaining grounds in the home though we might say that it is insignificant. Most children spend more time at school than at the home, and as time goes on, the mother tongue (Lete) might start losing grounds.

It can be said that at the grandparents' level, Lete is vibrant. This might be due to the fact that most of these grandparents refused to be associated with Akuapem Twi, because they saw the language as a language of oppression (from their history). To the first generation (grandparents), speaking Lete is a matter of prestige, identity and a fight against oppression.

The second generation presents a different picture from the first. There are a higher percentage of people falling within the parental generation that speak only Lete language at home as compared to the first generation. But we cannot use this as a yardstick for concluding that the language is stable or unaffected in the home. It can be observed that out of the sixteen (16) parents, four (4) speak only Lete language in the home. This can be attributed to the fact that, almost all these parents have some formal education. They have had options to choose from more than one language due to the formal education they had. Some of these parents are holding on to the ideas of the first generation (identity, prestige and

resistance) while others feel it is a matter of choice and therefore choose to go by their own set principles. From table 3.2 we have seven (7) parents that speak both Lete and Twi at home. Therefore if we calculate the percentage of Lete speakers against the rest of the languages, Lete still represents more than half of the total respondents. The figures of the third generation in these families have the highest number of speakers of Lete as compared to the first and second generations.

In comparison with the other languages: Akuapem Twi, English and others it seems that Lete is still strong at home, the use of these languages: Akuapem Twi, English and many more, is gradually growing, becoming a threat to Lete. It shows that a lot of Larteh children are being formally educated, thus learning other languages which they speak at home. Nowadays children spend more time at school and less time at home thus exposing them more to other languages other than to Lete.

Educated parents and even some non-educated parents prefer to speak English to their children at the early ages when children start to learn to speak. The reason some parents give is that they want their children to have a firm grasp of the English language. Some parents believe that a good English language base is the only way their children can compete favourably with their counterparts. One of the families said that their children attend private schools, because these schools insist on the use of English language, and even teach other foreign languages like French. They explained that the ever changing demands of the world have informed their actions.

If students wish to succeed academically, they must speak and be proficient in English. All internal and external examinations at all levels in Ghana are in English, a lack of understanding of the language spells failure and a hindrance to all personal ambitions and goals. English is therefore deemed as a tool for advancement and power.

Furthermore, some parents do not spend enough time with their children at home, let alone teach them their language. Some parents wake up early in the morning to go to work, and come back late in the evening, leaving the children in the hands of house helps who might not even speak the Lɛtɛ language. We must also not forget that there are families who are well educated yet they have been able to teach their children the Lɛtɛ language. What has accounted for this? Data gathered indicate that, some families value their language more than other families do. As people learn other languages, inadvertently they learn the culture of that language too.

In a related vein, the fourth generation is not so different from the third generation. The same trend in the third generation is replicating itself in the fourth generation. This generation, according to table 3.2, is losing some speakers.

**Table 3.3: Language use at home, Lartehs (Johnson, 1973)**

	Lɛtɛ	Twi	English	Others
Father	98	2	0	1
Mother	97	3	-	1
Siblings	97	4	0	-
Offspring	97	4	0	2

Johnson's (1973) findings in Larteh (table 3.3) show that the linguistic situation in Larteh at that time was relatively stable. The home was never affected by change according to (Johnson 1973). This might be due to the fact that a lot of people at that time were not actively in school or it might be due to the fact that in those times, Larteh people held

strongly to their language in the home. Again Johnson gives information on only two generations that is the parents' generation and the children's generation. "Father" and "Mother" can mean great grandfather/mother, grandfather/mother and then father and mother. 'Siblings' and 'offspring' can mean children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Therefore he did not give us the true picture of intergenerational language use in the home. His classification does not show us whether all generations in the home are on the same level in terms of language use. That is to say, Johnson does not tell us by his classification that all the generations in each family speak the Lete language at home. We can conclude that the parent generation (Father, Mother) transmit Lete language to children generation (Siblings, Offspring).

In conclusion, the home which was once not affected by change such as globalization, technological advancement, formal education and more, is now seeing some intrusion of other languages like Akuapem Twi and English. This may be attributed to three factors: in the first place a lot of Larteh children are educating themselves formally, and thus learning new languages; some Larteh parents have taken to speaking English with their children at home instead of Lete language; and Lartehs are inter-marrying with other ethnic groups. The home was essentially a monolingual environment (Johnson, 1973) forty years ago, but presently the home has changed to a multilingual environment.

### **3.2 LANGUAGE USE IN THE MARKET**

There are two market days in Larteh town. On Tuesdays and Fridays, people from nearby towns, and even as far as Koforidua go to trade in the market. Gas, Adangbes, Akuapems, and Niger traders (Zerma) also go to trade. The market is not big enough to

contain every trader therefore some traders display their wares along the street. In addition, there are shops at the entrance of the market.

As earlier commented, on market days, traders come from as far as Koforidua to sell their wares. There is an influx of Twi speakers during these days and thus, the Twi language becomes the means of transaction in the market. As one respondent pointed out, 'Twi is understood by almost everyone'. Although Twi is the means of communication in the market, it is not the only means by which people communicate. Meanwhile Adangbe and Ewe are also used in the market. This is not surprising because women from Ayikuma and Shai (Adangbe communities) areas come to trade during the market days. Though most of the market women complain that the market days have become less vibrant compared to some years back, the dominant business women are from surrounding Akuapem towns and villages. Some of these traders have settled in Larteh town, and have even married Larteh people.

In any case we cannot use what happens on just market days to say that the market is predominantly a Twi speaking domain.

### **3.3 LANGUAGE USE IN SCHOOLS**

This domain of language use is necessary to test UNESCO factor 6 (materials for language education and literacy) and factor 7 (government and institutional language attitudes and policies including official status).

There are different educational units in Larteh town. The Presbyterian Primary School was the first school in Larteh and was established by the Basel Missionary in 1858/9. The Wesleyan Mission also built a school in 1879 at Larteh and today their schools are still

functioning. There is a Methodist Primary and Junior High School in Larteh. The Anglican also have their schools in Larteh.

Today, all these schools are referred to as ‘Government assisted’ schools. This means that classrooms, books and other logistics for effective teaching and learning are provided by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service. The recruitment of teachers is also the responsibility of the two institutions. Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service have also provided a standardized curriculum and syllabus for all schools in Ghana.

Ghana language policy for schools states that, in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, whilst English is studied as a subject. From primary four and above, English replaces the Ghanaian language as medium of instruction and the Ghanaian language is then treated as just another subject on the timetable (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Teachers in Primary one to Primary three use the Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in that area as a medium of instruction from Primary one to Primary three. Owu-Ewie (2003) gives a diagrammatic representation of language policy in Ghana from pre-colonial era to 2002 but I have modified

**Table 3.4: A modified diagrammatic Representation of the language policy from pre-colonial era to date (1529-date)**

Period	1st Year	2nd year	3th Year	4th year and above
1529 – 2006				
a. Castle Schools	-	-	-	-
b. Missionary Schools	+	+	+	-
1925 – 1951	+	+	+	-
1951 – 1955	+	-	-	-
1956 – 1966	-	-	-	-
1967 – 1969	+	-	-	-
1970 – 1973	+	+	+	+
1974 – 2002	+	+	+	-
2005-2007	-	-	-	-
2008-present	+	+	+	-

Key: “+” Means Ghanaian language was used as the medium of instruction

“-” Means Ghanaian language not used

The researcher visited the Presbyterian Primary school, Methodist Primary school, Presbyterian and Methodist Junior High Schools, and the Presbyterian Senior High Technical School. Some teachers and pupils were interviewed. The researcher sat in classrooms to observe lessons in the lower and upper primary levels, the Junior High Schools and also observed happenings during break time. Pupils whose teachers were absent from class were the ones who were interviewed. The researcher felt that the presence of the teachers would distort the information or data required from the students. They were asked the question, ‘what language does your teacher use to teach in class?’ In the lower classes, different answers were given by the pupils, but the most frequent answer given was ‘Twi’. This was confirmed when I observed Primary two and three classes where the teachers used Akuapem

Twi to teach except during English language periods when teachers used Akuapem Twi to explain a difficult point.

At the Upper Primary level, teachers do subject teaching, that is, there is not a permanent teacher in each class as in the Lower Primary class. With the exception of the language and literacy lessons, English is used by the teachers as medium of instruction. There were few instances where a teacher had to translate some words into Twi for pupils. Sometimes pupils gave answers in Twi, but the teacher allowed them. Teachers communicated among themselves in Akuapem Twi, and even sent pupils on errands using Twi. Most of these teachers were not native of Larteh.

The current language situation in schools in Larteh is as follows: teachers use Akuapem Twi (dominant Ghanaian language of the area) as medium of instruction in the lower primary level (Kindergarten, Primary one to three). English and Akuapem Twi are still taught as subjects. From Upper Primary to the Senior High Schools, English is the only medium of instruction in all subjects except for the teaching of Akuapem Twi (subject). Some teachers in the upper primary school explained that pupils found it difficult to understand the English language and therefore they used Akuapem Twi to explain difficult issues to pupils in order to enhance understanding.

A retired teacher talked about the fact that during their days most of the children in Larteh schools were basically from Larteh town and some teachers were also natives especially those in the Pre-school and Lower Primary schools. In such situations, they could use Lete language when pupils had difficulty understanding a concept or issue. Presently, she said that Larteh schools were no more dominated by Larteh children, and also teachers were posted by the government to these schools irrespective of their language background.

In Senior High Schools, students are from different ethnic groups and language backgrounds. The use of Twi, Ga, and other native languages is prohibited in the school though students use these languages among themselves. Teachers believe that if students are encouraged to use these languages, it would affect their proficiency in the English language.

In the senior high schools, students use Twi, Ga, and Ewe outside the classroom (on compound during break time, group discussions, co-curricular activities, in their dormitories, etc.). This was evident as I was interacting with a group of students (boys and girls) in Presbyterian Senior High Technical School, Larteh. I posed my questions in English but these students responded in Twi. As I walked through the compound, every conversation, shouts, callings were mostly in Twi, sometimes in Ga and Lete (not so significant).

There were varying responses to the language that students and teachers use in school. The trend is to use English language as the medium of instruction in the educational sector, but on the ground (in schools) the policy is not fully implemented. The fact is that, Akuapem Twi is predominantly used in basic schools, and even to some extent in Senior High Schools. One would have thought that, Lete could have been used in the pre-school, but the problem is that pupils in these pre-schools are not children of Larteh people alone. Moreover, as the retired teacher mentioned, teachers in these schools are posted by the government irrespective of their language background.

Outside the classroom, pupils use Twi and Lete as they played with their friends, bought food and other items. Some pupils confirmed that most of their teachers communicated with them in Twi. Pupils who spoke English were those who could speak Twi properly or could not speak it at all. For instance, I met some Ewe children who could not speak Twi so they communicated with other pupils in English.

### 3.4 LANGUAGE USE IN LARTEH COMMUNITY

Letɛ is used in the streets and in the entire community. Walking down the street of Larteh, I observed that people greet in Letɛ. However others greet friends and neighbours in Twi. Notwithstanding, Letɛ is the language used in the streets. Friends converse among themselves in Letɛ. Though there are markets in the town a lot of shops are built along the main street behind houses and other corners of the town. People buy and sell items and the means of transaction is Letɛ and Akuapem Twi. Some of them answer in Akuapem Twi when asked of the price of an item in Akuapem Twi. I had an experience when I wanted to buy some dry cells for my camera. I entered a shop and asked:

Researcher: Wowɔ energizer batteries? (*Do you have Energizer batteries?*)

Response: (Letɛ) Meme energizer; mebo Tigerhead (*I do not have Energizer; I have Tiger head*) Wofɔ ɔsonsu a, wobe nye nko botɛ (*you will get some up the street*)

The shopkeeper's response communicated to me that he valued his language and if I wanted to communicate with him, I had to speak his language. He understood what I said, but intentionally refused to respond in Akuapem Twi. In the evenings the street is crowded with people enjoying themselves, and sharing their experiences during the day with loved ones. The language children use whilst playing around is Letɛ but there are other places in the community that Akuapem Twi is used. At the lorry park, drivers called for passengers in Akuapem Twi. This is because most of the drivers are from non-Larteh towns. Again, all passengers who board cars at the station were not Letɛ speakers therefore Twi was the commonest language most people communicated in, if not all. During afternoon periods, children and adults played football in open spaces to enjoy themselves. In one of such activities I bumped into, the children were carving big names for themselves before a football match. They spoke in Akuapem Twi

1<sup>st</sup> child:      Meyɛ Messi (*I am Messi*)

2<sup>nd</sup> child:      Meyɛ Essien (*I am Essien*)

3<sup>rd</sup> child:      Meyɛ Ronaldo (*I am Ronaldo*)

One group:    Yɛɛ Barca (*we are Barcelona Football Club*)

Another group: Yɛɛ Chelsea (*we are Chelsea Football Club*)

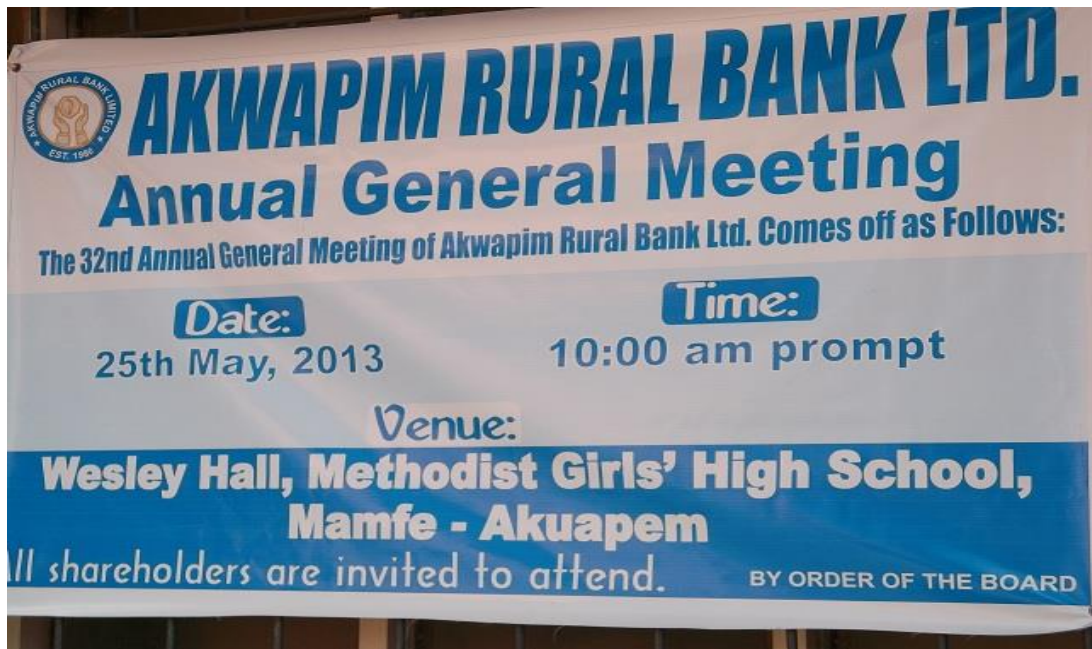
From the above discussion, it is evident that members of Larteh community have a good attitude towards their language though they still use the Akuapem Twi in some situations.

### 3.5 AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

This domain is necessary to assess UNESCO factor 9 (amount and quality of documentation). Most documents and written materials on Letɛ are mostly written in Akuapem Twi and English. School textbooks, the Bible and church hymnals are written in Twi and English, and magazines like OFIE, an Akuapem monthly magazine is written in English and Twi. Most of these documents are written in English language except hymnals and the Bible which have translations in Twi.

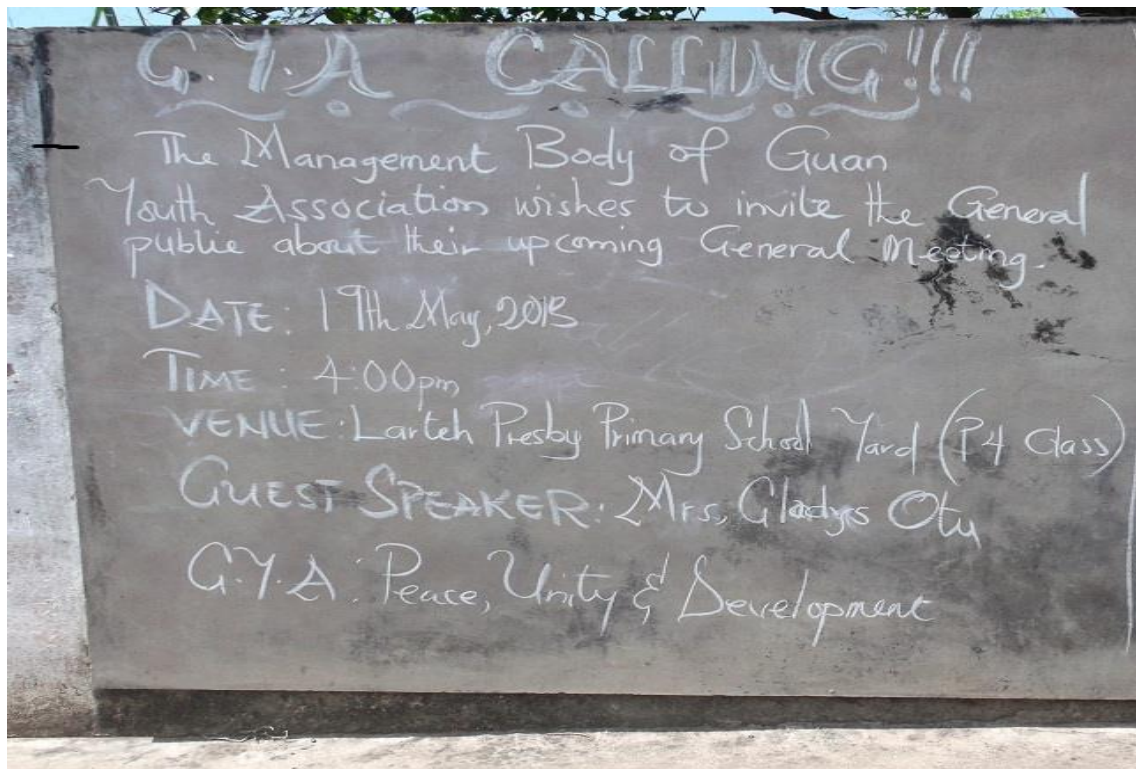
There are no reading materials in Letɛ language. Most people use the Akuapem Twi orthography in writing Letɛ words because there is no official orthography for Letɛ. Johnson (1973) talked about some bi-monthly ‘Vernacular Newspapers’ which includes *Nkwantabisa (Twi)*, *Akwansosem(Twi)* and the *Christian Messenger* (with articles in English, Twi, and Ga), but these newspapers are no more in existence. Most of these articles and publications were in English and Akuapem Twi. Though Larteh natives have financed a lot of newspapers and publications, none of these were written in their language.

Presently, most of these newspapers are not in circulation. The OFIE 'Home' is published every month by different writers from the Akuapem ridge. Interestingly this newsletter is written in English and covers issues concerning towns and villages on the Akuapem ridge including Larteh. However, there are scholars (Berry, 1951; Pilszczikowa, 1965; Banchi, 1971; Johnson, 1973; Yebuah, 1997; Akrofi-Ansah, 2002, 2005, 2009) who have conducted research on Lɛtɛ, but used English language to write their findings on the language. Walking in the main street of Larteh there were notices written in English, which presupposes that a lot of people are presumably educated and can read these notices and announcements. The picture below is a notice put out in the Larteh town by the Akuapem Rural Bank.



A notice by Akuapem Rural Bank

Other notices which I believe should have been written in Lete language were written in English. They read;



A notice by the Guan Youth Association

These notices in English are supposed to be read, understood and accordingly adhered to. There were no notices written in Akuapem Twi. It presupposes that all or most of the youth in the Larteh community are educated and can read and write English. In conclusion, these notices show that, comparatively, the literacy level in Lete language is insignificant.

### **3.6 LANGUAGE USE AT CHURCH, LARTEH**

Churches in Larteh town may be put into three categories: Charismatic, Pentecostal and Orthodox. Some Charismatic churches are Lighthouse Chapel International, Royal Warriors of Christ Ministry International among others. Some Pentecostal churches are the Church of Pentecost, Christ Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God Church and others. The Orthodox churches are the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Proceedings in four of these churches are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs. Church services in the Church of Pentecost, Lighthouse Chapel International, the Presbyterian Church and the Anglican Church were chosen because they represent the different types of denominations (Orthodox, Pentecostal and charismatic churches) in the Larteh town.

On 13th January 2013, I attended a mass at the Anglican Church at Larteh. The Church Service started with a processional hymn in English by the church choir. There were Bible readings in both English and Twi. Hymns were sung in either English or Twi. The preacher for the day preached on the topic: “The kind of people God uses”. The Bible reading was done in English, and the preacher translated the text into Akuapem Twi as he preached. The sermon was done in Twi interspersed with English. The announcements were given by the church secretary in Twi. The service ended with a recital: “The Grace of the Lord” in Twi.

The Rev. Father shared “The peace of the Lord” in English saying ‘In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, let the peace of the Lord be with you all now and forever more’ and the congregation responded, ‘Amen’. The recessional hymn was sung in Akuapem Twi.

On 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013, I visited the Church of Pentecost, Larteh Assembly. The following was observed. The service started with a prayer session and the leader spoke in Akuapem Twi. It was followed by praises and worship, where all songs were sung in Twi. A Twi local chorus was sung before the sermon. The preacher for the day was a deaconess of the church who preached in Akuapem Twi on the theme for the year 2013: “Worshipping in Spirit and Truth”. She read the scriptures from the Akuapem Twi Bible. The whole sermon was devoid of any English sentence or words. An excerpt from the sermon is as follows:

Preacher: “...Sɛ yɛka se yeresom wɔ honhom mu a, na yekyerɛ se woye odwadini a, worenbu woyɔnko. Ebiom, se yɛka se yeresom wɔ honhom mu a na yere kyere se wo bedi nokware wɔ Nyame fi. Ene se wobe tua wo ntotosodudu wɔ nokware mu....”

*English translation: If we say that we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth, then as a businessman/woman, you must not rob your friend. Again, if we are worshipping in spirit, then you have to be faithful in the things of God especially paying your tithe faithfully.*

As she preached, a man stood up and started singing in Twi, a form of an interlude. The preacher also read some passages from the Bible in Akuapem Twi which spoke about Ananias and Sapphira who sold their possessions and sent part of the money to the house of the Lord instead of the whole amount. She ended the sermon by admonishing the congregation by reading in Akuapem Twi, Psalms 19:14.

After the sermon, a second offering was taken as the praise team sang in Twi. This was followed by the sharing of testimonies, which was also done in Twi. The announcements

were given in both English and Twi. I realized that the announcer was an Ewe speaker and could not express himself properly in Twi, and so felt comfortable speaking English. He was code switching as he gave the announcements. The church service came to a close as the congregation sang a local chorus in Twi. The benediction was given in Akuapem Twi by one of the deacons.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, I fellowshiped with the Samuel Otu Memorial Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana – Larteh, the programme line-up was printed in English, but the service was totally conducted in Akuapem Twi except in a few instances where English was used, because of the presence of non-Larteh speakers. All the hymns sung were written in Twi.

The church service started with “Call to Worship” which was done in Akuapem Twi followed by the processional hymn in Akuapem Twi (Presbyterian Hymn 10). The salutation and the Beatitudes were recited in Akuapem Twi. The Church Band sang local chorus in Akuapem Twi. The prayer session was conducted in Akuapem Twi. Afterwards, an anthem was sung by the church choir in Akuapem Twi followed by the first and second scripture reading in Akuapem Twi. The men’s fellowship sang a song in Akuapem Twi and the third reading was read in English, but was translated into Akuapem Twi afterwards. Just after the scripture reading, a hymn of meditation (PH 376, 1-4) was sung in Akuapem Twi by the entire congregation. The sermon was delivered by Rev. Daniel Darko as he code switched in both English and Akuapem Twi. The preacher is a non-Larteh. He preached on the theme: “THE WORDS OF LIFE”. The following is an excerpt.

Preacher: “...Word of life is in Christ. The Christ who brings Good news of love in us

but you cannot experience the word of life unless you grasp the word.

Wɔ yɛn akenkansɛm a edi kan no mu, ɔfrɛ ɔmanfo no ma Ezra kenkan nsem no de ma wɔn senea ɛbɛyɛ a wɔbete Awurade ho asem efisɛ wote bi akyɛ. Wɔayɛ wɔn ankasa

wɔn koma so ade akyɛ. Na wɔka asem no wiee no, Bible kyere sɛ nnipa no werɛ how na wɔfii ase sui efisɛ wɔn nyinaa huu sɛ, wɔn agya Awurade abɔ kwan bi ato hɔ ama wɔn....”

Obviously, the Presbyterians have maintained the Akuapem Twi language used at church from the time of the early missionaries to date, but the sermon delivered on that day by Rev. Daniel Darko was marked by English and Twi code-switching. The whole sermon has been transcribed and put in the appendix.

After the sermon, a hymn on “trust and confidence” (PH 376, 1-3) was sung in Akuapem Twi. The first offertory was taken, led by the Church Singing Band who sang tunes in Akuapem Twi. The announcements were given in Akuapem Twi and the second offering was taken after the announcement had been read. The closing hymn was taken from Presbyterian Hymn 386, 1-2. The closing prayer and Benediction were given by Rev. N. A. Sono in English because he does not speak Twi. The choir led the recessional hymn (PH. 32) as they moved out of the auditorium.

Lɛtɛ language was a non-factor in all the church services I witnessed. During private conversations after church service, people spoke the Lɛtɛ language. For instance I enquired from an usher, an elderly woman in Akuapem Twi, about the preacher for the day.

Researcher: *‘auntie mɛpa wokyeɔw hɛna na ɔbɛ preachi enne?’* A woman sitting by quickly asked the usher a question in Lɛtɛ, saying *‘aye me’* which means ‘what is she saying’? The elderly woman replied in Lɛtɛ; *‘ade sokye ɔsɔfo Darko’* (She is looking for Rev Darko).

### **3.7 LANGUAGE USE AT PLACE OF WORK**

There are different vocations in Larteh town. Questionnaire responses to the language use at places of work vary depending on the type of work in question.

**Table 3.5: Language use at Place of Work**

OCCUPATION	LANGUAGE USED				Total No. of Respondents
	Letɛ	Twi	English	Other	
Farmers	5	5	-	-	5
Food Vendors	4	4	1	-	4
Seamstresses/ Tailor	7	7	3	-	7
Teachers	-	7	8	2	8
Bankers	-	2	2	-	2
Petty Traders	6	8	-	-	8
Shop Keepers	6	5	1	-	6
Drivers	5	9	4	1	9
Totals	29	47	16	3	49

Table 3.5 presents the language use in different occupational set-ups. Out of five farmers interviewed, all of them spoke both Letɛ and Akuapem Twi. Four food vendors spoke both Letɛ and Akuapem Twi, but one of them spoke English in addition to the two local languages. Out of the seven seamstresses and tailors spoken to, three of them used Letɛ, Akuapem Twi and English, but all seven spoke Letɛ and Akuapem Twi. Out of the eight teachers interviewed, seven used English and Akuapem Twi but two of them spoke English Adangbe and Ewe. Also, out of the two bankers spoken to, both of them used English and Akuapem Twi in their work. In their work place, six out of the eight petty traders used Letɛ and Akuapem Twi with their clients, but two out of these eight, spoke Akuapem Twi only. Five shop keepers used both Letɛ and Akuapem Twi but one of them spoke Letɛ only. Out of the nine drivers interviewed, five of them spoke both Letɛ and Akuapem Twi but four used both Akuapem Twi and English in discharging their work. I must say that it is only one of the

shop keepers who used Lete only in his work place. The rest of the respondents were either bi-lingual or multi-lingual in Akuapem Twi, Lete and English.

People in occupations such as farming, petty trading, food sellers, tailors, and seamstresses frequently mentioned the use of Lete in their place of work though Twi was also used in case the interlocutor did not speak Lete. At the Rural Bank, staff used Akuapem Twi in their oral transactions and English in their paper work with clients. The reason given was that most of the staff cannot speak the Lete, and in dealing with different categories of people they used a language which could be easily understood by clients hence the use of Twi. Table 3.6 shows the different kinds of occupations and the languages used at these places of work.

### **3.8 LANGUAGE USE IN TRANSPORTATION**

Drivers that ply Larteh-Accra-Larteh, especially the Benz bus drivers and urvan bus drivers, are of different language backgrounds. Accra to Larteh drivers normally speak Twi with passengers as they try to persuade them to board their cars. Again, they speak Twi if a passenger wants to alight at his/her destination. Akuapem Twi is the common language used by drivers and passengers. This is due to the fact that most of these bus drivers are not natives of Larteh, but also it would seem that Twi is the lingua franca in the geographical area. Moreover, there are drivers who speak Lete with passengers who can speak the language. In such instances, the passenger speaks the Lete first which gives the driver and his mate, an opportunity to also speak Lete.

At Larteh lorry stations, drivers and their mates converse as they wait for passengers to board their cars. Some of them speak Lete while others speak Twi. The observation is that when there is a discussion on radio on topical issues in the country a passenger might speak

in Twi about the issue which attracts others including the driver and mate who are interested in the issue.

Again, passengers also converse among themselves in the course of the journey. Most often family relations, colleagues and acquaintances engage in conversation. Issues emanating from discussions on radio stations become debates for passengers. Therefore, for everybody to understand and to join in the discussion Twi is mostly spoken. It is not only familiarity and topic that informs language choices, but also the nature of coincidence - hostile encounters may determine the language choice. Sometimes passengers who cannot speak Twi would like the driver or mate to speak English with them. It was on one of such occasions where a passenger had a quarrel with the driver for changing money for the mate while driving. The passenger was an Ewe man and did not understand Twi, and resorted to abusing the driver in English. He frequently asked the driver to speak English, but the driver refused because he could not speak English.

Obviously, in the transport domain, the use of Twi is relatively higher than Lɛtɛ. The reason is that most of these drivers who ply to Larteh are non-Larteh and cannot speak the Lɛtɛ language. Some of these drivers admitted they can speak Lɛtɛ but refuse to speak it. Their reasons are that most of the drivers, mates, and passengers do not understand Lɛtɛ. Again to them, the only predominant language on the routes they travel is Twi. There is also competition for passengers whom one needs to convince in order to board one's car and this can only be done in a common language which is Twi. One of the drivers said his mate is a family member so he speaks Lɛtɛ with him on personal issues that he does not want anybody around to know. The scenario presented therefore shows that, Akuapem Twi is the language predominantly used in transportation.

### 3.9 LANGUAGE USE AT THE CHIEF'S COURT

Language choice at the chief's court is crucial. If the right language is not used, sanctions are applied therefore people who gather at the court are extremely particular about their language. I observed the Representative Council deliberations before the start of the Odwira festival. Some of the chiefs led me to greet the divisional chiefs. I was introduced to the chief in the Lɛtɛ language. These chiefs communicated with the chief in Lɛtɛ, but talked back to me in Twi. The chief also asked me some questions in Twi, but spoke to his sub-chiefs who accompanied me in Lɛtɛ. He ordered the Akyeamehene (Chief Linguist) to introduce me to all the council members in Lɛtɛ language and to tell them why I was there. Other members present were Akuapem-Guan Tufuhene, Ankobeahene, Nana Okyenewaa (Akonnedi Chief Priestess), Abusuapayinfo (family heads from Larteh) and priestesses from other shrines. The meeting began with a libation by the Akyeamehene (Chief Linguist) in Lɛtɛ with all the other linguists.

The court proceedings were devoid of Akuapem Twi. The chief spoke in Lɛtɛ and the subjects and sub-chiefs addressed the chief in Lɛtɛ. All submissions were made in Lɛtɛ. In the course of the proceedings, a doctor friend of the chief came in. He was addressed in Twi, because he did not speak or understand Lɛtɛ. He asked permission from the chief through the Akyeamehene (chief linguist) before he was permitted to speak Twi. It is also due to the fact that as custodians of the land and its culture they do not have to succumb to any other culture, other than their own, which would have been a kind of disloyalty. Lɛtɛ predominates in the chief's court. Criteria for choosing prospective chiefs, queenmothers, and linguists, included the candidate's ability to express him/herself very well in the Lɛtɛ and his/her familiarity within the traditions of Lartehs. Though the chief's court uses Lɛtɛ, I observed that there were some words and phrases borrowed from English as the chief and others spoke. Words such as:

English Borrowed Words

Address

Post

Trust me

Information

Politics

Mattress

Chairman

Letters

Number

Blows

Lorry station

Difference

Classmate

Cement

Insist

Dumping grounds

Chieftaincy



The researcher in a pose with the Omanhene of the Akuapem Guan Paramountcy, Larteh

### **3.9.1 OATH SWEARING IN THE CHIEF'S COURT**

Oath swearing is a very important element in the enstoolment of chiefs in the Larteh community. Newly enstooled chiefs swear an oath of allegiance to the paramount chief. Sub-chiefs are also expected to swear an oath of allegiance to their immediate superiors. There are laid down conventions in oath swearing. According to the Akyeamehene, the oath swearing process is a laid down procedure from time immemorial and no one can change it. Larteh oath swearing is in Akuapem Twi. All chiefs who come to swear the oath of allegiance to the Omanhene do so in Akuapem Twi. This is because most of the sub-chiefs who swear allegiance to the Larteh chief are chiefs of Akuapem Twi towns which used to be Lete speaking towns, but the Akwamu invasion led to the death of Lete in these towns. All the 'sacred' words are in Akuapem

Twi. This shows that though the language in the chief's court is still Lete, aspects of the traditions are in Akuapem Twi. Again, since the Guans broke away from the Akuapem Paramountcy and set up their own paramountcy, one would expect that they would go further to substitute Akuapem Twi with Lete as the traditional language of chieftaincy.

I witnessed ten oath swearing acts and one enstoolment. Below is one of the oath swearing acts done by the leader of the warrior group and the chief linguist, in the presence of the Omanhene and the entire community. These chiefs swore to the Omanhene and all present. The chief warrior addressed the chief linguist and in turn addressed the chief linguist, and assisted the chiefs through the oath swearing.

Chief warrior with a sword in his hand saying:

Chief warrior: Nana Oseeko Dankwa	}	3X
Chief linguist: Nana a!		
Mede akofena yi ma wo		
Na wode ama nana . . . . . (name of chief)		
Obe suae akyere nananom na oto a, Nananom ne no bedi		

*(English translation)*

*Chief warrior: Nana Oseeko Dankwa*

*Chief linguist: Yes, Nana a!*

*Chief warrior: I give this sword to you, to be given to Nana... (name of chief). He is to swear to the paramount chief, but if he goes against the rule, he will be punished by the gods.*

The Oath said by the chiefs.

*Nananom Akyeame maka a (Linguists I swear)*

Abaahemafo maka a (*Queenmothers I swear*)

Response: Akora due!

Nananom Ankobeafu maka a (*Ankobeafu I swear*)

Response: Akora due!

Nananom Asiahenefo maka a (*Kingmakers I swear*)

Response: Nana due!

Nana Asumankwafo maka a (*Asumankwa I swear*)

Obaahemaa maka a (*Queenmother I swear*)

Nananom Ahenfo maka a (*Other chiefs present I swear*)

Response: Akora due!

Nananom Akomfo maka a (*Traditional Priests I swear*)

Response: Nana due!

Nananom Asafohenefo maka a (*Chief warriors I swear*)

Nananom Abusuapayinfo maka a (*heads of family I swear*)

Response: Due oo! Due!

Nana Krontihene maka (*Krontihene I swear*)

Nana Adontenhene maka (*Adontenhene I swear*)

Oman maka (*everybody present I swear*)

Response: Akora due!

Me Nana . . . . . (Name of Chief)

Meka wukuda, ka sokode se

Nananom fre me anopa , awia, anadwo nase mengye so a na mato mmra no

Mesuae meyi se oyaredom!

Response: Yaa Nana oo

The chief then stood in front of the Omanhene and hit the ground three times with the sword in his hands. He then climbed up to the Omanhene and bowed before him. The Omanhene then blessed him and poured a whitish substance on him. The

reason given for the oath being in Akuapem Twi is that, this oath was the oath of the Akuapem State chieftaincy. The Lartehs after their break away from the Akuapem state maintained this convention (the oath in Twi) as core element of their chieftaincy. This is an indication that Akuapem Twi is a strong force in the Larteh community even in the most important part of Larteh culture.

### **3.10 LANGUAGE USE IN ORAL LITERATURE**

There is a range of oral literature at Larteh which is not different from what is found in Twi speaking areas. Oral literature is a broad term which includes ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, folk tales, creation tales, songs, myths, spells, legends, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twisters, word games, recitations, life histories or historical narratives. A complete classification is not attempted, but language use, in some of them is presented.

#### **3.10.1 STORYTELLING (Anansesem-Akuapem Twi)**

Storytelling is meant for relaxation and entertainment. Traditionally, children gather around a fire place as their elders tell them stories. Stories told are either in Akuapem Twi or Lete. It is worth knowing that the major characters found in any other cultures of southern Ghana, are also prominent in Larteh stories. The structure in telling a story in the Larteh community follows the same pattern as the Akan storytelling form. There is the introduction (beginning), main story, interlude and the ending.

Among the Larteh people, a storyteller starts a story by saying:

‘*esɔ tɛɛ!* (Have a story)’ (if the story is a Lete story)

Response: ‘*ene sɔ*’ (we receive it/we are ready)

Or

Abra! Abra!! (if the story is in Akuapem Twi)

Response: yoo!

After the response, the storyteller proceeds to tell the story in Akuapem Twi or Lete but most of the stories were in Akuapem Twi. The proportion of stories in Akuapem Twi to Lete is about four to one (that is 4 Akuapem Twi stories to one Lete story). In the course of the story, there is an interlude (*mmoguo*) a song sung to relieve boredom. An example of an interlude (a song) in one of the storytelling session goes like this: in Akuapem Twi

“Wo ti konoo ei, adwen nni mu o ei?” (There is nothing in your big head)

The storyteller or anyone in the audience intones the song, and then the audience responds. The storyteller ends the story by saying (in AkuapemTwi):

*Se m'anansesem yi ye de o, se nye de o, mede sua....* (points at one of the members in the audience). English translation: if my story is interesting or not I hand the batton to (points at one of the members of the audience).

According to one old lady, most of the stories told in Larteh are in Akuapem Twi, but normally anyone can translate these stories into Lete language. From this confession and the content of the stories gathered, the language of most stories in Larteh is Akuapem Twi though there are stories in Lete.

### **3.10.2 SONGS (Lete. le; Twi. dwom)**

Though Lartehs have their own language, most of the songs they sing are in Twi. There are different types of songs that one can find in Larteh. These include songs associated



(a song in Lɛtɛ)

Mɛntɛ aboe ne bɛkre Lɛtɛ oo

Lɛtɛ bɔ ɔkre lo. 2X

Ɛne dɔ oo, ɛne kpe oo

Ɛne sokye tɔko gyi. 2X

mi bi Tete ye abegyɛ kyene oo

kyene bo ɔsɔnsɔ. 4X

*(English Translation)*

*Which animal will catch Larteh, Larteh is hard to catch.*

*We clear the bush, we want something to eat.*

*My son Tete says he won't be childless, childlessness is painful.*

Some churches in Larteh have singing groups that sing in both Twi and English depending on the church denomination. Churches such as the Presbyterian Church, Anglican Church and the 'Orthodox' Churches have hymn books written in Akuapem Twi and English. Some of these churches have "Singing Bands" which sing religious songs other than hymns. The Presbyterian Church has a singing band. Their songs are mostly composed in Akuapem Twi.

### **3.11 LANGUAGE USE IN THE SHRINES.**

The Akonnedi shrine provides an interesting example of language use patterns. Akonnedi is the most important deity of the shrine. When the priestesses are possessed, they assume the personality of a particular god or goddess. According to the chief priestess, Akonnedi speaks "deep" Lɛtɛ (which is said to be difficult to understand by any other person

except them (the priestesses). Adade Kofi, a lesser deity speaks “simple” Lete which is understood by any ordinary Larteh man or woman, but in a prolonged manner. Esi Ketewa is a Fanti deity and therefore speaks fluent Fanti; Asuo Gyebi, another lesser deity speaks Akyem Twi; Ogyeahoho, a lesser deity speaks Akuapem Twi; Nana Odamea, a lesser goddess speaks Lete; Nana Adom, another lesser god speaks both Lete and Akuapem Twi; Nana Adobea, a lesser goddess, speaks Lete; Nana Yentumi, a lesser god, speaks Akuapem Twi and Asuo Densu, a lesser god, speaks Akuapem Twi and Lete.

According to the chief priestess, Akonnedi sings in both Akuapem Twi and Lete whiles Esi Ketewa sings in Fante. Each of these deities sings songs in the language that he/she communicates in. The elders of the shrine are from Larteh and during their meetings, they speak Lete. However, when a non-Larteh visits the shrine, there is an interpreter to interpret whatever that is said either in English or Twi depending on the background of the visitor. When the researcher visited the shrine, the chief priestess spoke in Lete and someone interpreted into Twi. Apprentices at the shrine undergo training for three years and as part of their training they must learn to speak Lete I.

Domains of language use investigated revealed that, three main languages are used in Larteh: Akuapem Twi (L2), Lete the native language (L1), and English (official language of Ghana). Adangbe is also used for trade purposes. The responses to the language use survey questions as well as observations revealed the language behaviours in various situations in the study area. The analysis of the domains and language used in these domains are as follows: (in each case, the most predominant language is cited first)

<b>DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE</b>	<b>LANGUAGES USED</b>
Home	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
School	English, Akuapem Twi
Church	Akuapem Twi, English
Markets	Akuapem Twi, Adangbe, Letɛ
Community	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
Chief's court	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
Oral Literature	Akuapem Twi, Letɛ
Transportation	Akuapem Twi
Documents	English, Akuapem Twi
Literacy (reading and writing)	English, Akuapem Twi
Place of work	Akuapem Twi, English
The shrine	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi, Akyem, Fanti

There were three distinct languages that dominated in these domains –Akuapem Twi, Letɛ and English. English is the language for school, and official purposes. Akuapem Twi is used in all the domains explored in this chapter. Letɛ is used in domains such as the home, trade, tradition and oral literature. It is evident that, Akuapem Twi is used interchangeably with Letɛ in these domains which means that Letɛ is not exclusively used in one particular domain.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 4.0 ASSESSING LANGUAGE VITALITY AND ENDANGERMENT- Lɛtɛ LANGUAGE

This chapter attempts to assess the vitality and endangerment of Lɛtɛ using the data presented in chapter three by applying it to the UNESCO (2003) framework. This gives a fair picture of the status of Lɛtɛ, whether it is vibrant or endangered. The UNESCO (2003) document has underscored language use surveys as a prerequisite to any accurate assessment of language vitality.

#### 4.1 UNESCO's "Nine Factor" (2003)

In 2003, UNESCO was committed to develop a framework that allows a dialectal community and outsiders to assess the vitality of a language. Fishman's (1991) intergenerational transmission from the GID scale was adopted and new elements were introduced to evaluate how language attitudes can impact on the vitality of a language. Documented materials on Lɛtɛ were also seen as a very important factor in determining the status of a language. UNESCO (2003) proposed nine important factors for assessing the language vitality and endangerment. Six (6) out of the nine factors evaluate a language's vitality and level of endangerment. Two factors out of the nine assess the language community and the last one proposes the need for documentation. In order to operationalize these factors, it is suggested that for each language, a 5-point score should be assigned to each of the factors (except factor 2).

Lewis (2005) selected 100 of the languages of the world and applied them to analysis guided by UNESCO framework and from his findings, he said,

“This framework provides not only a clear framework for assessment but also delineates a very useful research agenda for investigators of the world’s languages that is based on a sound theoretical orientation to language maintenance and shift (pp. 28).” Again, this scheme was put together by language experts from across the world spearheaded by UNESCO.

#### **4.1.1 UNESCO Factor 1: Intergenerational language transmission.**

According to UNESCO (2003), a language must receive a grade of 5 to be considered safe. The language must be used and transmitted from one generation to another generation. A language becomes stronger if language transmission is not interrupted. Table 4.1 shows how a language is graded based on ‘factor 1’.

**Table 4.1: UNESCO Factor 1: Intergenerational language transmission.**

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Speaker Population
Safe	5	The language is used by all ages, from children up in many domains.
Unsafe	4	The language is used by some children in all domains; it is used by all children in limited domains.
Definitely endangered	3	The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.
Severely endangered	2	The language is used mostly by the gran parental generation and up.
Critically endangered	1	The language is used mostly by very few speakers, and mainly by people of the great grand-parental generation
Extinct	0	There exist no speakers.

From table 4.1, a language should be rated grade 5 in order to be considered as vibrant and safe. Lete language falls within grade 4. From the language use survey, it was clear that some families do not use Lete at home. Though we might think the number is insignificant, still that affects Lete. This is the situation that Batibo (2005) describes as dangerous, because the younger generation is the future of a language and if this group gradually refuses to learn the language, then in no time the language will die. In the case of Lete, some parents believe that in order for their children to reach the highest academic ranking, they must be proficient in English language. They are right; however, they are wrong if they believe that proficiency in Lete is an impediment to higher academic achievements. Again, this notion of English language proficiency has propelled parents to speak English with their children right from infancy. Deducing from the table the level of transmission needed for a language to be strong is gradually diminishing.

#### **4.1.2 UNESCO Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speakers**

Absolute number of speakers can be misleading: many will confuse population numbers with speaker numbers. This can result in underestimation or overestimation. It is also difficult or better still impossible to give the actual figure for a language speakers. Nevertheless, small speech communities are more likely to lose their language if there is a natural disaster such as flood, earthquake and more. In case of any external aggression such as wars, small language communities stand no chance of surviving. For instance, Lete speakers are estimated at 8,310 (Ghana Population and Housing Census 2000). Ethnologue (2009) on the other hand estimates the population of Larteh at 74,000 which does not specify the number of people who actually speak Lete. This means is that, ethnicity should not be confused with competence in a language identified with that ethnic population. For instance, if a child is born in Kumasi, but of Larteh parents and he/she lived the better part of his/her

life in Kumasi where very little Lete is spoken, he/she would be ethnically Larteh but his/her first language might be not be Lete. This is the only factor that the framework does not provide a grading system because of the reasons given earlier.

#### **4.1.3 UNESCO factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population.**

The number of speakers in relation to the total population of a group is a significant indicator of language vitality, where “group” may refer to the ethnic, religious, regional, or national group with which the speaker community identifies. This factor is also not easy to grade because of the multilingual nature of our present language communities.

**Table 4.2: UNESCO Factor 3: proportion of Speakers within Total Population.**

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Population
Safe	5	All speak the language
Unsafe	4	Nearly all speak the language
Definitely endangered	3	A majority speak the language
Severely endangered	2	A minority speak the language
Critically endangered	1	Very few speak the language
Extinct	0	None speak the language

From the data collected, not all people living in Larteh speak Lete. Again not all who hail from Larteh speak Lete. The Larteh society is more or less a bilingual society with Akuapem Twi as vibrant as Lete. Going by the data, Lete is considered as unsafe (grade 4, nearly all speak the language) according to table 4.2.

#### 4.1.4 UNESCO Factor 4: Trends in Existing Domains

Language assessors believe that ideally, a vibrant language must be used in all domains. The language becomes stronger if it is used in a wide range of domains. Where the language is used and for what purpose the language is used, are essential considerations in the determination of language vitality or endangerment.

**Table 4.3: UNESCO factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains**

Degree Of Endangerment	Grade	Domains and functions
Universal use	5	The language is used in all domains and for all functions
Multilingual parity	4	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions
Dwindling domains	3	The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains
Limited or formal domains	2	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions
Highly limited domains	1	The language is used only in very restricted domains and for a very few functions
Extinct	0	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.

Lɛtɛ is not used in every speech domain in and outside Larteh from table 4.3 above. Out of these domains in the community, the language is used mostly in the home and in the chief's court. Most of the other domains (education, market, church, social gathering etc.) are dominated by Akuapem Twi and even in the home Akuapem Twi is also used. Most Larteh people are bilinguals (they speak Akuapem Twi and Lɛtɛ). The language for documenting issues, knowledge, ideas is English language. English language is also in a way a means of

instruction in these domains mentioned above in the community. Consequently, Lete scores grade 3 on the table which means the language is used in limited domains. I must also say that most African languages and for that matter Ghanaian languages do not qualify for “Universal Use”. This is because the official languages for almost, if not all African countries are languages of their colonial master. We should also note that although multilingualism is a fact of life in most areas of the world, it is also important that native languages become robust in very important domains (for example, the home and the school) otherwise a dominant language (a language of social and economic value) will take over.

#### **4.1.5 UNESCO Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media**

A language is dynamic if the language is used in all new domains (UNESCO, 2003). The world is changing and new domains of language use are cropping up now and then. A language may be able to expand the scope of its use in these new domains because of their social and economic value. Social networks such as the internet and other electronic media (radio and television) are very powerful domains for disseminating and acquiring knowledge. If a language is used in such new domains, vitality is enhanced. If a dominant language is used in these media, it does not only expand its use, but can cause others to learn the language. Every language is graded from 5-0, where 5 means the language is dynamic and 0 indicate the inactiveness of a language.

**Table 4.4: UNESCO Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media**

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	New Domains and Media
Dynamic	5	The language is used in all new domains
Robust/active	4	The language is used in most new domains
Receptive	3	The language is used in many domains
Coping	2	The language is used in some new domains
Minimal	1	The language is used only in a few new domains
Inactive	0	The language is not used in any new domains

Lɛtɛ is not used in schools, in work places, the media (Television and Radio) and on social networks (the internet) though some Ghanaian languages (Akan and more) are now on some of these social medias. From table 4.4, new domains of language use, Lɛtɛ scores 0, that is, Lɛtɛ is inactive in all these new domains.

#### **4.1.6 UNESCO Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy**

It is always preferable if a language of a particular society is used as a medium of instruction in educational domains, than to have that language as a school ‘subject’ where a limited duration within the day is given to teach the language (UNESCO, 2003). If a language is used in the Educational domain, and has both oral and written materials, then the language is strong. Generally, in a community, its people must be educated to be empowered and also develop themselves. Books and formal educational materials are needed for all levels of education and all ages in the formal educational setup. Table 4.5 assesses whether there are written materials on Lɛtɛ for language education and literacy.

**Table 4.5: UNESCO factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy**

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials
5	There is an established orthography, literacy tradition with grammars, dictionaries texts, literature, and everyday media. Writings in the language are used in administration and education.
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writings in the language are not used in administration.
3	Written materials exist and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; and for the others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not part of the school curriculum.
1	A practical orthography is known to the community and some material is being written.
0	No orthography available to the community.

Johnson (1973) has established that Lete does not have an orthography which can be used to develop the language. This research also confirms Johnson's (1973) findings. Therefore, Lete scores grade 0 on no official orthography available to the community. Ghana's educational policy prohibits the use of the Lete in Larteh schools. It is also a fact that not all teachers and students in Larteh schools are from Larteh. There are other research work done on Lete, but these documents are not written in Lete. Some of existing works on Lete are: Aspects of Lete Phonology (Akrofi-Ansah, M., 2002); Number marking in Lete Nouns (Akrofi-Ansah, M., 2005); Larteh Syntax (Yebuah, V., 1997); Some Preliminary notes of Larteh Grammar (Pilszczikowa, N., 1965); Late-Guan (Berry, J., 1951).

#### 4.1.7 UNESCO Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use

There is a general perception that accommodating a lot of languages engenders national unity. Therefore, in trying to foster unity, governments may legislate the use of few languages, but such policies may discourage or even ban the use of certain languages. Again, a community's attitude towards its own language may maintain or endanger their language. UNESCO's (2003) factor 7 examines the status of language in view of government's language policies and also language community's attitude towards their language. Official support for dominant and minority languages may be graded according to the scale in table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: UNESCO Factor 7: Government and Institutional Language Attitudes And Policies Including Official Status and Use.**

Degree of Support	Grade	Official Attitudes towards Language
Equal Support	5	All languages are protected
Differentiated Support	4	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious
Passive Assimilation	3	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain
Active Assimilation	2	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.
Forced Assimilation	1	The dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.
Prohibition	0	Minority languages are prohibited.

Ghana has an explicit policy for its languages but eleven out of these languages have been selected to be learnt in schools as subjects and as medium of instruction. According to the new language policy of Ghana, the Ghanaian language prevalent in a particular area must be used as the medium of instruction in schools and studied as a subject. Some dominant languages (government sponsored languages) are the official regional languages selected by the government to be studied and used in schools and other official domains.

Going by the table of UNESCO factor 7, Lete scores grade 4 (Differentiated Support). What I mean by differentiated support is that, Lete is explicitly protected by the government, but there are clear differences in the contexts in which the dominant languages (English and Akan-Akuapem Twi) and Lete are used. The Ghana government encourages ethnolinguistic groups to maintain and use their languages, most often in private domains rather than in public domains (e.g. in schools, work place etc.). In some of the domains (the chief's court, traditional religious ceremonies and more) Lete enjoys high prestige. Nevertheless, this action elevates the Akuapem Twi high above Lete language. The language policy of Ghana is a catalyst in accelerating the endangerment of minority languages in Ghana.

#### **4.1.8 UNESCO Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes Towards their own language.**

The attitude of a speech community towards their own language is vital to the maintaining and developing of their language. If language communities value their languages as essential to their community and identity they will promote it (Fishman, 1991; Krauss, 2000; Brenzinger, 2000). Languages grow stronger if the speech communities develop positive attitudes towards their language and their traditions. Such attitudes become more pronounced where speakers become bilingual or speak several languages. There is a tendency to develop different attitudes for each of the languages that they speak. However, the

speakers' attitudes depend heavily on the status and prestige of their language (Smieja, 2003:63). Such prestige results from their perception of its functional value. Attitudes of community members towards their own language may be assessed on the following scale.

**Table 4.7: UNESCO Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Own Language.**

Grade	Community Attitudes Towards Language
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted.
4	Most members support language maintenance
3	Many members support language maintenance; Others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or even support language loss.
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or even support language loss.
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language.

Responses from the language use survey and observation give an indication that Larteh people use their language more often in their community. Most of them speak their language where necessary. It is considered positively and an indication of group affiliation. Their language is intimately connected with the home, family and traditions. Lartehs feel that their language is better than the other Hill Guan languages in that it is less influenced by Akuapem Twi. To some, it is not an easy task trying to develop Letɛ, and they would not like to go into it. Overall, the community's attitude towards Letɛ is strong. Again, most of them advocate that the family should maintain the language by transmitting it to their children, and in doing so, the language will not fade away.

#### 4.1.9 UNESCO Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation

UNESCO (2003:16) believes that a language should have a lot of “well documented, transcribed, translated and analyzed materials such as dictionaries, comprehensive grammars, extensive texts and abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings” to be considered as vibrant. Dwyer (2011) agrees that for a language to be strong, there must be a lot of historical and contemporary language materials. Based on the results on factor 6, factor 9 considers language maintenance by documenting a language or otherwise. Table 4.8 assesses the amount and quality of documents on a particular language.

**Table 4.8: UNESCO Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation**

Documentation	Grade	Language documentation
Superlative	5	There are comprehensive grammars, and dictionaries, extensive texts; constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.
Good	4	There is one good grammar and a number of adequate grammars, dictionaries, text, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.
Fair	3	There may be an adequate grammar or sufficient amount of grammars, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.
Fragmentary	2	There are some grammatical sketches, word-lists and texts useful for limited linguistic research but with adequate coverage. Audio and video recording may exist in varying quality, with or without any annotation.
Inadequate	1	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word-lists and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recording do not exist, are of unstable quality, or are completely un-annotated.
Undocumented	0	No material exists

From table 4.8, Lete scores 1, because there are inadequate documents on it. There exist short word-lists and fragmentary texts. These wordlists are displayed in the appendix. There are no audio and video recordings. When inquired whether they had video camera to record proceeding in the chief's court, I was told 'it is in the pipe-line'. Other research conducted on Larteh and the language is by Johnson (1973), Brokensha (1966, 1972), Akrofi Ansah (2002, 2005, and 2009) and others.

## 4.2 ASSESSMENT SUMMARY: LETE LANGUAGE

**Table 4.9: UNESCO Score Sheet**

Factors	Rating
Intergenerational language transmission	4 – Unsafe
Absolute Number of Speakers	8,310 (G.P.H.C., 2000)
Proportion of speakers within total population	3 – a majority speak the language
Trends in Existing language domains	3 – Strong Private and community use
Response to New Domains and Media	0 – no new media
Materials for language Education and literacy	0 – no orthography
Official status and Use: Governmental and Institutional language Attitudes, Policies	4 – differentiated Support.
Community members' Attitudes towards their own language	5 – Strong but mix feelings on language maintenance.
Amount and Quality of Documentation	1 – PhD Thesis, short word-lists, fragmentary texts

Table 4.9 presents UNESCO's (2003) nine factors for assessing a language's vitality or endangerment and how Lete is rated under each of these factors. The intergenerational language transmission of Lete seems to be breaking along the line. There are 8,310 Larteh people in Ghana (Population and Housing Census of Ghana, 2000). A majority of Lartehs speak Lete but not all do. Lete is only used in private domains and in the community, but not

in official domains. Again, Lɛtɛ currently is not in any new domain and the media. The language does not have an official orthography. Government's language policy does not give official status to Lɛtɛ as it has given to eleven selected Ghanaian languages. Lartehs value their language and speak it where necessary yet the language does not have documents for language education. The only documents available on Lɛtɛ are graduate research works, grammatical sketches, short word-lists and fragmented text.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The main objective of the study was to investigate the vitality and endangerment of Lɛtɛ using UNESCO (2003) framework. In order to achieve this, the study sought to know the different domains in which Lɛtɛ is used, using interviews, participant observation, focus group discussion and relevant related documents. The questions that guided the study were:

- To what extent is Lɛtɛ currently being used and passed on?
- What factors account for the vitality or endangerment of Lɛtɛ?
- What maintenance strategies can we employ to keep Lɛtɛ if endangered?

Table 5.0 is a list of domains investigated and the languages used in each domain. This is required by UNESCO'S (2003) framework for assessing a language. Not all domains of language use were explored, but the relevant domains needed for this research were investigated. The languages are ranked; the predominant language used in these domains is listed first, and then followed by the second language.

**Table 5.1: DOMAINS AND THIER LANGUAGE USE**

DOMAINS	LANGUAGES USED
Home	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
School	English, Akuapem Twi
Church	Akuapem Twi, English
Markets	Akuapem Twi, Adangbe, Letɛ
Community	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
Chief's court	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi
Oral Literature	Akuapem Twi, Letɛ
Transportation	Akuapem Twi
Documents	English, Akuapem Twi
Literacy (reading and writing)	English, Akuapem Twi
Place of work	Akuapem Twi, English
The shrine	Letɛ, Akuapem Twi, Akyem, Fanti

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

Based on the UNESCO (2003) framework, conclusions drawn are that Letɛ is endangered due to certain factors. The use of Akan for that matter Akuapem Twi in domains such as trade, education and the mass media are seen as catalysts in endangering Letɛ.

In the case of Letɛ some parents believe that in order for their children to reach the highest academic ranking, they must be proficient in English language. They are right; however, they are wrong if they believe that proficiency in Letɛ is an impediment to their

higher educational achievements. Again, this notion of English language proficiency has propelled parents to speak English with their children right from infancy.

Lɛtɛ is spoken by about 8,310 people (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2000). This obviously does not represent the exact number of Lɛtɛ speakers because of the presence of immigrants in the town. Majority of the Larteh population speak Lɛtɛ and Akan (Akuapem Twi) but the language situation in the town is multilingualism.

Additionally, the findings of the study show that not everyone who lives in Larteh town speaks Lɛtɛ. Again, not all people who hail from Larteh can speak Lɛtɛ and there are other language groups staying in Larteh. Therefore we can say that “nearly all speak the language” within the total population.

Ideally, a language must be used in all domains which mean that the language has a “Universal use” status. The number of domains in which Lɛtɛ is used is dwindling in that, other dominant languages such as English (official language of Ghana) and Akan (Akuapem Twi) - Regional language are finding their way gradually into the home after capturing all other domains. One expects that as language is dynamic, it should be gaining new domains but that is not the case of Lɛtɛ. Lɛtɛ is not used in the Mass Media. English is the language in all the print media and Television. Akan has taken over many electronic media (Radio) in Ghana. Lɛtɛ is also not used in any new domains such as Education, Mass Media and Social Media (the internet) as some Ghanaian language are making strides in these domains.

More so, a language is considered as strong if it is used in the educational domain and has both oral and written materials. In the case of Lɛtɛ, there are no such materials. The language does not have documented oral literature let alone written materials for language education and literacy as Akan (Akuapem Twi) does.

Further, the language policy for Education in Ghana does not favour the use of certain indigenous languages in schools. It is an established fact that Akan (Akuapem Twi) is the authorized Ghanaian language studied in almost all the schools in the Eastern region of Ghana, including Larteh schools. Lete by virtue of its status is not, and cannot be used in teaching and learning process. Akuapem Twi is the medium of instruction in Larteh schools. Another finding of the research is that most of the teachers in these schools are not natives of Larteh and cannot speak Lete let alone use it in the teaching and learning process. Textbooks and other teaching materials are in English and Akuapem Twi.

Again, the attitude of speech communities towards their language is vital to the maintaining and developing their language. Lartehs have positive attitude towards their language as you find them speak Lete in the community though not all speak the language. The consensus of the people is that the family should transmit the language to their children as that is the only way of maintaining the language.

Moreso, the research revealed that Lete has inadequate documents on it. There are no audio or video documents on events that go on in the society. There exist short word-lists and fragmentary text from the manuscript of Ofori Nyarko P. Scholars such as Johnson (1973), Kwamena Poh (1972), Akrofi Ansah (2002, 2005 and 2009), Banchi (1971), Berry (1951) and Brokensha (1966, 1972) have conducted research on the language and the community but the language used in these researchs is English.

Additionally, migration was another issue in the decline of Lete. As already noted there are few job opportunities in Larteh and therefore a lot of Lartehs seek greener pastures in different towns and villages. These people by no fault of theirs abandon the Lete language and learn to speak the language in their new community. As they become economically dependent on their new communities, they gradually abandon their language (Batibo, 2005).

Language is nurtured to grow and any break in the use of the language leads to the loss of some aspects of the language and culture.

Improved communication and mass media in dominant languages were found to disenfranchise minority languages such as Lete. Mass media (television, radio), films, video CDs, newspapers, magazines, and books most often use languages that are understood by a majority of their target population. As these media improve, the said language also gains grounds. Lete is not used in any of these Mass Media. The programmes and ‘products’ of these media have replaced traditional pastimes such as storytelling, puberty rites and more through which elders in the society transmit traditional norms and values, history and culture. The television was found to be the worst of all the mass media. Children prefer to play computer games or watch interesting programmes on television.

There is universal bilingualism (Akan Akuapem Twi and Lete). The domains in which Lete is spoken are limited to the home and the community. With all the other factors taken into account, the language is endangered, particularly because it has no orthography for language development; the language has no official status or educational use even though the language is used by the family. Under normal circumstances a strong language should score forty (40) points but Lete scored nineteen (19) points. There are limited amount of documentation on the language. Another revelation of the study is that, it demonstrated the problems of basing the assessment of vitality or endangerment of African languages on the UNESCO factors.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study shows that Lete language is threatened, even though the inter-generational transmission of the language remains stable. If the language is to live and thrive, its use in

new domains is very important. I suggest that language maintenance programme must be put in place to revamp Lɛtɛ language. Orthography must be developed or an already existing orthography can be adapted. Documenting the language will be an advantage. Larteh speakers must be encouraged to write short stories, newsletters, document oral narratives and also develop a dictionary in Lɛtɛ language. There must be language empowerment that is; the language must be used in other domains in the community. I will also recommend that, there should be what I will term as “LANGUAGE SENSITIZATION”. Parents, traditional leaders and the community must sensitize on the dangers in language shift, language endangerment, and language death. There should be efforts to boost the prestige of Lɛtɛ through their community “information centres” where commercial broadcasting would be done in Lɛtɛ as it is done on FM radio stations in some parts of Mali and in Northern Ghana.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: A SAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHIEFS AND ELDERS

1. Name please?
2. Age.
3. Place of birth.
4. Who are Larteh people and how did they come to be here?
5. What language do you use at home, in your court proceeding/in church/in your interactions with other member of the community?
6. During social gatherings such as durbars, cultural display, funerals, festivals what is the means of communication/medium of interaction?
7. If answer to (6) above is a language other than Lete, why?
8. In which language do you communicate with family members at home?
9. Please what is the attitude of your children towards the Lete language?
10. Are there any written documents on the Lete language that you know of?
11. If yes, in which language is it written?
12. Are there any books or manuals written in Lete, such as dictionaries, the Bible, novels etc?
13. Is Lete learnt in schools?
14. Do you think Lete language is gradually fading away?
15. If yes, why do you think it is faced with extinction?
16. If no, what do you think is keeping the language alive?
17. Would you like to see the Lete language dead for good or saved?
18. Do you think there is any benefit in keeping the Lete language alive? Explain.
19. What do you think should be done to preserve the Lete language?
20. Have you anything more to say?

## **APPENDIX 2: A SAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WORKERS, THE FAMILY**

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Place of birth?
4. Mother tongue
5. How long have you lived in this town?
6. How many languages do you speak?
7. In what language do you communicate with your family in the house?
8. What is the attitude of your children towards the Lɛtɛ language?
9. Are they interested in speaking the Lɛtɛ language anywhere they go?
10. When you go shopping, what language do you use:
11. Do you speak Lɛtɛ language with the market women or shop keepers?
12. If no, why?
13. Do you know any folktales, proverbs, poems songs, riddles etc in Lɛtɛ language?
14. If yes, Do you teach your children and grandchildren when they are around?
15. If no why?
16. At your work place, do you communicate with your Larteh brethren in Lɛtɛ?
17. What is the attitude of the local youth of today to the Lɛtɛ language?
18. In your view why do you think the youth of today do not like to speak the Lɛtɛ language but prefer other languages?
19. In your younger days what did elderly people do to make sure that children learn and speak the Lɛtɛ language?
20. Do you think one day the Lɛtɛ language will be extinct due to the current linguistic trends?
21. What do you think we should do to revive the language?
22. Have you anything more to say

**APPENDIX 3: A SAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUTH**

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Ethnicity:
4. How many languages spoken?
5. Where and how were they learnt?
6. Place of birth?
7. Where do you live presently?
8. Are both your parents from Larteh?
9. What language do you use to communicate at home?
10. Do your parents speak the language at home themselves?
11. Are there any occasions when it is mandatory to use the Lete language?
12. Do you speak Lete language fluently?
13. If no, why?
14. Would you have wished that you spoke the Lete language more fluently?
15. Do you prefer the use of Akwapim Twi to Lete language in your daily activities?
16. What do you think might be the reason why most Larteh people prefer to use the Akwapim Twi to Lete language?
17. What is your attitude towards the language? Underline as appropriate:
  - a. I dislike it;
  - b. I love it;
  - c. I feel ashamed of it;
  - d. I feel proud of it;
  - e. I can't say?
18. Do you learn the Lete language in school?
19. In school what language does the teacher use to explain a difficult point for you to understand?
20. Do you think some time to come the language will not be in use?
21. If yes, why?
22. If no, why?
23. Can you suggest some ways through which to sustain the language?

**APPENDIX 4: SOME SONGS FROM LARTEH COMMUNITY**

- i. Asonafo e  
 Yee!  
 Asonafi e  
 Yee! 2X  
 Yenko hwe Nana  
 Omma ye oo
- Asante kotoko beye den ni  
 Yebe ye wose  
 Yebe ye wo ni  
 Yebe ye se obiara o
- Asonafo woyaa  
 Woya e e e  
 Yenim o o o  
 Yenko ngwane o o  
 Ogya nso
- ii. Akrampa nsuro obiara  
 Obiara awiso yen  
 Yenso ani so bi  
 Nea ebeba mmra  
 Akrampa e e ! y i e e ! (2x)  
 Akrampa nsuro yaa e  
 Obiara aniso yen  
 Yenso y'ani so bi  
 Na nea ebeba mmra
- iii. 2x// Nananom akomfo Aduana akomfo na monhunu se osibiri reto a  
 // won ma yenko hwe atorofo  
 Na mo nhunu se osibiri to o o o (2x)  
 Akomfo atorofo ama osi akye yen e  
 Aye e e !
- osee yiee! (2x)  
 Yee ee yee !
- Otwedianpon e e  
 Yedan w o o o  
 Yedan w o o o !
- iv. Yaanom yafre o o  
 benkum yafre yafre  
 na montie yen o o  
 Woya e e  
 Agyanom yefre o o o  
 Guanman yefre yefre  
 Na montie yen o o o

Woya ee ye e  
 Yee yenwuranom  
 Wode akofo rehyiayen oo  
 Osee aye e e !

b. Lullabies (Lɛtɛ Language)

Kwasi fo wo ba o o //2x	(Kwasi wash your hands)
Kwasi doctor woba pɛɛ	(Doctor Kwasi whash your hands)
ɛhu ne bɛ	(Fufu is ready)
Fo woba pepɛɛɛ	(Wash your hands)

c. i. Other songs (Twi)

Yaa Otiwaa, yiee	}	2X
Yaa Otiwaa danfo agya e e		
Yaa Otiwaa e e e		

Mayɛ mayɛ mnyayɛ	}
Aye, Yaa Otiwaa aye e	
Matete koo Nkyin mma	
Yaa Otiwaa aye e e	

ii. Amoyiwa meho asem dɛɛdɛɛdɛ  
 Amoyiwa meho asem dɛɛdɛɛdɛ  
 Amayiwa bra o o o

Response: Amoyiwa meho asem dɛdɛɛdɛ  
 Amoyewa meho asem yaayaaya  
 Amoyiwa yie e e

## APPENDIX 5: A SERMON PREACHED IN THE SAMMUEL OTTO

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LARTEH

Apart from se nkwa efiri Onyankopon nkyen eba, ye san nya nkwa efiri Onyankopon asem mu. The Bible is the living word of God, and the witness to the true meaning of Jesus Christ.

Onyankopon asem a ema ye nkwa foforo efinese edama yen efirise Yesu Christo ho asem. Nkwa no farebae bio nso ne se, ye ba asore na yere tie Awurade asem no

Eyi ye, the spoken word of God. Onyankopon asem a waka. Botae a yegyina so ede ka Awurade asem se nea mere ye yi ene se, yebeka nokware no akyerere efirise, asafo bebree/pii na ewo ho nanso neama a woye no wo asafo nomu nye nokware. Asafo bi wo ho a woye bone a Osofo no ma woko to abaa na wode aba asore dan mu, na eduru bere a won aka won bone awiye no, Osofo no de abaa no egwa won wo asore dan no mu. Osofo no nim se, se w'anye no saa Onyankopon nfa wonbone nkye wo. Na esanese wakyerekyere asafo mma no se mmaabo no ama mu a, Onyankopon nfa wonbone nkye nti asafo mma no ye senea osofo ekanen. Nanso esanese nye nokware trodoo nti, Presbyterian asafo yeka Nokware asem no ne Yesu Kristo, \*Yen nkwa farebae a mepese se meko ho asem bio ne, Asubo ne Awurade adidi ho. Na eyi nso yefre no; The visible word of God. Se yeba asore dan yi mu ha bebo asu a, yenfa ntama no ntwana dan mu ha na yenfa mpanyinfo no nkoa nkohye kokoa mu. Yeye no wo pefee mu ma obiara ehu senea yeye no fa. Edu bere a yeko Awurade pon ho nso a, yenfa nkohye baabi, na emom yedebe si dan mu ha ma obiara hunu nea erekoso no bi.

Words of life are in Christ. The Christ who brings Good news of love in us but you cannot experience the work of life unless you grasp the work.

Saa nkwa nsem yi a yeka se ewe Yesu Christo mu se nkwa Yesu Christo na ede ba, na nsanase yebe hunu nkwa ho nsem yi, na yehu se saa nsem yegye asem, yeate asem no, nay a so asem no mu.

Wo yen akansansem a edi kan no mu ofre Omanfo no ma Ezra ekenkan nsem no edema omanforo senea ebeye a wobete Awurade ho asem efirise wonte be akye. Wo aye won ankasa won akomaso ade akye. Na waka asem no wie no bible kyere se nnipa no wreho ye na ofinase su firise won nyinaa hu se won agya Awurade bo kwan no ato ho na won

The words of life. Se wote Awurade asem no a sen ena eye wo wo mu. So ekasa kyere wo an se nea Nehemea ene ne nkorofu. Adofu wo yen Awurade mu.

Nkankanssem a etoso ebien no mu, yeho biakoye ewo odomakyede ahuro no mu. Na nea Paolo ereka nyinaa no ne, nkwa a ewo Onyankopon asem mu adi. eno nti se woye Okristoni na asem nfa biakoye mma wo ne wonua ntem a na Onyankopon asem no eye atosin we w'ababo no mu. Ma nea woka wo Luka asempa ti nan nkyekyemu junan kosi aduonu nan.

Yesu Kristo koka asempa wo Galelea wo hyradon mu na babi a o kan kan ye no ye odiyifo Joshiah nsuma no ti adusia baako nkyekyemu aduanu nwodwe na asem a ewo ho no, na ereka ogye ewoho ma Israalso se obegye won efiri babelfo nsem. Na ogye no akyno, na esese wontwe won ho efiri neama bi ho. This scripture is fulfilled through your hearing Onyankopon asem no eye ogya dema nemma, eye ayaresa de ma nemma a na eno ne

nkwa a eye nokware trodoo eye nokwasem, ede asodwoe de bre namma, na ede anidaso eba na esan ye nkwaye bre wiase nyinaa na saa neama yi nyinaa eno na yefre no daa nkwa.

So wokon do se wote Onyankopon asem, so wopese wohun se nkwaasem no ereye adwuma wo w'abrabo mu a, w'adwuma mu, wo abusua mu anaa se wopese nkwa yi ye nfasode ede ma woa

1. Nea edi kan, Read the word of God

Jeremiah 8:2,3. Bere a ebaye se wore tene asafo no, wohu se won akyea, wohu se won egua Onyankopon akwan, na osue. Onyankopon asem reba.

2. Listen attentively to the word of God whiles it is being preached. Tie Awurade asem bere a woreka akyere wo efirise neama beberee a na wobefa afiri Awurade asem mu ede abowobra quote from the bible

Nehemia 8:9,10, Luke 4:8

3. Meditate on the word always
4. Explain the word of God to others. Se ye kyere kye Onyankopon asem no akyere afoforo . Eno na Ezra ye ye, na ekobaase nnipa te nea esese wo ye, na wohunu se nye eno na wonye, won werehoe, na wosui asanese wohunu se won agya Awurade kwan.
5. Engage a regular worship where the word of God is read.
6. Preach and fellowship constantly

Esese yema yenan ye ntiantia ewo Awurade fie Ehade twere no ka se, where the word of God is read. Luke 4:16 Neh 8:1

7. Promote unity wherever you are.

Bo biako ye ho mmoden, efi ha wote no, bo biako ye ho mmoden, se adwumu na wote, bo biakoye ho mmoden, baabi biara wohunu woho, bo biakoye ho mmoden, eno ene nkwa ho nsem.

Se woye Adwuma senea esea nfaso ben na wobonya

Luke 4:18,19

Awurade honhom wo me so, na nti wafre me se menmeka asempa menkyere ahiafo. Wasomade se menmeka ogye mekyere nonun ne adehunu menkyere anifrayefo Na memegyewon a wabebare won no nkwa na memegyewon Awurade aniso afehyia.

Neama wie ena wobodin ewoho.

Se wo so Awurade asem na a eye nkwa nomu a, honhom anifraye ne honam mu anifraye ose ebeka halleluya

Congregation: Amen

Se hohom anifraye no ko, na honam anifraye nso ko a, yebnya amroa foforo

The eye that sees and the eye that look. Na menpaebo ne se wo benya aniwa a ehunu ade nye aniwa a ahawadwene

\*The spiritually and physically lame will walk. Won a honhom famu ne honam famu won tumi nantew no se eba se nkwa nsem no wura won mu a sobe nantew

\* the spiritually and physically deaf will hear.

won a honhom fa mu ne honam fa mu no won aso asiw a, woman nkwa asem no so nya won aso tew asem.

\*the spiritually and physicaly dead are raised up. Se wogye nkwa asem nodi a, na wodeye adwuma senea ese a se wawu wo honhom mu a, Nyame asem kyere se wobe sore

\*Nea ontumi nkasa nso betumi adasa bere a wobegye Awurade asem no adi. Awurade asem no a eye nkwa asem no, na wode aye adwuma. Nti yen a yewo asore dan yimu ha a yekase papa. Papa mentimi nye eyi no, moma yen hwe no yie. Because spiritually no, spiritually no, anka meyaye se wo ye weak. Nase woso Asurade asem mu na wode nantew a Awurade no Adofonom wo Awurade mu, Mateo asempa etiri dubiako (Mateo 11:5) nkyekyemu anum se: *Anifraso hunu ade, abuboafo nantew, Akwatafo hufi, na asotifo te asem, awufo enyane, na asempa no hyireen ma ahiafoo.*

Yaate Awurade asempa anopa yi, Awurade nfa nehonhom kronkron nhye yen nyinaa ma, woma yenye akukudurufu na yenfa saa akukuduru nkoka asempa no wone Yesu Kristo din mu

Amen

Congregation: Amen

## APPENDIX 6: STORY

Abra! Bra! Bra!

Yoo!

Mmere bi Osikani tirimodenfo bi tenaa ase a ɔwɔ akoa bi. Saa akoa yi nim ahoyɔ yiye, na ɔtow aboa a, ɔmfom da. Sɛ hanam yɛ ne wura akonno na ɔma ne tuo so kɔ wuram a ɔbeba na aboa bɔ ne kɔn ho.

Da koro bi a ɔkoe saa no, ne nsa kɔkaa batafo kɛse bi. ɔde bae pɛ, ne ne wura no sɛ: “Eyi de wɔfrɛ no ‘akoa nni’.” Enti ɔne ne yere ne ne mma dii a wɔamma no bi da. Odui pɛ, ankyɛ koraa na ne nsa kaa bi, nanso atirimoden a ne wura no bɔɔ no nti, wamfa no anko fie na ɔde no hyɛɛ adukurobi mu. Obedu fie o, na wura ne ne yere ne ne mma na atwa ahyira rebɔ aserehehe yi. ɛnna ɔse: Me wura, sɛ mede ɔtwe no bae nne a, anka menya bi madi?” ɛnna ne wura no se: “ene mmom de, anka worennya bi nni, gye da bi.”

ɛnna akoa no nso reka ne tirim sɛ:” Ende na ɔtwe mporow wɔ adukrom.

**APPENDIX 7: LANGUAGE VITALITY ASSESSMENT FORM**

Based on: Brenzinger, Matthias, Akira Yamamoto, Noriko Aikawa, Dmitri Koundioubu, Anahit Minasyan, Arienne Dwyer, Colette Grinevald, Michael Krauss, Osahito Miyaoka, Osamu Sakiyama, Riexs Smeets and Ofelia Zepeda. 2003. *Language Vitality and Endangerment*. Paris: UNESCO Expert Meeting on Safeguarding Endangered Languages.

Factors	Language name:	
	ISO 639-3 code:	
	rating	
Intergenerational Language Transmission		
Absolute Number of Speakers		
Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population		
Trends in Existing Language Domains		
Response to New Domains and Media		
Materials for Language Education and Literacy		
Official Status and Use: Governmental & Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies		
Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language		
Amount and Quality of Documentation		

**APPENDIX 8: PICTURES OF THE RESEARCH**

Researcher in a pose with Akuapem Guan Paramount Chief, Larteh



One of the families interviewed for the research



One of the families interviewed for the research



An 'Osofo' performing a ritual ceremony for 'Dente' deity



A picture of researcher, Chief Priestess of Akonnedi Shrine and some devotees





Some schools visited at Larteh



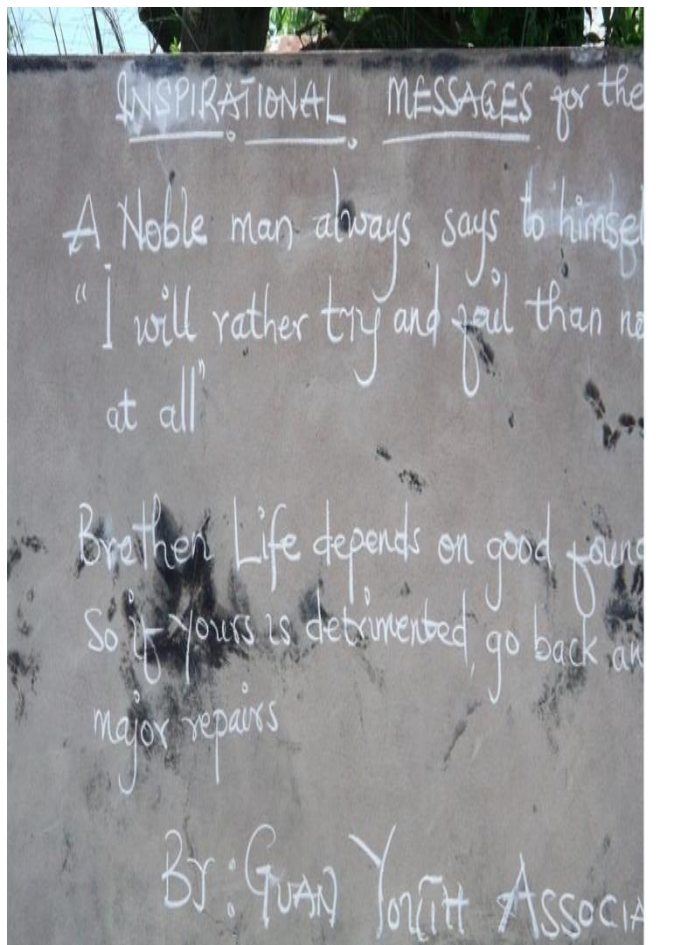
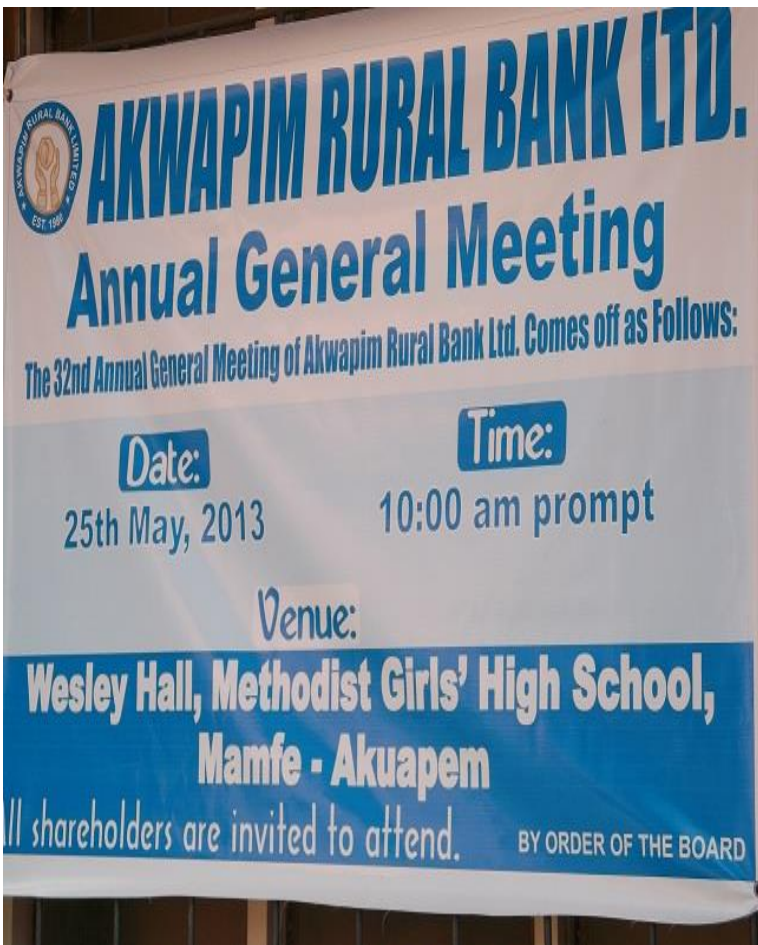
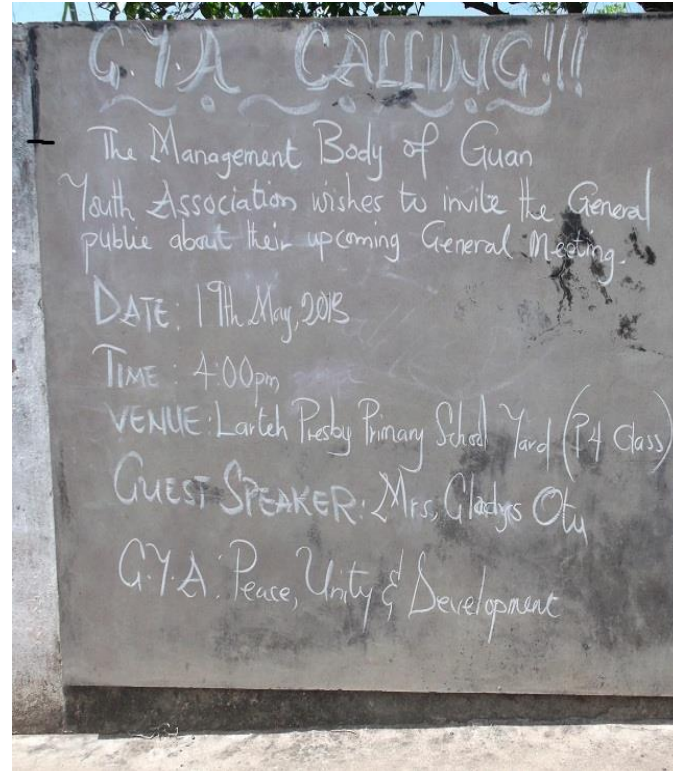
Storytelling sections in Larteh



An Oath Swearing Section in the Chief's court, Larteh



Chief Linguist making libation in the chief's court, Larteh



Some notices in Larteh



The Presbyterian Church, Larteh.



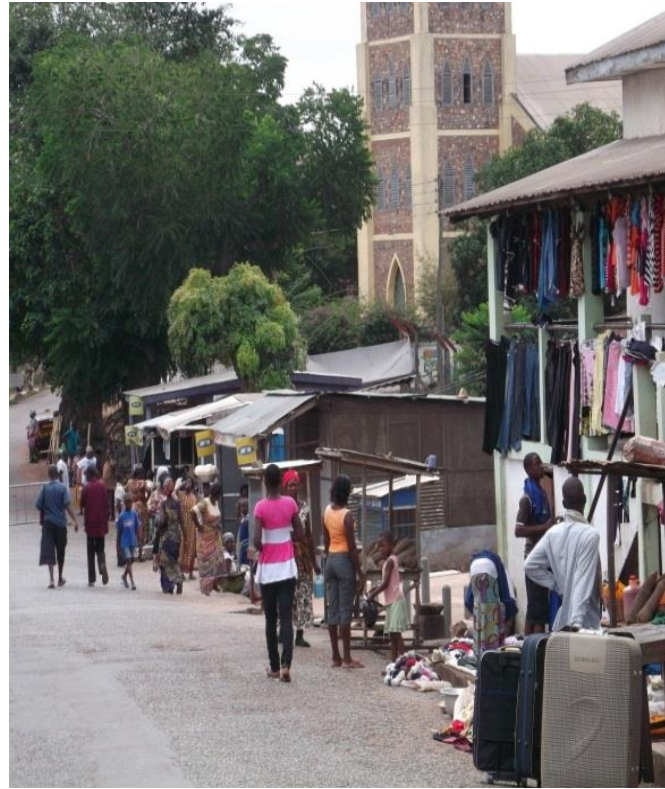
The church of Pentecost, Larteh Assembly



Lighthouse Chapel International, Larteh.



The Anglican Church, Larteh



Market days at Larteh

## APPENDIX 9: SHORT WORD LIST IN LETE LANGUAGE

### THE LETE DIALECT : EXTRACT FROM MY MANUSCRIPT.

#### PRONUNCIATION : "E" AND "O" VARIATIONS.

The "e", and "o" have other peculiar forms. These I call "open" and "squeezed", which may be identified with the dot thus. e + ó. The dot (.) or (dash -) may also be used for nasals.

A. "e" ("open" or normal)	as in	<u>ebi</u>	=	child, seed		
		<u>esibi</u>	=	eye		
(e) - "squeezed" as in		<u>kye</u>	=	look	<u>de</u>	= sleep
(sound iye)		<u>kye</u>	=	female	<u>ye</u>	= say
B. "o" ("open" or normal)	as in	<u>olo</u>	=	sore or scarce		
		<u>mo</u>	=	well done		
(o) - "squeezed" as in		<u>mo</u>	=	him	<u>enufo</u>	= lies
(sound ow)		<u>bo</u> (bow)	=	has	<u>Kpo</u>	= chest, sea
		<u>so</u>	=	Tuesday or nasal cold		

### READING EXERCISES 1 :

#### NKEMWE NÈ NYANSA/ÐHE NÈ MPÉTÈ WIASE PÈÈ

1. Kane ðkó, Kwaku Ananse sokyé bee mókã pe kehu nyansa, anso abe boaboa nyansa/ðhe).pèe anó yéwóre (ewóre) tó ðkó te ese oyi ðntã ðkó kóna nté. Akyin wiase pèe, yé adé boaboa ðhe/nyansa pèe anó, keebwe ne ððkóa beehu ðhe. Ahõ ewóre tó ante. Ahõ enna hó te fii, ye adeshã ese oyi ansó.
2. Pèe mka moobi Ntikuma yéré bó (bwó) ðkó de kye mò. Ka Ananse bzé de ndã oyi á, twu bee tó a mmete mó kpó te.
3. Moobi a mmase mó, ne ayé mó annea (yé annea) "Yye (yie) tó a eméte woansi ne wode ndã oyi a". Ananse hu bee ammenye nyansa a pèe. Mó api fu, ayie (ayye) tó a tó efé (effe). Biele, ne nyansa semé (semme) wiase pèe.
4. Nkembwe nè ðhe né mpétè wiase pèe annee.

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION : HOW WISDOM SPREAD IN THE WORLD

1. One day Kweku Ananse desiring to be the only wise man in the world, went round to collected wisdom into a gourd, intending to hang it on a tall tree far away in the forest. Thinking he had succeeded, he went and tried to climb the tree.
2. All the while, his son Ntikuma stood at a distance watching him. With the gourd hanging on his chest, he could not climb.
3. His son laughed at him and told him. "Hang the gourd on your back and you will be able to ascend the tree" Ananse realised his folly and failure, got angry and threw the gourd down. It burst and wisdom spread through-out the world.
4. This is how wisdom spread all round the world.

**READING EXERCISE 2****KORE MOBI ƆKÓ – THE EAGLET**

- Ake Ɔkó Ɔkpaw Ɔkó hukyi kore mó bi bó (bow) hwo te, ne a bété mó ye be awu. Asi mó te efra mó nkreni te, A tra mó bee Ɔkreni.
  - Bere Ɔkó ansí a, mó adamfo Ɔkó mensra mó. A ne ŋhu kore mobi a, a ye mó adamfo Ɔkpaw-a ye anea. “Enyine, abobi mó gyi kore mó bi; a beegyí okreni”. Ɔkpaw a bua mó ye anea: “Yio, nso nee-tra mó ne aadaŋ okreni”.
  - Mó adamfo a gye mó akyinnye ye anea:- “Abobi a nadwne ne mó Ɔko ara bwe mó kore. Se wɔɔ sɔ gyi-a, mede mbwe ne afrukyi nna.”
  - Ɔkpaw okyinnyegyefo a ne nyé mó ye atso kyé (akyo-kyé) a, a tsu kore a ye ke Ɔsónsó, ne atee te ye anea: “Wu gyi kore, Ɔsónsó gyi wo akyinnye a, beegyí asase só. Bukyi wó ebamba te ne wó frukyi nye!”
  - Kore a ne ndaŋ-daŋ mó esibi a, a-hu mó nnamfo nkreni-a ke de gyi ete bó sete-a. A frukyi wo, ye kyɔkye (tsɔ kye) tei (tegyi) a ŋko.
  - Ɔkpaw a ye: “Nte wó ehu Nyé wó. Aa-daŋ okreni. Mó adamfo a tsokye ete ne fe só nyɔ. Kore a ŋhu nkreni a pe, ka aawo fra ammó te. Ete ne fe só sa-a, onyine-a bété kore a ye na bɔ (bwɔ) Ɔkó só. A daŋ kore a nesibi yekɛ owu, ne atee te ye anea: “Kore ee, wu gyi kore oo. Ɔsónsó gyi wó akyinnye a. Yake wó ebamba te ne wó frukyi nye!”
  - Ampa, tumi Ɔkó wore abobi a nte. Asu bee kore; afrukyi nna ane mmembe kó da.
- Doktar Aggrey nne saa te mó ye ke bee, wu ngyi Obibini a, ka wu gyi Obibini. Woogyi Obroni. Ete ne hia gyi wó keehu ese wo ne gyi, ne wó bɔ wó yó mmɔdeŋ a.

**READING EXERCISE 3****AWURADE MPAEBɔ : THE LORD'S PRAYER.**

1.	Our Father	Ené Sé
2.	Who art in heaven	Né bó (ne bwó) Ɔsónsó
3.	Hallowed be thy name	Wó nyine gyi kroŋ
4.	Thy kingdom come	Wó ahenni be
5.	Thy will be done on earth	Wó apede bwe bó asaase só
6.	As it is in heaven	Bee kete bó Ɔsónsó a
7.	Give us this day our daily bread	Ne ené, nne, ené daa tegyi a
8.	And forgive us our trespasses	Hɔ (Bété) ené infomso yefri ené
9.	As we forgive them that trespass against us	Bee ené ke bété efrí ese ne fom ené a
10.	And lead us not into temptation	Bbe bété ené enna (yenna) sɔhwe te
11.	But deliver us from evil	Yye (Yie) ené twu Ɔkpamkpa te
12.	For thine is the Kingdom	Wó le gyi owuregyi (ahenni)
13.	The power and the glory	Tumi (Onyini) ne anuonyam
14.	For ever and ever	Daa ne daa a
15.	Amen	Amèn

**SOME EVENTS OF INTEREST IN LARTEH HISTORY**

<u>LARTEH MOTTO : LCTC BO ƆKRE LO</u>			
1a.	<p><b><u>LARTEH VERSION</u></b></p> <p>Lete Ɔkrubi                      Dadankpo, Dadamkpo                      Dedede Ɔmantease                      Gyira Kpɔmkpɔ                      Ɔne mbete Ɔkɔle ewɔɔbi                      Mente abwe ne bekre l.ctc                      Lctc bo Ɔkre lo!</p> <p>My prose of the poem, which has some semblance with Matt. 2/5-6, is as follows:                      You little town Larteh, Hail, Bravo, blessed. You are ancient and your state established.                      Despite your size, you are an enormous couldron, a huge frying pan for annealed stars,                      pace-setters, firstlings. So what are your worries? By His Grace, you have none.</p>	<p><b><u>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>Hail, Bravo Larterians                      Renowned men of old                      The ancient established community                      The largest frying pan                      Wherein the "Stars" were fried                      What monster dare catch Larteh?                      Larteh the invincible</p>	
<b><u>MIGRATION LYRIC: ATRIBUTED TO AHENEASE</u></b>			
1b.	<p><b><u>STATEMENT</u></b></p> <p>Ntumuru O Ntumuru                      Ntumuru Senya                      Senya Domfoe                      Domfoe Ebia                      Ebia – Sekete                      Sekete Enkpu                      Enkpu Ala                      Ala Konyon                      Konyon Lete                      Lete Ɔkɔ</p>	<p><b><u>RESPONSE</u></b></p> <p>Nte Ntumuru?                      Nte Senya                      Nte Domfoe?                      Nte Ebia?                      Nte Sekete?                      Nte Enkpu?                      Nte Ala?                      Nte Konyon?                      Nte Lete?</p>	<p><b><u>MY INTERPRETATION</u></b></p> <p>From Ntumuru                      (Nchumuru) to Senya                      on the coast. Then                      to Domfoe near                      Abonse in Akuapem                      to Ebia, Sekete                      Enkpu. Link with                      the La (Labadi) Then                      to the Akono Hill and Lete as one                      people</p>
THEN ALL SHOUT "AKOKɔ MIAW!"			
2.	<p>Population: 1960 Larteh 6361. Akuapem 80,000. In accordance with the UN convention, (5,000) Larteh is one of 98 towns of Ghana. Population at 2000 = 8310.</p>	<p>4. 17<sup>th</sup> Cent. The Akwamu and Akim moved peacefully into Guan Hills, probably for trade.</p>	
3a.	<p>All the Brongs (Clans) of Larteh – (Kubease 12 large and 4 small, Ahenease: 14 large and 5 small) have their own stories of origin.</p>	<p>5. 1646. Akwamu claimed western part of "Akuapem"</p> <p>6. 1729. The Guan revolted against Akwamu.</p>	
3b.	<p>The "Kubease" people after their trek, resided at ƆMANKɔ (now Amamfi) at OBISI, and the "Ahenease" in their 30 villages at ƆSAE near-by before the two groups finally settled in the twin towns of Larteh Kubease and Ahenease,</p>	<p>7. 1730. The Akuapem Guan and allied forces led by Danish Governor defeated and ejected the Akwamu from Nyanawase to Akwamu across the Volta.</p> <p>8. 1733. Inauguration of "AKUAPEM" (Akuw-apem) at Abotakyi – The ABOTAKYI ACCORD.</p>	
3c.	<p>The Ahenease Ruling Houses are Obrentri, Ntow and Oworae. There have been 25 Chiefs since 1730. Details as at 2003: Obrentri = 12, Oworae = 7, Ntow = 6. Total Kubease rulers at 2003 = 12 [Akropong = 25, Adukrom = 12, Aburi = 15 during the stated period].</p>	<p>9. 1742. Akuapem became Asante dependency.</p> <p>10. 1788. Paul Erdmann Isert, Physician and Botanist visited Akuapem. He returned in 1789 to establish an Utopian Colony at Akropong. His death in 1790 ended his experiment.</p>	