A Study of Generic Structure Potential in Select Sermons of Reverend E.M.F Oshoffa

Festus Moses ONIPEDE[1] 👤 🆔 ✉ **and EDUN, Olayinka Modinat[2]** 👤 🆔

[1]*Department of English, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria*
[2]*Department of General Studies, Federal polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun, Nigeria*
✉ **Corresponding Author**: Festus Moses ONIPEDE, **E-mail**: onipedemoses@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to examine the obligatory and optional linguistic elements, the generic structure, and the pragmatic imports of the linguistic elements identified in Reverend EMF Oshoffa's sermons. Reverend Emmanuel Mobiyina Friday Oshoffa is selected out of many white garment Churches because of the large audience that listens to him as the Supreme Head of Celestial Church of Christ worldwide. In this study, we purposely studied thirty-two (32) excerpts selected from Reverend EMF Oshoffa's sermons through participants and non-participant observations. The findings revealed the GSP catalogue for Reverend EMF Oshoffa as [P]^ [S]^ (DoP)^ [Se]^ {(CfC)^ (WtF)}^ [F].The elements generated in the catalogue include: prayer P, Song S, Greeting G, Declaration of Purpose DoP, Sermon Se, Call for Confession CfC, Welcome to the Fold WtF, and Finis F. While DoP, CfC and WtF are optional, the remaining ones (P, S, G,Se and F) are obligatory. The findings revealed that most registers used in patterning CCC sermons feature 'angelic registers' whose meanings cannot be traced to any world languages, but their meanings can be inferred from the context of use. Notable registers of the sermon featured El-beraca-bered-Eli, Elmorijah, Elohimjah, and Eli-Bamah-Yabah. The paper concluded that the elements of GSP catalogued here are typical of CCC sermonic discourse. Therefore, it is suggested that future research could apply this model to other sermonic discourse of other denominations, most especially White Garment Church such as Cherubim and Seraphim, to further test its validity.

1. Introduction

A sermon is a kind of speech delivered by clergymen to win souls for Christ. It is also known as preaching. Sermon serves as the communication of truth. Preaching or sermon features two elements, which according to Al-Aadilu (2018) are truth and personality. Truth and personality determine how the given sermon can convince the listeners or congregation to change from bad to good ones. The sermon has its peculiar language which differentiates it from other genres of speech delivery. Generally speaking, sermon, as one of the characteristics of religious discourse, has a distinct language that sets it apart from other discourse. Crystal and Davy (1969) submit that the collocational idiosyncrasies which occur in religious English feature different collocations which set it different from the language used elsewhere. Religious language stands out from other discourses because of its uniqueness. This corroborates Samarin's (1975) submission that 'religious communities are set apart linguistically, and this makes it interesting to reveal the uniqueness of their use of language.

According to Akpowowo (2002, p. 16), the language of Christianity features different purposes ranging from communicating information to assessing religious truth. Here, the purpose of preaching is for the preacher to reveal the truth to the congregation, which will encourage them to change from their bad behaviours. Sermon language features peculiar language, which according to Olanrewaju (2004, p. 93), is 'a distinct form of the spoken language that is marked with some peculiar features such as the use of biblical quotations, theological terms, prophetic utterances, imperative statements, interruptions, paralinguistic codes, repetitions, metaphors, paradox and euphony.' Sermon plays a vital role in Christianity, and it occupies a

central and strategic place in Christian services as it aims to reveal basic truths to humans (the audience) with the hope that they will accept and utilise these truths.

Though there is uniformity in Christian sermons' structure, the Celestial Church of Christ (hereafter CCC) differs. Therefore, this study is concerned with examining the generic linguistic elements that characterised the peculiar use of language to describe the pragmatic imports of the obligatory and optional elements in this context of language use.

The study is premised on the following research questions:

i. What are the obligatory and optional linguistic elements in Reverend EMF Oshoffa's sermons?

ii. What is the generic structure of Reverend EMF Oshoffa's sermons?

iii. What are the pragmatic imports of the linguistic elements identified in Reverend EMF Oshoffa's sermons?

2. Review of Relevant Literature

A plethora of studies has been carried out on language use in Christian sermons. These include Alagbe (2020), Oloo (2020), Alagbe (2019), Ajayi (2019, 2017), Akhiemen and Farotimi (2018), Aremu (2017), Ajayi (2017), Ugot and Offiong (2013), Aremu (2013a, 2013b), Awonuga and Chimuanga (2016), Anyanwu et al., (2016), Esimaje (2012), Adedun and Mekiluwa (2010a, 2010b), Adeyanju (2008), Babatunde (2007), and Taiwo (2006) among others.

Alagbe (2020) examines neologism as a stylistic device in the selected sermons of Paul Enenche and the findings showed that affixation is the central process for forming new lexemes in the sermons. The paper concludes that coinages belong to the four classes of the content words: noun, verb, adverb and adjective, which make the meaning of Enenche's neologisms easily accessible, and coinages serve as an index of the preacher's style. Oloo (2020) examines strategies Pentecostal preachers use to enhance audience participation during sermons in Eldoret, Kenya. The paper uses insights from the speech act theory, and the finding shows that the speech acts performed by preachers fail to get the desired response.

Akhimien and Farotimi (2018) examine selected sermons of Pastor E. A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria, to identify and describe the discourse strategies and persuasive elements that characterise his sermons. Using insights from Schlegloff's model of conversational analysis, they reveal that Adeboye's sermons manifest discourse features such as feedback-call-response, adjacency pairs, openings and closings; repair mechanism, and selection of next speaker, complemented with non-verbal conversational features as pause, smile, laughter, and raising of the hands and head.

In the same vein, Aremu (2013a, 2013b, and 2017) examines Nigerian SMS in language usage by selected preachers in South-western Nigeria, pragmatic presuppositions in the tracts of Deeper Christian Life Ministry; as a relevant theoretical analysis of two initial discourse tags ("Tell me" and"Unspeakable Joy") in South-western Nigeria Pentecostal crusades.

In addition, Ajayi (2019) examines generic structure potential analysis of Christian street evangelism in Southwestern Nigeria. This study is similar to the present study with little difference in structure. Similarly, Ajayi (2017) examines Southwestern Nigerian Christian preachers' use of language, as identifiable in Christian funeral services and sermons. He reveals that reference to the deceased as body and not corpse, reference to the good deeds of the deceased, reference to shared religious (biblical) belief about death and resurrection, deployment of songs of relief, and offering of words of prayers discourse features in Christian funeral services and sermons. In addition, Awonuga and Chimuanga (2016) examine the syntactic devices in the selected sermons of Pastors Paul Enenche and Chris Oyakhilome. The findings revealed that Christian street evangelism features five obligatory elements: songs, greetings, sermon, prayer and Finis; and three optional elements: declaration of purpose, call for Confession, and welcome to the fold.

Furthermore, Anyanwu et al. (2016) carry out a comparative analysis of the use of the English language in Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches, using two Catholic Churches, two Anglican Churches and two Pentecostal Churches within Owerri metropolis as case studies. They submit that the leaders use English as a powerful tool to manipulate the followers to achieve certain ideological goals.

Esimaje's (2012) work centres on a lexico-semantic analysis of Christian sermons delivered in English in Nigeria. The study concludes that context plays a significant role in the semantic framing and deconstruction of the lexical items deployed in English sermons in Nigeria.

Adedun and Mekiluwa (2010a) examine cooperative principles in a Nigerian Christian sermon with the aim of establishing how meaning is conveyed and interpreted in sermonic discourse. Their finding shows that background assumptions and knowledge shared by participants in sermonic discourse are meant for meaning construction and interpretation during sermon delivery.

Similarly, Adedun and Mekiluwa (2010b) investigate the discourse features and patterns in a Nigerian Pentecostal Christian sermon, and they found out that sermon in Pentecostal Christian context features series of rhetorical and speech acts, which are carefully deployed by preachers in their sermon delivery.

Adeyanju's works (1987 and 2008) investigate a stylistic analysis of sermons on the Mount as a stylo-semantic study of New Year season's greetings of Pastor Adeboye.

Taiwo (2006) centres on response elicitation in English-medium Christian pulpit discourse.

As mentioned earlier, these studies have all examined language use in other contexts of Christian activities, with the exclusion of CCC sermons. This study, therefore, attempts a study of generic structure potential in select sermons of Reverend Emmanuel Mobiyina Friday Oshoffa, the pastor and supreme head of Celestial Church of Christ, using insights from Halliday and Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential theory.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Data for this study employs participant and non participant observation. Data comprised thirty-two (32) CCC preaching/sermons, which were in English. The pulpit sermons of Reverend E.M.F Oshoffa were observed, transcribed and presented as data in this study. Data were subjected to descriptive discourse analysis, with insights from Halliday and Hasan's (1985) generic structure potential theory (thereafter, GSP).

This study is based on Halliday and Hasan's (1985) theory of generic structure potential (GSP). GSP is a theory of genre analysis that is an integral aspect of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Thereafter SFL)(Sunday and Fagunleka, 2017). GSP is suitable for the description of a particular text which is structurally different from another. Hasan (1984, p. 53) defines GSP as 'descriptive of the total range of textual structures available within a genre' She opines that GSP helps us to recognise the presence and the distribution of obligatory and optional elements within a genre', which determine the ordering of the elements and possible iterations. The ordering of elements must determine what elements must occur, what elements can occur, where elements must occur, where elements can occur, and how often elements can occur. In order to give a complete characterisation of texture, we should also have to refer to "generic" structure, the form that a text has as a property of its genre (Halliday, 1978, p. 61). Based on Halliday's submission, Hasan sees the genre as a 'type of discourse', and continues to perform research on its structure (Hasan, 1989, p.70).

The meaning of a text can be realised based on contextual configuration (CC). CC specifies the field, tenor and mode of a discourse, which 'permits statements about the text structures.' CC helps to predict the structure of a text based on the following elements:

- Obligatory elements- elements that must occur
- Optional elements- elements that may occur
- Sequencing of elements- arrangement of elements can be compulsory and optional.

Halliday and Hasan (1985) state that it is possible to express the total range of optional and obligatory elements and their order in such a way that we exhaust the possibility of text structure for every text that can be appropriate to a particular CC. This possibility is what is known as generic structure potential (GSP). It captures the possible characteristics of texts belonging to a particular genre. It selects the preferred textual organisation for texts in a genre, a genre set out to achieve Shop interaction or Service Encounter GSP analysis as identified in the following catalogue: **[(CG). (SI)^] [(SE. (SE^SC^}^ S^{ P^PC +F)].** Here, the acronyms stand for the following: Greeting (**G**), Sale Initiation (**SI**), Sale Enquiry (**SE**), Sale Request (**SR**), Sale Compliance (**SC**), Sale (**S**), Purchase (**P**), Purchase Closure (**PC**) and Finish (**F**). The round brackets ( ) show optionality of the enclosed elements; the dot between elements indicates "more than one option" in sequence; the square brackets [ ] depict restraint on the sequence; the braces with curved arrows are an indication that the degree of iteration for elements in the square brackets is equal, and the caret sign (**^**) shows the sequence. The obligatory elements make text distinct. This supports Halliday and Hasan's (1989) submission that the obligatory elements of any interaction (text) define the genre of the interaction.

This study makes use of the notations below for our analysis:

[ ] Obligatory elements

( ) Optional elements

^ Sequence of elements

Recursive elements

4. Findings

An attempt is made in this section to analyse the generic structure potential found in the selected sermons of Reverend E.M.F Oshoffa based on the following: prayer, song, greeting, declaration of purpose, sermon, and call for confession.

4.1 Prayer (P)

Prayer is a means of communicating with God. It is the experience of God's involvement in a believer's life that constitutes human-driven dialogue and, therefore, the experiential knowledge of God in daily life results in both planned and unplanned prayers (Van der Marwe, 2018, p. 8). Prayer in CCC is either rendered 'silently' or 'loudly.' When the congregation are asked to pray on their personal request after receiving the sermon, silent prayer is offered. When a preacher needs to pray for the congregation, he does that by praying loudly in order for people to hear and reply with an amen. Prayers in CCC sermons feature a recursive element, which could be said before, during, and at the end of the sermon. The forms of prayer rendered in CCC sermons include prayer of repentance and blessings over salvation. Examples are presented in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 1

Father, your children are ready to do your will today,
Grant unto them the spirit to sin no more.
Make them the heir of your kingdom.
In Jesus' name I pray.

Excerpt 2

Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Holy Micheal
Our father and God, we pray that your spirit join our gathering so that when your word is coming out, let it not be blown away by wind.
Let your Holy Spirit reigns in our lives today and partake in the harvest celebration.

Excerpt 3

Elberacah-bered-Eli, Elohimjah, Jerimoyamah
You are all angels of blessings
Bless your children, may they never know poverty
Bless them all and grant them peace and longevity

Excerpt 4

Eli-bamah Yabah (3ce)
Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Holy Micheal
Our father and God
Pray for your children
As they gather here today to observe the harvest anniversary
Spare their lives so that they will have a full course to glorify your name
In Jesus' name I have prayed.

4.2 Song (S)

Song plays an important role in religious discourse. It features the content of a given sermon in Christian sermons. Song in Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) summarised the theme of the intending sermons, which prepares the congregants with needed information. According to Oha (2012), song rendition in religious gatherings as a medium to express inner feelings, convert and edify souls has become a futile avenue for free worship. The songs examined in this study are taken from the CCC hymn book. They are presented below:

Excerpt 5

Jehovah, give us your power,
Jehovah, give us your power,
The power to conquer witches,
The power to conquer wizards,

The power evil world cannot confront,
Jehovah, give us your power (CCC hymn 253)

Excerpt 6

You children of Celestial,
Girdle up your loin firmly,
We might join Hosts of Angels,
Chant Hallelujah on that day,
That we might all dwell in the joy of the Lord... (CCC hymn 620)

Excerpt 7

I will trade with my Lord,
I will never run debt,
I will trade with my Lord.

Excerpt 8

The world had been bent to one side,
Satan is driven with shame,
Oh sinners come on board the last ship,
So that you may not be missing... (CCC hymn 539)

Excerpt 9

Take care of your works in Celestial (2 times)
Over the hills and over the plains,
My eyes behold your works in Heaven... (CCC hymn 608).

Excerpt 10

In my Father's house in heaven
Very many mansions exist there
Jesus is in there,
Angels are in there,
Singing Holy
Hallelujah, Holy
Hallelujah Holy
Hallelujah Holy
Hallelujah Holy
Hallelujah Hallelujah (CCC hymn 699).

Excerpt 11

O hearken all ye people,
To the voice of the Lord,
The day of judgment draws near,
That ye shall be reckoned.
Cr: All the whole world have sinned,
And fallen short of His glory,
O sinner the name of Jesus shall save us all.
No other way that leads into salvation,
Be prepared all ye people to accept Jesus. (CCC hymn 283).

4.3 Greeting (G)

Greetings in CCC sermons are meant for interactions. Greeting forms an integral part of Yorùbá interpersonal cultural communication (Ajayi, 2017;Odebunmi, 2015;Fafunwa, 2008). It is in line with Apostle Paul's and other writers' preaching in the Bible. Whenever Apostle Paul preaches, he will first of all send his greeting to open the door for interactions. These forms of greeting are evident in Philippians 4:21 & 22, Mathew 28:9, Luke 24:36.

Excerpt 12

Hallelujah! (3 times)
I welcome every Celestian to this special occasion,
Without God we cannot witness today,
Let's stand up and praise Him.

Excerpt 13

Congratulations to everyone here
I greet you all in Christ's name
Who had given you the opportunity to be here today
Some people wish to be here today but they could not
Once again, congratulations!

Excerpt 14

Brethren, I welcome you all in the name of God the father,
The son and the Holy Spirit.
If you are here with me shout hallelujah!

4.4 Declaration of Purpose [DoP]

DoP concerns how the preacher let the people know why s/he is out to engage them. It allows the audience to know the reason for the sermon. DoP is an optional element in CCC sermons. Once a preacher declares his/her intention, the audience are able to prepare their minds towards the message (s). The excerpts are presented below:

Excerpt15

Hallelujah!
My mission here today is to encourage us on how to priase God
How do you praise God?
You can do this through giving.

Excerpt 16

Hallelujah!
I am here today to know our preparedness for the kingdom of God
Brethren, are you fully prepared?
I want to believe that through our interactions with God we are fully prepared.

Excerpt 17

Children of Celestial,
My message for you today is about harvest and goodness of God
The message will force you to meditate and know where you have fallen short of the glory of God.

4.5 Sermon (Se)

Sermon is an obligatory element of CCC sermon which makes sinners change from their bad ways of lives and live a life worthy of Christ. In the words of Acheoah and Hamzah (2015, p. 23), 'Christianity as a religion is a product of evangelical ministry of

Jesus and his disciples, characterised by sermons which challenge the religious authorities of their times. Some examples of sermon in our data are presented below:

Excerpt 18

What did you bring for God?
What does God need from you?
Does God eat?
If you check the book of Isaiah 1:12-16, God forbids vain oblations... What He needs from us is to put away our evil doings from His sight and cease to do evil.

Excerpt 19

It is time to bring forth our first fruits to God and praise Him. By so doing you will be blessed abundantly
We should be full of joy
Exodus 23:19 emphasises how you can fully engage in observing it.
God really loves us, we have to appreciate God.
How can you appreciate God?
The Bible says we should bring all our treasure into God's house. I want you to remember all His goodness in your life this year.
Children of Celestial do not forget the good things God has done in your life.
Today you have to offer Thanksgiving to God,
As you are present today, do not forget
You must fear God, the one you have not seen before but you watch His deeds,
Why won't you respect Him?

Excerpt 20

Do not forget God goodness in your life
An angel has been sent before you because you have kept His commandments.
God will never forget to protect you because He does not forget his covenant.

Excerpt 21

You Celestians, obey Jesus Christ
Jesus was with the Israelites in those days,
He provided them with light.
Children of Celestial, are you ready to proclaim Him wherever you go? The Israelite are headstrong, it is like you also have headstrong that we no longer keep God's commandments.
Keep God's commandments and He will surely bless you.
Know God with all your belongings
Come back to God you children of Celestial
Worship God with what you have, He will bless you (psalm 116:12-14).

Excerpt 22

Celestians, you are celebrating harvest anniversary today
What did you bring for God for what He has done for you?
Do you wish to worship God with all your belongings?
Pay your tithe, pay all the necessary dues, tempt Him; you will know that He is good. My sermon has now turned to question.
Can you trade with God?
Can you tempt the God of Oshoffa?

Excerpt 23

Take God's warning because He rebukes those He loves.
Be righteous in your dealings with God. (Mat11:20)
You children of God listening to me, repent.
Where will you be that day; in the midst of sheep or goats?
Keep the way of God, there won't be partiality.

My father and mother are there cannot save you.

Excerpt 24

Celestians, whatever you sow you shall reap. You unbelievers, work for the kingdom of God. Bring forth your treasure to God. The last deed you engaged in shall be used to judge you. (Rev 20:11, Judges 5:23)

Excerpt 25

Children of God, nobody is perfect before God
Repent and renounce evils because we shall all give account and stand before the judgment throne (2Thessalonians 1:6-10).

4.6 Call for Confession (CfC)

It is an optional element of CCC sermons. This comes up when a sinner confesses his/her sins and promises to follow Christ. CfC takes a different form in CCC as a new convert is neither asked by the preacher to signify for confession nor the new convert comes forward for prayer. The following excerpts show instances of CfC below:

Excerpt 25

I believe some people are ready to give their lives to Christ.
I don't need to call you out but you can see me or the shepherd in charge after service.

Excerpt 26

Jesus is calling today,
Oh come, oh come to Him.
As you renounce your evil deeds to follow Christ,
May God's spirit dwell in you

4.7 Welcome to Fold (WtF)

WtF is not an obligatory feature of CCC sermons. It is a stage in sermon where those who have repented promise to do the will of God. Here, the preacher congratulates the new converts and charges them not to identify themselves but do that in their next gathering. Some of the examples captured in our data are presented below:

Excerpt 27

Congratulations to those that have promised to do the will of God.
I pray that as you promise to practice 'giving' you will be number one Harvest Chairman next year.

Excerpt 28

I am sure that at the end of this sermon some people have determined to stop their cunning attitude.
I don't want to know you but I wish you fulfilled your promise in our next gathering.

4.8 Finis (F)

This is the last element of the CCC sermon. It is a compulsory part of the sermon. It serves as a discourse marker, which alerts congregation the rounding off of the sermon. It is an element of the sermon that summarises the theme of the preaching, and it could be in the form of song or prayer. Consider the excerpts below:

Excerpt 29

Brethren, as you plan to follow Jesus today, I pray that He continues to watch your steps not to go back to your sinful lives.

Excerpt 30

As these people renounces their old ways of life to do your will, grant unto them discerning spirit to do your will eternally.

Excerpt 31

I hear the call of the lamb,
I hear the call of the lamb,
Jesus commands me to come,
You will follow Jesus to the end. Shalom!

Excerpt 32

I pray that satan will not take away all the words of God that we have heard today. The ones that passed through our right ears will not pass out through our left ears. May we be heirs of paradise on the last day. So shall it be.

5. Discussion

Prayer is a means of communicating with God. It is the experience of God's involvement in a believer's life that constitutes human-driven dialogue and, therefore, the experiential knowledge of God in daily life results in both planned and unplanned prayers (Van der Marwe, 2018, p. 8). Prayer in CCC is either rendered 'silently' or 'loudly.' When the congregation are asked to pray on their personal request after receiving the sermon, silent prayer is offered. When a preacher needs to pray for the congregation, he does that by praying loudly in order for people to hear and reply with an amen. Prayers in CCC sermons feature a recursive element, which could be said before, during, and at the end of the sermon. The forms of prayer rendered in CCC sermons include prayer of repentance and blessings over salvation. The preacher or the choir either sings the songs extracted from the hymn book.

Songs used in the sermon are selected based on the theme of the sermon. The preacher or choir appropriately selects the songs to draw the attention of the target audience. The songs also make the congregation carry along and prepare them to easily digest the sermon's content. These songs serve as a 'signature code' to draw audience attention (Ajayi, 2016). CCC sermon is full of hymnal songs adopted by the preacher to support the selected scripture verses, which helps the preacher fully disseminate his/her message. The selected songs from Reverend E.M.F Oshoffa showed that he is preaching in songs, as the case in excerpts 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Songs in CCC hymn books are in the form of an imperative that commands the listeners or audience to do something (Onipede, 2016). Similarly, Taiwo (2008) submits that songs elevate the passion for worship and the totality of the common socio-cultural, economic, political and religious experiences of worshippers, which often determine the choice of the song.

In excerpts 12, 13, 14, the preacher starts his sermon by greeting. It shows that the first thing a preacher does to get his message disseminated is through greeting. This form of greeting reflects the context of the preaching. It, therefore, shows that how a preacher greets during Sunday sermons is different from when giving sermons in naming, burial, thanksgiving and harvest ceremonies. This form of greeting is similar to Yorùbá forms of greeting, which show various times of the day in their greetings. It is a taboo in Yorùbá culture to interact with people without greeting them. Importance is also attached to greeting in the Bible, for instance, whenever the disciples go out to preach the gospel of Christ, the first thing they do is to say 'peace be unto you' (shalom). If peace reigns there, they will carry out their mission, but they will shake off the dust from their legs and leave (Mathew 10:12-13). Hence, a greeting in the context of a CCC sermon has certain peculiar features. Here, people are referred to as 'brethren' and 'celestians' as expressed in excerpts 12 and 14, respectively. Excerpts 12, 13, and 14 above show the sermon's purpose, which is meant to know how the people are fully prepared for the kingdom of God through giving and repentance.
Excerpts 15 to 17 allow the preacher to let the people know why he is out to engage them. It allows the audience to know the reason for the sermon. Once he declares his intention, the audience is able to prepare their minds towards the message(s).
Excerpts 18 to 25 present the obligatory element of Reverend E.M.F Oshoffa's sermons which encourage sinners to change from their bad ways of life and live a life worthy of Christ. In the words of Acheoah and Hamzah (2015, p. 23), 'Christianity as a religion is a product of evangelical ministry of Jesus and his disciples, characterised by sermons which challenge the religious authorities of their times.'

In excerpts 25 and 26, Call for Confession (CfC) occurs when a soul is won for Christ and such a person will see the preacher in private and the preacher will direct him/her to perform a certain 'ritual.' The 'ritual' in this sense does not mean that the person engages in the killing of animals for sacrifice; it is based on sanctification. Here, a pail or bucket of water is brought before the

preacher or clergyman for prayer, and the new convert bathes with the water. After bathing, the new convert is qualified to be welcome to the fold. This aspect of CCC sermon is in line with practice in the book of Romans 10:9.

From excerpts 27 to 28, the preacher congratulates the new converts and charges them not to identify themselves but do that in their next gathering. Finis serves as a discourse marker, which alerts the congregation to the rounding off of the sermon. It summarises the theme of the preaching, and it could be in the form of song or prayer, as seen in excerpts 29 to 32.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined a generic structure potential of Celestial Church of Christ's Supreme Head, Reverend Emmanuel Mobiyina Friday Oshoffa's sermons, using insights from Halliday and Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential (GSP). It has identified the obligatory and optional linguistic elements in CCC sermonic discourse. The GSP of Reverend EMF Oshoffa has been catalogued in this study as follows: **[P]^ [S]^ (DoP)^ [Se]^ {(CfC)^ (WtF)}^ [F].**

The elements generated in the catalogue include: Prayer **P**, Song **S**, Declaration of Purpose **DoP**, Sermon **Se**, Call for Confession **CfC**, Welcome to the Fold **WtF** and Finis **F**. While DoP, CfC and WtF are optional elements, the remaining elements are obligatory.

The paper concludes that the elements of GSP catalogued here are typical of CCC sermonic discourse. Therefore, it is suggested that future research could apply this model to other sermonic discourse of other denominations, most especially White Garment Church such as Cherubim and Seraphim, to test its validity further. In addition, the findings revealed that most registers used in patterning CCC sermons feature 'angelic registers' whose meanings cannot be traced to any world languages, but their meaning can be inferred from the context of use. Notable registers of the sermon feature El-beraca-bered-Eli, Elmorijah, Elohimjah, and Eli-Bamah-Yabah. Our analysis shows that most of the registers used in CCC sermons pose some challenges to the listeners/readers because most of these words cannot be traced to any world language. Hence, the study is a new contribution to sermonic discourses. Sermons in CCC are persuasive in nature. It should be stated that this study is restricted to Celestial Church sermons. Therefore, further research can be carried out on other white garment churches, such as Cherubim and Seraphim, just to know the generic structure potential of its sermons.

References

[1] Acheoah, J. E.,& Hamzah, A. (2015). Style in Christian and Islamic sermons: A linguistic analysis. *American Research Journal of English and Literature, 1* (1), 23-31.

[2] Adeyanju, D. (2008). Season's greetings from a cleric: a stylo- semantic analysis of Pastor Adeboye's new year compliments. *English and Linguistics, 9, 85-94.*

[3] Adedun, E. A., & Mekiluwa, O. O. (2010a). Cooperative principles in a Nigerian Christian sermon. *Lagos Notes and Records, 16, 110-125.*

[4] Adedun, E. A., & Mekiluwa, O. O. (2010b). Discourse features and patterns in sermonic texts: an analysis of a Nigerian pentecostalchristian sermon. *Arc: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University, 38, 63-94.*

[5] Adeyanju, D. (1987). *A stylistic analysis of sermon on the mount*. An unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Modern European Languages, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

[6] Ajayi, T.M. (2019). Generic structure potential analysis of Christian street evangelism in Southwestern Nigeria. *Inkanyiso, Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 11(1).*

[7] Ajayi, T. M. (2017). Language use and pain-relieving strategies in Christian funeral sermons and services in Nigeria. *Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education, 1(1), 42-63.*

[8] Akhimien, P. E., & Farotimi, Y. (2018). A study of the conversational features and discourse strategies in select sermons of Pastor E. A. Adeboye. *American Journal of Linguistics, 6(1), 1-8.*

[9] *Alagbe, J. (2020). Neologisms in selected sermons of Dr. Paul Enenche. Journal of English Scholars Association of Nigeria, pp. 99-177.*

[10] Alagbe, J. (2019). Motivations for code-switching in selected sermons of George Adegboye, In Pragmatics, Discourse and Society: A Festschrift for Akin Odebunmi. Apartment of English, University of Ibadan.

[11] Alagbe, J. (2017)). The force of proverbs in George Adegbite's sermons. *English and Linguistics. 18(1), 87 – 104.*

[12] Anyanwu, E. C., Njemanze, Q. U., & Ononiwu, M. C. (2016). English usage pattern in Nigerian religious settings: Perspectives from selected worship centers in Imo State. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21(6), 1-6.*

[13] Akpowowo, E.E. (2002). A lexico-semantic study of selected sermons of Pastor E.A Adeboye. Unpublished Master's thesis. Department of English, Faculty of Arts. University of Ibadan.

[14] Aremu, M. A. (2013a). Nigerianisms in the English language usage by selected preachers in South-western Nigeria. *Ife Journal of Humanities and Social Studies, 1(2), 85-100.*

[15] Aremu, M. A. (2013b). Pragmatic presuppositions in the tracts of Deeper Christian Life Ministry. *English and Linguistics , 14, 60-82.*

[16] Aremu, M. A. (2017). A relevance theoretic analysis of "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" discourse initiating tags in Southwestern Nigerian pentecostal crusades*. The Internet Journal Language, Culture and Society,14, 1-11*. Retrieved on 31st August, 2020, from http://aaref.com.au/en/publications/journal.

[17] Awonuga, C., & Chimuanya, L. (2016). An investigation of the syntactic devices in selected Nigerian preachers' sermons. *Journal of the English Scholars Association of Nigeria. 18(1), 110-125.*

[18] Babatunde, S. T. (2007). A Speech Act Analysis of Christian Religious Speeches. In Odebunmi, A. & Babied, A. O. (Eds.) *Styles in Religious Communication in Nigeria. Menachem: LINCOM Europa.*

[19] Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (1969). *Investigating English style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[20] Esimaje, A. U. (2012). A corpus-based lexical study of sermons in Nigeria. *English Language Teaching; 5(9), 24-32.*

[21] Fafunwa, A. (2008). Eyin Ara E je ka Gbe Yoruba Laruge. *Ede Yoruba Lode Oni: IweApileko Nipa Ajo Idagbasoke Imo Yoruba, 1-10.* Lagos and Ibadan: Macmillian Nigerian Publishers Limited.

[22] Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective.* Victoria: Deakin University.

[23] Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective. (2nd Ed.).* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[24] Hasan, R. (1984). The nursery tale as a genre. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular, 13, 71-102.*

[25] Odebunmi, A. (2015).Omolúàbí. *Handbook of Pragmatics.* Germany: Benjamins Publishing Company.

[26] Oha, O. (2012). *Multilingual praise worship as Pentecostal triumph over Babel*. Retrieved November 2, 2020 from x.pensiverrors.blogspot.com

[27] Olanrewaju, A.O.(2003). *Language of religion: A discourse analysis of pastor E.A Adeboye*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan.

[28] Oloo, I.M. (2020). Strategies used by Pentecostal preachers to enhance audience participation during sermons in Eldoret Kenya. *International Journal of English Studies,, 2(2), 23-29.*

[29] Onipede, F.M. (2016). A study of structure and meaning of songs of praises and goodness in Celestial Church hymn book. Unpublished MA thesis submitted to Department of English, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.

[30] Samarin,W.J. (1976). *Language in religious practice.* Rowley, MA. Newbury House Publishers.

[31] Sunday, A. B., & Fagunleka, O. O. (2017). Generic Structure Potential Analysis of Feature Articles in Nigerian Newspapers. *UJAH, 18(1), 108-130.*

[32] Swales, J.M. (1990).Genre analysis: English in academic and research setting. Cambridge: C.U.P.

[33] Taiwo, R. (2008). Discursive practices in Nigeria Pentecostal Christian songs. *California Linguistic Notes, 33(2).*http://hss.fullerton.edu/linguistics/cln/Sp%2008%20pdf/Taiw o-   CDA.pdf

[34] Taiwo, R. (2006). Response elicitation in English-medium Christian pulpit discourse (ECPD). *Linguistik Online , 2, 1/06.* Retrieve from https://www.rsarhgat.net /publication /253967035

[35] Ugot, M. I., & Offiong, A. O. (2013). Language and communication in the Pentecostal Church of Nigeria: The Calabar axis. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3(1): 148-154.*

[36] Van der Merwe, D. G. (2018). Prayer, the encounter and participation, the experience: a pauline exhortation towards a spirituality of prayer. *Verbum et Ecclesia 39(1): 1-8.*

[37] Yule, G. (2006). *The study of language.* 3rd edition.Cambridge University Press.