

## PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF RHETORIC DEVICES IN SELECTED SERMONS OF PAUL ENENCHE

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the pragmatic import of rhetorical devices in the sermon of Paul Enenche, the Senior Pastor of the Dunamis International Gospel Centre.. Two recorded CDs of his sermons were transcribed for the purpose of identifying the rhetorical devices contained therein. The transcribed sermons were subjected to analysis using P. H. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to determine the rhetorical devices whose usage flouted any of the cooperative maxims. The pragmatic functions of the rhetorical devices derived were also analysed and discussed. The findings of the study revealed that the Nigerian Pentecostal clergy rely heavily on rhetorical devices, as linguistic resources, to make their sermons impactful, memorable and persuasive. It was also discovered that these preachers use these rhetorical devices to heighten their audience's emotion as well as ensure their participation in their sermonic discourse.*

**Keywords:** Language, Rhetoric, Pentecostalism, Pragmatics, Cooperative Principles

### **Background of the Study**

Since time immemorial, language has remained an inseparable component of the practice of religion. Besides serving as the medium through which religious beliefs and experiences are communicated, language remains one of the most potent social variables that define the adherents of a given religion as a distinct social group (Okpeh, 2016). For example, both in terms of its discourse value and lexical properties, the language of African traditional religions and that of Christianity are not the same. In the same vein, even within Christianity, differences of contextual relevance in language use abound (Okpeh, 2017). It is therefore impossible to acquire a religion and claim to be its adherent without an in-depth understanding of the language associated with such a religion. This

is because the doctrines, beliefs, practices of a religion are encapsulated in its linguistic practices.

The current study focuses on the pragmatic use of rhetorical devices in the discourse of Nigerian Pentecostal Christianity with particular emphasis on the sermons of Paul Enenche, the founder of the Dunamis International Gospel Centre, one of the fastest growing Pentecostal denominations in Nigeria. Since it was planted in Nigeria in 1970 (Okpeh, 2016), Nigerian Pentecostal Christianity itself has sustained an increasing rate of expansion. This remarkable growth of Pentecostalism in Nigerian has not been unconnected with its focus on material prosperity, “deliverances”, the Holy Spirit, the “New Birth” experiences, etc which are communicatively embodied in highly emotive and persuasive language. Steve Allen (1986:72) argues that “most protestant preachers (Pentecostal clergymen inclusive) speak in an old-fashioned, emotional style, commanding the listener's attention and drive home their messages forcefully. They tend to shout and sound hysterical.”

The foregoing demonstrates the centrality of rhetorical devices in the discourse of Nigerian Pentecostalism in which the clerics always attempt to sway their congregations' mind through the effective deployment of rhetorical elements. The problematic of the study hinges on the preponderance of these elements in the discourse in question and the need to deconstruct their pragmatic import, in order to understand how language functions within this domain. Two sermons of Paul Enenche are transcribed and subjected to analysis using Grice's theory of Cooperative Principle. The choice of Enenche is informed by his towering status among the younger generation of Nigerian Pentecostal clerics. Thus, an understanding of the pragmatic deployment of rhetorical devices in his sermons is expected to provide insight on the principles that regulate the choice of linguistic elements by Nigerian Pentecostal clerics in their effort to persuade their congregation on the subject-matter of their sermons.

### **A Review of Previous Studies**

Okpeh (2012), in his work titled *The Discourse Features of Prophecy* studies the dialogic properties of prophecy inherent in its seeming monologic nature. The study also examines prophetic utterances as verbal acts performed only by delegation, the pastor performs the act on God's behalf. It also investigates the linguistic and extra-linguistic devices employed by the prophet to ensure the participation of his congregation in the course of prophecy, within a church setting.

Acheoah and Hamzah's (2015) *Style in Christian and Islamic Sermons: A Linguistic Analysis* examines the communicative features of Christian and Islamic Sermons with a view to establish areas of convergence and divergence. It is a stylistic analysis of language use in religious discourse i.e. the study of style which is defined as the way language is used in a given context by a given for a given purpose. It reveals the different stylistic devices used to convey messages in religious discourse such as a sermon. They also established the fact that often, speakers' choices are informed by audience, message, idiosyncrasies and other discourse constraints. The study also identifies some features of Christian and Islamic Sermons which are generally delivered on a persuasive mode.

Ibiley and Okpeh (2014) in their work, *The Structure of Pentecostal Christian Pulpit Discourse*, demonstrate that in Pentecostal Christian pulpit discourse, commissive and directive are more preponderant than other acts. The study also outlines some turn taking mechanisms or strategies like incomplete statements, pauses, direct instruction from the pastor and deliberate misquotation, usually employed by the pastor or his delegate to ensure the participation of the congregation in the discourse. The study also reveals the rigid structure of the Pentecostal Christian pulpit discourse which makes it distinct from other discourse. In the same light, Okpeh (2016) examine the role of metaphor and ideology in the structure and context of Nigerian Pentecostal Christian discourse.

Enefolo (2017) in his work, *A Pragmatic Study of Rhetorical Devices in Selected Sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo*, examines the role of context in the use of language and how it shapes the speaker's choice of words. The study analyses the rhetorical devices in the sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo. The study reveals that beyond persuasion, rhetorical devices are employed by the preacher to perform some pragmatic functions namely speech acts and implicature. The study also proves that the predominant speech act in the sermons examined is representatives.

## **Pragmatics**

Early works on pragmatics is often attributed to Morris (1938) and Carnap (1958) which attempt to draw a distinction between semantics, syntactics and pragmatics as areas of semiotics. Pragmatics has been defined by Levinson (1983:24) as quoted by Udofot (2015:136) as a branch of study concerned with the "ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate". Pragmatics is concerned with the use of language in social context and the way in which people produce or comprehend meaning

through language. It studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. People engage in communicative activity whenever they use language; whether or not they observe a particular syntactic rule is not too important. People talk with the intention to communicate something to somebody; this is the foundation of all linguistic behaviour (Mey, 1993). Vershueren (1991) views pragmatics as the study of language use, or, to employ a somewhat more complicated phrasing, the study of linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their usage, properties and process. Yule (1996:1) defined it as the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader as the case may be. This definition is in line with that of Watson and Hill (1993:146) which defines pragmatics as the study of language from the perspective of the user, especially the choices, the constraints he meets with in employing the use of the language and the effects the use has on the communication situation. These definitions are concerned with what is communicated by the user of a language and how it is interpreted by the listeners.

### **Rhetoric**

Rhetoric refers to the study and art of persuasive speaking and writing. Initially, the concept of rhetoric is associated with politics but it has now been used in relation to other discourse genres. Dairo and Onakeko (2008) viewed rhetorics as an aspect of pragmatics that studies the principles of effective language use in public speaking. The best known definition of rhetorics is that of Aristotle who considers it a counterpart of both logic and politics and calls it the "faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" .. According to Richard and Schmidt (2010:449), rhetoric is the study of how effective writing achieves its goals. Rhetorics is a style of writing or speaking that is intended to influence people. It is a purposeful and strategic manipulation of symbols. In other words, rhetoric is a persuasive or effective use of language in communication. In rhetoric, a speaker strives to persuade or manipulate particular audiences in specific situation. He or she can use a few words to get maximum positive response from his audience. Each word or phrase is carefully chosen to perform a function of its own.

According to Aristotle, there are certain factors of rhetoric which he classified as proofs of persuasion that enhance the effectiveness of a speech. These factors are **Ethos** which refers to the character and credibility of a speaker and how this can influence an audience to consider him or her to be believable. Aristotle further outlines three qualities that contribute to the credibility of a character. These are perceived intelligence, virtuous character, and goodwill. In other words, Ethos thus refers to the speaker's personality which is able to either

command the attention of the audience or otherwise. **Pathos** is the second among the three factors of rhetoric outlined by Aristotle. Pathos refers to the use of emotional appeals to alter the audience's judgement through metaphor, amplification or presenting the topics in a way that evokes strong emotions in the audience. **Logos**, the third in the list, is the use of logical ideas to appeal to the audience. It is under the third and last cannon that rhetorical devices are classified. Rhetorical devices are figures of speech used by a writer or speaker to persuade his audience.

### **Context**

Yule (2000:128) as cited by Song (2010) defines context as the general environment in which a word is used. Widdowson (2000:126) views context as those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning. He further pointed out that, "Context is a schematic construct...the achievement of pragmatic meaning is a matter of matching up the linguistic elements of the code with the schematic element of the context". Language is the vehicle of ideas, thought and perspective of our world. Human beings as social beings perpetually interact with his environment. . When and where we are interacting determines what actually we mean e.g. "late" have two major interpretations which depend on the time and context of usage.

Context may refer to any aspect of an occasion in which a speech act takes place, including the social setting and the status of both the speaker and the person who is addressed. It is what surrounds any part of a discourse and that help to determine its meaning. According to Claire Kramsch (1993), our choice of words is constrained by the context in which we use the language. Our personal thoughts are shaped by those of others. M.A.K Halliday also maintains that meaning should be analysed not within the linguistic system but also taking into account the social system in which it occurs. In other words, context serves as the basis for encoding, decoding and analysing language use in a given discourse. The notion of background knowledge is central to the understanding of context (Osisanwo, 2003). Brown and Yule (1983:238) describes background knowledge as "stored information". For instance, during a sermonic discourse, the clergy usually makes reference to certain verses of the bible without any prior introduction assuming that the audience has knowledge of it. This is a crucial determinant in the interpretation of utterance or text in a particular discourse like the religious discourse where the participants are being guided by their holy books which contain their beliefs. Sometimes, speakers appear to use vague and obscure statements but it is not to those who have a shared knowledge with the speaker.

## Methodology

Data for the study were sourced from two randomly selected sermons of Paul Enenche. The titles of the sermons are *Created for a Purpose* and *The Harvest of His Presence*. The choice of the two sermons was based on their titles and their time of delivery. *Created for a Purpose* was preached on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2005, the first day of a new year. This is usually the time when people make new resolutions, recount on their failures in the past year and set goals to be achieved in the New Year. Sermons during such a time are generally targeted at getting the congregation to forget their past failures and move on to the New Year with hope and courage.

The second sermon *The Harvest of His Presence* provides the background for the preacher to convince his audience of living a sin-free life which is a core to the message of the Christian religion. The selected sermons, which are audio recorded, were repeatedly listened to and the utterances carefully transcribed and critically studied to determine the rhetorical devices used by the preacher in the sermons. There are about fifteen (12) rhetorical devices used in the sermons all of which make the sermon rhetoric, persuasive and memorable. The rhetorical devices were further classified into two: *Rhetorical Devices of Foregrounding* and *Rhetorical Devices of Emotion Arousing*.

The derived rhetorical devices were analysed using Grice's (1975) *Cooperative Principles*. According to Mey (2001), the term "cooperative principles" suggests that in every communication setting, there seems to be cooperation or what we might call agreement between the speaker and the listener. Grice argued that speakers intend to be cooperative when they talk and one way to be cooperative is for a speaker to give as much information as is expected. The way in which people try to make conversation work is to obey these principles which are outlined as maxim of quality, quantity, manner and relation.

- a. **Maxim of Quantity:** Make your contribution as informative as required and do not make your contribution more informative than required.
- b. **Maxim of Quality:** Do not say what you believe to be false and do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- c. **Maxim of Relation:** Make your contribution relevant
- d. **Maxim of Manner:** Avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) and be orderly.

The above maxims of the *Cooperative Principle* are deployed in the analysis and interpretation of the data of this study to determine the pragmatic import of the rhetorical devices contained therein. In doing this, attention was given to how

these maxims were deliberately flouted by the preacher in his use of the rhetorical devices, with the intention of making his sermons persuasive to his congregation.

## Analysis of Data and Discussion

### Analysis of Data

S/N	UTTERANCE	RHETORICAL DEVICE	MAXIM FLOUTED	PRAGMATIC FUNCTION
1	<p><b>Look at the book of Genesis chapter fifteen and in verse one, Genesis chapter fifteen in verse one.</b> After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying, fear not Abram, <b>I am thy shield and thy exceeding great rewards. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.</b></p>	Repetition	Manner	Emphasis
2	<p><b>Numbers chapter eighteen, we read verse twenty. Number eighteen, twenty.</b> It said {please open your bible} And the Lord said unto Aaron thou shall not have any inheritance in the land i.e in the land of Israel, neither shall thou have any part among them, <b>I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. I am your part. I am your inheritance among the children of Israel.</b></p>	Repetition	Manner	Emphasis
3	<p>You read through the bible, you realized that God gives people different things...He gave Solomon, what did He give Solomon? He gave Solomon wisdom. He gave Samson, what did He give Samson? Power and might</p>	Question and Answer strategy	Manner	Integrating audience's participation

	to bring down gates and giants. He gave Esther, what did He give Queen Esther? Favour, He gave Esther favour in the sight of the King, Ahaserus. He gave people various things..			
4	The question I want to ask you is what is it that makes a man to sleep in the night when he is to be executed tomorrow... and he slept until the angel has to tap him to wake up? It is called the peace of God that passes understanding.	Question and Answer Strategy	Quality	Integrating audience's participation
5	The presence of God is the secret of <b>prospect, prospect and prospect</b> means favour and opportunity	Repetition	Manner	Emphasis
6	A woman of God by the name Kathryn Kuhlman, she spent eighteen hours worshipping, praying and fellowshiping with God... What happen? A woman who carries God just passed and people couldn't stand as she is passing.	Story	Manner	Justification of the subject under discussion
7	So when you carry God and you step into a place, that place becomes fertilized with the supernatural. Do you understand what I am talking about? So the person who carries the presence of God is a <b>mobile wonder. Wonder in mobility. Is a working sign, is a working, is a sign and a wonder working.</b> Do you understand what I am talking about?	Alliteration	Manner	Drawing the audience's attention

8	<p>One day, I came out of my office saturated, infiltrated, penetrated, perpetrated (audience scream) embodied with His presence. I walked out of the office and there was a young man in the church auditorium. The other church, the smaller building, the one we pulled down before this one. He was mad. They chained his hands with about three padlocks; about three to four men surrounded him with his mother. I was passing through the church and the mother looked at me with tears in her eyes, she said this is my only son, this is my only son and he is mad now, he is mad now. I was coming from my office saturated, no one heard me, I looked at the people I say loose him. I am sure if they are bold enough, they will have told me come and loose him yourself. Loose him. They loosed the first padlock, loosed the second padlock, loosed the third padlock, unwire the chain. The young man adjusted his short like this. His hands was bleeding from the chain, I say sorry, he thanks me. I say go on your knees. He says yes sir. Say after me, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, I surrender my life to you, I surrender my life to you, I refuse to be mad, I refuse to be mad. Thank you Lord, thank you Lord. I am free; I am free, in Jesus name. Stand up. Woman, carry your son (screaming). They</p>	Testimony	Manner	Validating the subject under discussion
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	said is that all? I said that is all.			
9	Lift up your right hand say, I receive your presence Lord (audience responded), in my life (audience responded), I need your presence (audience responded), I receive your presence (audience responded), in my life (audience responded), in Jesus name.	Repetitive Dialogue	Manner/Quantity	Integrating the audience's participation and drawing their attention into the sermon.
10	<b>Are you hearing what I am saying here today?</b> A friend that took the person to the abortionist is a sinner. The man who impregnated the girl and organise the abortion is a sinner. The person that manufactures it is in sin (audience scream). <b>Do you understand what I am talking about?</b> The girl said she did not commit sin but she is dressing about like a Jezebel, naked dressing, seductive appearance. Somebody looks at her and feels like following her but he lacks the opportunity. So, he gets another and commits sin with that person on her account. <b>Did you see the connection?</b> He is committing sin with another person on the account of another person. In case you say I don't do but you put stumbling block for people. That shall not be your portion (audience responded amen). He told the children of Israel, he said you didn't enter the	Rhetorical Question	Manner	Drawing the audience's attention

	kingdom and you block the road for others coming.			
11	Can somebody say amen (audience responded amen). Lift up your right hand, say separation (audience responded), separation is the condition for my possession of the presence of the Almighty (audience responded). Can somebody say amen (audience responded).	Repetitive Dialogue	Manner	Committing the audience's attention to the sermon
12	...It doesn't matter how long that situation of bareness or hopelessness or sickness has lasted. That devil is a liar. You are coming out of it. You will be celebrated (audience responded amen) ...	Motivational Talk	Quality	Integrating the audience's participation

### Discussion of Findings

The above analysis reveals twelve (12) rhetorical devices in the transcribed sermon, in the usage of which the cleric variously flouts the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality and maxim of manner, and relation. The analysis further reveals that of all the maxims flouted, the maxim of manner has the highest frequency as the cleric was not brief in some of his citations, especially in the use of such rhetorical devices as stories, repetition, testimony and allusion. To systematise the discussion of findings emerging from the analysis, the analysed rhetorical devices have been classified into two broad categories on the basis of their discourse functions. One of the categories are *Rhetorical Devices of Foregrounding*, which comprise the devices that help to make sermons memorable and persuasive to the audience, with the goal of making them to take a particular course of action, as desired by the cleric. The second category are the *Rhetorical Devices of Arousing Emotion*, which consist of devices that help to persuade the congregation through motivation.

### Rhetorical Devices of Foregrounding

These devices are carefully chosen by the cleric to leave a positive and lasting impression on the minds of members of the congregation. In the analysed data, the rhetorical devices under this category are repetition, metaphor, repetitive dialogue, question and answer strategy and antithesis.

These devices are very commonly deployed by most modern Pentecostal clerics in their sermons, especially of the Nigerian extraction. In the analysed sermon, the speaker's use of these devices is not only deliberate but also creative, and this is for the purpose of making his sermons persuasive, impactful and memorable. These devices as used by the cleric in the analysed text are discussed below:

### **Repetition**

Although repetitions are generally used for the purpose of emphasis, Pentecostal clerics use it for this purpose and also for the purpose of making their sermons last in the memories of their congregation. In the text under consideration, the cleric preponderantly deploys this along with other rhetorical devices such as allusion and anaphora. Below is an excerpt from the text to illustrate this rhetorical device:

*Look at the book of Genesis chapter fifteen and in verse one, Genesis chapter fifteen in verse one. After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying, fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great rewards. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward (No. 1)*

*The presence of God is the secret of prospect, prospect and prospect means favour and opportunity( No. 5)*

*Numbers chapter eighteen, we read verse twenty. Number eighteen, twenty. It said {please open your bible} And the Lord said unto Aaron thou shall not have any inheritance in the land i.e in the land of Israel, neither shall thou have any part among them, I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. I am your part. I am your inheritance among the children of Israel (No. 2).*

In the use of the above repetition, the preacher flouts the maxim of quantity., the propositional requirements of which is that a speaker should be as informative as he can possibly be, avoiding unnecessary **prolixity**. However, in the above excerpt, there appears to be a deliberate attempt by the preacher to be repetitive in order to not only emphasise the foregrounded words, but to make the words memorable in the perception of his congregation. This is especially so as the words are Bible references. The taken for granted understanding is that both the Preacher and the congregation believe in the centrality of the Bible in the theology of the Christian religion, hence the need for the preacher to constantly repeat the reference in the sermon.

### **(Repetitive) Dialogue**

This is one of the most effectively deployed rhetorical devices in the text. In using it, the preacher invites the congregation to repeatedly say a particular utterance or statement after him. Below is an excerpt from the text illustrating the use of this rhetorical device:

*Lift up your right hand say, I receive your presence Lord (audience responded), in my life (audience responded), I need your presence (audience responded), I receive your presence (audience responded), in my life (audience responded), in Jesus name (utterance No. 9)*

*Can somebody say amen (audience responded amen). Lift up your right hand, say separation (audience responded), separation is the condition for my possession of the presence of the Almighty (audience responded). Can somebody say amen (audience responded) No. 11 as shown in the table of analysis.*

In using this rhetorical device, the preacher again flouts the maxim of quantity again, which requires conversational participants to avoid unnecessary details, and be as informative as possible. Its usage in this context however has the pragmatic function of motivating. The use of the rhetoric of repetitive dialogue is hinged on the psychology of positive confession which is a common among especial Pentecostal preachers. The understanding is that whatever is confessed with the mouth becomes automatically the possession of the believer. Thus, in a typical Nigerian Pentecostal setting, the congregation are constantly being asked to verbalize their reception of desired blessings and rejection of unpleasant experiences in the conviction that whatever they confess will automatically become their experience.

### **Question and Answer Strategy**

As its name suggests, in this rhetorical device the cleric asks a question to which he also supplies an answer in the same stretch of utterance. The use of this device is a deliberate strategy of explicating the subject matter of the sermon. Depending on how it is used, this device has the potential to arouse the emotion of the congregation and get their attention focused on the sermon. Some excerpts from the text that demonstrate the relevance of this rhetorical device are:

*A woman of God by the name Kathryn Kuhlman, she spent eighteen hours worshipping... What happened? A woman who carries God just passed and people couldn't stand as she is passing. (No. 6)*

*You read through the bible...what did He give Solomon? He gave Solomon wisdom. He gave Samson, what did He give Samson? Power and might to bring down gates and giants. He gave Esther, what did He give Queen Esther? Favour, He gave Esther favour in the sight of the King, Ahaserus. He gave people various things. (No. 3)*

*The question I want to ask you is what is it that makes a man to sleep in the night when he is to be executed tomorrow... and he slept until the angel has to tap him to wake up? It is called the peace of God that passes understanding. (No. 4)*

The use of this device flouts the maxim of manner largely and that of quantity partly. In the flouting the manner maxim, the preacher avoids brevity and orderliness in the utterances in that he assumes the posture of the narrator, the questioner and the “ answerer”, all at the same the time. In the usual order of such an exchange, the questioner should not be the one providing the answer to the question he himself has asked. In this current context, however, the questions and the answers are both lumped into one stretch of utterance with the rhetorical intention of arresting the attention of the congregation and consequently enhancing the subjecting of the sermon.

### **Rhetorical Devices of Arousing Emotion**

The rhetorical devices of arousing emotion used by the cleric in the transcribed sermons include possibility talk, analogy, stories, alliteration, testimonies, and rhetorical question. These are devices that are specially chosen to stir members of the congregation to action by means of emotional appeal. There are a number of decisions members of the congregation need to take in the course of a sermon, but they may remain unwilling or indecisive until their emotions are stirred up.

### **Motivational Talk**

This is one of the most used rhetorical devices by Nigerian Pentecostal clergy. In the analysed sermon, the device has been used by the cleric to motivate and inspire hope in the members of the congregation who because of their problems might be suffering from depression and despondency. See an excerpt from the text below:

*...It doesn't matter how long that situation of bareness or hopelessness or sickness has lasted. That devil is a liar. You are coming out of it. You will be celebrated (audience responded amen)... (utterance No. 12)*

This device flouts the maxim of quality which states that one should not say that for which he lacks adequate evidence or that which he believe to be false. Empirically, the cleric lacks evidence to make such a statement. However, within the context of Pentecostal Christianity where the above statement are interpreted as “prophetic declarations”, the congregation are motivated by such an utterance to believe that however long their problems have lingered, there is hope of solution as long as they do not lose hope. This rhetorical In the Christian discourse, it is believed that a preacher cannot lie since he is a representative of God. In the transcribed sermons, the preacher did not deliberately flout this maxim. However, in the use of the rhetorical devices like possibility talk, the speaker has stated that for which he lacks adequate evidence. Although the preacher said this based on the assurance of God’s power, how sure is he since there are factors like God-factor and the man’s will factor that may actually not make it so?

### Testimony

With regards to the use of this rhetorical devices Enefola (2017) notes that, “testimonies can evoke emotions of laughter, anxiety, sobriety, encouragement, inspiration and so on, but the rhetorician chooses the most appropriate to achieve his aim of persuasion”. Although this rhetorical device is essentially informative, the pragmatic impact is very significant both at the point of the utterance and after the utterance. See the excerpt below:

*One day, I came out of my office saturated, infiltrated, penetrated, perpetrated (audience scream) embodied with His presence. I walked out of the office and there was a young man in the church auditorium. He was mad. They chained his hands with about three padlocks; about three to four men surrounded him with his mother. I was passing through the church and the mother looked at me with tears in her eyes, she said this is my only son, this is my only son and he is mad now, he is mad now. I was coming from my office saturated, no one heard me, I looked at the people I say loose him. I am sure if they are bold enough, they will have told me come and loose him yourself. Loose him. They loosed the first padlock, loosed the second padlock, loosed the third padlock, unwire the chain. The young man adjusted his short like this. His hands was bleeding from the chain, I say sorry, he thanked me. I say go on your knees. He says yes sir. Say after me, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, I surrender my life to you, I surrender my life to you, I refuse to be mad, I refuse to be mad. Thank you, Lord, thank you Lord. I am free; I am free, in Jesus name. Stand up. Woman, carry your son (congregation screaming). They said is that all? I said that is all.*

This is a commonly used rhetorical device among Nigerian Pentecostal clerics, and it can be used either at the beginning of the sermon, the middle, or the end.

in the utterance under analysis, it was used in the middle of the sermon. The maxim flouted in the utterance is the quantity maxim whose propositional requirement has it that the speaker should be only as informative as it is required. However, the cleric flouts this maxim by giving this lengthy testimony in order to stir up faith in his congregation and make the subject-matter of his sermon persuasive to them. The perlocutionary effect of the rhetorical device on the congregation on the congregation is evident in their screaming at the end of the testimony.

### **Alliteration/Assonance**

Alliteration is the repetitive occurrence of consonant sounds at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other while assonance is the re-occurrence of the vowel sounds. This is common among contemporary Pentecostal preachers as a means of achieving persuasion. It is an emotion arousing rhetorical device also deployed by the cleric in the analysed sermon. See an excerpt from the text below:

*Do you understand what I am talking about? So the person who carries the presence of God is a **mobile wonder. Wonder in mobility. Is a working sign, is a working, is a sign and a wonder working.** Do you understand what I am talking about? (No. 7)*

The device flouts the maxim of manner which requires conversationalists to avoid ambiguity, or obscurity. In the present utterance, the use of the words in alliteration/assonance flouts the manner maxim in that the words in themselves are ambiguous, unless when contextualized within the broader text of the sermon. The potency of this rhetorical device hinges on its poetic aesthetics through the means of which the subject-matter of the sermon is not only made persuasive to the congregation, but also memorable to them. This is the reason for its preponderant use by most Nigerian Pentecostal clerics.

### **Conclusion**

This study has examined the pragmatic effect of rhetorical devices in the sermonic discourse of Paul Enenche, one of the leading Nigerian Pentecostal clerics. The findings of the study reveal that the Nigerian Pentecostal clergy rely heavily on rhetorical devices, as linguistic resources, to make their sermons impactful, memorable and persuasive. It was also discovered that these preachers use these rhetorical devices to heighten their audience's emotion as well as ensure their participation in their sermonic discourse.

Rhetorical devices are not only preponderant in the analysed text, but deployed by Nigerian Pentecostal clerics, but this study has shown the relationship between language, rhetoric and Christian religious discourse, especially the sermon. Preachers, as public speakers, deployed language and the linguistic resources available to them to make their sermons rhetoric. It also shows how preachers deliberately employ rhetorical devices to arouse their audiences' emotion, consciousness (attention) and also ensure their participation in the sermonic discourse. These strategies help to make their sermons persuasive and memorable.

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