

*Research article*

## Usage and Understanding of Archaisms in King James Bible among Clergy and Laity in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria

Kehinde Pedro Amore<sup>1\*</sup>, Abiodun John Soretire<sup>2</sup>, & Isaac Kehinde Ojelabi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Department of English, College of Humanities, Tai Solarin University of Education, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Department of Religious Studies, College of Humanities, Tai Solarin University of Education, Nigeria

\* [amorekp@tasued.edu.ng](mailto:amorekp@tasued.edu.ng)

### Abstract

This study was a survey of usage and understanding of archaisms of personal pronouns and verb endings in the King James Bible among the clergy and laity of selected churches within Ijebu-Ode metropolis of Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey method with a sample size of 40 respondents selected via simple random sampling technique and 10 recorded homilies/liturgies from the selected churches cutting across the two major denominational blocs (Pentecostal and Protestant) using the King James Bible within Ijebu-Ode metropolis. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to obtain relevant information from the respondents who cut across various demographic groupings. Transcription served as the supporting instrument to gather pertinent data from the recorded homilies/liturgies. Thereafter, the descriptive method was employed in analysing the data gathered. The findings of the study enunciated the fact that archaisms of the King James Bible are still being used in churches through different platforms but majority of congregants lacked the proper understanding of the lexico-semantic and grammatical values of these archaisms. It is then recommended that clergymen should engage in thorough investigation into the KJV archaisms and the advantages they offer and educate their people accordingly, among other recommendations.

### Keywords

Archaisms; clergy and laity; King James Bible; personal pronoun; verb-ending.

### Article history

Submitted: 01/10/2022; revised: 23/05/2023; accepted: 02/06/2023.



© 2023 by the author(s). Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY SA) license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every language undergoes change over time in a gradual process. This change affects every part of the language including morphemes, words, phrases, sentences and even phonology (Nordquist, 2020). Some of the changes in the English language can easily be noticed when we read different translations or modifications of the

Holy Bible. White (1995) linked this concept of language change with the resultant need for new or revised Bible translations. He wrote:

Languages change. They evolve and grow. Often this process involves the addition of new terms due to contact with other languages or from improving technology (the King James Bible translators would think we were speaking a foreign language if we spoke of astronauts, television, downloading, or CD-ROMs). Words change meanings over time due to use, first by small groups, then by the larger populace. Such common terms as 'let', 'prevent' and 'communicate' all meant different things to English speakers only a few centuries ago (White, 1995).

In 2011, the King James Bible celebrated its 400th anniversary in circulation. Though not the first English translation and obviously not the last, it has become the most widely read and quoted, and most beloved even to the point of veneration by some individuals referred to as King James Bible-Onlyists, of all English translations (Berg, 2020; Gasparian, 2020).

The concern of the researchers as they get pressed more and more to till this research ground is, 'why will a translation, situated in the early seventeenth century of a language that is probably one of the most dynamic in the world, ascend to such status through time despite the barrage of archaisms it carries?' The research work will want to zero in only on two types of archaism out of the five identified forms in the King James Bible. This is so because in all of the six revisions the Bible translation underwent, with the final and most important being the 1769's revision by Dr. Blaynet, the two target archaic forms –the archaic personal pronouns, *thee, thou, thy, thine, ye*; and the archaic verb endings, *-eth, -est* – were interestingly retained despite the fact that they were already becoming archaic in 1611 when the original King James Bible was first published (Kuiper, 2023).

It has been observed that the archaic Middle English personal pronouns and verb endings have become part of the church language even in the twenty-first century which may not be unconnected with the Middle English personal pronoun and verb-ending usage of the most popular English Bible translation, The King James Bible (Munro, 2013). Though several Bible translations have followed The King James Bible, this version, popularly called 'The Authorised Version', has become the predominant translation for liturgy, public reading and memorization, irrespective of the dynamism of the language, that is, English Language, on which the translation was based (Wilcox, 2015). The Authorised Version, which was issued in 1611, cuts across church denominations in this perennial patronage (Ward, 2020).

This study examines a small but vital part of language change: verb endings and the second person pronouns which Umudova (2022) described as the insignificant words used for addressing. The scholar observed that the English language has earlier been more informative with respect to the usage of personal pronouns. In her comparative linguistic study which compared the New King James Bible Version (NKJV) to King James Bible, she made an obvious submission: in from 1990 there are only three different second person pronouns in NKJV while in the King James Bible from 1611 eight pronouns are used.

Harbach (2022) reeled out the statistics of the archaic personal pronoun usages in King James Bible thus: *thou* appears 3,881 times, *thee* 2,736 times, and *ye* 2,851 times; the archaic second person possessive *thy* 3,044 times and *thine* 818 times. That adds up to a total of 13,330 instances where these pronouns are replaced in the new versions with the less literal and less specific words *you*, *your* or *yours*.

Umudova (2022) notes that there are several types of obsolete words and that there are several archaic language use in King James Bible, namely: 1. Use of *thee* and *thou* pronouns (and *ye*, *thine*, etc.); 2. Use of *-est* and *-eth* endings on verbs; 3. Use of archaic words that have lost meaning; 4. Use of archaic words that have changed meaning; and 5. Use of archaic idioms and phrases. Though many of these archaisms have given way to their modern equivalent forms, the archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings persist in their usage. This has given some quarters cause for concern. And that includes translators who have worked hard to make modern translations reflect, in their totality, the dynamism of the Modern English. One of them, the translators of the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, retorted in the preface of their translation:

As for the traditional pronouns *thou*, *thee* and *thine* in reference to the Deity, the translators judged that to use these archaisms (along with the old verb forms such as *doest*, *wouldest* and *hadst*) would violate accuracy in translation. Neither Hebrew, Aramaic nor Greek uses special pronouns for the persons of Godhead. A present-day translation is not enhanced by forms that in the time of the King James Bible were used in everyday speech, whether referring to God or man (Preface, NIV, 1978)

Although modern *you* can be both singular and plural while the old English makes such a distinction which also exists in the Hebrew and Greek from which English translations are translated, it is believed that about 1575 *you* had become more common than *thou* as an address form for second person (Girsang et al, 2023).

However, the pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy* and *thine* were still used by the King James Bible translators.

In the same vein, the King James Bible uses *-est* ending (which has become archaic in 1611 when it was published) and *-eth* ending (which was already falling out of use) on verbs which neither add meaning to nor take meaning from the text (Tursunoy & Zarina, 2023). This study attempted to separate the doctrinal melee by probing clergymen's and the laity's usage, dispositions and understanding of archaisms of personal pronouns and verb endings in the King James Bible through a field research.

This study focused on one of the root causes of the King James Bible controversy which is the fact that after over 400 years of its usage, irrespective of the diverse changes English language has gone through in those years, the King James Bible remains the Bible of choice among the English-speaking world.

This study sought to further test the strength or otherwise of King-James-Onlyism, by examining the disposition of the main stakeholders, the clergy and the laity, to it. The main aim of this study is to examine the usage of pronoun and verb-ending archaisms of The King James Bible among English-speaking churches within Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State and thereby: 1. Identify the factors that engender the perennial use of The King James Bible; 2. Examine the facts and fables of The King James Bible controversy; 3. Analyse the values and virtues of the retained archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings in The King James Bible; 4. Explore the frequency of the target archaisms in the homilies/liturgies of select English-speaking churches within Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State; and 5. Extract and analyse the disposition of the clergy from the select English-speaking churches within Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State to The King James Bible.

The research investigation was defined by the following: an attempt at the morphological description of the archaic forms using the informal theoretical framework of basic linguistic theory of Dixon (2009); a probe of the justification for the inclusion of the archaic forms by the original translators of King James Bible through three schools of thought: Tyndale's translation influence, Deity majestic attachment and grammatical functionality; an attempt at a brief review of the King James Controversy literature and taking of a linguistic viewpoint; an examination of recorded homilies/liturgies of ten clergymen (five from Protestant and five from Pentecostal churches) in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State for the

usage of the target archaic forms and statistical analysis of them; and a statistical interpretation of forty randomly administered questionnaire to the clergy and laity of English-speaking churches in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State (twenty from Protestant and twenty from Pentecostal churches) to assess their standpoints on King James Bible-onlyism, their usage and grammatical understanding of the target archaic forms.

## **2. METHODS**

This study adopted descriptive survey research design of 'ex-post facto' type. The study simply carried out an objective observation and description of the variables without manipulating it. The population for this research consisted of clergymen, officials and lay members of Protestant churches (churches under Christian Council of Nigeria bloc of CAN) and Pentecostal churches (churches under Pentecostal fellowship of Nigeria bloc of CAN) within Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Out of the total population of Protestant and Pentecostal church members (both the clergy and the laity) in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria, 16 clergymen and 24 laymen/women, totaling 40 were selected using the simple random sampling technique and used as sample size from the total population of this study. 10 homily/liturgical audio recordings were as well selected for transcription for the purpose of analytical scrutiny with respect to KJV archaisms and their occurrences and frequencies in the recordings.

The main instrument for this research work was structured questionnaires. Transcriptions from audio recordings only serve as a supporting instrument. Two versions of the designed instrument (questionnaire) with relevant items were used to collect data for the study, namely Questionnaire on KJV Disposition (QKD) and Questionnaire on KJV Archaisms (QKA).

Questionnaire on KJV Disposition (QKD) was developed by the researchers. It is divided into two sections: A and B. Section A elicited demographic information from the respondents while section B consisted of statements measuring the disposition of the respondents towards KJV. The statements in section B were in Likert scale of four items ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), through Agree (A) and Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

Meanwhile, the Questionnaire on KJV Archaisms (QKA) was also developed by the researchers. It is divided into two sections: A and B. Section A elicited

demographic information from the respondents while section B consisted of statements measuring the respondent's usage and understanding of KJV archaisms. Section B had Likert scale's four-option ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), through Agree (A) and Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD) where the respondents are to indicate the level of their agreement or disagreement with the statements relating to KJV archaisms. The instruments were validated, their reliability established and adjudged suitable to generate data required in the study. For the supporting instrument of audio transcriptions, live recordings were made in some cases while pre-recorded audio recordings were obtained in other cases. 40 copies of the questionnaires were administered and all of them were completed and returned. 10 audio recordings of randomly-selected homilies/liturgy were obtained and transcribed.

The data gathered from both primary and secondary sources of data collection were analysed using the descriptive statistical method. The analysis of data was done using simple percentage and frequency counts.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### ***3.1. Archaisms in King James Bible***

Gasparian (2023) informed that the King James Version has its root from the Conference King James 1 of England organised with the intention of producing an English version of the Bible that will be agreeable to the different blocs of the Church in his time. Rather (2014) added that forty-seven translators were divided into six companies with each presided over by scholars from Cambridge University, Oxford University and the Westminster. The work was given to the public in 1611.

The King James Bible won its way, according to Suchard (2022), not through the royal parade that was given it at birth to guarantee some civil force and urge it into general use. Rather, the version became a force to be reckoned with on its own merit alone (Bowen, 2016). However, it must be noted that a list of English translations before and after the King James Bible exists. Schmid (2016) and Barmash (2017) put forward three reasons why the rout of English translations keeps on swelling. One of it is the dynamic changes in English language. Another is the discovery of new manuscripts. The last but not least of the reasons is the numerous advances in biblical scholarship.

Several attempts at classifying and categorising the different English translations using varying phenomena have been made. Two of such were the one based on the translation method and the one based on the period of the language employed. Scholars like Phillips (2014), Costin-Gabriel and Rebedea (2014), Jeffcoat (2016), and Quvondiq (2022) made great inputs into perfecting these two methods of classification.

Syntax and morphology are the grammatical concepts of concern in the study (Mohamed, 2021). Chomsky (2002) gave the definition of syntax as the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, specifically word order, as well as the study of such principles and processes. Morphology, a term coined by Schleicher in 1859, on the other hand, is about changes in the internal structure of the word which in the end becomes a function of the sentence structure (syntax). It is about the analysis of the component parts of the word called morphemes. Amore (2015) defines morpheme as 'the smallest unit, which exhibits an internal structure and meaning of its own but which cannot be further broken up'. This shows the common difference between reality and realities: an attempt to further break down the former results in producing an entirely different meaning in the plural sense.

Personal pronouns are pronouns associated with grammatical persons, first, second or third. In contemporary English, they are *I* (first person, singular, subject), *me* (first person, singular, object), *we* (first person, plural, subject), *us* (first person, plural, object), *you* (second person, singular/plural, subject/object), *he* (third person, singular, subject, masculine), *him* (third person, singular, object, masculine), *she* (third person, singular, subject, feminine), *her* (third person, singular, object, feminine), *it* (third person, singular, subject/object, neuter), *they* (third person, plural, subject, masculine/feminine/neuter) and *them* (third person, plural, object, masculine/feminine/neuter). With respect to the inflectional verb-endings of the study, Brinton (2000) distinguished between verb-ending as inflection-based verb conjugation and verb-ending as a derivational means of word formation. Amore (2018) submitted that derivation will create new word from the existing word while inflection, with inflectional morphemes like *-s*, *-ed* and *-ing*, only modifies the verb's tense. Amore (2018) also gave the inflected forms of the modern English verb as: the third person singular present form in *-s*, the past tense form also called preterite, the past participle form, and the form ending in *-ing* which serves as a present participle and gerund.

Invariably, the target King James Bible archaisms of the study concern some second person personal pronouns and inflectional verb-endings. Cook (2018) had described the King James English as Early Modern English. The English then had many different pronouns - *thou, thee, thine, ye, thyself* - which (Hedvall, 2008) opined that their disappearance in the current English language might have caused some ambiguity. Aitchison (1992) made a comparative analysis of how the second person plural *you* (English), *Ni* (Swedish) and *Vous* (French) have become the polite pronoun of the second person singular across the languages. Elwood (2003) noted that it was French that influenced English this way and that by 1575 *you* had become more common than *thou* as an addressing form for the second person. Kashima (2017) indicated also that the verb inflection form used extensively with third person singular present in the King James Bible was the alternate form *-th* which later became obsolete while *-s* survived. The second person singular has a peculiar marking both in the present and past tenses *-stor -est* (Barber, 1997).

Ellis (2011) however, observed that many of these King James archaisms came as a result of strict translation rules which bound the translators to 'verbal habits of earlier generations as they were to follow older translations with their older English – a language of 1525.' McGrath (2011) highlighted some of the examples of this language conservatism. Hedvall (2008) would rather want to have it that more informative and grammatical functionalities of these archaic grammar words over their modern forms informed the decision for their inclusion in the King James Bible. As for the third school of thought which was championed by the New International Version translators as related in their preface to (The committee on Bible translation, 1978), they accused the King James Bible translators of using the archaic pronouns as special pronouns for the persons of the Godhead which neither Hebrew, Aramaic nor Greek, the original language they translated from used. Todd (2011) shared the same view and described the phenomenon as *I-thou* language.

Related to the study is the dispositional controversy popularly dubbed the "King James Only Controversy", a world of claims and counterclaims borne out of what White (1995) described as a phenomenon involving the justification of everything about the King James Bible including even its archaism. As examples, Hu and Lu (2017) say that the use of (archaic) pronouns provide a more accurate translation than *you* does while Aliyeva (2022) sees the archaic verb endings as a necessity for what he called 'agreement factor'. White (1995) used his book *The King James Only Controversy* to counter and foil many claims of King-James-Only apologists. He diligently compared the King James Bible with modern translations and concluded that there

was nothing like grand conspiracies involving an 'Alexandrian cult' which the King-James-Onlyists believed the modern translators were working for to change, delete from, add to, or alter the Word of God.

Further, Canon (2016) recorded that the formal use of *you* and *ye* was between 1450 – 1650. Aliyeva (2022) added that the Norman invasion of 1066 resulted in *thou* being used to express intimacy, familiarity or even disrespect till it fell into disuse in the standard language in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Kortmann (2004) observed that the lack of singular/plural distinction as a result of the disappearance of *thou* and *ye* have been compensated for in many English dialects through creation of new plural pronouns or pronominals, such as *yinz*, *yous*, and *y'all* or the colloquial *you guys*.

Fennell (2001) traced the history of the verb ending *-est* being conjugated with *thou*. He submitted that the anomalous development from *-es* to modern English *-est*, which took place separately at around the same time in the closely related German and Frisian languages, is understood to be caused by an assimilation of the consonant of the pronoun, which often followed the verb. Jabbari (2023) worked on the poetry of archaism using Victorian translators of Old Norse and Persian legends. On a final note, Abbott (2013) wrote on Shakespeare Grammar to reflect the variations in verb inflections of Early Modern English in his book titled *A Shakespearean Grammar: An attempt to illustrate some of the differences between Elizabethan and modern English* for the use of schools.

Many empirical studies have been carried out in the line of the research. This included Greteman's (2013) study on *Archaic Style in English Literature 1590-1674*, Kperogi's (2014) investigation of *12 most popular Archaisms in Nigerian English* and Der Manuelian's (2022) study on *Living in the past: Studies in Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-Sixth Dynasty*. This study, therefore, is a survey of the popularity and understanding of these archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings among both the clergy and the laity in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

### ***3.2. The usage and understanding***

Based on the theoretical framework and practical and statistical evidences, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) Is sticking to The King James Bible more a tradition than the comparative advantage it has over other English translations?

- 2) Do congregation revere or prefer clergymen who quote from The King James Bible?
- 3) Is retaining the personal pronouns and verb-endings in The King James Bible a wise decision by its translators?
- 4) Do the archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings impede or enhance understanding of The King James Bible?
- 5) Have clergymen personally taken time to study the archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings in The King James Bible and the differences in their usage?
- 6) How frequent do King James Bible’s archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings appear in clergymen’s homilies/liturgies?

The data collected for this study were analysed and presented using simple percentage and frequency counts. The descriptive statistical tool of frequency count and simple percentages was used to analyse the first five of the research questions formulated for the study. These five research questions were designed to be answered through the administration of the two versions of the questionnaire. The sixth research question was designed to be answered through transcription and scrutiny of the audio recorded homilies/liturgy using simple percentage and frequency count.

Table 1: Distribution of Bible Version(s) Used

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>KJV</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>KJV + Others</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Pentecostal	10	25	5	12.5	5	12.5	20	50
Protestant	10	25	1	2.5	9	22.5	20	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, October (2021)

From Table 1, it can be seen that the larger percentage of the respondents use KJV only (20, 50%) or together with other translations (14, 35%). In fact, half of both the Pentecostal respondents – 10 (25%) – and the Protestant respondents – 10 (25%) – use KJV translation only. More Pentecostals at 5 (12.5%) respondents used other translations without KJV than the Protestants with only 1 (2.5%) respondent. On the other hand, more Protestants at 9 (22.5%) respondents used other translations with KJV than the Pentecostals with just 5 (12.5%) respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of KJV Archaisms in Homilies/Liturgies

Archaisms	General	Direct Reading	Indirect Reference	Personal Usage
#	7	5	4	2
Total	10	10	10	10
%	70	50	40	20

Source: Field Survey, October (2021)

Table 2 revealed that KJV archaisms occur 70% of the time in clergymen’s homilies/liturgies. Specifically, 50% of clergymen’s homilies/liturgies contain one or more KJV archaisms directly read from the Bible, 40% contain one or more KJV archaisms indirectly referred to and 20% contain one or more KJV archaisms in personal grammatical constructions.

**General**

Number of homilies/liturgies without KJV archaisms = 3

Number of homilies/liturgies with archaisms = 7

Percentage frequency of general archaisms in homilies/liturgies =  $(7/10) \times 100 = 70\%$

**Direct Reading**

Number of homilies/liturgies without direct reading KJV archaisms = 5

Number of homilies/liturgies with direct reading KJV archaisms = 5

Percentage frequency of direct reading archaisms in homilies/liturgies =  $(5/10) \times 100 = 50\%$

**Indirect Reference**

Number of homilies/liturgies without indirect reference KJV archaisms = 7

Number of homilies/liturgies with indirect reference KJV archaisms = 4

Percentage frequency of indirect reference archaisms in homilies/liturgies =  $(4/10) \times 100 = 40\%$

**Personal Usage**

Number of homilies/liturgies without personal usage KJV archaisms = 8

Number of homilies/liturgies with personal usage KJV archaisms = 2

Percentage frequency of personal usage archaisms in homilies/liturgies =  $(2/10) \times 100 = 20\%$

Table 3: Distribution of KJV Archaisms Usages in Homilies/ Liturgies Considered together as a Unit

	Frequency of Usage (#)	Percentage (%)
Direct Reading	61	80.2
Indirect Reference	7	9.3
Personal Usage	8	10.5
Total	76	100

Source: Field Survey, October (2021)

According to Table 3, if all the KJV archaisms used in a homily are considered together as a unit, 80.2% of such usages are directly read from KJV Bible itself, 9.3% are indirectly referenced while 10.5% of the usages are personal grammatical

constructions in majestic address to God in prayer.

This research work was a survey of the usage and understanding of archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings among both the clergy and the laity in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. In this research, six research questions were generated and considered for the purpose of the work.

Question 1 asks if sticking to KJV is more a tradition than the comparative advantage it has over other English translations. The study thus revealed that most church members saw the church sticking to KJV as more a tradition than any comparative advantage it may have to offer over other English translations. 31 (78%) respondents strongly agreed / agreed that KJV is the traditional Bible of the Church. This is reinforced by the fact that a large percentage of the respondents, (34, 85%), either use KJV only (20, 50%) or together with other translations (14, 35%). Our findings equally revealed that 4 (10%) respondents strongly agreed and another 20 (50%) respondents merely agreed that KJV has comparative advantage over other English Translations. Only 16 (40%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that KJV has comparative advantage over other English Translations. (*Compton's Encyclopedia*, 1985) has rightly observed this when he asserted that the King James Bible is still preferred by a great number of English-speaking Christians and churches. The King James Bible is 'rightly regarded as the most influential book in the history of English civilization'. These findings possibly explains why Brown (2010) in his doctoral thesis agreed that KJV is not a perfect translation but he described it as 'an excellent translation that has been blessed and greatly used of God. He used this translation to influence the English-speaking world for almost four hundred years as no other book in all of their history.'

Question 2 asks if the congregation revere or prefer clergymen who quote from KJV. Most of the respondents disagreed that congregation revered or preferred clergymen who quoted from KJV. Results of investigation revealed that 19 (48%) respondents disagreed and another 6 (15%) respondents strongly disagreed that clergymen who quote from KJV are revered. Though 31 (78%) respondents agreed that KJV is the best English translation of the Bible with another 25 (63%) respondents strongly agreeing/agreeing that KJV is infallible (always right, no mistake), but a good number of respondents (31, 78%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that KJV should be the only English Translation used. Some 32 (80%) respondents strongly agreed or simply agreed that other translations should complement the KJV. This seems to be in disagreement with (*Compton's Encyclopedia*, 1985) who believed that KJV has been deeply revered everywhere English is spoken,

for a long time, because of the lyrical and linguistic quality it is highly noted for. White (1995) could not hide his feelings when he said, 'it is amazing to listen to people honestly asserting that they think that the King James Bible is easier to read than the modern versions.'

Question 3 asks if retaining the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV a wise decision by its translators. The study submitted that most church members did not see the decision to retain the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV by the translators as a wise one. It was discovered that by the time the first edition of King James Bible was released in 1611, some parts of its language were archaic. *Thou* was already falling out of use and *(e)th* simple-present-tense verb-ending for third person singular noun or pronoun has become obsolete by 1611. Yet, the King James Bible translators retained them among others. McGrath (2011) concluded: in 1611, the translators produced a bible written in the accepted language of 1525. Some have opined that the inclusions have grammatical and/or ethical values. But the population of the study did not seem to appreciate this. It may be as a result of ignorance. Therefore, getting the population informed will be of great value.

Question 4 asks if the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings impede or enhance understanding of KJV. The study revealed that most church members saw archaic personal pronouns and verb endings as impeding their understanding of KJV. Asked if Archaisms such as *thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc hinder understanding of KJV, 29 (73%) respondents agreed that archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc) hinder understanding of KJV while only 11 (27%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc) hinder understanding of KJV. However, 30 (75%) respondents strongly agreed that they quote from/memorise KJV along with the archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc) but that they would prefer KJV without the archaisms. Only 10 (25%) respondents disagreed that they quote from/memorise KJV along with the archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc). Interestingly 35 (88%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they know the differences between *thou, thee, ye, you, thy* and *thine*.

Placing this result side by side the results of research questions two and three, the research shows that the people appreciate the aura around the archaisms but are in the dark with respect to the lexico-semantic implications of the archaisms. Knowledge is therefore key in solving this problem.

Question 5 asks if clergymen and church members have personally taken time to study the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV and the differences in

their usage. The study thus revealed that clergymen and church members have personally taken time out to study the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV and the differences in their usage. 29 (70%) respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they have personally taken time to study KJV archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc). While 11 (30%) respondents disagreed that they have personally taken time out to study KJV archaisms (*thee, thou, ye, -est, -eth*, etc). This is an interesting finding.

Question 6 asks how frequent KJV's archaic personal pronouns and verb-endings appear in clergymen's homilies/liturgies. The study discovered that KJV archaisms occur 70% of the time in clergymen's homilies/liturgies. Specifically, 50% of clergymen's homilies/liturgies contain one or more KJV archaisms directly read from the Bible, 40% contain one or more KJV archaisms indirectly referred to and 20% contain one or more KJV archaisms in personal grammatical constructions. In addition, the study found out that 80.2% of all homily-borne KJV archaisms are directly read from KJV Bible itself, 9.3% are indirectly referenced while 10.5% are personal prayer-based grammatical constructions.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The study revealed and concluded that sticking to KJV is more a tradition than the comparative advantage it has over other English translations. Furthermore, in daily practices, congregation reveres or prefers clergymen who quote from KJV. By doing so, retaining the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV is not a wise decision by its translator as well as archaic personal pronouns and verb endings impede understanding of KJV. On the other hand, clergymen and church members do personally take time out to study the archaic personal pronouns and verb endings in KJV and the differences in their usage. Last but not the least, KJV archaisms, most especially those read out directly from the KJV itself, occur very frequently (70%) in clergymen's homilies/liturgies.

Finally, based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made by the researchers: a) Clergymen are to engage in deep and thorough investigation and study into the KJV archaic personal pronouns and verb endings and the advantage they have to offer over their modern counterparts; b) Churches that insist on KJV use should take it upon themselves to educate their people on KJV archaic personal pronouns and verb endings; c) There is dearth of general Christian literature on the target KJV archaisms of the study. Literature should be produced for

the church of God within Ijebu-Ode local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria with respect to getting them educated on the lexico-semantic implications of the KJV archaisms; d) Churches should be more liberal towards admittance of other English translations in their public worship; and e) Modern variants of KJV such as NKJV and KJV2000 should be used along with KJV to bridge, in the interim, the ignorance with respect to KJV archaisms.

## REFERENCES

- Abbot, E. A. (2013). *A Shakespearian Grammar: An Attempt to Illustrate Some of the Differences Between Elizabethan and Modern English (Kindle Edition)*. Dover Publications.
- Aitchison, J. (1992). *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* Cambridge University Press.
- Aliyeva, Z. (2022). Lexical means of historical stylization: archaisms and historicisms. *Journal of Modern Educational Achievements*, 3, 150-154.
- Aliyeva, Z. R. (2022). The concept of historical styling. *Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 10(11), 768-784.
- Amore, K. P. (2018). *Introductory English Morphology*. Nigeria, Charis, and Saris Publisher.
- Amore, K.P. (2015). *Essential Aspects of English Grammar and Usage*. Nigeria, Charis, and Saris Publisher.
- Barber, C. L. (1997). *Early Modern English (2nd Ed.)*. Edinburgh University Press. 24.
- Barmash, P. (2017). Symposium: Does Archaic Biblical Hebrew Exist? Pamela Barmash. *Hebrew Studies*, 58(1), 47-47.
- Berg, T. (2020). *Authorised: The Use And Misuse of The King James Bible" – A Review. King James Bible History*. <https://kjbhhistory.com/authorized-the-use-and-misuse-of-the-king-james-bible/>
- Bowen, G. A. (2016). *Sounding Sacred: The Adoption of Biblical Archaisms in The Book of Mormon And Other 19th Century Texts*. [https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open\\_access\\_dissertations/945](https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open_access_dissertations/945)
- Brinton, L. J. (2000). *The Structure of Modern English: A linguistic Introduction*. John Benjamins.
- Canon, E. B. (2016). Buried Treasure in the Tyndale Corpus: Innovations and Archaisms. *ANGLICA-An International Journal of English Studies*, 25(2), 151-165.
- Chomsky, N. (2002). *Syntactical Structures*. Mouton & Co.,'s-Gravenhage.
- Compton's Encyclopedia* (Vol. 7). (1985). F.E. Compton Company.
- Cook, E. M. (2018). On some supposed archaisms in Mishnaic Hebrew. *Maarav*, 22(1-2), 11-20.
- Costin-Gabriel, C., & Rebedea, T. E. (2014). Archaisms and neologisms identification in texts. In 2014 RoEduNet Conference 13th Edition: *Networking in Education and*

- Research Joint Event RENAM 8th Conference (pp. 1-6). IEEE.
- Der Manuelian, P. (2022). *Living in the past: Studies in archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-sixth Dynasty*. Routledge.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (2009). *Basic Linguistic Theory* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, S. (2011, Juli 1). The King James Bible: Still The Word After 400 Years. *British Heritage Travel*.
- Fennell, B. A. (2001). *A History of English: A Sociolinguistic Approach*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Gasparyan, S. (2023). Some linguistic and stylistic properties of the King James Bible. *Folia Linguistica et Litteraria* 44(2023), 9-21.
- Gasparyan, S. (2020). The Historical Background of The King James Bible. *Armenian Folia Anglistika*, 16(2).
- Girsang, M., Nababan, D. E. O., Barus, K. G., Panjaitan, M. M., & Hutasoit, S. M. (2023). Archaic word usage in English literary works. *Media Bina Ilmiah*, 17(7), 1745-1756.
- Greteman, B. (2013). Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590-1674. *Philological Quarterly*, 92(3), 437-442.
- Harbach, R. C. (2022). *Biblical Archaisms*. <https://cprc.co.uk/pamphlets2/archaisms/>
- Hedvall, E. (2008, April 28). *Thou, Thee, Thy, Thine, Ye, You, Your, Yours: Second Person Pronouns In Two Bible translations*. <http://www.uppsats.se/uppsats/76f4242ff9/>
- Hu, J. & Lu, H. (2017). The application and E-C translation methods of common archaisms in business contract. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(9), 798-803.
- Jabbari, M. (2023). *The Poetics of Archaism: Victorian Translators of Old Norse and Persian Legends*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan).
- Jeffcoat, B. A. (2016). *English Bible History*. English Bible History. [www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/index.html](http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/index.html), 2013
- Kashima, K. (2017). The aeneid and archaism. *Harvard: Persephone: The Harvard Undergraduate Classics Journal*, 2(1), 5-18.
- Kortmann, B. A. (2004). *Handbook of Varieties of English: CD-ROM*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kperogi, F.A. (2014). 12 most popular archaisms in Nigerian English. <https://www.farooqkperogi.com/2014/03/12-most-popular-archaisms-in-nigerian.html>
- Kuiper, K. (2023). King James Version. Dalam *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/art/Jacobean-age>
- McGrath, A. E. (2011). *The King James Bible and Late Tudor Translation Theories* [ABC Religion and Ethics]. The King James Bible and Late Tudor Translation Theories.
- Mohamed, E. A. (2021). Semantic Problems of The Usage of Archaic Morphological Features: Surat Al-Humza (Traducer) As A Model. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, 4(2).

- Munro, L. (2013). *Archaic Style In Religious Writing: Immutability, Controversy, Prophecy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nordquist, R. (2020). Archaism (words and syntax). *Thoughtco*.  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/archaism-words-and-syntax-1689130>
- Phillips, H. (2014). Whither Archaism? *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 43(3), 277–282.
- Qvondiq, M. V. (2022). The Problem of Classification of Archaisms. *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development*, 7(6), 181–183. 21.
- Rather, S. (2014). *Archaism, Modernism, and the Art of Paul Manship*. University of Texas Press
- Schmid, M. T. (2016). *Translating the Bible Literally: The History and Translation Methods of the King James Version, the New American Standard Bible and the English Standard Version*. Westbow Press.
- Suchard, B. D. (2022). Historical (in) accuracy and linguistic archaism in Daniel 5. *Biblica*, 103(2), 213-226.
- The committee on Bible translation. (1978). *Preface to New International Version*. 10.
- Tursunoy, M., & Zarina, S. (2023). Figurative and expressive means of archaic and obsolete words in language. *Innovations in Technology and Science Education*, 2(6), 140-144.
- Umudova, M.T. (2022). Types of obsolete words (archaisms and historicisms). *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 05(12), 5897-5900.
- Ward, M. (2020). Review: Laurence M. Vance's *Archaic Words and The Authorised Version*.  
<https://byfaithweunderstand.com/2020/06/23/kjvg01/>
- White, J. R. (1995). *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Rust The Modern Translations? Minneapolis*. Bethany House Publishers.
- Wilcox, H. (2015). The King James Bible in its cultural moment. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700* (p. 455). OUP Oxford.

*This page is intentionally left blank*