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LEXICAL COINAGES AND PHONOSTYLISTIC INNOVATIONS IN SELECTED SERMON OUTLINES OF PASTOR (DR.) WILLIAM F. KUMUYI

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Abstract

This study examines lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi, focusing on their structural characteristics and stylistic functions. The study adopts a qualitative stylistic approach, drawing on Word-Formation Theory, phonostylistics, and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics as complementary analytical frameworks. Data comprise twelve purposively selected Sunday sermon outlines obtained from publicly accessible materials of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry. The lexical analysis identifies compounding, lexical hyphenation, lexical bracketing, and derivation as relevant word-formation processes, while distinguishing established lexical items from formations whose contextual use may constitute innovation. The phonostylistic analysis reveals patterned consonantal alliteration, assonance, rhythmic, euphonic patterns, lexical repetition, and syntactic parallelism, as illustrated by the recurring /d/-initial pattern in expressions such as "the destructiveness and domination," "the deceitfulness and duplicity," and "the decisiveness and destiny." The interaction of these features creates emphasis, reinforces thematic relationships, and enhances the rhetorical force of the sermon outlines. The study demonstrates the value of examining lexical structure and sound patterning together in explaining the stylistic organisation of religious discourse. It therefore recommends that further studies are also encouraged to undertake comparative lexical studies of the sermons of different Nigerian Pentecostal preachers to establish similarities and differences in their lexical coinages and word-formation practices.

Keywords: lexical coinage, word formation, phonostylistic innovation, alliteration, lexical repetition, sermon outlines, religious discourse, and William Folorunso Kumuyi

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Introduction

Language is a creative resource that speakers exploit to achieve diverse communicative goals. Within religious discourse, preachers often deploy distinctive linguistic choices such as lexical, phonological, and stylistic devices to persuade, instruct, and emotionally connect with their audiences. This creativity produces new word formations, sound patterns, and stylistic innovations that shape the rhetorical force of sermons. Lexical creativity constitutes an important form of stylistic variation through which language users deliberately create or manipulate lexical items to convey particular meanings and achieve specific communicative or expressive effects. Lavrova et al. (2020) associate lexical innovation with deliberate linguistic experimentation and the expression of individual linguistic creativity, while Taiwo and Dontele (2020) demonstrate that coinages can perform important communicative and social functions. More recently, Llopart-Saumell and Cañete-González (2023) distinguish stylistic neologisms from purely denominative innovations, showing that stylistically motivated lexical creations may involve subjective linguistic choices and unusual word-formation patterns. Thus, examining the linguistic features of sermons provides insights into how preachers construct identity, achieve persuasion, activate memorability, and reinforce doctrinal teachings.

In contemporary Pentecostal and evangelical circles, sermon registers have evolved into recognizable discourse types characterized by unique lexical choices, complexities, emphatic sound patterns, and rhythmic delivery. Religious language may exhibit distinctive lexical patterns because words and expressions can acquire specialised meanings and functions within particular doctrinal and worship communities. Smith (2021) demonstrates that religious discourse may contain ideologically charged lexical choices associated with particular faith-based discourse communities, while Ajayi (2021) shows that lexical items in Nigerian Christian discourse can acquire conventional and contextual meanings through shared beliefs, doctrine and church culture. Similarly, Mavlonov (2024) observes that religious terminology exhibits distinctive morphological and syntactic characteristics that facilitate the expression of complex theological and spiritual concepts. Collectively, these studies suggest that religious language is not simply a reproduction of general English but may involve specialised lexical choices, semantic adaptations and linguistic innovations shaped by doctrinal and communicative purposes. These innovations may reflect theological convictions, sociocultural realities, professional training, or the preacher's personal communicative style.

Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi, founder of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, is widely acknowledged for his systematic, didactic, and scripture-driven preaching style. His sermon outlines are concise, thematically structured teaching documents, frequently exhibit unusual lexical formations, semantic shifts, and sound-based stylistic devices such as alliteration, assonance, rhythm, and emphatic stress. Such features contribute not only to memorability but also to interpretive clarity and persuasive force.

Contemporary scholarship continues to emphasise the role of creativity in purposeful language use. Kshenovskaya (2020) explains that linguistic creativity enables language users to create new linguistic units, modify established patterns and depart from conventional norms in order to achieve particular communicative purposes. Similarly, Casini (2021) views linguistic creativity as a resource for self-expression and communication through which language users generate and share

meanings beyond established patterns of linguistic regularity. From a sociocultural perspective, Grishaeva (2022) argues that linguistic creativity is manifested through speakers' selection of linguistic resources, communicative strategies and perspectives within particular cultural and communicative contexts. These views suggest that creative linguistic choices are not merely ornamental departures from conventional usage but may constitute purposeful strategies for constructing meaning and communicating particular perspectives to an audience.

Lexical creativity, in particular, offers fertile ground for stylistic research. These include newly formed words, blended forms, modified expressions, and context-specific constructions created to address spiritual, moral, or doctrinal themes. Recent scholarship suggests that lexical innovations frequently arise from communicative and sociolinguistic needs when established vocabulary does not adequately represent emerging experiences or culturally specific realities. Obasi (2022) observes that Nigerian English users create new words and adapt existing ones to fill lexical gaps and express local cultural meanings, while Taiwo and Dontele (2020) demonstrate that coinages can function as collective symbols through which members of a speech community construct shared social meanings and identities. Similarly, Ojukwu et al. (2021) show that new lexical forms emerged in Nigerian English during the COVID-19 pandemic to represent experiences for which existing vocabulary was insufficient, with such innovations occurring across domains including religion. These findings suggest that lexical creations in religious discourse may serve as resources for articulating doctrinal, cultural and experiential meanings that conventional vocabulary does not fully capture. In Kumuyi's sermons, such creativity may serve as pedagogical tools designed to simplify abstract doctrines or intensify moral exhortations.

In the same vein, phonostylistic innovations are sound-based patterns used for rhetorical and aesthetic effect which play a significant role in sermonic discourse. Preachers often rely on phonological choices such as repetitional template, sound parallelism, and rhythmic structuring to enhance emphasis and audience retention. Recent sociolinguistic research continues to demonstrate that phonological and other stylistic variations can function as strategic communicative resources for constructing identity and expressing social meanings. Ilbury (2020) shows that the selective deployment of socially recognisable linguistic features enables speakers to project particular personae and stances and to achieve specific interactional purposes. Similarly, Ilbury (2022) demonstrates that stylisation involves the purposeful appropriation of culturally recognisable linguistic styles through which speakers may construct, negotiate or challenge social identities. Okamoto (2023) further argues that stylistic resources acquire social meanings through situated use, allowing speakers to creatively construct and negotiate identities and interpersonal relationships. Taken together, these studies support the view that phonological stylization is not simply formal variation but may constitute a deliberate communicative strategy through which speakers convey social identity, stance and interpersonal meanings.

Despite the prominence of Kumuyi in global evangelical circles, scholarly attention to the linguistic dimensions of his sermon outlines remains limited. Existing scholarship on Nigerian religious discourse has examined the phenomenon from a range of linguistic perspectives, with considerable attention given to pragmatic strategies, contextual meaning, discourse organisation and socioreligious functions. For instance, Ayansola (2021) investigates pragmatic acts and communicative strategies in Nigerian Christian sermons, while Ajayi (2021) examines the pragmatic (de)construction of selected lexical items in relation to doctrine, church culture and contextual beliefs. More recently, Udaa, Gbatoon and Adasu (2026) have extended the analysis to prosodic

features such as stress, rhythm and intonation in the sermons of William Folorunso Kumuyi. Although these studies demonstrate growing interest in the linguistic resources of Nigerian religious discourse, relatively limited attention has been devoted to the stylistic interaction of lexical creativity, particularly, lexical inventions with phonostylistic creativity in Nigerian Christian sermons.

This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by conducting a detailed stylistic investigation of the lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations in selected sermon outlines of Pastor W. F. Kumuyi. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on African religious discourse, linguistic creativity, and stylistic variation in specialized registers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sermonic discourse in Nigeria has developed into a rich and dynamic linguistic genre characterized by creativity, rhetorical intensity, and stylistic innovation. While many prominent Nigerian preachers employ diverse linguistic strategies in their sermons, Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi stands out for his systematic, didactic, and peculiarly stylistic use of language. His sermon outlines are widely circulated across denominations and used for Bible study, evangelism and doctrinal teaching which display distinct lexical coinages, modified expressions, rhythmic sequencing, and phonological patterning. These features appear to contribute significantly to his communicative power, clarity of instruction, and ability to engage audiences across linguistic and educational backgrounds.

However, despite the importance and wide circulation of his sermons, there is limited scholarly inquiry focusing specifically on the stylistic dimensions of Kumuyi's sermon outlines. Existing studies on Nigerian Christian discourse have emphasized pragmatics, rhetoric, ideology or discourse structure (Adegbite, 2006; Odebunmi, 2005), but they seldom examine how lexical creativity and phonostylistic strategies function as systematic stylistic mechanisms within the homiletic context. Little is known about the types of lexical coinages he uses, the patterns underlying their formation, or the communicative motivations for their deployment. In like manner, phonological devices such as alliteration, assonance, sound repetition, rhythm, etc., which are essential to sermonic delivery and memorability, remain underexplored.

This lack of detailed stylistic analysis creates a research gap in understanding how Pastor Kumuyi's linguistic innovations contribute to meaning-making, persuasion and doctrinal emphasis in Nigerian Christian preaching. Without such investigation, the unique linguistic identity of his sermons and the broader implications for African religious stylistics remains insufficiently documented. This study therefore addresses the problem of inadequate scholarly attention to lexical creativity and phonostylistic innovations in Kumuyi's sermon outlines by providing a systematic, stylistic examination of these linguistic features.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to analyze the lexical creativity and phonostylistic innovations used in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi, with a view to identifying their forms, functions, and stylistic significance. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. identify and classify the lexical coinages present in selected sermon outlines of Pastor W. F. Kumuyi.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

ii. examine the phonostylistic devices employed in the selected sermon outlines, such as alliteration, assonance, rhythm, sound repetition, and intonational emphasis.
iii. determine the communicative and stylistic functions of these lexical and phonostylistic innovations within the sermonic context.
iv. evaluate how these linguistic innovations contribute to meaning-making, persuasion, and audience engagement in Kumuyi's preaching style.

The Concept of Lexicology

Lexicology is a branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic study of the lexicon or vocabulary of a language. It examines words and other lexical units in terms of their structure, formation, meaning, origin, relationships and use. As Bauer (2021) explains, lexicology is concerned with "words, their meanings and the relationships between them, their origins and their structure." This indicates that lexicology is not restricted to the simple identification or listing of words; rather, it investigates the internal organisation of the vocabulary and the various processes through which lexical units acquire, develop and communicate meaning.

A useful distinction should be made between lexicology, lexis and lexicon. Lexicology refers to the linguistic discipline that studies vocabulary, whereas lexis refers to the lexical resources available in a language, and lexicon may be understood as the vocabulary or lexical inventory of a language. In this regard, Abioye and Ajiboye (2014), drawing on Darbyshire, explain that lexis comprises the major linguistic units that carry referential meaning. Their discussion further emphasises that lexis is not restricted to isolated words but may include certain phrases and idiomatic expressions that function as meaningful lexical units.

The concept of lexis is therefore broader than a simple list of dictionary entries. It encompasses individual lexical items as well as certain conventionalised combinations of words, including collocations, idioms and other multiword expressions, where these combinations have relatively stable meanings or functions. This broader understanding is important because meaning is frequently realised not through individual words in isolation but through the relationships that words establish with other lexical items in actual contexts of use. Contemporary research on collocation, for example, treats lexical items as lexemes that occur together with greater-than-random frequency in particular linguistic environments.

Lexical items can also be distinguished from grammatical or functional items on the basis of their capacity for membership expansion. Major lexical categories such as nouns, lexical verbs and adjectives, together with many adverbs, generally constitute relatively open classes. Their membership can be enlarged through processes such as derivation, compounding, borrowing, blending, abbreviation, conversion and coinage. This openness accounts partly for the ability of languages to respond to new social, cultural, technological and communicative experiences. Bauer (2021) devotes specific attention to processes involved in "making new words" and to the development of vocabulary, thereby demonstrating that lexical study necessarily includes both established vocabulary and processes of lexical expansion.

The distinction between lexical structure and lexical formation is also important. A lexical item may be simple, as in book and man; derived, as in unhappy and teacher; or compound, as in blackboard and churchgoer. Other lexical formations may arise through borrowing, conversion, blending,

clipping, acronyms and deliberate coinage. These processes should not be confused with collocation. While affixation and compounding are principally processes involved in the formation or structure of lexical items, collocation concerns the tendency of particular lexical items to occur together in recurrent patterns.

Lexicology is also closely related to lexical semantics, which investigates the meanings of lexical units and the semantic relationships that exist among them. Such relationships include synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, polysemy and homonymy. The study of lexical meaning consequently involves not only what individual words denote but also how their meanings are differentiated and related within the vocabulary of a language. Bauer's (2021) treatment of lexicology similarly brings together the study of word structure, meaning, lexical development, borrowing and other aspects of the vocabulary.

From a stylistic perspective, the study of lexis becomes particularly significant because writers and speakers make deliberate lexical choices from the linguistic resources available to them. Such choices can contribute to the expression of subject matter, viewpoint, identity, ideology, emotion and aesthetic effect. In Nigerian English, for instance, Obasi (2022) demonstrates that lexical innovation may arise when existing English vocabulary does not adequately meet communicative needs. Users may create new words or modify existing ones to express local cultural meanings and experiences. The study identifies processes such as coinage, transfer of meaning and culture, analogical creation and borrowing as sources of lexical innovation in Nigerian English.

This relationship between lexicology and stylistics is particularly relevant to the present study. Whereas lexicology provides the linguistic basis for examining lexical forms, meanings, relationships and processes of formation, stylistics investigates how such lexical resources are selected and deployed in particular texts or communicative contexts to produce particular effects. Lexical creativity, therefore, can be examined not merely as the formation of new words but as a stylistic resource through which a speaker or writer can foreground ideas, reinforce meanings and respond creatively to the communicative demands of a particular discourse community.

In the context of religious discourse, this perspective is especially useful because religious speakers may employ existing lexical items in specialised ways or introduce innovative expressions to communicate doctrinal concepts, spiritual experiences, moral positions and culturally situated meanings. Consequently, the study of lexical coinages requires attention not only to how new lexical forms are constructed, but also to why they are created, how they function in context and what stylistic or communicative effects they produce.

Lexical Coinage

Lexical coinage refers to the deliberate or spontaneous creation of a new lexical item, or the assignment of a new lexical form or meaning to an existing linguistic resource, in order to meet an emerging communicative need. It is therefore an important aspect of lexical innovation and vocabulary expansion. Al-Salman and Haider (2021) observe that periods of rapid social change can generate substantial numbers of new lexical forms and expressions, demonstrating the responsiveness of vocabulary to new experiences and communicative circumstances. Lexical coinage may involve processes such as compounding, derivation, blending, conversion, borrowing, semantic extension, analogy, abbreviation, and the creative recombination of existing linguistic

materials. Körtvélyessy, Štekauer, and Kačmár (2021), in their investigation of the formation of new complex words, demonstrate that creativity plays a significant role in the production of novel lexical forms, particularly where speakers balance the need for economical expression with the listener's need for semantic transparency. Coinage should therefore not be understood merely as the arbitrary invention of unfamiliar words; rather, it is a productive linguistic process through which speakers exploit the structural and semantic resources available within a language to produce expressions capable of communicating new or contextually specialised meanings.

The sociolinguistic dimension of lexical coinage is particularly significant because new words frequently emerge when speakers encounter experiences, concepts, institutions, cultural practices, or social realities for which existing vocabulary is inadequate. In the Nigerian context, Obasi (2022) explains that lexical innovation develops partly because English users in Nigeria need to fill lexical gaps and adapt English to local communicative circumstances. Significantly, she notes that speakers may "create new words, or bend the already existing words in English to bear a 'local colour' and content" (p. 65). This observation is important because it demonstrates that lexical coinage can perform both referential and identity-related functions: a coined expression may identify a new phenomenon while simultaneously encoding the cultural environment in which it originates. Furthermore, Obasi (2022) identifies coinage alongside transfer of meaning and culture, analogical creation, and direct borrowing from indigenous languages as processes through which distinctive lexical items develop in Nigerian English. Consequently, lexical coinage may arise from language contact, cultural adaptation, social change, technological development, institutional practices, or the communicative creativity of particular speech communities. The acceptability and eventual conventionalisation of such forms depend, however, on their circulation and recognition within a linguistic community; a one-time individual invention does not necessarily become an established lexical item**.**

From a stylistic perspective, lexical coinage extends beyond the mere expansion of vocabulary because writers and speakers can deliberately manipulate lexical resources to achieve particular communicative and aesthetic effects. Maledo (2021), for example, demonstrates how Nigerian poet Joe Ushie creatively employs morphological resources such as compounding, affixation, blending, lexical hyphenation, and lexical bracketing to produce lexical innovations that are "stylistically and thematically motivated." Lexical coinage can consequently contribute to foregrounding, emphasis, imagery, humour, ideological expression, cultural representation, emotional colouring, and the construction of specialised discourse. In religious discourse, such creativity can be particularly significant because preachers may coin or creatively adapt lexical expressions to encapsulate theological ideas, intensify exhortation, name spiritual experiences, or make abstract religious concepts more accessible and memorable to their audiences. Thus, lexical coinage may be regarded in this study as a stylistically motivated process whereby existing linguistic materials are creatively manipulated, or new lexical forms are introduced, to communicate meanings that are particularly relevant to the social, cultural, communicative, and rhetorical context of a discourse. This conception makes lexical coinage especially relevant to the analysis of innovative lexical expressions in religious sermons, where lexical creativity may simultaneously perform semantic, pragmatic, rhetorical, and stylistic functions.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Lexical Innovation

Lexical innovation refers broadly to the emergence, modification, adaptation, or introduction of lexical forms and meanings that are new, relatively unfamiliar, or newly functional within a particular linguistic community. It is a natural consequence of the dynamic character of language, since speakers continually develop new expressions to represent new objects, experiences, technologies, social practices, cultural realities, and conceptual distinctions. Al-Salman and Haider (2021) demonstrate that periods of significant social change can stimulate extensive lexical innovation as speakers create and adopt new expressions to describe emerging realities. Lexical innovation may therefore involve the creation of an entirely new word, the modification of an existing word, the extension of an established meaning, or the incorporation and adaptation of lexical material from another language. In this broader sense, lexical innovation encompasses several mechanisms, including coinage, borrowing, compounding, derivation, blending, conversion, abbreviation, analogy, semantic extension, and other forms of lexical restructuring. Obasi (2022), in her study of Nigerian English, similarly demonstrates that lexical innovation may arise through the creation of new words as well as through the adaptation of existing English forms to express meanings associated with Nigerian cultural and communicative realities. Lexical innovation should consequently be understood not simply as the production of new words but as the broader process through which the lexical resources of a language are expanded, modified, or creatively adapted.

The distinction between lexical innovation and lexical coinage is particularly important. Whereas *lexical innovation* functions as a general term covering different forms of novelty within the lexicon, *lexical coinage* refers more specifically to the creation or introduction of a new lexical form. Thus, coinage constitutes one possible manifestation of lexical innovation rather than being completely synonymous with it. Körtvélyessy, Štekauer, and Kačmár (2021) emphasise the role of creativity in the formation of new complex words, showing that speakers can construct novel lexical expressions by manipulating existing linguistic resources in systematic ways. Similarly, Obasi (2022) identifies coinages, analogical creations, direct borrowings, and transfers of meaning and culture among the processes responsible for lexical innovation in Nigerian English. This distinction is useful because an existing English word may become lexically innovative without being newly coined if it acquires a culturally specific Nigerian meaning. Conversely, a newly coined word represents lexical innovation because a novel lexical form has been introduced into use. Lexical innovation can therefore be represented as the broader category, with lexical coinage, borrowing, semantic extension, analogy, compounding, derivation, blending, and related processes functioning as particular routes through which lexical novelty enters or develops within a language.

Lexical innovation also has important stylistic and sociocultural implications because innovative lexical forms do not merely expand vocabulary; they can encode the identity, experiences, values, and communicative purposes of the communities that employ them. Obasi (2022) observes that Nigerian users of English may "create new words, or bend the already existing words in English to bear a 'local colour' and content" (p. 65). Such innovation demonstrates the capacity of language users to appropriate an established linguistic code and reshape it to accommodate local meanings and communicative requirements. In stylistic discourse, lexical innovation may consequently serve

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

functions such as foregrounding, emphasis, humour, imagery, cultural representation, ideological expression, emotional intensification, and semantic compression. In religious discourse, for instance, preachers may innovate lexically by creating or adapting expressions that capture theological concepts, spiritual experiences, moral positions, or culturally familiar interpretations in memorable forms. Lexical innovation is therefore particularly relevant to the present study because innovative lexical expressions in sermons may represent not only additions to the vocabulary of the discourse but also deliberate stylistic choices through which the preacher constructs meaning, foregrounds particular ideas, establishes audience rapport, and communicates religious experience. The analysis of lexical innovation should accordingly consider both the linguistic process through which an innovative expression is formed and the contextual and stylistic function that the expression performs within the discourse.

Phonostylistics

Phonostylistics is the branch of linguistic stylistics concerned with the investigation of how phonetic and phonological resources are selected, organised, and manipulated to produce particular stylistic, expressive, pragmatic, or communicative effects. It therefore examines the relationship between the sound structure of language and the context in which speech is produced and interpreted. Alymbaeva (2020) describes phonostylistics as concerned with the sound composition of texts and the stylistic significance attached to their phonetic features, while Norova and Babajanova (2023) define it more specifically as a branch of linguistic stylistics that studies "the sound component of speech and the connotation of phonetic means." This conception extends phonostylistic analysis beyond the description of individual sounds to the investigation of how sound patterns contribute to meaning and expressiveness. Phonostylistics may consequently examine segmental phenomena, including the selection, repetition, variation, or distribution of consonants and vowels, as well as suprasegmental phenomena such as stress, rhythm, tempo, pause, pitch movement, and intonation. Saparova (2020), in a comparative study of Russian and Uzbek, similarly distinguishes segmental and suprasegmental phonostylistic units and demonstrates that their stylistic functions are shaped by the phonological characteristics of individual languages. Phonostylistics can therefore be understood as the systematic study of the stylistic potential of sound in actual language use.

An important concern of phonostylistics is the way speakers exploit phonetic and prosodic choices to foreground information, signal attitudes, organise discourse, and influence listeners' interpretation. This is particularly evident in spoken communication, where meaning is conveyed not only through lexical and grammatical choices but also through the manner in which an utterance is delivered. Arvaniti, Grice, and D'Imperio (2026) emphasise that intonation plays a crucial role in communication by signalling syntactic constituency, information structure, and conversational implications. Their observation reinforces the view that prosody is not an ornamental addition to verbal language but an important component of meaning construction. In a similar view, Decheva and Aristova (2023), examining the phonostylistic characteristics of university lecturing, demonstrate the relevance of phonostylistic variation to different rhetorical and communicative situations. Phonostylistic resources may include emphatic stress, strategic pauses, changes in tempo, pitch variation, rhythmical patterning, repetition of sounds, alliteration,

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

assonance, consonance, rhyme, onomatopoeia, and other forms of sound patterning. Such features may function to highlight important information, create emphasis, sustain attention, express emotion, mark transitions, establish interpersonal relationships, or enhance memorability. Phonostylistics is thus concerned not simply with *what* is said but, importantly, with how the sound pattern and delivery of an utterance contribute to the communicative effect of what is said.

Within spoken religious discourse, phonostylistics assumes particular significance because preaching is fundamentally an oral and rhetorical activity in which the speaker seeks to inform, persuade, exhort, admonish, motivate, and emotionally engage an audience. A preacher may, consciously or otherwise, manipulate stress, pitch, rhythm, tempo, pauses, repetition, and other sound-patterning devices to foreground theological propositions, intensify exhortations, dramatise biblical narratives, or make particular expressions more memorable. Norova and Babajanova (2023) note that phonostylistics investigates the use of such features as "sound, rhythm, tone, stress, tempo" in relation to communicative circumstances, thereby demonstrating the close connection between sound organisation and stylistic meaning. Similarly, Alymbaeva (2020) shows that the sound organisation of a text can contribute to its expressive and stylistic character. Consequently, for the present study, phonostylistics is understood as the systematic examination of the stylistic and communicative functions of segmental and suprasegmental sound features in spoken discourse. In the analysis of Kumuyi's sermons, this perspective makes it possible to examine how sound repetition, alliteration, assonance, consonance, stress, rhythm, tempo, pause, pitch and intonation may be strategically employed to foreground expressions, reinforce ideas, evoke emotional responses, enhance rhetorical force, and facilitate audience engagement and recall.

Sermon Outlines as Didactic Texts

A sermon outline may be regarded as a condensed written representation of a religious message prepared to guide the preacher in the oral presentation of instruction, exhortation, or theological reflection. Unlike a sermon transcript, which records the sermon substantially as delivered, an outline presents the principal ideas, scriptural references, arguments, illustrations, and points of application in a deliberately economical form. Charles (2020) aptly observes that "a sermon outline charts the path for the sermon to reach its intended destination", thereby highlighting its structural rather than merely documentary function. The outline consequently serves as an organisational framework through which the preacher can develop a coherent sequence of ideas while retaining sufficient flexibility for oral elaboration. Recent linguistic studies likewise treat the sermon as an important genre of religious discourse in which language performs instructional, persuasive, rhetorical, and affective functions. Adam (2021), for instance, demonstrates that persuasion is a central feature of Protestant sermons, while Razzaq (2023) identifies lexical choices, grammatical structures, rhetorical devices, emotional appeals, logical reasoning, religious authority, and storytelling as significant resources in sermon discourse. Sermon outlines may therefore be understood as instructional texts whose written organisation provides the framework for the subsequent construction of an orally delivered religious message.

As a religious genre, the sermon outline is normally anchored in a biblical or other authoritative scriptural text from which its theme and principal propositions are developed. The textual basis

provides the theological foundation, while supporting biblical references, explanations, illustrations, exhortations, and applications extend the central message and direct the audience towards a particular understanding or response. Rossette-Crake (2023) situates the sermon within the broader tradition of religious oratory and observes that linguistic choices in religious oratory are closely related to contextual variables, participant roles, and communicative purposes. Similarly, Hassouni and Madi (2022) demonstrate that contemporary religious discourse is shaped by linguistic choices associated with the particular religious and communicative context in which it occurs. In this respect, the sermon outline can be conceptualised as a specialised written genre of religious discourse whose primary function is not simply to preserve information but to organise scriptural knowledge for oral instruction and persuasion. Its effectiveness consequently depends partly on the careful selection and arrangement of lexical items, semantic relations, scriptural references, and propositions through which abstract theological concepts and moral principles are made intelligible to the intended audience. The lexical and semantic resources of both the principal biblical text and its supporting references are therefore relevant to the interpretation of the message and to the analysis of the linguistic choices through which its themes are developed.

Structurally, sermon outlines commonly consist of identifiable functional components, although their arrangement may vary according to the preacher, denomination, subject matter, and rhetorical purpose. These components may include the textual or scriptural basis, title or thematic statement, introduction, exposition or discussion, supporting points, applications or exhortations, and conclusion. The textual basis establishes the scriptural foundation; the thematic statement identifies the central proposition; the introduction establishes the subject and prepares the audience for the message; the exposition develops and interprets the principal ideas; supporting points and scriptural references provide elaboration and evidence; while the conclusion consolidates the major ideas and may direct the audience towards an appropriate religious or moral response. Such organisation is significant for cohesion and coherence because the relationships among the components enable ideas to progress systematically rather than appear as isolated propositions. Recent cohesion research on sermons confirms that cohesive resources such as reference, conjunction, ellipsis, substitution, reiteration, and collocation contribute to semantic connectedness and the continuous development of ideas within religious messages. Consequently, sermon outlines may be viewed as religious instructional texts whose structural organisation, lexical selection, semantic relationships, and cohesive resources provide the written framework for the coherent, persuasive, and rhetorically effective oral delivery of religious teaching.

Lexical and Phonostylistic Creativity in Preaching

Lexical and phonostylistic creativity constitute important resources through which preachers can construct distinctive, memorable, and communicatively effective messages. At the lexical level, preachers may create new expressions, adapt existing words, extend meanings, or combine linguistic elements in innovative ways to express theological concepts and respond to particular communicative needs. Obasi (2022), in her study of Nigerian English, observes that language users may "create new words, or bend the already existing words in English to bear a 'local colour' and content" (p. 65), demonstrating how lexical creativity can arise from the need to communicate

meanings that existing lexical resources do not adequately express. In religious contexts, such creativity may serve to condense complex theological ideas into memorable expressions and give particular concepts greater textual and rhetorical prominence. Swart, Hankela, and Nyamnjoh (2021) similarly demonstrate that language practices can constitute forms of religious innovation, particularly where linguistic choices are shaped by the communicative and evangelistic needs of faith communities. Their study consequently supports the view that innovation in religious language is situated within particular social, communicative, and religious contexts.

Phonostylistic creativity complements lexical creativity by exploiting the sound patterning of language to reinforce emphasis, memorability, aesthetic effect, and communicative force. Norova and Babajanova (2023) describe phonostylistics as a branch of linguistic stylistics concerned with the functional and stylistic possibilities of sound resources, including rhythm, stress, tempo, pause, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and repetition. In preaching, such resources may work together with innovative lexical choices to foreground significant expressions and reinforce the thematic and rhetorical organisation of the message. This relationship is particularly relevant to the study of Kumuyi's sermons. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026), in their pragma-prosodic study of selected sermons of Kumuyi, demonstrate that stress-bearing lexical items, rhythmic groupings, and intonation participate in the realisation of doctrinal and persuasive meanings. The present study builds on these insights by examining lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations together, with particular attention to how creative lexical choices and sound-based patterning contribute to the stylistic distinctiveness, emphasis, memorability, and communicative effectiveness of selected sermon outlines.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK Word-Formation Theory

Word-Formation Theory provides a systematic account of how new words are created, structured, and incorporated into the vocabulary of a language. Bauer (2021) places word formation within the broader study of English words, particularly their morphological structure and the processes through which new lexical items are made. The theory therefore draws attention to such productive processes as affixation, compounding, conversion, blending, clipping, back-formation, and other mechanisms of lexical expansion. In the context of the present study, the theory is particularly relevant because lexical coinages in sermon discourse may involve the creative combination, modification, or extension of existing linguistic forms to express meanings that are appropriate to particular theological and communicative contexts. Körtvélyessy, Štekauer, and Kačmár (2021) emphasise this creative dimension, describing word-formation creativity as the ability of language users to select among alternative ways of representing or naming a concept. Their study consequently treats the formation of new complex words not simply as an automatic application of morphological rules but as a process in which speakers exercise choices in responding to particular naming needs.

The relevance of Word-Formation Theory to the present study lies in its capacity to identify and explain the structural mechanisms underlying the lexical coinages found in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) W. F. Kumuyi. The theory makes it possible to examine whether a coinage results from processes such as compounding, derivation, conversion, blending, abbreviation, or the creative modification of an existing lexical item, and to relate the formal structure of each

coinage to its contextual meaning and communicative purpose. Körtvélyessy et al. (2021) examine word formation as a creative process, demonstrating the relevance of individual creative potential and the competing demands of economy of expression and semantic transparency in the formation of new complex words. Thus, Word-Formation Theory provides an appropriate analytical foundation for determining how lexical coinages are formed and why particular lexical forms may be selected for expressive, emphatic, memorable, or persuasive purposes in preaching. It is especially useful for the present study because the investigation is concerned not merely with identifying unusual words in Kumuyi's sermon outlines, but with analysing the morphological processes and creative choices through which such lexical innovations are constructed.

Phonostylistics as a Stylistic Framework

Phonostylistics is a branch of linguistic stylistics concerned with the stylistic and communicative potential of sound patterns in language. It examines how speakers or writers exploit phonetic and prosodic resources to produce particular expressive, aesthetic, emphatic, and communicative effects. Norova and Babajanova (2023) describe phonostylistics as a branch of linguistic stylistics that studies "the sound component of speech and the connotation of phonetic means," thereby emphasising that sound organisation may contribute meanings beyond the lexical or grammatical content of an utterance. The framework therefore accommodates both **segmental features**, such as the patterned use or repetition of consonants and vowels, and **suprasegmental features**, including stress, rhythm, intonation, pause, tempo, and pitch. Yadgarova (2021) similarly identifies intonation, pause, and stress as important phonostylistic resources through which speech may acquire connotative and expressive meanings. Phonostylistics consequently provides a useful stylistic perspective for examining such devices as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, sound repetition, rhythmic patterning, and other forms of phonological foregrounding in discourse.

As a stylistic framework, phonostylistics is particularly relevant to the present study because preaching is fundamentally an oral communicative activity in which the organisation of sound can reinforce emphasis, memorability, emotional appeal, and rhetorical force. Although the present corpus consists of written sermon outlines, phonostylistic analysis can legitimately be applied to sound patterns that are recoverable from the textual data, especially alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, repetition, and other forms of phonological patterning. Where features such as actual pitch movement, tempo, or intonation are concerned, however, their analysis requires corresponding auditory evidence or explicit prosodic marking and should not be inferred solely from an unmarked written outline. Within the present study, phonostylistics therefore functions as a framework for examining how the deliberate patterning and foregrounding of sound resources interact with lexical choices to enhance the stylistic distinctiveness and communicative effectiveness of Kumuyi's sermon outlines. Norova and Babajanova (2023) note that phonostylistics examines the functional and stylistic possibilities of sound according to communicative purpose, content, circumstances, and context. This orientation makes the framework suitable for investigating the phonostylistic innovations through which selected sermon expressions may become more emphatic, memorable, aesthetically striking, or rhetorically effective.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed principally from the work of M. A. K. Halliday views language as a social semiotic system through which speakers and writers make meaning in particular contexts. Rather than treating linguistic forms as isolated structures, SFL is concerned with the relationship between **linguistic choices, meanings, and the social contexts in which those choices are made**. Hoang (2021) explains that SFL provides a framework for interpreting meaning in relation to social context and emphasises the concept of metafunctions as a fundamental property of language. The framework recognises three major metafunctions: the **ideational metafunction**, through which language represents experience and construes reality; the **interpersonal metafunction**, through which language establishes social relationships, attitudes, and positions between participants; and the **textual metafunction**, through which linguistic resources organise meanings into coherent and cohesive texts. As Halliday's functional perspective is concerned with language as a meaning-making resource, linguistic choices are understood in relation to the purposes for which language is being used rather than simply as formal grammatical selections. The Cambridge *Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics* likewise presents SFL as a framework for analysing how language functions to make meaning in context and identifies ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning as its major metafunctional dimensions (Thompson et al., 2019).

The relevance of SFL to the present study lies in its ability to provide a **functional interpretation of lexical and phonostylistic choices** in Kumuyi's sermon outlines. While Word-Formation Theory explains the morphological processes through which lexical coinages are constructed and phonostylistics accounts for the stylistic possibilities of sound patterning, SFL helps to explain what these linguistic choices accomplish within the communicative context of preaching. Lexical innovations may, for example, construe particular religious experiences or theological concepts (**ideational meaning**), establish relationships with the congregation and express exhortation, evaluation, conviction, or solidarity (**interpersonal meaning**), and contribute to the organisation and prominence of particular ideas within the sermon (**textual meaning**). In this respect, the framework allows the study to move beyond merely identifying innovative lexical forms or sound patterns to considering their contribution to meaning and communicative purpose. Hoang (2021) demonstrates the applicability of the metafunctional model to the interpretation of texts in their social contexts, while Thibault (2021) further argues that linguistic representation is not adequately understood through the experiential metafunction alone but involves the interaction of the metafunctions.

Therefore, Systemic Functional Linguistics serves as a **supporting interpretive framework** in the present study rather than as the principal theory for classifying lexical coinages or phonostylistic innovations. Its value is in explaining how the formal choices identified through Word-Formation Theory and phonostylistic analysis function within the communicative purposes of preaching. The framework is particularly appropriate because sermon discourse is situated within a specific social and religious context in which the preacher seeks to communicate theological meanings, influence attitudes, exhort listeners, and organise ideas for effective reception. Thus, the three metafunctions provide complementary perspectives for interpreting the communicative significance of the lexical and sound-based choices identified in the selected sermon outlines. SFL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

consequently strengthens the present analysis by connecting **form, meaning, function, and context**, enabling the study to account for not only how lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations are constructed, but also how they contribute to the overall communicative and stylistic effectiveness of the sermons.

Applicability of the Theoretical Frameworks to the Present Study

The three theoretical perspectives adopted in this study are complementary because each addresses a different but interconnected dimension of the linguistic phenomena under investigation. Word-Formation Theory provides the principal framework for identifying and explaining the morphological processes through which lexical coinages are constructed, including the creative combination, modification, or derivation of existing linguistic resources. Phonostylistics provides the basis for examining the stylistic and communicative effects of sound patterning, including alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, repetition, and other forms of phonological foregrounding that are observable in the sermon outlines. Norova and Babajanova (2023) explain that phonostylistics is concerned with the functional and stylistic possibilities of sound resources in relation to communicative purpose and context. The two frameworks therefore correspond directly to the principal analytical concerns of the study: how lexical coinages are formed and how sound resources are creatively patterned for stylistic effect.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) serves as a complementary interpretive framework by relating these formal linguistic choices to their functions within the communicative context of preaching. Hoang (2021) demonstrates that SFL's metafunctional framework can be used to interpret how linguistic choices construct meaning in social context, particularly through experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings. In the present study, this perspective makes it possible to consider how lexical coinages may construe theological ideas and experiences, establish interpersonal relationships between the preacher and congregation, and contribute to the organisation and prominence of sermon themes. Similarly, phonostylistic choices may reinforce emphasis, evaluation, persuasion, and textual prominence. The study therefore does not treat the three frameworks as competing explanations; rather, Word-Formation Theory explains the structural formation of lexical coinages, Phonostylistics accounts for the stylistic deployment of sound resources, while SFL helps interpret the functional significance of these choices within the communicative context of preaching. Such complementarity is consistent with Hoang's (2021) demonstration of the usefulness of SFL for interpreting linguistic meaning in relation to social context.

The combined application of these frameworks is consequently appropriate for the analysis of the selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) W. F. Kumuyi. At the formational level, Word-Formation Theory enables the study to classify and explain the processes underlying identified lexical coinages; at the stylistic level, Phonostylistics enables the investigation of sound patterning and its potential rhetorical and aesthetic effects; and at the functional level, SFL provides a means of relating these linguistic choices to the meanings and communicative purposes realised in the sermons. This integrated approach enables the study to move beyond merely listing unusual lexical forms or sound patterns and to examine how such resources work together to enhance emphasis, memorability, thematic prominence, persuasion, and communicative effectiveness. The frameworks are therefore applied according to their respective analytical strengths, with Word-

Formation Theory and Phonostylistics serving as the principal analytical bases and SFL providing the broader functional interpretation of the findings.

Studies on Lexical Coinage and Lexical Innovation

Recent scholarship has continued to demonstrate that lexical coinage and lexical innovation are important mechanisms through which speakers respond creatively to new communicative needs. Körtvélyessy, Štekauer, and Kačmár (2021), in their study of the formation of new complex words, conceptualise word-formation creativity as the ability of language users to create new lexical forms in response to particular naming needs. Their findings draw attention to the role of creativity in word formation and show that the construction of new complex words involves choices between competing considerations such as economy of expression and semantic transparency. In the Nigerian context, Obasi (2022) examined patterns of lexical innovation in Nigerian English and found that lexical items arise through several processes, including coinage, analogical creation, transfer of meaning and culture, and direct borrowing from indigenous languages. Significantly, Obasi (2022) observes that Nigerian users of English may "create new words, or bend the already existing words in English to bear a 'local colour' and content" (p. 65). This observation is particularly relevant to the present study because it establishes lexical innovation as a productive response to communicative and sociocultural needs within Nigerian English.

Studies of lexical innovation further indicate that newly created or modified lexical forms cannot always be understood solely in terms of their formal structure; their interpretation is closely related to the contexts and communicative purposes in which they occur. Körtvélyessy et al. (2021) demonstrate that creativity is integral to the process of lexical formation, while Obasi (2022) shows how Nigerian users adapt English lexical resources to express meanings shaped by their local sociocultural environment. These studies provide an important empirical foundation for examining lexical coinages in religious discourse, where preachers may similarly create, modify, combine, or extend lexical resources to express theological concepts and make particular messages distinctive and memorable. The present study therefore draws on these insights but shifts the empirical focus to selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) W. F. Kumuyi, with particular attention to the lexical coinages occurring within religious discourse and their relationship to the communicative and stylistic purposes of preaching.

Studies on Lexical Innovations in Religious Discourse

Recent scholarship demonstrates that lexical innovation is an important dimension of religious language because religious communities continually adapt linguistic resources to express doctrinal concepts, social experiences, cultural meanings, and emerging communicative needs. Obasi (2022), in her study of lexical innovation in Nigerian English, found that users create new lexical forms and modify existing ones to fill communicative gaps and give English localised meanings. Her analysis identifies coinage, analogical creation, direct borrowing, and the transfer of meaning and culture among the processes through which lexical innovation develops in Nigerian English. Although her study was not restricted to religious discourse, its findings are particularly relevant to Nigerian religious language because they establish the sociocultural and communicative conditions under which innovative lexical forms emerge. Similarly, Ajayi (2021), examining lexical

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

items in White Garment Christian Church discourse in Yoruba, demonstrates that religious beliefs and shared church-specific knowledge influence the meanings associated with particular lexical items. His findings show that lexical items used within a religious community may acquire both conventional and context-dependent meanings through participants' shared knowledge of language, doctrine, experience, and situation.

The relationship between language innovation and religious practice has also received attention beyond the Nigerian context. Swart, Hankela, and Nyamnjoh (2021) identify language practices as an important dimension of religious innovation in Pentecostal charismatic churches, particularly in relation to belonging, diversity, and evangelisation. Their study is significant because it demonstrates that linguistic practices can participate in the construction and negotiation of religious identity rather than merely transmit pre-existing religious content. Within Nigerian Christian discourse, Ayansola (2021) similarly demonstrates that lexical and other linguistic choices in sermons can perform important pragmatic functions in the communication of religious and ideological meanings. Taken together, these studies suggest that innovation in religious language should be examined not merely as the creation of unusual words but as a context-sensitive linguistic practice through which religious speakers construct meaning, communicate doctrine, establish relationships with audiences, and respond to particular sociocultural circumstances.

Despite these contributions, an important analytical space remains concerning the relationship between lexical innovation and phonostylistic creativity in Nigerian Christian sermons. Existing research has examined lexical innovation in Nigerian English and context-dependent lexical meanings in Christian discourse, while recent research has also begun to address the prosodic organisation of Kumuyi's sermons. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026), for example, analyse selected sermons of William Folorunso Kumuyi from a pragma-prosodic perspective, focusing on stress-bearing lexical items, rhythmic groupings, and intonation patterns. Their findings indicate that stress, rhythm, and intonation contribute to the foregrounding of doctrine and the pragmatic functions of affirmation, admonition, persuasion, and assertion. However, their focus is on prosodic organisation and pragmatic meaning, rather than on the stylistic interaction between newly created or creatively adapted lexical forms and sound-based rhetorical patterning. The present study therefore extends existing scholarship by examining lexical innovations in Kumuyi's Sunday sermon outlines alongside their phonostylistic significance. It is particularly concerned with how lexical creativity may interact with sound patterning to produce emphasis, memorability, rhetorical force, and stylistic foregrounding in religious discourse. The contribution of the study thus lies not in claiming that lexical or prosodic features of Nigerian sermons have previously been ignored, but in investigating their intersection within a single stylistic analysis of Kumuyi's sermon outlines.

Studies on Phonostylistic Features

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognised phonological and prosodic features as important resources for the construction of meaning and stylistic identity in spoken discourse. Holliday (2021), reviewing research on prosody and sociolinguistic variation, observes that prosodic variables have remained comparatively underdescribed despite their significance for understanding variation in speech. Similarly, D'Onofrio and Stecker (2020) demonstrate that speakers use stylistic variability

in speech to construct socially meaningful personae, thereby showing that phonetic choices can contribute to meanings extending beyond the propositional content of an utterance. More specifically, prosodic features such as stress, rhythm, pitch, and intonation can help speakers signal prominence, information structure, stance, interpersonal relations, and communicative intention. Recent research by Oyebola and Ilekura (2025) is particularly relevant to the Nigerian context. Their study of Nigerian English reports a relative scarcity of research on speech rhythm and notes that suprasegmental features including stress, rhythm, and intonation remain less extensively investigated than segmental features. Their findings further demonstrate that Nigerian English exhibits distinctive rhythmic patterns, confirming the importance of examining prosodic phenomena within the Nigerian linguistic environment.

Research has also begun to apply prosodic analysis directly to Nigerian religious discourse. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026) examine selected sermons of William Folorunso Kumuyi from a pragma-prosodic perspective, focusing on stress-bearing lexical items, rhythmic groupings, and intonation patterns. They report that stress functions to foreground and reinforce doctrinal content, rhythm contributes to the amplification and stabilisation of theological ideas, while intonation participates in the expression of affirmation, admonition, persuasion, and assertion. Their study is particularly significant for the present research because it establishes that prosody is not merely an accompanying feature of sermonic delivery but can contribute directly to the construction and interpretation of religious meaning. The study nevertheless approaches Kumuyi's sermons primarily from a pragma-prosodic perspective, whereas phonostylistics is concerned more specifically with the stylistic significance of sound patterning and phonological choices. This distinction provides a useful basis for examining features such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, sound repetition, stress, rhythm, pause, tempo, and intonation as stylistic resources within religious discourse.

Although these studies have advanced knowledge of prosody, sociophonetic variation, and sermonic discourse, there remains scope for a more explicitly phonostylistic investigation of Nigerian Christian sermons, particularly in relation to the interaction between sound patterning and lexical creativity. The recent study of Kumuyi by Udaa et al. (2026) addresses stress, rhythm, and intonation, but does not principally investigate how these features interact with lexical innovations or other stylistically foregrounded lexical choices. The present study therefore approaches phonostylistic features from an integrated stylistic perspective, examining how sound-based resources may reinforce, foreground, intensify, or make memorable innovative lexical expressions, particularly, in Kumuyi's Sunday sermon outlines. The study consequently does not claim that phonological or prosodic features in Nigerian sermons have been entirely neglected; rather, it identifies a more specific area of investigation at the intersection of lexical innovation and phonostylistic patterning. Exploring this identified lacuna, in the literature, is crucial for understanding how linguistic creativity operates simultaneously at the lexical and phonological levels in religious discourse.

Studies on Phonostylistic Features/Innovation in Religious Discourse

Recent studies of religious discourse have demonstrated that phonological and prosodic resources contribute substantially to the stylistic organisation and communicative effectiveness of

preaching. Okumo (2025), in a phonological analysis of Prophet Odumeje's sermons and public speeches, identifies a range of phonological and phonostylistic features, including metathesis, omission, insertion, syllable repetition, alliteration, assonance, code-switching, code-mixing, substitution, and stress. The study reports that these features are used stylistically to produce rhetorical effects, enhance audience engagement, and contribute to the preacher's distinctive communicative style and identity. In a related study of Islamic religious rhetoric, Saadiah, Syafii, and Ibragimov (2025) examine the relationship between prosodic features and pragmatic effects in Mufti Menk's preaching. Using phonetic analysis and PRAAT, they demonstrate that particular intonation patterns are associated with different speech acts and communicative intentions, thereby showing that suprasegmental resources can contribute to the interpretation and persuasive force of religious communication.

Research focusing specifically on Nigerian Pentecostal preaching has also begun to give greater attention to the relationship between prosody and sermonic meaning. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026), in their study of selected sermons of William Folorunso Kumuyi, analyse stress-bearing lexical items, rhythmic groupings, and intonation patterns within a pragma-prosodic framework. Their findings indicate that stress can foreground doctrinal content, rhythm can reinforce theological centrality, and intonation can contribute to affirmation, admonition, persuasion, and assertion. These findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they establish that sound patterning and prosodic organisation are significant components of Kumuyi's sermonic style. However, the present study differs in both corpus and analytical emphasis: whereas Udaa et al. (2026) examine the prosodic realisation of three delivered sermons, the present study focuses on **twelve selected written Sunday sermon outlines** and investigates phonostylistic innovations that can be identified from the textual data alongside lexical coinages. Consequently, features dependent on actual acoustic realisation such as pitch movement, tempo, and intonation are not inferred from the written outlines unless they are explicitly marked or supported by corresponding audio evidence.

Taken together, these studies establish that phonological and prosodic choices can perform important stylistic, rhetorical, pragmatic, and persuasive functions in religious discourse. They also indicate a movement from treating sound features as merely formal properties towards examining their contribution to meaning, audience engagement, religious identity, and rhetorical effectiveness. The present study extends this line of inquiry by bringing **lexical coinage and phonostylistic innovation into the same analytical frame**, thereby examining not only the sound-based resources employed in selected sermon outlines but also how such resources interact with creative lexical choices to produce emphasis, memorability, thematic prominence, and stylistic distinctiveness in Kumuyi's preaching.

Studies on Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi

Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi has attracted scholarly attention not only for his theological and evangelical influence but also for the linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of his preaching. Earlier linguistic research has examined his sermons from pragmatic, discourse-analytic, and stylistic perspectives. Bahago (1999), for instance, investigated the language of religion in selected sermons of Kumuyi from a pragmatic perspective, with particular attention to contextual features,

speech acts, and the interpretation of illocutionary force. Similarly, Adeyanju (2010) examined language and style in selected message outlines of Kumuyi, demonstrating the relevance of linguistic choices to the organisation and effectiveness of sermonic discourse. More recently, Akinwotu (2021) incorporated selected sermons of Kumuyi alongside those of other Nigerian Pentecostal preachers in a pragma-rhetorical investigation of persuasive and argumentative strategies. These studies establish that Kumuyi's preaching constitutes a significant site for linguistic inquiry rather than an unexplored area of research.

Recent scholarship has extended attention to the prosodic dimension of Kumuyi's preaching. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026) specifically examined selected sermons of Kumuyi through a pragma-prosodic framework integrating Systemic Phonology, Metrical Phonology, and Pragmatic Act Theory. Their analysis focuses on stress-bearing lexical items, rhythmic groupings, and intonation patterns, showing how prosodic resources participate in foregrounding doctrine and performing functions such as affirmation, admonition, persuasion, and assertion. This study is particularly relevant to the present research because it demonstrates that the prosodic organisation of Kumuyi's sermons has already received direct scholarly attention. Consequently, the present study does not claim to be the first investigation of phonological or prosodic features in Kumuyi's preaching; rather, it seeks to extend existing scholarship by examining the relationship between *lexical creativity and phonostylistic patterning* in a corpus of his Sunday sermon outlines.

The specific contribution of the present study therefore lies in its integrated examination of lexical innovation and phonostylistic creativity as complementary resources of sermonic style. While previous studies have variously addressed pragmatic meaning, speech acts, rhetorical persuasion, discourse organisation, general stylistic features, and prosody in Kumuyi's preaching, less attention has been directed specifically to how newly created, adapted, or contextually innovative lexical expressions interact with sound-based stylistic resources to achieve emphasis, memorability, persuasion, and audience engagement. The present study addresses this narrower analytical space by examining selected Sunday sermon outlines systematically, thereby contributing to scholarship on Nigerian religious discourse, lexical creativity, and phonostylistics.

Synthesis of Empirical Review and Research Gap

The empirical studies reviewed demonstrate that lexical innovation and phonostylistic patterning are productive resources through which language users respond to communicative, sociocultural, rhetorical, and religious needs. Obasi (2022), for instance, establishes that lexical innovation in Nigerian English occurs through processes including coinage, analogical creation, transfer of meaning and culture, and borrowing from indigenous languages. She further observes that Nigerian users may "create new words, or bend the already existing words in English to bear a 'local colour' and content" (p. 65), thereby demonstrating the relationship between lexical creativity and contextual communicative needs. Similarly, studies of religious discourse have shown that linguistic choices may function as resources for religious innovation and persuasion. Research on phonostylistic and prosodic features has also established that sound patterning can contribute to rhetorical and pragmatic meaning. For example, Saadiah, Syafii, and Ibragimov (2025) demonstrate through their analysis of Mufti Menk's preaching that particular intonation patterns

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

are associated with specific speech acts and communicative intentions, illustrating the contribution of suprasegmental features to religious rhetoric.

The reviewed scholarship is particularly significant for studies of Pastor (Dr.) W. F. Kumuyi because recent research has begun to address the prosodic dimension of his sermons. Udaa, Gbatoon, and Olaniru (2026) examine selected sermons of Kumuyi within a pragma-prosodic framework incorporating Systemic Phonology, Metrical Phonology, and Pragmatic Act Theory. Their study demonstrates scholarly interest in the relationship between prosody and meaning in Kumuyi's preaching and therefore makes it inappropriate to claim that prosodic analysis of his sermons has received no attention. Nevertheless, the empirical literature reviewed remains differentiated by its principal analytical concerns: studies of lexical innovation largely investigate general Nigerian English usage, while studies of religious discourse and preaching have tended to examine pragmatic, rhetorical, or prosodic dimensions. Even the recent Kumuyi study focuses specifically on pragma-prosodic features rather than on the interaction between lexical coinage and phonostylistic patterning.

Consequently, the research gap addressed by the present study is **not the absence of research on lexical innovation, religious discourse, phonostylistics, or Kumuyi's sermons individually**, but the limited empirical attention to their intersection in the selected corpus. The present study therefore examines lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations together in twelve purposely selected Sunday sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) W. F. Kumuyi. It seeks to identify the lexical processes underlying the coinages and the phonostylistic resources evident in the written outlines, while considering how the two sets of resources contribute to emphasis, memorability, thematic prominence, and communicative effectiveness. In this respect, the study extends existing scholarship by bringing **lexical formation and sound-based stylistic patterning into a single analytical account of Nigerian Christian sermon discourse**, rather than treating them as independent linguistic phenomena.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design, nature and source of data collection, sample and sampling technique, analytical framework and procedures adopted for the study.

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design, rooted in stylistic analysis. This design is appropriate because stylistics investigates unique patterns of language use and their communicative functions, emphasizing interpretation rather than numerical quantification.

Nature and Source of Data Collection

The data for this study comprise twelve (12) purposively selected Sunday sermon outlines authored by Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi. The sermon outlines were obtained from the official website of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DCLM) by request, and through sermon materials circulated by email to the ministry's nations, states, and regional offices. The selected materials are publicly accessible in both print and digital formats and constitute the primary textual data for the study. The official DCLM website and its sermon resources (https://www.dclm.org or

https://www.dclm.org/sermons provide the principal online sources from which the sermon outlines were retrieved.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique is used to select twelve (12) Sunday sermon outlines for analysis. The selection is guided by the following criteria:

i. The sermon outlines must be authored by Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi;
ii. The sermon outlines must be written in English;
iii. The sermon outlines must display noticeable lexical and sound-based innovations;
iv. The sermon outlines must cover doctrinal or ethical themes that typically involve linguistic emphasis;
v. The sermon outlines are publicly available to avoid ethical concerns; and
vi.The sermon outlines must be complete texts, and not excerpts.

Purposive sampling is justified because stylistic features are context-dependent, and the goal is in-depth analysis of lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations rather than representativeness.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is divided into two major components: lexical analysis and phonostylistic analysis.

A.i Lexical analysis: This involves identifying lexical coinages, classifying them into types (e.g., neologisms, blends, semantic shifts, compounding, conversions).
ii. Describing their morphological and semantic properties,
iii. Interpreting their stylistic and communicative functions

B.i Phonostylistic analysis: This also may include identifying phonological devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, rhythm, sound parallelism and phonemic foregrounding
ii. Describing their patterns,
iii. Explaining how they enhance persuasion, memorability and rhetorical effect

Method of Data Analysis

The analysis follows four systematic steps:

i. Identification: Extract instances of lexical and phonological innovations.
ii. Classification: Group items based on structural and stylistic categories.
iii. Interpretation: Explain each feature's communicative purpose within the sermonic context.
iv. Discussion: Relate findings to existing scholarly literature on stylistics and religious discourse.

Lexical Coinages

Lexical coinage refers to the creation or introduction of new lexical forms to express new concepts, experiences, meanings, or communicative needs. Bauer (2021) explains that the study of English vocabulary encompasses the morphological structure of words and the processes through which lexical items are formed, while Körtvélyessy, Štekauer, and Kačmár (2021) emphasise the role of creativity in the formation of new complex words, particularly where speakers require new

forms to meet naming or communicative needs. In Nigerian English, Obasi (2022) similarly observes that lexical innovations arise through processes including coinage, analogy, transfer of meaning and culture, and direct borrowing from indigenous languages. Lexical coinage may therefore be realised through different word-formation and lexical-development processes, among which derivation, compounding, and borrowing are particularly relevant to the analysis of lexical innovation. These processes demonstrate how speakers draw on existing linguistic resources or external linguistic sources to expand the vocabulary available for expressing context-specific meanings. Below are some classic examples from the corpus selected sermonic discourse.

Datum 1.Lexical Bracketing

Table 1: Classification of Lexical Bracketing of Selected Lexical Items in the Corpus Data

S/N	Lexical item	Morphological bracketing	Process involved
1	unrighteousness	[[un- + righteous] + -ness]	Prefixation and suffixation
2	incorrigible	[in- + corrigible]	Prefixation
3	goodness	[good + -ness]	Suffixation
4	disregarded	[[dis- + regard] + -ed]	Prefixation followed by inflection
5	unfortunately	[[un- + fortunate] + -ly]	Prefixation and suffixation

The classification adopts Bauer's (2017) semantic typology of endocentric/exocentric compounds and Plag's (2003) and Katamba & Stonham's (2006) model of recursive derivation and category change.

Interpretative Summary

The lexical items in the above table demonstrate how morphological bracketing reveals the internal structure of complex words and the hierarchical relationships between their constituent morphemes. In unrighteousness, the negative prefix un- combines with righteous before the nominalising suffix -ness is added, while incorrigible illustrates prefixation that produces a negative meaning. The word goodness demonstrates nominalisation through suffixation, whereas disregarded shows the formation of disregard through prefixation before the inflectional suffix -ed marks its past-tense or past-participle form. Similarly, unfortunately results from the formation of unfortunate through prefixation, followed by the addition of the adverb-forming suffix -ly. Collectively, these examples illustrate how prefixes and suffixes modify meaning or grammatical category, while the bracketing makes explicit the order in which the morphological constituents combine.

Datum 2. Lexical Hyphenation

Table 2: Classification of Selected Lexical Hyphenations in the Corpus Data

S/N	Lexical item	Morphological structure	Word-formation process	Functional classification
1	heart-warming	heart + warming	Compounding	Compound adjective expressing an emotionally pleasing or touching quality

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

2	Christ-centred	Christ + centred	Compounding	Compound adjective expressing a Christ-focused orientation
3	worldly-wise	worldly + wise	Compounding	Compound adjective describing practical knowledge or experience of worldly affairs
4	seven-sealed	seven + sealed	Compounding	Compound adjective indicating something sealed with or by seven seals
5	sin-bearer	sin + bearer	Compounding	Compound noun denoting one who bears or takes upon himself the burden of sin

The classification adopts Bauer's (2017) semantic typology of endocentric/exocentric compounds and Plag's (2003) and Katamba & Stonham's (2006) model of recursive derivation and category change.

Interpretative Summary

The preceding examples in the table illustrate the use of hyphenated compounds to create compact expressions with specific descriptive or theological meanings. Heart-warming and Christ-centred function as compound adjectives, conveying emotional appeal and a Christ-focused orientation, respectively. Similarly, worldly-wise combines two elements to describe practical knowledge of worldly affairs, while seven-sealed combines a numeral with a participial element to describe something associated with seven seals. In contrast, sin-bearer functions as a compound noun referring to one who bears the burden of sin. The hyphens visually connect the constituent elements and help signal their interpretation as unified lexical expressions.

Datum 3. Lexical Compounding

Table 3: Classification of Selected Lexical Compounding in the Corpus Data

S/N	Compound	Internal Structure	Syntactic Classification	Semantic Classification	Morphological Process
1	freethinkers	free + think + -er + -s	Noun Compound (Adj + N)	Endocentric, Synthetic	Compounding + Derivation + Inflection
2	masterbuilder	master + builder	Noun Compound (N + N)	Endocentric	Compounding + Derivation
3	gatecrash	gate + crash	Verb Compound (N + V)	Endocentric	Compounding (by Back-formation)
4	churchgoers	church + go + -er + -s	Noun Compound (N + V + -er)	Endocentric, Synthetic	Compounding + Derivation + Inflection
5	hardhearted	hard + heart + -ed	Adjective Compound (Adj + N)	Exocentric (Bahuvrihi)	Compounding + Derivation [Adj][V][N]

The classification adopts Bauer's (2017) semantic typology of endocentric/exocentric compounds and Plag's (2003) and Katamba & Stonham's (2006) model of recursive derivation and category change.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Interpretative Summary

The aforementioned data shows three distinct morphological patterns of English compounding. Freethinkers and churchgoers are synthetic compounds where a verb combines with another category (Adjective and Noun respectively) to form a noun through the agentive suffix -er, denoting persons who perform the action. Masterbuilder follows the Noun + Deverbal Noun pattern and remains endocentric, as it refers to a type of builder. Besides, gatecrash is a Noun + Verb verb compound that is endocentric and largely lexicalized as a verb through back-formation. In contrast, hardhearted is an exocentric adjectival compound of the bahuvrihi type, formed as Adjective + Noun + -ed, where the compound does not refer to a type of heart but describes a person characterized by having a hard heart. In general, the examples demonstrate the productive use of suffixation (-er, -ed) in compounding and the predominance of endocentricity in English nominal compounds.

Datum 4. Derivational Lexical Items

Table 4: Classification of Derivational Processes in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Derived Word	Base / Root	Affixes	Bracketed Structure
1	destructiveness	destruct (V)	-ive, -ness (suffixes)	[[destruct + -ive]Adj + -ness]N
2	unrelentingly	relent (V)	un-, -ing, -ly (prefix, suffixes)	un- + [relent + -ing]Adj + -ly]Adv
3	deceitfulness	deceit (N)	-ful, -ness (suffixes)	[[deceit + -ful]Adj + -ness]N
4	unrighteousness	right (Adj)	un-, -eous, -ness (prefix, suffixes)	[[un- + [right + -eous]Adj]Adj + -ness]N
5	principalities	prince (N)	-ipal, -ity, -ies	[[[prince + -ipal]Adj + -ity]N + -ies]N

The classification adopts Bauer's (2017) semantic typology of endocentric/exocentric compounds and Plag's (2003) and Katamba & Stonham's (2006) model of recursive derivation and category change.

Interpretative Summary

The preceding dataset illustrates recursive derivation involving both prefixation and suffixation as central to English morphological productivity. Four of the items: destructiveness, deceitfulness, unrighteousness, and principalities, followed by a two-stage derivational path where an intermediate adjective (destructive, deceitful, unrighteous/righteous, principal) is formed first before being nominalized by -ness or -ity to express abstract quality or state. Unrighteousness and unrelentingly specifically demonstrate the attachment of the negative prefix un- to reverse or negate the meaning of the base, while unrelentingly further extends to adverb formation through -ly. The presence of inflectional -ies in principalities distinguishes inflection from derivation, marking number without changing category. All things considered, the analysis confirms that English derivation is largely suffix-dominant, permits affix stacking, and systematically involves category shift and semantic modification, with -ness and -ity as the most productive nominalizers in the data.

Phonostylistic innovations/features

Phonostylistic innovations or features are phonological patterns used for rhetorical and aesthetic effect which play a significant role in sermonic discourse. Preachers often rely on phonological choices such as repetition, sound parallelism, intonation contours, rhythmic structuring, and rhyming patterns to enhance emphasis and audience retention. Furthermore, these sound-based patterns are linguistically significant because they foreground conceived meaning of the message, demonstrate aesthetic, emphatic, and communicative effects. The data for analysis reveals the occurrences of some phonostylistic devices. Below are some glaring phonemic patterns.

Consonantal and alliterative patterns

Consonance generally refers to the recurrence of consonant sounds within words or across a phrase, without requiring those sounds to occur initially, whereas alliteration is a more specific form of consonantal repetition involving the recurrence of the same or similar initial consonant sounds. Norova and Babajanova (2023) place alliteration, assonance and repetition among the phonostylistic resources through which sound patterning acquires stylistic and expressive value. Similarly, Abduraxmanova and Murodova (2023) identify alliteration and consonance as phonetic stylistic devices capable of contributing to emphasis, rhythm, memorability and emotional effect. Thus, while consonantal patterning constitutes the broader recurrence of consonant sounds, alliteration represents a more restricted and readily perceptible pattern of initial consonant repetition; the two may therefore operate together in a text to reinforce rhythm, cohesion and stylistic prominence.

Datum 5.

The **s**uffering of our **s**inle**ss** **s**ubstitute; the **s**infulness of all **s**cornful **s**inners; the **s**alvation of **s**ubmissive **s**eeker**s**

The excerpt above demonstrates deliberate sibilant-dominated phonostylistic patterning through the extensive recurrence of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. The /s/-initial lexical items: suffering, sinless, substitute; sinfulness, scornful, sinners; salvation, submissive, and seekers create a conspicuous chain of alliterative cohesion across the three parallel units. The phonological recurrence is reinforced by the syntactic repetition of the three expressions which also exhibit a repeated nominal structure consisting of the definite article "the," a head noun, and an "of"-phrase. The constructions seem to enforce semantic progression from Christ's sacrificial suffering, through human sinfulness, to the salvation available to submissive seekers. The pattern therefore illustrates phonostylistic creativity in which sound selection is integrated with lexical choice, syntactic parallelism and sermonic rhetoric to enhance emphasis, rhythm, memorability and theological coherence.

Datum 6.

The **d**estructiveness and **d**omination of loosed un**t**amed **t**ongues ; the **d**eceitfulness and **d**uplicity of lawless undependable tongues; the **d**ecisiveness and **d**estiny of liberating unblamable tongues

The preceding expressions exemplify deliberate phonostylistic and lexical creativity in sermonic discourse. The passage is characterised principally by /d/-initial alliteration, as evident in

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

destructiveness, domination, deceitfulness, duplicity, decisiveness and destiny. This phonological recurrence is reinforced by morphological similarity, syntactic parallelism and semantic association. The repeated structure is clearly initiated by a definite article "the", a voiced dental or inter-dental fricative /ð/, followed by voiced alveolar plosive /d/, voiced alveolar lateral /l/, voiceless alveolar plosive, and the insertion of an open central neutral vowel /ʌ/, though a negative prefix meant to describe sufficiently the condition of the graceless tongue. Thus, the extract provides formal cohesion at the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels, while the progression from destructiveness and deceitfulness to decisiveness creates a movement which functions of speech to its potentially consequential and liberating function. The deliberate convergence of sound, lexical form and meaning enhances rhythm, emphasis, memorability and rhetorical force, demonstrating how phonological patterning can function as a significant resource for meaning-making in Nigerian religious discourse.

Datum 7.

The lion with **p**erfect **p**revalent **p**ower; the lamb **p**ure **p**ropitiation **p**eacemaker; the Lord, the **p**reeminent **p**redominant **p**rince

The above extract illustrates deliberate phonostylistic and lexical creativity through a conspicuous concentration of the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/. The /p/-initial sequence is evident in perfect, prevalent, power; pure, propitiation, peacemaker; preeminent, predominant, and Prince. The phonological pattern is reinforced by semantic association, lexical intensification and parallel descriptive structures. The first unit intensifies the conception of Christ's supreme power; the second compresses His purity, sacrificial function and reconciliatory role into a memorable phonological sequence; while the third foregrounds His supremacy and sovereignty. The deliberate convergence of sounds on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axises are consonantal phonemes that registered a visible alliterative presence include voiced dental fricative /ð/,voiced alveolar lateral /l/, and voiceless bilabial plosive /p/. These phonological patterns ultimately produce rhythm, emphasis, memorability and rhetorical force, demonstrating the exploitation of phonological resources for theological meaning-making in sermonic discourse.

Datum 8.

"About the **r**enov**a**tion, the **r**eclam**a**tion and the **r**estor**a**tion of the earth".

The foregone expression exemplifies creativity through the deliberate coordination of phonological, syntactic and semantic parallelism. The three principal nouns: renovation, reclamation and restoration are linked by initial /r/-alliteration and the shared nominal suffix -tion. The repetition of the definite article in "the" further establishes syntactic parallelism and produces a pronounced triadic rhythm. Semantically, the three lexical items are closely related but contribute different nuances: renovation evokes renewal or improvement, reclamation suggests recovery, while restoration denotes a return to an intended or appropriate condition. Their sequential arrangement consequently produces a progression from renewal through recovery to restoration. The convergence of phonological recurrence, morphological similarity, lexical selection and semantic progression enhances rhythm, emphasis, memorability and rhetorical

force, demonstrating the exploitation of linguistic form as a stylistic resource in sermonic discourse.

Datum 9.

"Apostle Peter wrote to the brethren to "**stir up** [their] **pure minds**" to remind them that the day of the Lord "**will come"** whether or not **s**coffers **s**coff, **s**c**or**ners **s**c**or**n or freethinkers think whatever".

The preceding excerpt instantiates the intersection of phonostylistic patterning and sermonic rhetoric. The preacher draws on Peter's exhortation to believers to remain mindful of the certainty of the Lord's coming despite the scepticism of those who question it. Phonostylistically, the sequence exhibits a voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and manifests freethinkers -think as lexical and morphological parallelism through the pairing of nouns with their corresponding verbs. The recurrence of initial consonantal forms in *scoffers–scoff* and *scorners–scorn*, together with the root repetition in *freethinkers–think*, produces phonological cohesion, rhythm and memorability. Semantically, the three expressions foreground different forms of sceptical response, while the repeated lexical pattern reduces them rhetorically to mere human reactions that cannot prevent the fulfilment of the divine promise. Thus, the preacher exploits phonological recurrence, lexical selection and parallel construction to reinforce the sermonic message that the Lord's promised coming remains certain irrespective of human scoffing, scorn or speculative thinking.

Datum 10.

" The last **d**ays are **d**ays of **d**eception and **d**eadly **d**istortions".

The foregone expression demonstrates the integration of phonological patterning, lexical repetition and semantic intensification in sermonic discourse. The repetition of *days* in "*the last days are days"* establishes syntactic and lexical parallelism, while the succession of a voiced alveolar plosive /d/, in initial words such as *days, deception, deadly* and *distortions* creates a marked alliterative pattern. The phonological recurrence enhances the rhythm and memorability of the warning, particularly in oral delivery. Semantically, *deception* and *distortions* are closely related in denoting departures from truth, while the modifier *deadly* intensifies the potential consequences of such distortions. The preacher therefore, employs the convergence of sound, lexical choice and semantic association to foreground the dangers of deception and distorted truth in the last days. The expression exemplifies phonostylistic creativity in which alliteration and structural parallelism contribute directly to the rhetorical force of the sermonic message.

Datum 11.

" The best we can do for others is to love them – desire their **s**alvation, **s**ecurity, **s**incerity, **s**teadfastness and **s**anctification".

The above extraction illustrates deliberate phonostylistic creativity through the concentration of /s/-initial lexical items. The sequence *salvation, security, sincerity, steadfastness* and *sanctification* constitutes a conspicuous instance of sibilant alliteration, as each of the five coordinated nouns begins with the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. The sustained repetition of the sound produces phonological cohesion, rhythm and memorability, particularly within the oral context of sermon

delivery. The lexical items are also semantically related, as they collectively represent different dimensions of the spiritual and moral welfare desired for others. Their parallel nominal structure further strengthens the formal unity of the sequence, while the cumulative arrangement intensifies the sermonic appeal to Christian love. Thus, the preacher's deliberate convergence of sound, lexical selection and semantic association transforms the abstract injunction to "love" others into a rhythmically striking and memorable catalogue of spiritual aspirations, demonstrating the rhetorical significance of phonostylistic patterning in sermonic discourse.

Phonaesthetic effect

Recent scholarship acknowledges that phonaesthesia is seen as certain sound patterns that may bear systematic or motivated relationships to meaning, thereby weakening a strictly arbitrary view of the linguistic sign. Bermúdez (2020), for example, defines sound symbolism in terms of non-arbitrary associations between particular sounds and conventional meanings, while Erben Johansson et al. (2020) demonstrate recurring sound–meaning associations across languages. In literary and stylistic contexts, phonaesthesia may therefore be understood as the expressive use of sound patterns whose phonetic form evokes or reinforces aspects of meaning, extending beyond direct imitation characteristic of ordinary onomatopoeia. In the present study, the phenomenon is considered in relation to the correspondence between naming and the object or concept named. Although such patterns occur sparingly in the selected sermon texts, their occurrence provides evidence of deliberate sound–meaning association as a phonostylistic resource.

Datum 12.

" We are not expected to carry out this great task **f**eeb**ly**, **f**aint**ly**, **f**lesh**ly**, **f**alse**ly, f**raudulent**ly**, **f**lippant**ly** and **f**orgetfu**lly".**

The preceding quotation exemplifies a conspicuous instance of alliteration with a phonaesthetic effect. The seven adverbs begin with the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/, producing a sustained repetition of the same consonantal sound: feebly, faintly, fleshly, falsely, fraudulently, flippantly and forgetfully. The recurrence of /f/ creates phonological cohesion and gives the sequence a distinctive acoustic texture that is particularly effective in oral sermon delivery. Although the /f/ sound does not intrinsically signify weakness, falsity or carelessness, its repeated occurrence across lexically related negative expressions produces a phonaesthetic effect in which sound patterning reinforces the semantic accumulation of the words. The passage therefore illustrates how phonological recurrence may foreground and intensify meaning when combined with deliberate lexical selection.

The expression is further strengthened by morphological and syntactic parallelism. The seven items function as coordinated adverbs modifying the verb phrase *carry out*, while the recurrent '-ly' /li/ ending in *feebly, faintly, falsely, fraudulently, flippantly,* and *forgetfully* reinforces the formal parallelism. Semantically, the sequence accumulates different forms of inappropriate or inadequate performance: *feebly* suggests lack of strength, *faintly* lack of vigour or intensity, *fleshly* orientation toward the flesh rather than the spiritual, *falsely* lack of truthfulness, *fraudulently* deliberate dishonesty, *flippantly* lack of seriousness, and *forgetfully* failure to remain mindful. The

cumulative lexical pattern consequently complements the repeated /f/ sound, producing a memorable and rhetorically emphatic formulation**.**

From a phonostylistic perspective, therefore, the significance of the passage lies not simply in the repetition of /f/, but in the interaction between sound, lexical choice, morphology, syntax and meaning. The repeated /f/ gives the sequence acoustic unity, while the semantic progression of the coordinated adverbs supplies interpretive substance. The expression may consequently be described as a phonaesthetic construction realised through /f/-initial alliteration and reinforced by morphological and semantic parallelism. Its patterned sound structure is particularly suited to sermonic performance because the repetition makes the sequence rhythmically prominent and potentially easier for listeners to perceive and remember.

Datum 13.

"Instead, we should be **f**aithful, **f**ervent, **f**earless, **f**aultless, **f**irm, **f**ree and **f**air in the work of **s**aving **s**oul**s**".

The extract under consideration constitutes a prominent instance of /f/-initial alliteration with a phonaesthetic effect. The seven coordinated adjectives: faithful, fervent, fearless, faultless, firm, free and fair begin with the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/. The systematic recurrence of this consonant creates strong phonological cohesion and gives the sequence a distinctive rhythmic and acoustic pattern. In oral sermon delivery, such recurrence can enhance prominence, memorability and rhetorical force.

The phonaesthetic effect emerges from the interaction between the recurring /f/ sound and the semantic clustering of the lexical items. The words collectively express qualities expected of those engaged in the Christian task of saving souls: faithfulness, spiritual earnestness, courage, moral integrity, steadfastness, freedom from compromising influences and fairness. Although /f/ does not inherently signify these qualities, its repeated association with the carefully selected lexical items creates a unified sound meaning pattern. The phonological recurrence therefore reinforces the semantic accumulation and helps present the qualities as an integrated set of expectations.

The expression also demonstrates lexical, syntactic and morphological parallelism. The seven items belong to the same grammatical category and occur in coordinated sequence as predicative complements of *should be*. Their formal similarity, particularly the repeated initial /f/, produces a cumulative rhythmic effect. The sequence may therefore be interpreted as a phonaesthetic innovation realised through /f/-initial alliteration and reinforced by lexical-semantic and syntactic parallelism.

Interestingly, this expression can be considered alongside the earlier sequence *"feebly, faintly, fleshly, falsely, fraudulently, flippantly and forgetfully."* In the earlier passage, the recurring /f/ accompanies a series of undesirable modes of performing the Christian task, whereas in the present expression it accompanies desirable qualities required for that task. This contrast demonstrates that Kumuyi's phonostylistic practice does not depend on an inherent meaning of /f/ but on the deliberate association of a recurrent sound pattern with strategically selected lexical items. The resulting sound pattern contributes to the rhetorical packaging, emphasis and memorability of the sermonic message.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Table 5: Classification of Consonantal and Alliterative Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Consonantal/Alliterative Pattern	Classification Criterion	Typical Phonological Realisation	Stylistic Function/Effect
1	Initial alliteration	Repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of successive or closely positioned words	/p/ in perfect, prevalent, power	Emphasis, cohesion, memorability and auditory prominence
2	Alliteration across stressed syllables	Recurrence of the same initial consonant in prominent/stressed syllables, even where the words are not immediately adjacent	Repeated /d/ or /p/ in stressed lexical items	Reinforces rhythmic organisation and draws attention to key expressions
3	Medial consonance	Recurrence of a consonant sound in the middle of neighbouring or closely related words	Repeated /t/, /s/, /m/, etc. in medial positions	Creates internal sound cohesion and subtle rhythmic texture
4	Final consonance	Repetition of the same consonant at the ends of words, without requiring the preceding vowels to be identical	Repeated final /k/, /t/, /n/, etc.	Produces auditory linkage and reinforces cadence
5	Distributed consonance	Recurrence of a consonant sound at different positions across several words	The same consonant occurring initially, medially or finally	Creates pervasive phonological cohesion across the expression
6	Consonantal clustering	Concentration of closely related consonants within a short lexical sequence	Several plosives, fricatives or other consonants occurring in succession	Produces heightened auditory intensity and emphatic effect
7	Articulatory consonantal patterning	Recurrence of consonants sharing a place or manner of articulation, even when they are not identical	E.g., concentration of bilabial /p, b, m/ sounds	Produces phonetic cohesion and a distinctive sound texture
8	Combined alliteration and consonance	Initial repetition reinforced by further recurrence of the same consonant elsewhere in the expression	Initial /p/ followed by additional /p/ occurrences medially/finally	Intensifies sound patterning, emphasis and memorability

Source: Author's classification is informed by Barton (2024) and Fabb and Sykäri (2022).

Onomatopoeia / sound symbolism or phonaesthetic effect

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Another sound device observed in the data is **onomatopoeia.** Onomatopoeia refers to the formation or use of words whose phonetic form imitates, resembles, or evokes the sound associated with the entity, action, or event they denote. Nuckolls (2020) explains that onomatopoeic forms exhibit sound symbolism by imitating aspects of sensory experience, particularly sounds, while Bermúdez (2020) situates onomatopoeia within the broader phenomenon of sound symbolism, where a non-arbitrary relationship may exist between sound and meaning.

In its proto-form, therefore, onomatopoeia involves a linguistic form that echoes or mimics an actual sound in the extra-linguistic world, thereby creating a perceptible correspondence between the sound of the word and the sound or event represented. Such forms are sometimes described informally as "sound words," although onomatopoeia is the more appropriate technical term in linguistic and stylistic analysis. In the present study, the device is identified where the phonological form of an item imitates or evokes the sound associated with its referent, thereby contributing to the vividness and expressive quality of the sermon discourse. The following are some clear manifestations of onomatopoeia in the selected sermon documents.

Datum 14.

" The rod in the hand of the Shepherd is not to **'smash'**(kill or destroy) the sheep in his fold but the lion".

The preceding expression illustrates a **sound-symbolic expression with a marked phonaesthetic effect**, particularly in the use of the word *smash*. The word /smæʃ/ has a compact consonantal structure comprising the initial cluster of voiceless alveolar fricative and voiced bilabial nasal /sm-/ and the final /ʃ/, a voiceless postalveolar fricative. The abrupt phonological shape of the word complements its lexical meaning of striking, crushing or destroying with force. Consequently, the sound structure contributes to the impression of suddenness and violence associated with the action.

Strictly speaking, *smash* is not a typical instance of onomatopoeia because it does not directly imitate a specific natural sound. Rather, it evokes the acoustic and physical impression of violent impact. It is therefore more appropriately treated as *sound symbolism or phonaesthetic effect with an onomatopoeic quality.* This distinction is important because the stylistic significance derives from the interaction between the phonological form of the word and its lexical meaning, rather than from direct imitation of a sound.

The forceful lexical choice *smash* therefore intensifies the contrast between the protected object and the perceived threat. The phonaesthetic quality of *smash* reinforces this semantic opposition by giving the destructive action an acoustically sharp and forceful character. The expression consequently demonstrates how sound patterning can support metaphorical and rhetorical meaning in sermonic discourse.

Euphony

This concept refers to the harmonious arrangement of sounds in a line, phrase, or sequence of words that produces a pleasant, smooth, or melodious auditory effect. It is particularly associated with the skilful combination of speech sounds and other phonostylistic resources to create an

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

agreeable effect on the ear. Alymbaeva (2020) explains that phonostylistics is concerned with the sound composition of texts and the stylistic possibilities generated through the organisation of phonological resources in literary and other forms of discourse. Similarly, Blohm et al. (2021) demonstrate that the sound structure of literary texts can contribute to their perceptual and aesthetic effects.

In the present study, euphony is not viewed merely as the production of auditory pleasantness; the pastor also appears to exploit harmonious sound sequences to reinforce the verbal presentation of the persons, objects, or ideas under discussion, thereby helping to evoke corresponding mental images and making the intended impression more memorable to the audience. Thus, the euphonious arrangement of sounds functions as a phonostylistic resource through which auditory agreeableness is combined with semantic and imaginative effect. The following are some instances of euphony identified in the selected sermon data.

Datum 15.

"... Having been commission**ed**, appoint**ed**, anoint**ed** and approv**ed** of by God".

The preceding extract exhibits a marked *euphonic effect* through morphological, phonological and syntactic parallelism. The sequence *commissioned, appointed, anointed* and *approved* consists of four coordinated past participles with recurring morphological and rhythmic patterns, producing a balanced and harmonious cadence. The four-part enumeration also creates a cumulative effect that foregrounds the speaker's divine commissioning, consecration and approval. The regularity of the forms and their semantic compatibility enhances the solemnity, rhythm and memorability of the sermonic expression.

Datum 16.

"We are not expected to carry out this task **f**eeb**ly**, **f**aint**ly, f**lesh**ly**, **f**alse**ly**, **f**raudulent**ly**, **f**lippant**ly**, and **f**orgetful**ly**".

The foregoing passage produces a strong euphonic effect through /f/-initial alliteration, morphological parallelism and rhythmic enumeration. The repeated voiceless labiodental fricative /f/, together with the recurring -ly /li/ ending, creates phonological continuity and a pronounced rhythmic cadence. Although the lexical items express undesirable ways of performing the Christian task, their patterned arrangement produces a smooth, memorable and rhetorically emphatic sound sequence.

Datum 17.

"Instead, we should be **f**aithful, **f**ervent, **f**earless, **f**aultless, **f**irm, **f**ree, and **f**air in the work of **s**aving **s**oul**s**".

The above quoted passage demonstrates a particularly strong euphonic effect through /f/-initial alliteration and lexical, morphological and syntactic parallelism. The repeated voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ creates a smooth and cohesive acoustic pattern, while the coordinated adjective sequence generates a balanced rhythmic cadence. The accumulation of positively valued qualities enhances the rhetorical force and memorability of the statement, making the desired attributes of Christian service particularly prominent in oral delivery.

Table 6: Classification of Euphonic Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outline

S/N	Euphonic Pattern	Manifestation	Representative Datum(s)	Stylistic Effect
1	Consonantal recurrence	Repetition of /p/ in closely positioned lexical items	"perfect, prevalent power"	Auditory cohesion, smoothness and emphasis
2	Concentrated sound patterning	Recurrence of /p/ and /pr/ across a sequence of lexical items	"pure, propitiation, peacemaker, preeminent, predominant prince"	Melodious and memorable auditory texture
3	Parallel sound arrangement	Recurrence of /r/ combined with balanced lexical organisation	"renovation, reclamation and restoration"	Fluency, balance and harmonious cadence

Source: Author's classification, informed by Liashuk, V. M. (2023).

Assonance

Assonance is another sound-based pattern observed in the selected texts. It refers to the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in words that occur in close proximity within a line, phrase, sentence, or other stretch of discourse. As Norova and Babajanova (2023) explain in their discussion of phonostylistics, sound repetition constitutes one of the important resources through which phonetic forms acquire stylistic and expressive significance. Similarly, Koyanbekova, Jamambetova, and Utegulova (2023, p. 99) observe that assonance functions as a phonostylistic instrument and that its repetition can contribute to the "melodiousness" of speech and enhance emotional perception. Although assonance has traditionally been associated particularly with the recurrence of vowel sounds in stressed syllables, its use in contemporary stylistic analysis is not necessarily restricted to stressed positions; repeated vowel sounds may occur in either stressed or unstressed syllables, provided that their proximity makes the recurrence perceptible. What is essential, therefore, is the repetition of vowel sounds rather than the repetition of vowel letters. In the present study, assonance is identified where such recurring vowel sounds occur sufficiently close together to create a noticeable phonological pattern and contribute to the rhythm, musicality, emphasis, or expressive quality of the sermon discourse. The following excerpts constitute some clear manifestations of assonance in the

Datum 18.

" Our gr**a**cious s**a**viour…." "... embr**a**ce the gr**a**ce of God ".

The above extract under consideration exhibits assonance through the recurrence of the diphthong /eɪ/ vowel, although the pattern is reinforced more strongly by lexical repetition and the phonetic relationship between grace and gracious. The repeated vowel quality contributes to phonological cohesion and gives the expression a smooth, harmonious auditory quality. Semantically, the recurrence of gracious, grace, and God foregrounds the theological concept of divine grace, thereby allowing the sound pattern to reinforce the central religious message.

Datum 19.

"To r**ea**d the c**o**nc**ea**led c**o**ntent of the book…"

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

The preceding expression contains assonantal recurrence, particularly through the repeated long /iː/ vowel in *read* and *concealed.* The repetition produces a subtle internal vowel harmony across the phrase and contributes to its euphonic quality. Although the assonance is less conspicuous than in some of the other examples, it helps bind the expression acoustically while the semantic relationship among read, concealed, content, and book establishes the idea of discovering information that is hidden within the sacred text.

Datum 20.

"No one was found worthy to unseal the b**oo**k and l**oo**k into it…"

The foregoing passage exhibits assonantal recurrence particularly via the repeated short monophthong /ʊ/ vowel in look and book, producing a noticeable internal sound correspondence. The repetition is further supported by the phonological similarity of the two words and their close syntactic positioning. This assonantal pattern creates a compact rhythmic effect and draws attention to the relationship between the book and the action of look[ing] into it, thereby reinforcing the sermon's theme of gaining access to the concealed contents of the book.

Datum 21.

"The book contains the program of God to r**e**cl**ai**m, r**e**store, r**e**nov**a**te and bring the earth out of the hand of the usurper Satan".

The above quoted passage demonstrates assonantal and phonological cohesion through the recurrence of vowel sounds across reclaim, restore, and renovate, while the coordinated verb sequence also creates a strong rhythmic pattern. The three semantically related verbs present a cumulative movement from recovering what has been lost to returning it to its proper condition and renewing it. Thus, the sound pattern works together with lexical and syntactic parallelism to give the expression a balanced and memorable sermonic rhythm.

Datum 22.

"The knowledge about the renov**a**tion, reclam**a**tion and restor**a**tion of the earth is only in this book".

The preceding extract contains prominent assonantal correspondence within renovation, reclamation, and restoration, particularly through the recurring vowel of /e/ and /ei/ sound sequences in these morphologically parallel nouns. The three '-tion' forms also create a strong rhythmic and structural parallelism, while their related meanings establish semantic cohesion. The combined vowel recurrence, morphological parallelism, and triadic enumeration produce a euphonic and memorable expression that foregrounds the sermon's central idea concerning the divine programme for the earth.

Table 7: Classification of Assonantal Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Assonant Pattern	Manifestation	Representative Datum(s)	Stylistic Effect
1	Repeated vowel sound	Recurrence of the same or closely similar vowel in neighbouring stressed	"/ei/ as in gracious, saviour, embrace, grace"	Creates internal musicality and sound cohesion

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

S/N	Assonant Pattern	Manifestation	Representative Datum(s)	Stylistic Effect
		syllables		
2	Vowel recurrence across lexical items	The same vowel quality links otherwise different words	"/ʊ/ as in look and book"	Enhances cohesion and memorability
3	Distributed assonance	Recurring vowel sound appears across non-adjacent lexical items	"/rɪ/ as in reclaim, restore, renovate; "/ei/ as in renovation, reclamation and restoration	Creates subtle phonological continuity and emphasis

Source: Author's classification is informed by Gibbons, A., & Whiteley, S. (2018).

Sibilance

Sibilant is a specialised category of consonantal sound characterised by a prominent hissing or hushing quality. In phonetic terms, Reilly (2020) discusses the acoustic distinctiveness of sibilant fricatives, while recent phonetic descriptions identify sounds such as /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/ as typical sibilants produced through a constricted airstream that generates relatively strong high-frequency acoustic energy. Abduraxmanova and Murodova (2023) further situate such sound patterning within phonetic stylistic devices, noting the contribution of consonantal repetition to the expressive and aesthetic effect of discourse. Thus, in the present study, sibilance refers specifically to the recurrence of sibilant consonants in closely occurring words or phrases, producing a perceptible hissing or hushing effect. The following extracts illustrate some manifestations of sibilance in the selected sermon texts.

Datum 23.

"... **s**ub**s**titute and went through the **s**corn, **sh**ame and **s**orrow for u**s**".

The preceding expression exhibits prominent sibilance through the repeated /s/, a voiceless alveolar fricative, in substitute, scorn, shame, and sorrow. The recurrence of this sibilant creates phonological cohesion and a sustained hissing quality across the expression. The clustering of scorn, shame, and sorrow also produces lexical and semantic parallelism, foregrounding the suffering endured by Christ on behalf of humanity. The sibilant pattern therefore contributes to emphasis, rhythm and memorability.

Datum 24.

"... de**s**ire **s**alva**t**ion, **s**ecurity, **s**incerity, **s**teadfa**s**tne**ss** and ,**s**anctifica**t**ion".

This preceding passage contains a particularly strong concentration of /s/ through salvation, security, sincerity, steadfastness, and sanctification. The repeated voiceless alveolar sibilant creates a pronounced auditory pattern, while the series of abstract nouns establishes lexical, morphological and syntactic parallelism. The sound pattern enhances the rhythmic progression of

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

the enumeration and draws attention to the various dimensions of the Christian's spiritual welfare that constitute the object of the speaker's desire.

Datum 25.

" There are fal**s**e prophet**s** who hold office**s** in **ch**ur**ch**e**s**, tea**ch** in Sunday **s**chool**s**, organi**z**e prayer**s** and deliverance mini**s**trie**s;**... who tea**ch** erroneou**s** doctrine**s** and cau**s**e division**s** and offen**ses** in the hou**s**ehold of faith".

The above extract under consideration exhibits a noticeable sibilant pattern through the recurrence of /s/, particularly in *false, prophets, churches, schools, organize, ministries, erroneous, doctrines, divisions,* and *offenses*. The concentration of these fricative sounds creates phonological cohesion and a sustained sibilant texture across the expression. The pattern is reinforced by lexical and syntactic parallelism, especially in the successive descriptions of what the false prophets do: *hold, teach, organize, teach,* and *cause*. In the sermonic context, the sibilant recurrence contributes to emphasis and rhythmic continuity while foregrounding the warning against false teaching, doctrinal error, division and offence within the Christian community.

Table 8: Classification of Sibilant Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Sibilant Pattern	Manifestation	Representative Datum(s)	Stylistic Effect
1	Recurrent /s/	Concentration of /s/ across closely positioned lexical items	"/s/ a voiceless alveolar fricative, in substitute, scorn, shame, and sorrow"	Produces a pronounced hissing quality and draws auditory attention
2	Sibilant concentration	Repeated sibilant sounds across neighbouring words	"/s/ through salvation, security, sincerity, steadfastness, and sanctification"	Enhances sonic texture and emphasis
3	Secondary sibilance	Isolated /ʃ/ occurring within a semantically prominent word	" /s/, particularly in false, prophets, churches, schools, organize, ministries, erroneous, doctrines, divisions, and offenses"	Adds a brief phonaesthetic emphasis

Source: Author's classification, informed by Gibbons, A., & Whiteley, S. (2018).

Rhythmic patterns

Rhythm is another phonological or prosodic device through which the patterned succession of speech sounds, particularly stressed and unstressed syllables, produces a perceptible movement in language. Cantarutti and Szczepek Reed (2021) explain that speech rhythm involves "the distributed prominence of syllables across stretches of speech and their perceived regularity in time," thereby relating rhythm closely to the organisation of stress and accent. Similarly, Myers and Watson (2021) observe that "rhythmic structure in speech is characterized by sequences of stressed and unstressed syllables," with rhythmic organisation involving the distribution of stressed syllables across prosodic phrases. Rhythm may therefore be understood as the patterned alternation or arrangement of accented and unaccented syllables through which a flow of sounds

is produced and which can contribute to melody, emphasis, memorability, and expressive effect. Although rhythm is traditionally associated particularly with poetry and metrical composition, it is also observable in prose and other forms of discourse where recurring patterns of prominence create perceptible sound movement. The data under investigation contain several noticeable rhythmic patterns, occurring both within individual expressions and across larger syntactic sequences. For the purpose of analysing these patterns, (•) is used to represent an unaccented syllable, while (--) represents an accented syllable. The following examples illustrate some of the rhythmic patterns identified in the selected sermon data.

Datum 26.

The limitless saviour of the body

The preceding quotation exhibits a discernible rhythmic pattern through the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, particularly in *limitless saviour* and the subsequent *of the body*. The rhythmic movement gives the short expression a measured and balanced cadence, making it relatively easy to articulate and retain. The pattern is further reinforced by the compact syntactic structure and the natural stress placement of the lexical items, while the phrase's theological content gives the rhythmic form a memorable sermonic quality. Thus, although brief, the expression demonstrates how rhythmic organisation can contribute to emphasis, fluency and memorability in sermon language.

Datum 27.

Our loving service to the body

The foregoing passage manifests a discernible rhythmic pattern through the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, as represented in the stress notation supplied. The movement from *loving service* through *to the body* produces a measured cadence that gives the short phrase balance and ease of delivery. The rhythm is reinforced by the compact syntactic arrangement and the natural stress patterns of the lexical items, contributing to emphasis, fluency and memorability. In the sermonic context, this rhythmic organisation makes the expression more striking and readily retained by the hearers.

Datum 28.

The lively synergy in the body

The above quoted passage demonstrates a discernible rhythmic pattern through the recurrence and distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables. The lexical items *lively, synergy,* and *body* carry prominent stresses, creating a measured cadence across the phrase. The rhythm is crystal clear from the patterned alternation of prominent and less prominent syllables, which gives the subtitle balance, fluency and memorability. As part of the sermon's subtopics on "The full service of love to His body," this rhythmic organisation also contributes to the oral effectiveness of the sermon language.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Datum 29.

The description of false prophets

The preceding extract encapsulates a discernible rhythmic pattern through the distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables, with prominent stresses occurring on description, false, and prophets. Particularly, the sequence false prophets permits two consecutive accented syllables, creating a spondaic effect that gives the expression additional rhythmic weight. The three prominent stresses also produce a balanced cadence, enhancing the fluency, emphasis and memorability of the sermonic subtitle.

Datum 30.

The deception of false prophets

The above quoted passage demonstrates a similar rhythmic organisation, with the principal stresses falling on deception, false, and prophets. The consecutive stresses in false prophets create a spondaic effect, while the preceding stress on deception contributes to the overall three-stress rhythmic pattern. This measured cadence gives the expression prominence and rhetorical force, making the subtitle suitable for effective oral delivery and retention.

Datum 31.

The destructiveness and damnation of loosed, untamed tongues

The excerpt under consideration manifests a strong rhythmic pattern through the regular distribution of prominent stresses across destructiveness, damnation, loosed, untamed, and tongues. The alternation of stressed and less prominent syllables, together with the closely balanced sequence of coordinated nouns and adjectival modifiers, creates a measured and cumulative cadence. The repeated syntactic structure and the semantic association among destructiveness, damnation, and the description of tongues further reinforce the rhythmic effect, making the subtitle emphatic and memorable in oral delivery.

Datum 32.

The deceitfulness and duplicity of lawless, undependable tongues

The above quoted passage exhibits a noticeable rhythmic pattern through the patterned distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables, with prominent stresses falling on the major lexical items *deceitfulness, duplicity, lawless, undependable,* and *tongues*. The rhythm is reinforced by the parallel syntactic arrangement of two coordinated nouns followed by two coordinated modifiers, creating a balanced and cumulative cadence. The recurring prosodic pattern, together with the lexical and syntactic parallelism, gives the expression emphasis, fluency and memorability, thereby enhancing its effectiveness in oral sermon delivery.

Datum 33

The decisiveness and destiny of liberating, unblamable tongues

The preceding extract encapsulates a discernible rhythmic pattern through the regular distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables, with prominent stresses occurring on the major lexical items *decisiveness, destiny, liberating, unblamable,* and *tongues*. The rhythm is strengthened by the

parallel arrangement of the coordinated nouns *decisiveness* and *destiny* and the corresponding modifiers *liberating* and *unblamable*. This balanced prosodic and syntactic organisation produces a measured, cumulative cadence that enhances emphasis, fluency and memorability in oral sermon delivery.

Table 9. Classification of Rhythmic Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Rhythmic patterns	Description/Manifestation	Representative Datum(s)	Stylistic Effect
1	Stress patterning	Deliberate distribution of prominent and less prominent syllables	26, 28	Produces measured cadence and facilitates oral delivery
2	Stress clustering	Concentration of prominent stresses on successive lexical items	29, 31	Creates emphasis and rhetorical prominence
3	Rhythmic parallelism	Recurrence of similar lexical and syntactic structures	32, 33	Produces balance, regularity and memorability
4	Cumulative cadence	Successive coordination of prominent lexical elements	32, 33	Builds rhythmic momentum and reinforces emphasis

Source: Author's classification, informed by Low (2015).

Rhyme pattern

Rhyme as a phonological unit is viewed as one related to rhythm. A concept whose similarity of sound exists between stressed syllables occupying corresponding positions within one or more lines of any artwork. The correspondence of sound is based on the vowels and succeeding consonants of the stressed syllables, which must make for perfect rhyme, be preceded by different consonants. According to Osisanwo (2012), the issue of "rhyme is often discussed in relation to 'sound symbolism' which refers to certain words that have come to acquire peculiar sounds over the years". For instance, 'book' and 'look' constitute a perfect rhyme because the vowel and succeeding consonants are identical and the preceding consonants 'b' and 'l' are different. The data under investigation possess some obvious rhyme patterns either externally or internally. Below are some classic examples of the concept highlighted:

Datum 34.

"... which talks about the sin**less**, spot**less**, blame**less**".

The preceding expression displays an internal rhyming pattern through the recurrence of the identical final syllable /ləs/ in *sinless, spotless,* and *blameless*. Although the words differ in their initial syllables, their matching unstressed endings create a clear internal rhyme within the same utterance. The repeated /ləs/ sequence produces phonological cohesion and a pleasing rhythmic cadence, while the parallel adjectival forms further reinforce the pattern. In the sermonic context,

the rhyme enhances emphasis and memorability while drawing attention to the cluster of qualities attributed to the subject.

Datum 35.

"This means there will be a renov**ation**, redemp**tion**, reclam**ation** and restor**ation** of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began".

The excerpt under consideration displays a canonical instance of morphological rhyme through the quadruple parallel deployment of deverbal nouns: renovation, redemption, reclamation and restoration. The pattern is marked by homoeoteleuton, the recurrence of the suffix *-ation*/*-tion* with identical /eɪʃən/ coda, reinforced by prefixal alliteration /rɪ-/ in three of the four items. The preacher's selection is not merely ornamental; it functions rhetorically to encode theological completeness. The phonological symmetry collapses four distinct soteriological and eschatological concepts into a single acoustic unit, thereby iconically mirroring the semantic claim of total cosmic renewal. The polysyndetic framing further intensifies the cumulative effect, making the promise of universal restoration memorable, emphatic and homiletically persuasive.

Datum 36.

"... he came and t**ook** the b**ook** out from the right hand of him…"

The preceding extract exhibits an internal rhyming pattern through the recurrence of the /ʊk/ sound sequence in *took* and *book*. The repetition involves both the vowel /ʊ/ and the final consonant /k/, producing a closely matched internal rhyme within the utterance. This phonological recurrence creates an audible sense of cohesion and rhythmic continuity, thereby enhancing the memorability and oral effectiveness of the sermonic expression. The internal rhyme also draws attention to the semantically connected lexical items *took* and *book*, reinforcing the cadence of the utterance.

Datum 37.

The supremacy of the glorious son→ a
Our citizenship in the kingdom of His son→ a
The coming of the king for his saints→ b
The crowning of the king with His saints→ b
Yes, it qualifies for *end-of-line rhyming pattern (couplet / paired monorhyme - scheme aabb).*

The excerpt previously cited encapsulates perfect identical end-rhyme in two distichs: son / son (a-a) and saints / saints (b-b) producing the /sʌn/ and /seɪnts/ echo. This is not accidental rhyme but deliberate epiphoric parallelism that structures the eschatological discourse into two balanced theological units — Christological exaltation (a-a) and ecclesiological consummation (b-b). The phonological symmetry reinforces semantic cohesion, creates mnemonic closure, and foregrounds the shift from Christ's supremacy to the saints' ultimate glorification through patterned aural repetition.

Datum 38.

The truthfulness in Christ's **Evangelism**→ a

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

The tragedy in unChristlike **Evangelism**→ a
The transformation through Christ-centred **Evangelism**→ a
The above three thematic captions terminate in the same lexical item 'evangelism' producing perfect identical end-rhymes. The phonological identity /ɪˈvæn.dʒə.lɪ.zəm/ across all lines is not coincidental but a deliberate structural device that creates epiphora and thematic cohesion. While the initial lexemes truthfulness tragedy, and transformation establish semantic contrast, the invariant terminal rhyme anchors the discourse to a single missiological focus, thereby foregrounding the typological progression from ideal to aberration to ideal restoration, and enhancing mnemonic and homiletic symmetry.

Datum 39
"... to finish our journey on earth joy**fully**, purpose**fully** and victorious**ly**".
The foregoing excerpt instantiates suffixal rhyme through the recurrent adverbial morpheme **-ly** with phonological echo of **/-fəli/** in joyfully/purposefully and near-rhyme /-əsli/ in victoriously. The tripartite adverbial cluster creates phonological parallelism that reinforces semantic climax. Rhetorically, the acoustic symmetry foregrounds the teleological progression of the Christian journey from inner disposition (joy), to intentional living (purpose), to ultimate triumph (victory), thereby making the exhortation aesthetically cohesive, memorable and persuasive.

Table 10: Classification of Rhyming Patterns in the Selected Sermon Outlines

S/N	Rhyming Pattern Type	Textual Instance	Rhyme Scheme	Theological Idea Captured
1	Morphological / Homoeoteleuton (suffixal rhyme)	renovation, redemption, reclamation and restoration	-ation / -tion / -ation / -ation	Eschatological completeness; universal renewal of all things
2	Adverbial Suffixal Rhyme	joyfully, purposefully and victoriously	-fully / -fully / -ously (a a a)	Teleology of Christian pilgrimage, manner of finishing earthly journey
3	Identical Monorhyme (Epiphora)	"... in Christ's Evangelism → a / ... in unChristlike Evangelism → a / ... through Christ-centred Evangelism"→ a	-evangelism/ -evangelism/ -evangelism (a a a)	Missiological typology - ideal, aberration and restoration of evangelism
4	Paired Couplet Monorhyme	"... the glorious son → a / ... the kingdom of His son → a / ... the king for his saints → b / ... the king with His saints" → b	-glorious son/ -His son/ -His saints/ -His saints (a a b b)	Christology to Eschatology - from Christ's exaltation to saints' glorification

Source: Author's classification informed by Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the data reveals that lexical coinage and creativity are not extensively represented across the purposively selected sermon outlines. Nevertheless, compact lexical formations can convey complex meanings economically. The morphological processes identified demonstrate how linguistic resources, including existing word forms and elements from external linguistic sources, may be employed to expand the lexical resources available for expressing context-specific meanings. In contrast, phonostylistic patterns occur more prominently throughout the data. The recurrence of related phonostylistic structures establishes cohesion among expressions and foregrounds their evaluative vocabulary, thereby contributing to the organisation and stylistic distinctiveness of the written sermon outlines. In light of these observations, the following findings are presented and discussed in relation to the research objectives.

First, the findings indicate that lexical creativity in the selected sermon outlines can be examined through morphological processes such as compounding, lexical bracketing, lexical hyphenation and derivation, alongside other forms of lexical innovation where supported by the data. Examples such as freethinkers, churchgoers, and hardhearted illustrate the combination of lexical elements and, in some cases, the interaction of compounding with affixation. Similarly, forms such as unblamably, deceitfulness, and encouragement demonstrate derivational processes involving prefixes and suffixes. However, morphological complexity does not automatically establish coinage; the classification must distinguish established English words from genuinely novel formations or contextually innovative uses.

Second**,** the analysis identifies consonantal alliteration, assonance, rhythmic patterns, euphonic models, lexical repetition, and syntactic parallelism as salient features of the sermon excerpts examined. For instance, the expressions "the destructiveness and domination of loosed untamed tongues," "the deceitfulness and duplicity of lawless undependable tongues," and "the decisiveness and destiny of liberating unblamable tongues" exhibit a recurring /d/-initial pattern, reinforced by /l/-initial alliteration and the repetition of tongues. Their parallel syntactic organisation further strengthens the patterned delivery of the message.

Third, the findings suggest that lexical and phonostylistic choices perform complementary functions in the sermon outlines. Morphologically complex expressions can condense theological ideas, characterise spiritual conditions, and communicate moral evaluations, while alliteration, repetition, and parallel structures foreground key concepts and establish relationships between successive propositions. The recurrence of related initial sounds in the data creates cohesion across the expressions and gives prominence to their evaluative vocabulary. These features therefore contribute to the organisation and stylistic distinctiveness of the written sermons, although their precise functions must be interpreted in relation to each expression's immediate sermonic context.

Fourth, the interaction of lexical selection and patterned sound appears to strengthen the rhetorical potential of Kumuyi's sermon outlines by making important ideas more prominent, memorable, and readily recognisable. Expressions organised through alliteration and parallelism can intensify contrasts, reinforce warnings, and support the presentation of doctrinal or moral claims. Similarly, compact lexical formations can communicate complex meanings economically. These observations suggest that lexical and phonostylistic innovations contribute to the

persuasive organisation of the sermons. Nevertheless, because the study examines sermon outlines rather than directly measuring audience responses, claims about actual audience engagement should be framed as potential stylistic effects, not as empirically demonstrated listener reactions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

The study investigated lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi. It provides a useful stylistic examination of the relationship between lexical formation, sound patterning, and meaning in religious discourse. Its principal strength lies in the integration of morphological and phonostylistic analyses to demonstrate how linguistic choices contribute to the organisation and rhetorical presentation of sermonic messages. The use of twelve purposively selected sermon outlines also provides a defined corpus for qualitative investigation. However, the scope of the study is limited to written sermon outlines and does not extend to the analysis of their oral delivery or prosodic realisation. In view of this limitation, the following recommendations are proposed for further inquiry:

1.Further research could undertake comparative lexical studies of the sermons of different Nigerian Pentecostal preachers to establish similarities and differences in their lexical coinages and word-formation practices.

2. Diachronic investigations could examine Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi's sermon materials from different periods to determine changes in his lexical choices and phonostylistic patterns over time.

3. Corpus-based research could involve compiling larger corpora of sermon outlines and transcripts to quantify word-formation processes and recurrent sound patterns and examine their distribution across different themes and periods.

4. Comparative textual and prosodic analyses could examine sermon outlines alongside audio or video recordings of their delivery to explore the relationship between written sound patterning and its oral realisation, particularly in relation to stress, rhythm, pauses, and intonation.

5. Audience-response and reception studies could investigate how alliteration, repetition, parallelism, and distinctive lexical expressions influence listeners' recall, comprehension, emotional responses, and interpretation of sermons.

6. Cross-cultural and cross-denominational stylistic studies could compare Kumuyi's sermon language with that of other Nigerian Christian leaders and, where relevant, preachers from other African religious contexts to explore how denominational affiliation, language background, and cultural setting influence lexical and phonostylistic choices.

CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

This study contributes to scholarship in stylistics and religious discourse by examining lexical creativity and phonostylistic innovations within a unified analytical framework. By bringing Word-Formation Theory, phonostylistics, and Systemic Functional Linguistics into complementary use, the study demonstrates how morphological structures and patterned sound features can be analysed not merely as isolated linguistic forms but also in relation to their communicative and stylistic functions in religious texts. Its analysis of selected sermon outlines by Pastor (Dr.) William

Folorunso Kumuyi provides textual examples of how compounding,lexical hyphenation, lexical bracketing, derivation; alliteration, assonance, euphonic models, rhythmic patterns, lexical repetition, and syntactic parallelism contribute to the organisation, emphasis, and rhetorical presentation of sermonic messages.

The study further contributes methodologically by distinguishing lexical coinage from established word-formation processes. This distinction encourages greater precision in stylistic research by showing that the morphological complexity of a word does not, in itself, establish its status as a new coinage. Similarly, by treating phonostylistic features in relation to their textual contexts, the study offers a basis for interpreting the potential contribution of sound patterning to emphasis, cohesion, and persuasive expression without assuming unverified oral delivery and audience responses. The analysis therefore provides a framework that informs subsequent investigations of lexical creativity and sound patterning in sermons and other forms of religious communication.

More broadly, the study provides a foundation for comparative research on the linguistic styles of Nigerian Pentecostal preachers. Although its findings are limited to the selected sermon outlines, the analytical approach may be applied to larger sermon corpora, oral sermon recordings, and comparative studies across preachers and denominations. In this way, the study extends the scope for investigating the relationship between lexical structure, sound organisation, and meaning-making in religious discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined lexical coinages and phonostylistic innovations in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi, focusing on their forms, functions, and stylistic significance in religious discourse. The analysis demonstrates the relevance of morphological processes, including compounding, lexical hyphenation, lexical bracketing and derivation, to the formation and interpretation of lexical items, while highlighting the contribution of phonostylistic features such as alliteration, assonance, euphony, rhythmic structuring, lexical repetition, and syntactic parallelism to the organisation and expression of sermonic messages. The recurring consonantal patterns and parallel constructions identified in the selected excerpts illustrate how sound organisation and lexical choices can reinforce emphasis, establish textual cohesion, and foreground significant religious themes.

The study further demonstrates the importance of interpreting linguistic forms within their communicative contexts. While compounds and derived words reveal the resources of English word formation, their presence does not necessarily constitute lexical creativity; claims of innovation require evidence of novelty or distinctive contextual use. Similarly, phonostylistic patterns may enhance the rhetorical potential of sermon outlines. However, conclusions regarding actual oral delivery and audience responses would require additional evidence. Since this study focuses solely on written sermon outlines, oral presentation and audience responses fall outside its scope. The complementary application of Word-Formation Theory, phonostylistics, and Systemic Functional Linguistics provides an analytical basis for explaining the relationship between linguistic structure, stylistic choice, and meaning-making in the selected texts.

All things considered, the study contributes to stylistic scholarship by bringing lexical analysis and phonostylistic investigation together in the examination of religious discourse. Although the

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

findings are limited to the twelve purposively selected sermon outlines, the study establishes a basis for further research using larger corpora, comparisons across preachers, and analyses of recorded sermons. Such investigations could deepen understanding of the relationship between lexical creativity, sound patterning, and persuasive communication in Nigerian Pentecostal preaching and religious discourse more broadly.

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