

Religious Discourse: A Study of *How to Maintain a Spirit-Filled Life* by Rev. Dr. David Ogbueli

Juliet Akpa

Department of English
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: Julietakpa5851@gmail.com
Phone: +2348144806765

Abstract

The study examines religious discourse through a critical analysis of a sermon titled "How to Maintain a Spirit-Filled Life," delivered by Rev. Dr. David Ogbueli. The study adopts the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It explores how linguistic choices in the sermon construct spiritual authority, reinforce doctrinal beliefs, and shape the identity of the audience. Data were collected from YouTube. The analysis focuses on the use of rhetorical strategies, biblical references, imperative structures, and evaluative language in the sermon. It investigates how the preacher engages the audience through inclusive pronouns and persuasive appeals, delegitimizes secular solutions, while simultaneously positioning himself as a spiritual authority. The study also highlights how the sermon reflects broader socio-religious contexts, particularly within contemporary Nigerian Christianity. Furthermore, the research explores how religious discourse functions as a medium for ideological transmission, emphasizing themes such as spiritual discipline, personal transformation, and divine relationship. The findings reveal that the sermon employs strategic linguistic features to legitimize its message, delegitimize secular solutions, and sustain religious ideology. Ultimately, this study contributes to the understanding of how religious discourse operates not only as a form of communication but also as a powerful mechanism for shaping belief, identity, and society at large.

Keywords: Religious discourse, spirit-filled, life, Ogbueli

Introduction

Religious discourse refers to discourse about God, prayer, faith, morality and spirituality. It can be spoken or written. It mostly takes place in places of worship like churches, mosques, shrines, etc but also takes place outside of places of worship.

According to Huber, Religious discourse consists of that which Christians say both institutionally and de facto about God. Greg Bahnsen defines religious discourse as a discourse that involves talk about God,

immortality, miracles, salvation, prayer, values, and ethics.

William Samarin (1976). Defines religious discourse as language used in religious contexts to express beliefs, perform rituals, and communicate spiritual meanings within a community. Samarin sees religious discourse as language used to express religious thoughts, beliefs, and perform religious rites like baptism, holy communion, funeral, and wedding. This definition tells us in a nutshell what religious discourse does:

communication, expression, and ritual performance. One main weakness of this definition is its inability to account for how religious discourse may shape power relations, influence human behaviour or construct ideology.

Dell Hymes (1974). Opines that religious discourse is a socially situated form of language through which individuals construct and negotiate religious identity and group membership. Hymes emphasizes that religious discourse is socially situated and tied to identity construction. This is very much reflected in Nigeria, a country with diverse ethnicities, languages and religions. A Muslim is different from a Christian both in beliefs and in identity and these differences reflect in our national polity. A Muslim from northern Nigeria, say, Kano, will consider a Muslim from Southern Nigeria like Ekiti to be his brother more than he considers a Christian that is from Kano State, likewise a Christian. So, religious identity is one of the strongest identities to have especially in a deeply religious country like Nigeria.

Religious discourse is a culturally embedded communicative practice through which sacred meanings and traditions are transmitted and maintained. Michael Lambek (2002). Lambek frames religious discourse as a cultural practice that transmits sacred meanings. This perspective is essential because it situates language within tradition, ritual and cultural continuity. It also helps us understand how religious discourse preserves and transmits beliefs across generations. This definition may however be insufficient considering its inability to address conflict, power and change. For example, the rise of Pentecostal denominations and the ideological wars driving some of them.

Religious discourse consists of performative utterances that do not merely describe reality but actively bring about spiritual or social effects. J. L. Austin (1962). Austin's theory introduces the idea that religious utterances do things. They are not mere utterances that are uttered without any effect. Rather, they are utterances that perform actions and bring about social or spiritual effects. For example, when a priest pronounces two people husband and wife, it changes their relationship instantly. From that moment, they become husband and wife. When a priest baptizes a person, that person is baptized and recognized as such. Other examples include but are not limited to the following:

Prayers: eg. You are healed in Jesus name. Amen.

Blessings: I bless you in the name of the father, son and of the holy spirit. Amen.

Prophetic declarations: Every chain holding you, I decree them broken now in Jesus name. Amen. This definition is important because it uniquely highlights the transformative power of language, the power of language to do and to bring about a new reality.

Religious discourse involves illocutionary acts such as asserting, commanding, blessing, and declaring, which function to influence belief and action. John Searle (1969).

Building on the earlier work of J. L. Austin, Searle develops Speech Act Theory further by providing a clearer and more detailed classification of the different kinds of actions that language can perform. He groups speech acts into categories such as assertives (statements of fact or belief), directives (commands or requests), commissives

(promises or commitments), expressives (emotions or attitudes), and declarations (utterances that bring about a change in reality). This framework is particularly useful in the study of religious discourse because it helps to explain how religious speakers use language to achieve specific purposes. For example, in a religious setting:

A pastor may use directives to instruct the congregation, such as *“Pray now”* or *“Stand up and worship.”*

Assertives are used to express belief or conviction, such as *“God is faithful.”*

Commissives may appear in promises like *“God will bless you.”*

Declarations are especially powerful in religious contexts, as in *“It is done”* or *“You are healed,”* where the speaker presents the utterance as bringing about a spiritual reality.

The major strength of Searle’s approach is that it provides a systematic and organized way of analyzing meaning and intention in language use. It allows researchers to clearly identify what kind of action a speaker is performing and how that action is intended to affect the audience.

However, a key limitation of this approach is that it focuses mainly on the structure and classification of utterances, rather than the broader social and cultural context in which they occur. Like Austin’s model, it does not fully account for how factors such as power, culture, belief systems, and ideology influence the interpretation and effectiveness of religious speech. As a result, while Searle’s framework is very useful for identifying types of speech acts, it is often complemented by other approaches such as Critical Discourse Analysis, to provide a

more complete understanding of religious discourse.

Religious discourse is a structured system of texts and talk characterized by specific linguistic features used to convey doctrinal and moral messages. H. G. Widdowson (2007). Widdowson emphasizes the structural and linguistic features of discourse, such as cohesion, coherence, and textual organization.

Religious discourse encodes shared belief systems and shapes how individuals perceive reality, morality, and the supernatural. Teun A. van Dijk (1998). This contribution focuses on how discourse shapes mental models and shared beliefs. In religious contexts, this explains how language influences moral reasoning, perception of reality and belief in the supernatural. This perspective is strong in linking language, cognition, and ideology. However, it can be abstract and may require empirical data to demonstrate how these mental processes operate in real-life settings.

Religious discourse is an integral part of the existence of any society, an important factor of human development, as well as one of the forms of preserving the experiences of the ancestors.

According to the United Nations, there are 8.2 billion people in the world. According to Wikipedia, more than 7.5 billion people are religious. With a population of 2.365 billion, Christianity leads the way as the most populated religion in the world (30.74%), followed by Islam which has a population of 1.907 billion (24.9%).

According to Worldometer, based on the latest United Nations' data, Nigeria has a population of two hundred and thirty three million, four hundred and ninety five thousand, eight hundred and twele (233,495,812). In Nigeria, the dominant religions are Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion. Nigerians are very religious people so whether physically in the church, at home, school, market, or through media channels like radio, television, Facebook, etc, religious messages are passed to Nigerians on daily basis.

Religious discourse is analyzing the words, phrases, clauses, and structures of these messages to understand the underlying beliefs, values and attitudes being conveyed.

Proponents of Religious Discourse

The concept of religious discourse is a broad framework that has been shaped by various scholars such as theology, linguistics, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology, to mention only the most important. Among them are:

1. John Searle: Speech Act Theory

Searle is a central figure in the study of language and discourse. Through the development of speech act theory, he secures his place as a prominent contributor in the fields of language and discourse analysis. His work is especially useful in analyzing religious discourse. Building on J. L. Austin, Searle argued that speaking is a form of acting. This is to say that when people speak, they are not just conveying information; they are performing actions. This is very important in a religious context where words are seen as powerful forces that can perform actions.

Searle refined speech acts into five major categories:

1. Assertives: These include statements that express belief or truth claims. Eg. God is faithful. There is nothing impossible for God to do. Assertives are usually used during sermons to affirm doctrine and belief systems.

2. Directives: A directive is an illocutionary speech act aimed at getting the hearer to perform a particular action. The goal is to influence the listener or audience to do something the speaker wants. Orders, commands, invitations, prayers and requests are some of the examples of directives. During sermon, the pastor may use directives to get the congregation to do a particular thing or to exercise their faith. Examples: Repent now, pray now, wave your hands unto the lord, begin to praise Jesus.

3. Commissives

A commissive is a speech act that commits the speaker to a future course of action. Commissives express a speaker's intention and ties a speaker to a future action. Examples of commissives include promises, vows and threats.

Examples: By this time next year, you will carry your own baby in Jesus name.

Give us only three months of your time and I promise you that after that

4. Expressives

An expressive is a type of illocutionary speech act designed to reveal the speaker's emotions regarding a particular situation. They express how the speaker feels towards or about something. Examples of expressives are welcoming, congratulating, praising, apologizing, thanking to mention only but a few. The pastor may welcome new members, congratulate new couples or new souls that he just led to God, praise or chastise some members.

Examples:

You are welcome to Dominion City Onitsha Mall.

Thank you for fellowshiping with us.

Jesus loves you.

Declaratives

Declaratives are speech acts that change the world or reality through the very act of uttering them. By performing a declaration, the speaker causes the proposition (the content of what is said) to correspond to the world. For a declarative to be successful, the speaker must have the needed authority and the utterance must concur within a specific context or institution.

Examples of declaratives include: You are fired. I hereby resign.

I now pronounce you husband and wife.

John Searle contributed immensely in religious discourse by providing a structured way of analyzing how religious speeches work. Now, instead of seeing sermons as random speech, we can identify what kind of speech it was, the speaker's intention and how the audience is expected to respond. He also showed that for certain speech acts to work, the speaker must have recognized authority.

2. Teun Van dijk:

Teun A. Van Dijk is a major figure in discourse studies. His work-The Socio-Cognitive Theory offers a powerful tool for examining religious discourse. His contribution lies in how he explains the relationship between language, cognition and society which is highly relevant to understanding how religious messages function.

Van Dijk's theory of discourse is built on three key dimensions:

Discourse (text and talk): the structure and content of language.

Cognition (mental models, beliefs and ideologies)-how people process and internalize discourse.

Society (power, dominance, inequality)- the broader social context shaping discourse.

The socio-cognitive approach is crucial for analyzing religious discourse because religion operates strongly through collective experience, shared beliefs and ideologies.

Van Dijk sees discourse as a vehicle for expressing and reproducing ideologies.

Religious language communicates belief systems like sin, holiness, salvation and authority. Sermons, prayers and scriptures reinforce these beliefs and also group identity (We believers vs others: usually unbelievers). Religious discourse also constructs moral hierarchies (good vs evil, holy vs sinful)

Van Dijk also examines how religious leaders like priests, pastors and imams use discourse as a tool to take and maintain power, control discourse production and influence followers and eventually legitimize and consolidate authority.

Van Dijk argues that even though elites control public discourse in circular world, in religion, it is the clergy that function as discourse elites.

He introduces the concept of mental models: internal representations of reality. This is relevant to religion because:

- (a) Religious teachings shape how believers interpret the world

(b) Repeated discourse (sermons, rituals) forms stable cognitive frameworks

It May overemphasize power and ideology, ignoring spirituality or faith experience

(c)These frameworks influence behavior (faith, obedience, moral choices)

It is less focused on sacred or theological meaning

For instance, constant exposure to messages about divine punishment can shape a believer's fear-based moral reasoning. Van Dijk also contributes to discourse structure in religious texts and speech by analyzing micro and macro structures of discourse as follows:

Micro level (Microstructure): This is the lowest level of analysis and it includes word choice, syntax, rhetorical devices, sentence structure, etc.

Macro level (Macrostructure):

This is the global meaning of the discourse. It is the overall meaning of the text. For example, the macrostructure of a sermon may be that God rewards sacrifices.

Superstructure: This refers to the organizational pattern of the discourse. It looks at how the discourse is structured and why. Some of the strengths of the socio-cognitive theory include:

It Integrates language, thought, and society

It Useful for analyzing sermons, testimonies, and religious media

It Reveals power dynamics and ideological influence

The theory has the following limitations:

3. Norman Fairclough:

Norman Fairclough's contribution to religious discourse is not through direct theological study, but rather by providing the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which enables researchers to examine how language, power, and ideology operate within religious texts, practices, and institutions. By applying his three-dimensional model: text, discursive practice, and social practice, scholars can unmask how religious discourse shapes identity, justifies power structures, and influences social, political, and cultural life.

Fairclough's key contributions to the analysis of religious discourse include:

a. Analyzing Religious Ideology and Power
Fairclough posits that discourse is a social practice that constructs social identities and knowledge systems. This means that religious discourse is not just reflective, but constitutive of social reality. Critical Discourse Analysis helps us reveal how religious institutions maintain hegemony by presenting specific interpretations as divine truth.

It enables us examine how concepts like "faith," "the other," "sin," or "unbelief" are constructed to create social boundaries and moral authority.

b. The Three-Dimensional Model in Religious Contexts

Researchers use Fairclough's (1989/1995) three-stage model to analyze religious data. Through this model, researchers analyze data following three stages:

Description (Textual Analysis):

This analyzes linguistic features like metaphors, modality, and vocabulary—in sermons, sacred texts, or religious media.

Interpretation (Discursive Practice):

This examines how religious texts are produced, distributed, and consumed (e.g., how a sermon is interpreted by the congregation).

Explanation (Social Practice):

This connects the discourse to broader social struggles, such as the use of religion in politics, or interreligious conflict and harmony.

3. Application Examples in Religious Studies
Fairclough's CDA has been widely applied in studies concerning:

Religious Moderation and Tolerance: this involves analyzing how religious texts can be interpreted to either promote harmony or justify discrimination.

Religious Politics: Scholars use it to Examine how political leaders integrate religious language and symbolism (e.g., interfaith dialogues, prayers, etc) to gain legitimacy.

Interreligious Dialogue: It has help scholars and researchers in bridging the gap between the textual analysis of scripture and the social, practical realities of interreligious worship.

Critical Sociology of Religion: It has become a powerful tool in the hands of sociologists who use it to study how religious inequality and power are reproduced in mediated society.

Fairclough's framework, therefore, acts as a bridge between the textual analysis of

religious scripture and the social, practical, and political realities of believers.

4. Henry Tajfel, and John Turner

These scholars explore how religious language and practices shape group identity and belonging.

Henri Tajfel and John Turner, primarily through their development of Social Identity Theory (SIT), provided a robust psychological framework that explains the formation of in-group cohesion and out-group discrimination, which is highly applicable to religious discourse. Their work helps analyze how religious groups define themselves, maintain internal cohesion, and interact with other religious or secular groups.

Key Contributions to Religious Discourse:

Social Categorization and Religious Identity: Tajfel and Turner proposed that people naturally categorize themselves and others into groups to understand the social environment. In a religious context, this explains how individuals define their identities as "us" (e.g., Christians, Muslims, Jews) versus "them" (out-groups).

In-group Favoritism and Intergroup Conflict: SIT suggests that individuals strive for positive distinctiveness: a desire to see their own group as superior to others to boost self-esteem. This directly applies to religious prejudice, stereotypes, and conflicts, where individuals may favor their own faith community while devaluing others.

Minimal Group Paradigm: Tajfel's "minimal group experiments" demonstrated that even arbitrary or trivial categorizations can cause individuals to favor their own group. This implies that

religious discrimination can arise simply from the awareness of belonging to different, even non-competing, groups.

Self-Categorization Theory (SCT): John Turner's extension, Self-Categorization Theory, explains how personal identity is transformed into social identity (from "I" to "we"). This process is crucial in understanding collective religious behaviour, such as group worship, shared beliefs, and adherence to religious norms.

Social Change and Group Status: Tajfel's work on social change highlights how religious groups may challenge existing social hierarchies if they feel their group is negatively stereotyped or treated unfairly in society.

TENETS OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

Understanding religious discourse is rooted in several key principles:

1. Sacred texts: Sacred texts are [texts](#) which various [religions](#) consider to be of central importance to their religious beliefs and traditions. They often feature a compilation or discussion of beliefs, ritual practices, moral commandments and [laws](#), ethical conduct, spiritual aspirations, and admonitions for fostering a religious community.

Within each religion, these sacred texts are revered as authoritative sources of guidance, wisdom, and [divine revelation](#). They are often regarded as sacred or holy, representing the core teachings and principles that their followers strive to uphold. Sacred texts are seen as holy, authoritative and divinely inspired.

Examples of sacred texts include:

The Bible (Used by Christians)

The Qur'an (Used by Muslims)

The Torah (Used by the Jewish)

These texts are seen as the word of God and in religious discourse, all interpretations, arguments and teachings usually originate from or return to them. Beyond being the final authority on religious matters, they provide legitimacy to religious language. That is why during sermon, priests and preachers quote the bible often to support their teachings. Sacred texts are not necessarily self-explanatory so lay people depend on the interpretations of religious elite. That is why in Christianity for example, different denominations have different interpretations of the bible.

Sacred texts are usually written in archaic and elevated language (The lord is my shepherd I shall not want, thou, thy, thine, maketh, knowest, etc) although there are simpler and more modern versions.

2. Doctrine: Doctrine can be defined as the official teachings and beliefs of a religious group.

It provides the authoritative framework of beliefs that guide how religious communities interpret reality and construct meaning. Doctrine is the official teaching of a religion and is usually accepted as true and non-negotiable. In religion, doctrine covers beliefs, morality, salvation and human purpose and in discourse it functions as a reference point that shapes what can be said and who has the authority to say what.

Doctrine functions as a regulator of language. This it does by legitimizing certain expressions, eg. “God is sovereign,” “It is written,” “I am the way, the truth and the life, nobody comes to the father except through me.” It restricts alternative or contradictory interpretations. For example, in 2022, at Shehu Shagari College of education in Sokoto, a female student named Deborah Samuel Yakubu complained that her muslim course mates were sending a lot of religious content to their class Whatsapp group which should be for academic discussions. In the course of her protest, she allegedly used words Muslims consider blasphemous by their doctrine. The next day, her Muslim course mates confronted her crying blasphemy blasphemy and before she could explain herself, they poured petrol on her and with a match stick, set her on fire. Shockingly, when the case was taken to court, a team of 34 lawyers were in court to defend the suspects accused of killing Deborah Samuel Yakubu. This is an example of how powerful doctrine is as a language regulator. While doctrine stabilizes meaning, it can also limit interpretive flexibility and create tension between traditional belief and modern beliefs and realities which may lead to ideological conflicts.

3. Ritual and practice:

These are religious ceremonies, traditions and daily practice. Ritual and practice translate belief into observable, repeatable action. While doctrines and sacred texts provide the content or religion, ritual and practice provide its performance. They are the means through which religious meaning is enacted, reinforced and communicated within the religious community. In religious studies, ritual refers to formalized, symbolic actions performed according to established rules. These actions are patterned and often

repetitive which gives them communicative power. From a discourse perspective, rituals are *performative* in the sense that they do not just describe belief but actively *create* and sustain it. Examples of religious rituals include sacraments like baptism and holy-communion, prayer, fasting, chanting and liturgical recitations, pilgrimage, offering, marriage, funeral rites, etc.

Practice extends beyond formal rituals to include daily behaviors shaped by religious belief. It is often studied in Sociolinguistics and anthropology as part of lived religion. Examples of religious practices include: observing dietary rules, dressing modestly or symbolically, daily or weekly prayer routines and ethical actions guided by religious teachings

Practice reflects how individuals internalize and reproduce religious discourse in everyday life. It shows that religion is not confined to sacred spaces but embedded in social interaction. Ritual and practice work together to influence and also construct meaning through: Reinforcement of belief, Identity formation, and transmission of tradition. By repeating rituals and practices, shared beliefs and identities are strengthened within the community and religious beliefs and traditions are gradually transmitted to the younger generation thereby ensuring the continuity of the religion. Rituals can regulate behaviour and maintain authority. If one is fasting for example, one is likely to abstain from quarreling or being cantankerous but is expected to be meek and kind. Rituals often combine verbal and non-verbal elements like sacred language, formulaic expressions, gesture and posture.

4. Symbolism: It is the use of symbols, icons and metaphor to convey religious meaning.

Symbolism is a foundational tenet of religious discourse because it enables religions to communicate complex, abstract, and often ineffable ideas through concrete forms. While doctrines state beliefs and rituals enact them, symbolism *mediates* meaning thereby bridging the visible and the invisible, the human and the divine.

In Religious Studies, symbols are as signs that point beyond their literal meaning to deeper spiritual or moral realities. Unlike ordinary signs, religious symbols are layered and open to interpretation.

For example:

Light may symbolize purity, truth, or divine presence

Water may represent cleansing, rebirth, or life

The cross in Christianity signifies sacrifice and redemption

These symbols allow believers to grasp abstract concepts like salvation, sin, or transcendence in tangible ways.

Symbolism is communicative. It operates alongside language to convey meaning within a religious community. Religious discourse uses symbols to encode beliefs in visual, verbal, and material forms; create shared understanding among members and sustain continuity across generations.

Symbolism also plays a crucial role in identity and community formation. Shared symbols distinguish one religious group from another and create a sense of belonging. Symbolism helps a lot in social cohesion and

identity formation by unifying members through common interpretation, and marking boundaries between one religious community and another-“insiders” and “outsiders”. For example, dress codes or sacred marks can signal religious identity in public spaces. Beyond intellectual meaning, symbols evoke emotion and experience. A symbol can inspire awe, reverence, fear, or comfort often more powerfully than direct explanation. This emotional dimension makes symbolism a powerful tool for sustaining religious belief.

5. Ethics and morality:

Ethics and morality are central tenets of religious discourse because they provide the framework through which religions guide human behavior, define right and wrong, and regulate social life.

Ethics in religious discourse refers to structured systems of principles that govern conduct. It is often codified in doctrines, laws, and teachings derived from sacred sources. For instance, in Christianity, ethical guidance is drawn from texts like the Bible, while in Islam, it comes from the Qur'an and Hadith. These ethical systems outline duties such as honesty, justice, compassion, and obedience to divine authority. Ethics, therefore, tends to be formal, institutional, and collectively upheld within a religious community.

Morality on the other hand, refers more to personal beliefs about right and wrong, often internalized by individuals through religious teachings. It involves conscience, intention, and character. Religious discourse shapes morality by emphasizing virtues such as love, humility, forgiveness, and self-control. For example, moral teachings like “love your neighbor as you love yourself” or “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”

are not just rules but principles meant to shape inner attitudes and everyday behaviour.

Moral and ethical principles are often presented as originating from God or a higher power, which gives them legitimacy and binding force. This distinguishes religious ethics from purely secular systems.

Ethics and morality play important roles both in and outside religious communities.

Some of these roles include:

Social Regulation: They help maintain order within religious communities by setting standards for acceptable behavior, such as prohibitions against theft, violence, or deceit.

Identity Formation: Adherence to specific ethical and moral codes helps define membership within a religious group and distinguishes it from others.

Judgment and Accountability: Religious discourse often links morality to consequences, such as reward or punishment in the afterlife, reinforcing ethical behaviour. Ethics and morality are communicated through sermons, sacred texts, parables, and everyday religious language. They are reinforced through repetition, storytelling, and ritual practices, making them deeply embedded in the life of religious faithfuls.

Data Presentation

Data has been extracted from a YouTube sermon by Dr. David Ogbueli, the general overseer of Dominion City. The topic of the sermon is maintaining an unbroken fellowship with God.

How to Maintain a Spirit-Filled Life

We have three major ministries in the church: the up reach (when we reach up and the person we are reaching up to is God), the in reach and the outreach. Each of these reaches has different targets. For up reach, the target is God. God also needs ministry- Acts 13: 1. Most of the time we are focused on what we need from God, forgetting that God also needs something from us. He's a person just like you. Acts 13:2 says, "As they ministered to the lord. "The first ministry we all have is to minister to God. We are created for His pleasure and Glory. As powerful as women are and women are very powerful. The truth is that woman was made for the man. And when you're in a relationship or marriage, study that man, study how to make him happy. You'll be the happiest woman on earth. Focus on the person you're called to minister to. You're not told to love every man, you're told to love your husband, or love the one that is in your life. Woman is created as a help mate for the man. That is why a million people can be here but the one that God touches is the one that is worshiping, not everybody that is present.

Worship is intercourse. You know, relationship, marriage was created so that we can have an idea of how our relationship with God is. The deepest part in marriage is intercourse. And that deepest part is worship. That's the place where you strike it real hard, you hit gold. It's that part. That's the part

where God even gets naked. And the upload which is up reach also works alongside with download because the climax in sex is ejaculation. And the climax in worship is ejaculation. God starts pouring revelations. You don't talk to people when you're worshipping just as you don't bring people when you and your husband are ... yeah. At the peak, the revelation knowledge starts flowing, prophetic words start flowing. That's when God ejaculates. Rhema, is what he starts releasing to you, starts releasing things to your heart. Now, this is different from letter. This is now, if you want to know where prophets get all these "and thus says the lord." Okay. You see, because as a pastor, you don't know the people like God. You can prepare all you want but you don't know what's going on in the lives of people.

So, a man of God should not just be a man of letter. Because you have Phd you can study well, you come and talk. No. We are not men of the people. We are not professors. A man of God must have a rhema word and whenever it comes, it just strikes the heart of people, meet needs, resolve issues and clarify confusions, make God real. I don't want people to sit before me and feel like they have sat before a professor, because I am very knowledgeable I have studied all sorts of things. No. That's not why I'm effective in ministry. No. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. That word called "proceedeth," if you want to understand what it means, it is a tap. When you turn a tap on, that fresh water, that one that flows out of a running tap, or a spring water or a water fountain. Man does not live by the word that proceeded. Yesterday's word fed you then. But people need daily manner. The manner used to fall every morning.

The dynamics of worship is what God is trying to... He told me to explain to you. The

principle is that when you upload, God downloads and what he downloads is what feeds your spirit. And the word that God downloads is life. The bible said the word of God is quick and powerful. The quick part is life, is the food that human spirit needs. Then what he downloads is power. That's when the anointing, it's when you hit rhema or revelation that you hit the anointing, you hit the oil. When you are dealing with letter, mere information, you don't touch the power of God yet. The power is in his word but you have to hit. It's like cracking palm kernel. There's oil, there's palm kernel and there's palm kernel oil, you don't get it from the hard kernel. It is powerful. It is sharper than any two edged sword because it is an operating instrument and it pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit. So when I have a wound in my heart, when I'm wounded in my emotion, when I have a tumour in my mind; because you are more than the body. You see how complex the body alone is, and some things can develop in the body it kills the man. And with all the years of medicine Mayo clinic is saying everything we have learnt is just one percent of what there is to know. That's why there is a lot of things they can't cure, so they maintain it, they help you manage it: High or low blood pressure, Diabetes, HIV, etc. When you have mental or emotional breakdown, they give you drugs to calm you down so you don't become violent. They can't cure it. They said it is just one percent and yet they have built an industry called medicine on it. People are going to schools spending six years, just one percent of the body.

Now, let's go beyond the body. What about the soul? What about the emotion? What about the mind? You are now getting to where the real human being is. All the other things you've been doing working on the

body is the man's house. Now we are going to where the man is. What about the spirit? We have issues. Sometimes it's bitterness, it's rejection, sometimes it's fear. Sometimes, I don't feel that God loves me. Sometimes I'm carrying guilt I have made some mistakes. Sometimes I don't feel like my own brethren care. Other times I feel depressed. Somebody is carrying suicidal tendencies... You don't know. You greet them good morning, sir/ma. You don't know. A very beautiful girl in Lagos, she is from the South West, killed herself. She was so beautiful. I thought once you are pretty, you would be happy because other girls are praying oh God, this my nose why is it flat? This one has pointed. Others are trying to bleach, she was given it naturally, very fair. Others have four feet, five feet and, she has height. She went to school. She even has a good profession. She killed herself. Her family said she had been under depression for a while. So, when people are going through different things, you smile at them, they come sit beside you, you don't know. Because many a times, packaging is not allowing us to open up too. And our ego because you don't know who you're talking to. What they will do with the information you're giving them. What can get deep down and do the surgery, and you know God's surgery he doesn't cut, you don't see the bleeding but when he finishes, perfect! It is rhema word. Lecture, like professor, cannot do it.

Data Analysis

Data 1

We have three major ministries in church: the up reach (when we reach up and the person we are reaching up to is God), the in reach and the outreach. Each of these reaches has different targets. For up reach, the target is God. God also needs ministry- Acts 13: 1. Most of the time we are focused on what we need from God forgetting that God also needs something from us. He's a person just like you. Acts 13:2 says "As they ministered to the lord. "The first ministry we all have is to minister to God. We are created for His pleasure and Glory. As powerful as women are and women are very powerful, the truth is that woman was made for the man. And when you're in a relationship or marriage, study that man, study how to make him happy. You'll be the happiest woman on earth. Focus on the person you're called to minister to. You're not told to love every man; you're told to love your husband, or love the one who is in your life. A woman is created as a helpmate for the man. That is why a million people can be here, but the one that God touches is the one that is worshipping, not everybody that is present.

Textual Analysis

At the textual level, the sermon is structured around categorization and hierarchy. The speaker introduces "three major ministries" (up reach, in reach, outreach), which function as a framing device that organizes religious life into clear, manageable units. This creates a sense of order and a divine system. The preacher uses declarative statements "The first ministry we all have is to minister to God," "study that man," "focus on the person" to present beliefs as unquestionable truths and to guide behaviour. A striking linguistic shift occurs when the discourse moves from divine relationship (God-human) to gender relations (man-woman), and the analogy is this:

“God needs ministry.” “Man needs ministry from woman.”

This parallel subtly equates serving God with serving a man, embedding ideology within seemingly spiritual instruction.

We also see deictic expressions like we, he, us, you. The preacher uses “He” to refer to God. “He is a person just like you.”

Discursive Practice

The sermon draws on two dominant discourses: Religious Discourse and Patriarchal / Gender Discourse.

Use of scripture (Acts 13) gives the message divine authority. The phrase “we are created for His pleasure and Glory” constructs humans as subordinate to God, normalizing service and submission. The claim “woman was made for the man” draws on traditional biblical and cultural narratives. Christians have several patriarchal beliefs, many of which are drawn from the bible. Genesis 2:18: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” In Genesis 3:16: “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” This could be interpreted to mean that a woman is made for a man and not for herself or any other primary purpose. In Genesis 2:21–23, woman is created from man’s rib. Some Christians interpret this to mean that man is God’s primary creation (the original) while woman is God’s secondary creation (an afterthought). There’s also a school of thought that believes that, by the account of the creation, woman is superior to man.

Man was made from dust, but woman was made from bone. A woman is therefore stronger than a man. Also, a woman was created to be man’s helper. You cannot be stronger than your helper. If a woman is a man’s helper, it means that a woman is stronger in strength, resilience, depth. The first interpretation is dominant in Christian religious discourse and is what the pastor is preaching here. On marriage, the general message of Christian pastors, teachers, and priests is that a woman is incomplete until marriage. Marriage gives a woman honour and keeps her in good standing with society. A woman is not perceived to carry dignity or honour intrinsically. It is something a man bestows on her by making her his wife.

Social Practice

Christianity is patriarchal religion- the Christian God is male.

The text reinforces the power dynamics in the Christian religion. There is power imbalance in the text with God having the higher power: it is God who created man and not the other way round. It is man who will worship God and not the other way round. Man holds a bit power considering that there’s something God needs from man: worship.

In between God and his people are the priests, pastors, teachers, and other religious leaders who, as servants of God, function as middlemen through whom God reaches his people.

The text perpetuates the dominant ideology of the Christian God being a benevolent patriarch who works only with men. The preacher says, “We are not men of the people.” ” A man of God must have a Rhema word.” The fact that the preacher excludes

women each time he mentions religious leaders implies that women are not allowed the privilege of the priesthood and pastorship in the Christian religion. The sermon portrays Christianity as an androcentric and misogynistic religion. The text teaches that a woman was created for the man and not for herself, to be a helpmate for the man and not to pursue her own purpose, and that the way for a woman to find happiness in life is for her to please her husband or any other man (not a woman) in her life. This ideology, which is dominant in Christianity, is one of the reasons women who are experiencing domestic violence and other forms of abuse in their marriage would rather die and be taken home in a coffin than divorce their husbands and be “purposeless” or “honourless”.

Narratives like this position men as deserving recipients of women’s care, attention, submission, and service while simultaneously placing on women the burden of making their men happy. So, if your husband is not happy, you are the cause. It doesn’t matter the choices he has made in the past. It perpetuates the ideology that a woman cannot find purpose and genuine happiness outside of man which is harmful to society at large considering the number of young women who throw away the opportunity to get education and build a career before settling down simply because a man proposed marriage.

These girls are particularly vulnerable because, while some of them may question their parents or friends, they trust their pastors and take their teachings without scrutiny. The statement: “You’ll be the happiest woman on earth” functions as persuasive legitimation, suggesting that compliance leads to reward: happiness. This masks the power imbalance by framing it as beneficial. We also see that religious leaders, through spiritual authority, control the lives

of the religious by embedding gender roles within religious teaching. This gives the message moral authority so that resistance becomes not just social deviation but spiritual disobedience.

Data 2

Worship is intercourse. You know, relationship, marriage was created so that we can have an idea of how our relationship with God is. The deepest part in marriage is intercourse. And that deepest part is worship. That’s the place where you strike it real hard; you hit gold. It’s that part. That’s the part where God even gets naked. And the upload, which is up reach, also works alongside the download because the climax in sex is ejaculation. And the climax in worship is ejaculation. God starts pouring revelations. You don’t talk to people when you’re worshipping just as you don’t bring people when you and your husband are ... yeah. At the peak, the revealed knowledge starts flowing, and prophetic words start flowing. That’s when God ejaculates. Rhema is what he starts releasing to you, starts releasing things to your heart. Now, this is different from a letter. This is now, if you want to know where prophets get all these “and thus says the lord.” Okay. You see, because as a pastor, you don’t know the people like God. You can prepare all you want but you don’t know what’s going on in the lives of people.

Textual Analysis

At the textual level, the sermon is dominated by an extended sexual metaphor, where *worship* is equated with *sexual intercourse*. This is not a brief comparison but a sustained mapping:

“Worship is intercourse.” “The deepest part... is intercourse... that

deepest part is worship.” “The climax in sex is ejaculation. And the climax in worship is ejaculation.”

“God ejaculates... releasing revelations.”

This metaphor operates through semantic transfer, where meanings from sexuality (intimacy, climax, bodily release) are mapped onto spirituality (worship, revelation, divine communication). The speaker uses sexual imagery (“intercourse,” “climax,” “ejaculation”) to intensify his message. It is in the climax of worship that God gets naked. By using naked, the speaker is trying to say that God hides nothing from his children who come this far. Instead, he rewards them by pouring his rhema.

“That’s the place where you strike it real hard; you hit gold.”

The speaker is not talking about literal gold but rather, revelational knowledge, rhema, something neither money nor education (letter) can buy.

Discursive Practice

This excerpt blends two major discourses—religious discourse and sexual discourse.

Concepts like “worship,” “revelation,” “prophetic words,” and “Rhema” establish a Pentecostal/charismatic framework. The idea of direct divine communication positions God as active and expressive.

Marriage and sexual intimacy are used as interpretive frameworks.

The “private” and “exclusive” nature of sex is mapped onto worship (“you don’t bring people...”). This blending

creates interdiscursivity: different domains of experience (sex and spirituality) are fused to produce new meaning. The preacher uses figures of speech to illustrate his points.

Examples:

Metaphor: Worship is intercourse: the preacher compares worship to intercourse, a very intimate act. Metonymy: Now, this is different from the letter. Here, the preacher uses ‘letter’ to represent academics and opines that academic scholarship alone does not qualify one to be recognized as man of God.

Social Practice

The discourse attempts to make spiritual experience tangible, embodied and emotionally intense. By using sexual imagery, the speaker frames worship as the highest possible form of intimacy which may increase emotional commitment among listeners. The statement: “That’s when God ejaculates... Rhema... prophetic words” constructs a hierarchy of knowledge:

Ordinary believers receive “letter” (basic knowledge)

Spiritually mature individuals receive direct, intimate revelation (Rhema).

The comparison: “You don’t talk to people when you’re worshipping just as you don’t bring people...” constructs worship as private and exclusive.

This discourse is powerful but also controversial because it collapses boundaries between sacred and sexual domains, reframes divine-human interaction in highly physical,

gendered, and intimate terms and potentially manipulates emotional and psychological engagement by invoking one of the most intense human experiences.

This repeated negative construction functions to *reject* a particular identity (academic/intellectual authority) while implicitly elevating another (spiritual/prophetic authority).

The speaker places contrasts:

Letter vs Rhema

Letter is academics, what man taught man. Rhema is divine knowledge, what God revealed to man. No man can teach you this.

Professor vs Man of God

Professor represents the height of human knowledge. A professor is widely knowledgeable in his profession or field. Man of God, on the other hand, may not be as knowledgeable as the professor but will be more effective because, unlike the professor, he depends on God for divine knowledge and God gives him not just the diagnosis of people's problems but the solutions.

Studied knowledge vs. divine revelation

Studied knowledge is the knowledge that was studied. Divine knowledge surpasses all studying. It is the knowledge that God reveals to man. It is beyond the realm of studied knowledge.

The pastor uses metaphor-
"Proceedeth is a tap" to frame divine revelation as fresh, flowing water.

Data 3

So, a man of God should not just be a man of letters. Because you have a PhD, you can study well, and you come and talk. No. We are not men of the people. We are not professors. A man of God must have a rhema word, and whenever it comes, it just strikes the heart of people, meets needs, resolves issues, clarifies confusions, make God real. I don't want people to sit before me and feel like they have sat before a professor, because I am very knowledgeable I have studied all sorts of things. No. That's not why I'm effective in ministry. No. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. That word called "proceedeth," if you want to understand what it means, it is a tap. When you turn a tap on, that fresh water, that one that flows out of a running tap, or a spring water or a water fountain. Man does not live by the word that proceedeth. Yesterday's word fed you then. But people need daily manner. The manner used to fall every morning.

The sermon is structured around strong contrasts and negation:

"Not... a man of letters."

"We are not professors."

"That's not why I'm effective."

“Yesterday’s word” vs “daily manna”

Here, he contrasts between stale and fresh nourishment and reinforces the belief that God will not only provide today but will continue to provide for us all the days of our lives. This also supports the popular narrative in Christianity that God is a generous provider.

“Man shall not live by bread alone...” invokes scriptural authority to legitimize the argument.

Discursive Practice

The speaker draws on a familiar Pentecostal discourse that privileges spontaneous and spiritual revelation (Rhema) and downplays formal education (“PhD,” “professor”). This is not a total rejection of knowledge (the speaker admits being “very knowledgeable”). The speaker, being a PhD holder himself, believes in education (letter) but also believes that education, as good as it is, has its place and limitations. He believes that divine revelation (Rhema), which requires no degrees but a quality relationship with God and worship of God to obtain, is far superior and more capable of solving human problems. The speaker recontextualizes the scripture “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ” to reinforce the idea of ongoing dependence on God for fresh revelation.

Social Practice

The sermon constructs a specific model of spiritual authority:

A true “man of God” is seen as one who receives direct, fresh revelation.

Academic figures (professors) are seen as insufficient or ineffective.

This creates a hierarchy of legitimacy which places divine revelation above human education and shapes how listeners perceive credibility and build trust. By saying: “We are not men of the people... not professors,” the speaker subtly undermines academic authority and positions intellectualism as spiritually inadequate or ineffective. By so doing, the speaker strategically reduces the likelihood that listeners will evaluate sermons using critical or scholarly standards and increases the likelihood that listeners will trust him or pastors more than they trust lettered professionals. The idea of “daily manna” and “fresh word” promotes continuous dependence on spiritual leaders for new revelation. The speaker presents the need for constant revelation as not only normal but necessary and by so doing, reinforces a cycle of reliance. The speaker succeeds in redefining knowledge itself. Knowledge is no longer something you *study* but something you *receive in real time from God*. This shift strengthens the authority of the speaker while weakening alternative sources of interpretation like academia and independent reasoning.

Data 4

The dynamics of worship is what God is trying to... He told me to explain to you. The principle is that when you upload, God downloads, and what he downloads is what feeds your spirit. And the word that God downloads is life. The bible said the word of God is quick and powerful. The quick part of

life, is the food that the human spirit needs. Then what he downloads is power. That's when the anointing- it's when you hit rhema or revelation that you hit the anointing; you hit the oil. When you are dealing with letter, mere information, you don't touch the power of God yet. The power is in his word, but you have to hit. It's like cracking a palm kernel. There's oil, there's palm kernel, and there's palm kernel oil; you don't get it from the hard kernel. It is powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword because it is an operating instrument and it pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit. So when I have a wound in my heart, when I'm wounded in my emotion, when I have a tumour in my mind; because you are more than the body. You see how complex the body alone is, and some things can develop in the body it kills the man. And with all the years of medicine, the Mayo Clinic is saying everything we have learnt is just one percent of what there is to know. That's why there is a lot of things they can't cure, so they maintain it; they help you manage it: High or low blood pressure, Diabetes, HIV, etc. When you have a mental or emotional breakdown, they give you drugs to calm you down so you don't become violent. They can't cure it. They said it is just one percent, and yet they have built an industry called medicine on it. People are going to school for six years, just one percent of the body.

Textual Analysis

At the textual level, the sermon relies heavily on mechanical, biological, and economic metaphors to construct meaning:

“Upload” / “download” frames worship as a data exchange system where God becomes the source server, and humans are receivers.

This metaphor makes abstract spirituality appear systematic, predictable, and functional

The Metaphor “Cracking palm kernel” and “accessing hidden “oil” (power/anointing)

Suggests that divine power is embedded but requires effort, skill, or special access to extract

There is medical and bodily language: “Wound in my heart,” “tumour in my mind,” “emotional breakdown”. The speaker presents religion and rhema as the solution to such problems. He also contrasts between Letter and Rhema to the advantage of Rhema:

The letter is mere information, while Rhema is life and power.

The letter is surface-level, while Rhema is deep and capable of solving deep problems.

A letter is an ordinary word that cannot do anything out of the ordinary, while Rhema is a living word that can heal not only the body but the spirit and the soul.

Discursive Practice

This excerpt blends religious discourse with scientific or medical discourse.

Concepts like “anointing,” “Rhema,” and “power” emphasize experiential spirituality.

Authority is tied to accessing deeper, hidden dimensions of God.

The speaker makes references to illness: “Diabetes,” “HIV,” “mental breakdown”, and how scientific solutions—drugs, are used to give you temporary relief because medicine cannot solve the problem permanently. Here, he makes the audience see the need to invest in their relationship with God as that is their only hope of getting permanent healing for their medical problems. He mentions the Mayo Clinic as an authority in medicine.

However, he strategically recontextualizes the whole thing in the sense that Medicine is acknowledged but simultaneously undermined. He portrays scientific knowledge as limited (“just one percent”) of the human body. He says that people spend six years studying medicine, which is built on one percent of the body. That, by implication, means that ninety-nine percent of the body problems, and problems of the soul and spirit, will be solved by rhema (God through men of God like him) and not by letter (medicine and certified professionals).

Social Practice

Here, the speaker acknowledges yet delegitimizes scientific authority. The claim that medicine knows “just one percent” serves to reduce trust in scientific and medical expertise and elevate spiritual knowledge as superior and more complete. Even though institutions like the Mayo Clinic are invoked, they are used to validate the limitations of science rather than its authority.

The speaker also constructs religion as superior to science in terms of providing solutions to people’s problems. By saying that medicine manages but does not cure, and that spiritual power penetrates, heals, and transforms, the speaker creates a hierarchy,

placing spiritual power above medical science.

This positions the church as a site of ultimate healing and a provider of solutions beyond human capability.

The speaker makes himself relevant by expanding the scope of problems (body, mind, spirit) and then presenting spiritual revelation as the only complete solution. He goes on to build authority through exclusivity:

The idea that “you have to hit... to access power” implies that not everyone can access this level because it requires special knowledge or guidance. This reinforces the authority of the preacher as someone who understands how to “crack the kernel,” making him highly relevant even among men of God. Earlier, academic knowledge was downplayed. Here, scientific and medical knowledge is also relativized. The cumulative effect is a systematic displacement of alternative authorities (education, science, medicine).

Data 5

Now, let’s go beyond the body. What about the soul? What about the emotion? What about the mind? You are now getting to where the real human being is. All the other things you’ve been doing, working on the body, are in the man’s house. Now we are going to where the man is. What about the spirit? We have issues. Sometimes it’s bitterness; it’s rejection; sometimes it’s fear. Sometimes, I don’t feel that God loves me. Sometimes I’m carrying guilt because I have made some mistakes. Sometimes I don’t feel like my own brethren care. Other times I feel depressed. Somebody is carrying suicidal tendencies... You don’t know. You greet them Good morning, sir/ma. You don’t know. A very beautiful girl in Lagos, who is

from the South West, killed herself. She was so beautiful. I thought once you are pretty, you would be happy because other girls are praying Oh God, this is my nose, why is it flat? This one has pointed. Others are trying to bleach; she was given it naturally, very fair. Others have four feet, five feet, and she has height. She went to school. She even has a good profession. She killed herself. Her family said she had been depressed for a while. So, when people are going through different things, you smile at them; they come sit beside you; you don't know. Because many times, packaging is not allow us to open up too. And our ego, because you don't know who you're talking to. What they will do with the information you're giving them. What can get deep down and do the surgery, and you know God's surgery he doesn't cut; you don't see the bleeding but when he finishes, perfect! It is a rhema word. A lecture, like a professor, cannot do it.

Textual Analysis

The discourse is structured as a progressive deepening: Body -Soul -Mind -Spirit.

This layered movement constructs a hierarchy of human existence, where the "*real human being*" is located in the inner, invisible realm.

The speaker uses rhetorical questions to drive home his point: what about the soul? ... the mind? ... the spirit?" These questions guide the audience toward a predetermined conclusion, creating a sense of discovery while controlling interpretation.

The speaker uses metaphor to separate physical identity from true self: "The body is the man's house" and to frame spiritual intervention as medical precision without pain: "God's surgery." This metaphor is powerful because it suggests complete

healing without visible process, contrasting with physical medicine.

There is also emotive and psychological lexicon: "bitterness," "rejection," "fear," "guilt," "depression," and "suicidal tendencies".

The story of the "beautiful girl in Lagos" functions as a cautionary tale, a disruption of the assumption that beauty equals happiness. It personalizes abstract issues like depression, making them socially real and immediate.

Discursive Practice

This excerpt blends psychological discourse with religious discourse.

References to depression, suicide, emotional pain, and recognition of hidden struggles are part of psychological discourse, while "Rhema word" and "God's surgery" are part of religious discourse. The speaker touches on social discourse when he made mentions of beauty standards (skin tone, height, nose shape) and how other girls would like to look like the girl. He also makes references to social practices like bleaching cream. In Nigeria, fair people are seen to be more beautiful than their dark-complexioned counterparts. This has made a lot of dark-complexioned ladies feel insecure. Their complexion is not admired. They are not seen as attractive like their friends who are fair in complexion. This has pressured many ladies to start bleaching their skin in order to meet up with societal beauty standards. There is also the belief that point nose is more beautiful than a flat nose, and some ladies will do anything to have it. For the girl to have all of these and still commit suicide shows that her problem is not a problem of the body. It is deeper and probably beyond the letter.

These discourses are combined to produce the message that external conditions (beauty, success, appearance) are irrelevant to inner well-being.

Social Practice

The sermon defines human problems as deeply internal, hidden, complex and often invisible. This creates the perspective that ordinary social interaction (“you greet them... you don’t know”) is insufficient to understand people. The speaker goes on to delegitimize secular solutions. The statement:

“Lecture, like professor, cannot do it” echoes earlier patterns where intellectual approaches are framed as ineffective for real human problems and reinforces a recurring ideological structure that spiritual knowledge is superior to intellectual knowledge. The discourse also constructs spiritual authority to be superior and exclusive.

By asserting: “What can get deep down... is Rhema word,” the discourse positions spiritual revelation as the only effective tool for deep healing thereby making the preacher as mediator of Rhema, indispensable. This shows that discourse can be used to shape and reinforce authority.

References

Peter L. Berger
Berger, P. L. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Anchor Books.

Kenneth Burke
Burke, K. (1970). *The rhetoric of religion: Studies in logology*. University of California Press.

Deborah Cameron
Cameron, D. (1995). *Verbal hygiene*. Routledge.

Norman Fairclough
Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.

M. A. K. Halliday
Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday’s introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Dwight N. Hopkins
Hopkins, D. N. (2019). *Religious discourse, social justice, and the politics of belief*. (Publisher not specified).

Dell Hymes
Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Andrew W. Koenig
Koenig, A. W. (2019). *Discourse analysis and religious discourse*. (Publisher not specified).

John L. Mahoney
Mahoney, J. L. (2019). *The study of religious discourse*. (Publisher not specified).

Daniel R. Olsen
Olsen, D. R. (2018). *The language of God: Analyzing the religious discourse of evangelical Christians*. (Publisher not specified).

David Ogbueli
Ogbueli, D. (2022). *How to maintain a spirit filled life* [Sermon]. Dominion City. <https://www.youtube.com/live/Dt6EUI-MXVM>

John Searle
Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.

Teun A. van Dijk
Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage Publications.

Ruth Wodak
Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.