

# JOURNAL OF THE ENGLISH SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (JESAN)

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## AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SYNTACTIC DEVICES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN PREACHERS' SERMONS

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### **Abstract**

*The dynamic phenomenon of language and the idea that it shapes human actions and decisions is what creates different forms of usage. This feature of Language makes it accommodate different thoughts, terminologies and usages, and allows situations to influence the choice of language use. For instance, religion is one major social factor that has over the years influenced the use of language; English in specific, in Nigeria. This work examines two sermons by Pastor Paul Enemche of Dunamics International Gospel Centre and Pastor Chris Oyakilome of Christ Embassy, with the view to x-ray their use of linguistic devices in order to outline how the use of such devices affects meaning and fulfils the goals of their messages. It also seeks to assess the ways that such linguistic devices may have formed the basic characteristics of language use by Nigerian Pentecostal Preacher. Within the framework of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which is a distinct approach in the study and description of language use in the society, the study identifies repetition, syntactic parallelism, rhetorical questions, imperative sentences and dependent clauses followed by independent ones as the distinguishing linguistic characteristics of sermon in the Pentecostal context.*

**Keywords:** religion, sermon, discourse, identity, linguistic behaviour

### **Introduction**

The ways in which language is used in the religious context have continued to draw the attention of linguists. Religion, being a crucial aspect of any society, has always played and will continue to play an influential role in the society. Nations have gone to war at the instance of religion, peace treaties have been contracted on the platform of religion – all made possible by language use in religious practices. When language use is examined, emphasis is placed on style, and style is dependent on context. Onoja (2010) notes that language style is usually brought to the fore if it is intrinsically and consciously examined in relation to the society in which language is used. Notable also is the observation that religion is at the core of communication; that is, in the sense that everything done in the practice of religion is in an effort to communicate either between mankind and the Supreme Being or among individuals

(Beyer, 1994). The field of religion therefore, provides language scholars a verse pool of data with which to study the continuous changes that occur in the use of language in relation to individuals, context and social norms, which are major variables in determining the appropriate variety of the language to use at a particular time using a specific medium Crystal (2001). For instance, a sermon, in which the clergy employ different linguistic resources to achieve their goals, such as salvation and guide to godly living, would be tailored towards the use of the language with consideration for certain socio-cultural practices within the society. This study derives from a conviction that religious discourse can better be understood and appreciated in the context of language study. Halliday (1994) illustrates the possibility of variability in language use, using three aspects of context to show that language is influenced by a specific context in which it occurs: what the communication is all about (the field of discourse), the interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors in a discursive event (the tenor of discourse) and the symbolic organisation of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel-spoken or written (the mode of discourse). Thus, it can be deduced that three major factors make communication possible: the topic, the participants and the functions of language.

The objective of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of language use by two Nigerian Pentecostals preachers; Pastor Paul Enenche and Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, in their sermons, "The mystery of the Blessing" and "Spiritual Blessing" respectively. This is in order to identify the recurrent stylistic patterns inherent in their individual use of language, which will in turn provide more clues to the general description of language use by Nigerian Pentecostal Christian in general. The objective of this study is therefore to identify the recurrent patterns in the selected Nigerian Pentecostal sermons and to explore how such patterns aid in achieving the aims of the sermons, through their impact on sustaining meaning.

## **Background**

There is a general categorization of Churches into evangelical, Pentecostal and orthodox; evangelical churches believe in personal relationship with Jesus and a commitment to the demands of the New Testament. They particularly believe in preaching the "gospel" being commanded by the Bible (Taiwo, 2006). The central focus in Pentecostal churches is the belief in Holy Spirit and the manifestations of the Spirit through speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and discernment of spirits. They also believe in the casting out of demons. According to Engelsma (2001), it is known as the Pentecostal movement, because it claims to be a "second Pentecost" at the end of history. It is also known as the charismatic movement, because it claims to recover and practice the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit that are mentioned in Acts and in I Corinthians 12-14 (Greek: *charismata*). A notable feature that marks Pentecostals from all other Christian sects is found in their use of language; which is marked by diverse peculiarities in a bid to pass their message.

Wertheimer, et al (1986), cited in Okediadi (1980), observes that in addition to using language to communicate, people use language to control behaviour, as can be seen in command, orders and requests. People can indirectly be made to act in a particular way by providing factual information or evaluations. For instance, when preachers make reference to instances in the Bible, or when they make deductions from



specific events, they are indirectly able to direct their listeners to behave in specific manner. This instance reiterates the rhetorical characteristic of religious language, which is primarily to persuade and enforce a change in behaviour.

Several studies have characterised the language use of Nigerian Pentecostals; highlighting the peculiarities. Onoja (2010) in examining the stylistic features employed by Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church, in his sermon titled "Operating in the Supernatural", identifies the use of complex sentences, register, diction, anaphora, repetition, archaisms, tone and rhetorical questions as the stylistic resources that mark the language of sermon from every day or conventional speech forms. His work was simply to inform non-Christians of peculiar ways Christians use language.

Ugot and Offiong (2013) in examining the non-verbal variety of communication, which is an inevitable device used by Nigerian Pentecostal pastors, observe that such variety of communication includes body movement or kinetics and the use of different parts of the body to aid communication (Nelson and Pearson 1990). From their observation of Pentecostal pastors, Nelson and Pearson (1990) as cited in Ugot and Offiong (2013) submit that these pastors use facial expressions, eye contact, emotional tears, regulators such as head nodding, hand gestures, wave of hand to emphasize a point, shift in posture, points to different directions, etc. Ugot and Offiong (ibid:149) equally observe that Pentecostal preachers in Calabar violate all spatial proximity as they may begin their sermon at the altar and then move down to the audience, where they are able to talk or point directly to a person, or even touch or lay their hands on a person. This work is a continuation of such studies in the description of language use by Nigerian Pentecostal preachers. This is with the view that over time, a corpus of the patterns that make up the language of Nigerian sermons could be compiled to serve as a reference material.

### **Language and Style**

The whole objective of language is to be meaningful while making communication possible. However, there are different ways of making meaning in any given language; in this case English, which may be referred to as style. Leech and Short (1981:10) gives the broadest definition of style as 'the way in which language is used'. Language in the case of this study will be referred to as a 'text'. Thus, the effect of any text is to a large extent determined by style. The linguistic inquiry into the style of a text is referred to as stylistics. This implies that there is a linguistic way in which the meaning making strategies of a language is investigated. Such investigation will involve the application of linguistic insight into a text. Crystal and Davy (1969: 9) observes that style can be described from four senses; as all the unique linguistic idiosyncrasies of an individual; which make it possible to refer to the style of a particular preacher, all of the unique linguistic idiosyncrasies shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time; which makes it possible to refer to the style of a group like 'Winners', 'Redeemers', 'Love World' and so on, as the effectiveness of a mode of expression; which makes it possible to associate certain linguistic choices to a particular group, for instance, 'it is well' for Nigerian Pentecostals. The fourth sense is to see style as solely a literary language; as a characteristic of 'good', 'effective' or 'beautiful' writing.

According to Crystal and Devy (1969:10), to examine language from the above perspectives of style will entail;



... identifying from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context; to explain, where possible, why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives; and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in the social context.

Different styles of an expression are appropriate in different situation; language style can be formal or informal, spoken or written, technical or slang, etc. For instance, the words and syntax in a Newspaper will be different from that found in a written sermon.

Leech and Shorts (1981) asserts that 'two major aspects to investigate when studying the style of a text are: diction; the choice and use of words, and syntax; the sentence structure. In other words, a stylistic inquiry will examine which words are used and how these words are strung together. A third realm of inquiry will be to examine the use of rhetorical devices in the text. The question then becomes more encompassing when it bothers on how the use of diction, syntax and rhetorical devices produce certain effects and are fashioned to evoke certain responses in the listeners and readers.

### **Language of Religion**

According to Crystal (1987), 'common styles exist within all religious discourse that marks it as the language of religion'. In other words, it may be seen that language to a large extent, makes religion what it is. Hence, it can be deduced that there are peculiarities with the way a preacher uses language. It has also been observed that the forms and functions of language use in religious practices vary according to the beliefs of the adherents (Crystal 1995), cited in Taiwo (2006). The language could vary from highly structured forms to totally unpredictable ones, from voluble expressions to silent and meditative ones, from tightly structured unison responses to spontaneous loudness. Ugot and Offiong (2013) also observe that language use and communication arises out of the doctrine characteristics of the church, which in turn shapes all aspects of language and communication use in the church including literary devices in preaching and prayers, neologisms, kinetics and the music of the church. This observation draws from Fairclough's (2001:71) submission that the message (sermon) is made to "textualize the world in a particular way that leads the reader/listener to interpret it in the manner intended by the text producer (pastor)". Alluding to the above observations, Amadi (2013:798) states that "text producer (pastors) use framing to subtly ask reader/listeners (the congregation) to understand and evaluate meaning from the encoder's standpoint". Framing, in this case; the use of stylistic devices, controls how a message is understood (Sillars and Gronbeck 2001). The use of different stylistic device is thus observed to help highlight the intertextual nature of the text. It may therefore seem that acquiring a religion may entail to some extent learning a new vocabulary and grammar. For example, the old Quaker use of "thee" in some Christian contexts, phrases such as "trusting 'on' Jesus" instead of the indigenous "trusting 'in' Jesus", presents a situation where speakers may need to master a new language form. And because what is said might, according to Campbell (2011), partially condition what can be thought, the use of such speech patterns will have subtle psychological effects on the speakers,

tending to limit what can be expressed and thought. Hence religion and language are closely connected especially at the structural level.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Systemic functional linguistics theory also known as Halliday's (1985) theory of language, is organised around two basic principles (Malmkjaer, 2002). First, it sees language as part of a social semiotic; and second, it sees language as a social system. This implies that the theory of language is part of an overall theory of social interaction. By this, language is seen, not as a set of sentences as Chomsky (1957) claims, but as a text or discourse – the exchange of meaning in interpersonal context. The creativity found in language use which results in variety differentiation selects from this exchange. Therefore, systemic functional approach is a model of meaningful choices rather than of formal rules.

Since language is seen as a social semiotic, it means that the culture of people is meaningful, and is fashioned out of a series of systems of signs. As a social system, language could be subjected to variations: variation by users and variation according to use (Halliday and Hassan, 1976; Longue, 1995; Malmkjaer, 2002). Accent and dialect as aspects of variation by the user do not in principle provoke any variation in meaning, unlike variation according to use (i.e. register variation which produces variation in meaning).

Since register is a language-behaviour at a specific time, it is determined by what the user in that communication event is doing in that context. By extension, register denotes the user's language usage in specific context of situation (Hymes, 1972; Halliday and Hassan, 1976; Gregory and Carroll, 1978).

The notion of register is the notion required to relate the functions of language to those aspects of the situation in which it is being used that are relevant aspects for us to include under the notion of speech situation or context (Malmkjaer, 2001:169).

The relevant aspects of the situation (i.e. features of context) are what Halliday and Hassan (1976) call field, tenor and mode. Spencer and Gregory (1964) as cited in Oha (1994) referred to field, tenor and mode as the specific categories of the context of situation. It also recognises three levels of language description which are form, substance and context (Halliday, 1961) and contends that the "completeness" of this relationship gives texts their meaningfulness.

### **Methodology**

The data for this study comprises two purposively select sermons, titled "The mystery of the Blessing" by Pastor Paul Enenche and "Spiritual Blessing" by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome. Data were sourced from <http://tv.camanda.org/2015/07/17/the-mystery-of-the-blessing-dr-pst-paul-enenche/> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=859a-mpc\\_0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=859a-mpc_0k), for the two sermons respectively. Although the data were retrieved in their audio forms, they were transcribed for the ease of analysis. Analysis of the data was done within the framework of Halliday's (1985) Systemic functional Linguistics (SFL), which derives from the idea that language comprises a set of systems, each of which offers the users a set of "choice of expressing meaning" (Halliday et al, 1964, Hymes, 1972, Bloor and Bloor, 1995:2). However, the analysis here focused at the syntactic and lexical levels of language use and has only



been carried out at the primary degree of delicacy. The data are referred to as text in this study.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Text 1: 'The mystery of the Blessing', by Pastor Paul Enenche**

It is easy to see that the message contains a lot of repetition, mostly in the form of direct repetition of words, phrases and sentences on the one hand, and of syntactic parallelism on the other.

### **Direct Repetition**

We have direct repetition when a word, phrase or sentence repeated verbatim in a text. One reason for this type of repetition is that words that typically belong to a register of English tend occur a number of times in a stretch of language, and because such items are reiterated in a text, they serve the purpose of emphasis. Since the text is on God's blessing, the word "blessing" occurs in its various grammatical realisations several times. For instance, it occurs in the expression;

**Table 1: Frequency of the Occurrence of "Blessing"**

Variant	Frequency
the blessing	14
a blessing	3
bless	1
blessed	5
blessing	1
blessings	1

In addition, the phrase "the mystery of the blessing" is repeated 3 times; and "the blessing of God" is repeated as "blessings of God" once. In addition to "blessing", some other words are also repeated in the text: "Dunamis", 7 times; and "favour", 5 times, occurring in the phrase, "buy favour", twice and "no more" occurs 3 times. There are also three sentences that are repeated in the text. The first one is; "the blessing of God is a mysterious force that produces very strange results in the lives of carriers".

In the second occurrence of the sentence, the subject, "the blessing of God" is replaced with the third-person pronoun, but the sentence still counts as repetition of the first one. The second sentence that is repeated is as follows: "the blessing makes a person to occupy the front place of influence, relevance and greatness in his/her generation".

There is also a clause that is repeated in the passage: "the money that entered her hand ... that entered her hand".

In the second occurrence of the clause, the initial part has been ellipted, so it is still the clause that has been repeated. This clause functions as the subject of the main the main clause in a sentence. The sentence in which it occurs is as follows:

... a sister testified in the first service how that by January ending, the money that entered her hand ... that entered her hand was far more than the whole year salary ...



There are two clauses in this sentence, as the following analysis shows:

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///... a sister testified in the first service how that by January ending// the money that entered her hand, (the money) that entered her hand was far more than the whole year salary.///

This analysis shows that the first clause ends at "ending" and that the second starts at "the" in "the money". It is important to point out here that the analysis has only been carried out at the primary degree of delicacy. As a result, no attempt has been made to identify the constituent parts of each clause making up the sentences. The third sentence that is repeated in the text is;

"I say no more!": "I say no more! I say no more!! I say no more!!! ..."

As pointed out earlier, the effect of these repetitions is emphasis. Because the words, phrases, clauses and sentences repeated are reiterated, they call attention to themselves and the listener, and the reader is forced to notice them and consider the part they play in unravelling the author's intended meaning in the text.

### Syntactic Parallelism

The other type of repetition manifested in the sermon under review here is, as pointed out earlier, syntactic parallelism. This has to do with the repetition of syntactic patterns rather than just the repetition of words (Leech, 1969; Simpson, 2004). The pattern repeated could be Subject + Verb + Complement + Adverb, or a variation of that pattern, as will be seen shortly. Syntactic parallelism can occur at the level of the phrase, clause or sentence. In "The Mystery of the Blessing", there are examples at all these levels. In the following sentence;

"Your result, your impact, [literally] fills your territory"...

The two phrases, "your result" and "your impact", are syntactically parallel, thus:

m	h
your	result
your	impact

(m stands for modifier and h for head)

When a parallel structure is set up in this way, there is an equivalence of either similarity or contrast among some of the words in the structure. In the example here, the equivalence that has been set up is between "result" and "impact" which both occur as head of the phrases in which they occur. This relationship is one of similarity, as the two words involved are closely related, in the sense that something happens because something else has happened before.

It is also to be noted that the two phrases occur as the Subject of the sentence in question:

S      A      P      C

///Your result, your impact,/ [literally]/ fills / your territory///

This shows that a parallel structure can occur in any part of a sentence. There is another example of syntactic parallelism being manifested at the subject position in the text, in the following sentence:

“God, who is the Lord of Abraham, the God of Jacob, the God of Isaac, the God of Joseph, the God of Job and David and Solomon is still the same God today”

The syntactic analysis of this sentence follows:

God, [[who is the Lord of Abraham]]

(God, [[who is) the God of Jacob]]

(God, [[who is) the God of Isaac]]

(God, [[who is) the God of Joseph]]

(God, [[who is) the God of Job]]

(God, [[who is the God of) David]]

(God, [[who is the God of) Solomon]

Here, too, an equivalence of similarity is set up among “the Lord of Abraham”, “the God of Jacob”, “the God of Isaac”, “the God of Joseph”, “the God of Job”, “(the God of) David” and “(the God of) Solomon”; for it is the same God that is being referred. In other words, who He is to Abraham is also who He is to Jacob, Isaac, Job, David and Solomon. The brackets are meant to show the ellipted words. It can be seen that the clauses starting with “who” are rank-shifted in the sense that they are serving as qualifiers to “God”, thus telling us more about Him. It can also be seen that the parallel structures occur at the subject position in the relevant sentence, thus:

S

///God, who is the God of Abraham, the God of Jacob, the God of Isaac, the God of Joseph, the God

P A C

A

of Job and David and Solomon/ is / still / the same God / today ...///

So, from “God” to “Solomon” is the Subject of the sentence; it is, as a result, a complex Subject. It shows that all the Biblical personages mentioned in the sentence have the same God. There are other examples of syntactic parallelism in the text. For instance, we have the following sentences:

“I am substantial! I carry weight! I can’t be a beggar! I can’t be a borrower!”

We can indicate the parallel structures as follows:

S	P	C
I	am	substantial
I	carry	weight
I	can’t be	a beggar
I	can’t be	a borrower

The syntactic pattern repeated here is the SPC structure of the clause. There is equivalence set up at the Predicate and Complement positions. There is a relationship of similarity set up among the verbal elements “am”, “carry” and “can’t be” in the sense



that they all express states of being. The use of the verb "carry" is particularly interesting. It generally implies physical activity, as in carrying an object. But here, it has not been used in that sense. Rather, it has been used to suggest that the speaker is important or influential. This use of the word puts it in the same class with "am" and "can't be".

There is, at the complement position, also an equivalence of similarity among "substantial", "weight", "a beggar" and "a borrower": the sentence in which they occur state that the speaker is not ordinary; rather, he is special. The sentence, "And I carry substance" occurs in the same linguistic environment with "I am substantial!"

But the two sentences do not constitute parallel structures; "I carry substance" is a direct repetition of "I am substantial!", the superficial difference between "substance" and "substantial" notwithstanding. It is the same word manifesting as two grammatical forms.

Just before the sentence that was just considered, there are two other examples of syntactic parallelism. The first one is:

"you are behind nobody in your field! behind nobody in your area of vocation".

The parallel structures can be stated as follows:

S	P	C	A
You	are behind	Nobody	in your field!
You	are behind	Nobody	in your area of vocation

The syntactic structure repeated here is the SPCA structure of the clause. The word "behind" has been used as a preposition, that is why it has been treated as part of the verbal group. The equivalence set up in the clause is at the Adjunct position; "in your field" and "in your area of vocation". The equivalent is one of similarity; the two adverbials are referring to what someone does for a living. These clauses bring to mind the last parallel structures that was discussed; "I am substantial!" and so on. All these examples reinforce the idea of being important, of not being ordinary or inferior to other people.

The second sentence referred to above is as follows:

"... let us stop apologising on behalf of God, let us stop managing in the name of God"

The two clauses in the above can be stated as:

P	S	P	A
... let	→ us	stop apologising	on God's behalf
Let	us	top managing	in the name of God

The word "let" is used as a verb here, and that is why it has been marked as anticipating the rest of the verbal group, with "us" interrupting the items of the elements at that position in the clause. An equivalent of similarity is set up at the Predicate and Adjunct positions; "apologising" and "managing" are similar in the sense that they are both admonishing the congregation to stop being complacent: they



should "stop apologising on God's behalf" and as if they are not blessed. The phrases "on God's behalf" and "in the name of God" are related: the audience should stop behaving as if God is in support of their low estate. They need to rise up and claim what rightfully accrues to them: God's blessing.

Also before this last sentence, there are two other sentences that manifest parallel patterns:

"We looked at the mystery of the blessing in the life of Abraham in the first service; looked at Isaac in the second service; looked at Jacob in the third service; looked at Joseph in the fourth service. We'll like to look at the mystery of the blessing in the life of Job in this fifth service."

S	P	C	A	A
We	looked at	the mystery of the blessing	in the life of Abraham	in the first service
(we)	looked at	(the mystery of the blessing	in the life of) Isaac	in the second service
(we)	looked at	(the mystery of the blessing	in the life of) Jacob	in the third service
(we)	looked at	(the mystery of the blessing	in the life of) Joseph	in the fourth service
(we)	'll like to look at	(the mystery of the blessing	in the life of) Job	in this fifth service

The syntactic pattern repeated here is the SPCAA structure of the clause. The words at the subject, predicate and complements positions are repeated in each clause: "we" at the subject position, "looked at" and its variant " 'll like to look at" at the predicate position and "the mystery of the blessing" at the complement position. At the first Adjunct position, "in the life of" is also repeated but the last word there is different in each of the clauses making up the parallel structure. For instance, in the first clause, we have "Abraham"; in the second, we have "Isaac"; in the third, "Jacob"; in the fourth "Joseph"; and in the fifth, "Job". Similarly, at the second Adjunct position, the phrase "in the" and the word "service" are repeated in four of the clauses. But the word "first" is not repeated in the other four clauses, for, in the second clause we have "second"; in the third, we have "third"; in the fourth, "fourth"; and in the fifth, "fifth". On the surface, the names at the first Adjunct position are different, but there is the equivalence of similarity among them in the sense that they all refer to Biblical personages who enjoyed the blessing of God. Similarly, the adverbials at the second Adjunct position refer to different times, but they are related because they refer to different parts of the same message given by the same preacher. So, it is also an equivalence that has also been set up among them.

There are yet two other examples of syntactic parallelism in the text:

S	P	C	A
Somebody saying amen	will say	It	Louder!
(Somebody saying amen)	will say	It	The loudest!!

Again, here, the items of the Subject, Predicate and Complement positions are repeated. We have rankshift and deletion at the Subject position as follows:

Somebody [[(who is) saying amen]]

But the items at the Adjunct position are slightly different from each other, in the sense that in the first clause, we have a single adverb "louder", whereas in the second clause, we have a complex adverbial group "the loudest". But the equivalence that has been set up between the two phrases is one of similarity; they are requests to the audience to speak out loud. It is for this reason that the two words are treated as adverbs, for they have the sense of speaking out more loudly. The sequence, "somebody saying amen" has been elipped in the second clause.

The following examples of syntactic parallelism are also present in the text:

$$\begin{matrix} & \rightarrow & & \leftarrow & \\ S & P & (A) & P & A \\ \dots & I / \text{am (too) blessed} & / & \text{to be} & / \text{behind} \end{matrix}$$

$$\begin{matrix} & \rightarrow & & \leftarrow & \\ S & P & (A) & P & C \\ & I / \text{am (too) blessed} & / & \text{to be} & / \text{the tail} \end{matrix}$$

I / am (too) blessed / to be / irrelevant

A cursory look at these sentences shows that it is partial parallelism that is present. This observation is clearly supported by the syntactic patterns in the second clause in each sentence:

P	A
... to be	Behind
P	C
... to be	the tail
... to be	Irrelevant

From this analysis, we can see that it is only the first clause that has the structure PA, that is, Predicate + Adjunct. The other two clauses have the structure PC: Predicate + Complement. The structure that is repeated in the initial part of the sentence in question is SP(A)P. This shows that the item at the predicate position "am" and "blessed" have been interrupted by the adverb "too". It is also noticed that the items that occurs in the first three clauses are all repeated: "I am blessed". Furthermore, the items at the predicate position in the three clauses; "to be", are also repeated. It is only at the last part of these clauses that we have different words used: "behind" (adverb), "the tail"



and "irrelevant" (both are complements), thus giving rise to the partial parallelism observed earlier.

In addition to the observation in text A, there are examples of rhetorical questions, imperative sentences and the sequence; dependent clause followed by independent clause in the sermon under consideration at this point in this paper.

### **Rhetorical Questions**

The rhetorical questions that occur in the passage are as follows:

- a. Why should it be in our generation that children of God's enemy are in the charge of various fields?
- b. \*Why are we knowing God and we are behind?

### **Imperative Sentences**

The following imperative sentences are found in the text.

- a. Lift your right hand and say, Lord Jesus, I declare, ...
- b. He that believeth shout a thousand amen!
- c. If you are among them, say a loud amen!
- d. Take your seat.
- e. Lift your right hand and say; 'I am substantial'!
- f. Somebody saying amen will say it louder.
- g. Can I hear a louder amen!
- h. That amen can be better!

Examples (a-e) are clearly commands given by the speaker to the congregation: to make a declaration (a and e), to say a loud amen (b, c, g,), to sit down (d). Examples (f and h) are particularly interesting, in the sense that they are indirect commands. In other words, they have the form of declarative sentences but the illocutionary force of a command: say a louder amen (Austin, 1962 ; Searle, 1969; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001).

### **Dependent Clause followed by Independent Clause**

This sentence pattern is also manifested in the sermon;

- a. When you carry a blessing, you are behind nobody.
- b. If you are among them, say a loud amen!
- c. If Jesus tarries, a crop of people are being raised from the church that will occupy the front roll.
- d. Like I said some time ago, you don't only speak in tongues ...
- e. When money talks, people run.
- f. ... before this year is over, it will be confirmed.
- g. ... by the time January has ended, it will look like the year has finished.
- h. If you believe it, it's on you right now!
- i. In case you don't understand what I mean, I will tell you just now.
- j. Anywhere you live, no one can claim he did not know what you did.
- k. If your vehicle is titled Dunamis, that is now your transport company, ...
- l. ... anywhere they turn, (they will see) Dunamis, ...
- m. ... (when) they are on Owerri road, (they will see) Dunamis, ...
- n. (when) they are travelling from Port Harcourt to Okrika, (they will see) Dunamis, ...



- o. ... (when) they are travelling from IkotEkpene to IkotAbasi, (they will see) Dunamis, ...
- p. ... when they are moving from IsialaNkwa to Isi UkwuAto, (they will see) Dunamis ...
- q. If your bottle water that you manufacture is called favour, everywhere you go is 'buy favour!' buy favour!!
- r. (when) you are in hold-up in Oshodi, (it is buy) Favour!...

The use of these devices helps the speaker to persuade the audience to see his point of view: that the listeners are blessed of God and that they should not continue to see themselves as ordinary or inferior to anybody.

### **Text 2: "Spiritual Blessing" by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome**

This text also manifests the use of direct repetition, syntactic parallelism, imperative sentences and sentences of the pattern: dependent clause followed by independent clause.

#### **Direct Repetition**

There are direct repetition of words and phrases in the text. For instance, the word "God" occurs on its own 15 times. It also occurs in different phrases a number of times. These phrases themselves are repeated a number of times in the text.

**Table 2: Frequency of the Occurrence of "God"**

Variant	Frequency
Glory to God	8
God our Father	2
Blessed be God	11
Blessed be the God	2
Praise God	2

The phrase "Glory to God" occurs 8 times, "God our Father" 2 times, "blessed be God" 11 times, "blessed be the God" 2 times, "Praise God" 2 times. In addition to occurring in the form of the variant "blessed" in the phrases referred to in the last sentence, the word "blessing" occurs once on its own and in the form of its variant "blessing" (3 times) and "blessed" (6 times). Furthermore, the phrase "spiritual blessing" is repeated 5 times and its variant "spiritual blessings" also 5 times. The expression "physical blessings" occurs twice in the text, it is opposed to "spiritual blessing", as shown in the following sentence;

"... so spiritual blessings are bigger than physical blessings because they're the ones that give rise to the physical blessings"

In other words, there can be no physical blessings without spiritual blessings, for it is spiritual blessings that get manifested in the physical. Also, the word "Hallelujah" is repeated three times. "Abraham occurs on its own twice, in the phrases "Abraham with God" (once), and "Abraham the Blessed" 3 times.

## Syntactic Parallelism

There are four examples of syntactic parallelism in the text;

S →	P	← A	P	C
I	do	(not)	have	this
(and) I	do	(not)	have	that

In this example it is the SPAPC structure of the clause that is repeated. The verbal group has been interrupted by the adverb "not", and "that" in the second clause is contrasted with "this" in the first, showing that it is the equivalence of contrast that has been set up in the two clauses.

S	P	C
This	should be	your testimony
This	should be	your worship

The SPC structure of the clause is repeated in this example. Again, it is at the Complement position that different words are used. But here, it is the equivalence of similarity that is set up: in this context, "testimony" and "worship" belong to the register of Christian religion and they are, as a result, used in the same linguistic environment.

→	P	←(S)	P	C
	Have	(you)	Seen	it?
	Have	(you)	seen	that?

It is the inversion of the sentence that is responsible for the P(S)VC structure of the clause that is seen here: the Subject has interrupted the verbal group as a result of the interrogation form of the sentence. It is also at the Complement position that we have two different items used. But it is the equivalence of similarity that is set up here: "that" is pointing to the referent of "it" – Galatians 3:16.

A	S	P	C
So	Grace	is	My name
	Peace from God our Father	is	mine

The clauses in this example are partially parallel, in the sense that the first clause has the structure ASPC while the structure of the second clause is SVC. It is also noticed that the items at the Subject and Complement positions are different while the same word "is" occurs at the Predicate position. Also, at the Subject position, there is a simple nominal group "grace" in the first clause, there is a complex nominal group in the second clause. Thus, while the nominal group in the first clause comprises only the head word, that in the second clause is made up of the head and a qualifier:

h	Q
peace	from God our Father



In spite of this complexity in structure, however, the equivalence set up at that position is one of similarity, it is an equivalence that is set up between 'my name' and 'mine' at the Complement position, for the speaker is saying that 'grace' and 'peace from God' are his by right as God's son.

### Imperative Sentences

The following are examples of imperative sentences in Text 2;

- a) Now watch it!
- b) But become exuberant with God!
- c) Shout hallelujah!
- d) Look at me, ...
- e) Sit down!
- f) You read it to me first.
- g) ... one, two, go!
- h) That's the way we ought to think!
- i) Can you say it with me!
- j) Can I hear you say, I love my Bible!

Example (h) has the form of a declarative sentence but the illocutionary force of a command, albeit a subtle one. The implication of the utterance is: this is the way I want you to think. In other words, think this way. The last two examples are couched in the form of interrogative sentences, but they are actually indirect commands.

### Dependent Clause Followed by Independent Clause

There is just one example of this phenomenon in the text under review here:

"... if you have the spiritual blessing then you have all the blessings."

One who has the spiritual blessings is the one entitled to all the blessings. This, essentially, is the core message of the text.

### Conclusion

From the analysis and interpretation of the selected texts, "The Mystery of the Blessing" and "Spiritual Blessing", it is seen that certain linguistic phenomena are manifested in the texts. These are: repetition, syntactic parallelism, rhetorical questions, imperative sentences and dependent clauses followed by independent ones. These can be taken as the distinguishing linguistic characteristics of sermon in the Pentecostal context.

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