

## **ABSTRACT**

The present thesis sets out to answer the question “What do the key terms יהוה, אלהים, and אֵל mean within the Masoretic Text of the Pentateuch in the context of translating the Christian canon into minority languages?” In order to answer this question in Part I, representative examples of past comparative philological scholarship are summarized for יהוה, אלהים, and אֵל, and the methodology behind this type of investigation is identified and evaluated. A brief summary of the relevant aspects of cognitive linguistics is provided (profiles-domains/frames, encyclopedic knowledge, centrality and information salience, context and meaning, and dynamic construal and interpretation), which then serves as the foundation for a fresh cognitive investigation into the way ‘God’ is conceptualized within the Pentateuch based upon the contextual use of יהוה, אלהים, and אֵל within the MT. The implications for translation are then identified.

Part II then turns to the issue of literary processes in relation to words for ‘God,’ and discussion is limited to the interchange between יהוה and אלהים in the Pentateuch. The theories of J. Astruc and U. Cassuto are summarized and evaluated. Using the principles of narrative linearity, cumulative reading knowledge, and characterization, a fresh account for the interchange between יהוה and אלהים is then proposed based upon the literary structure of the pentateuchal text. The implications of this interchange for translation are then identified.

What contribution does this thesis make? First, it demonstrates methodologically how traditional comparative philology has identified the meaning of יהוה, אלהים, and אֵל within the text of the Pentateuch, and then proposes a cognitive account, which seems to resonate better with contextual approaches to meaning. Second, this thesis provides a rationale for the interchange between יהוה and אלהים which is based on the literary structure of the Pentateuch itself.