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An Investigation of Lexical and Grammatical Cohesion in Selected Sermon Outlines of Pst. (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi

Peacemaker A. Leizou
Department of English and Literary Studies, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria
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Abstract
This study investigates the use of lexical and grammatical cohesion in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi, with a view to examining how cohesive devices contribute to the construction of meaning, textual coherence and effective communication in sermonic discourse. Data for the study were drawn from twelve randomly selected Sunday worship sermon outlines. The analysis is anchored in M.A.K. Halliday and Hasan's theory of cohesion within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), complemented by insights from stylistic analysis. The findings reveal that both lexical and grammatical cohesive devices are systematically and strategically deployed throughout the texts. Lexical cohesion, realized through repetition, synonymy, antonymy, collocation, and hypernymy/hyponymy, plays a significant role in reinforcing thematic focus and maintaining semantic continuity. Grammatical cohesion, manifested through reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism, contributes to logical sequencing, textual unity, clarity of expression, and audience engagement. The study further demonstrates that these cohesive resources enhance the organization, coherence, and interpretability of the sermon outlines, thereby facilitating effective transmission of the preacher's message. The study concludes that cohesive devices constitute indispensable linguistic resources for meaning-making in religious discourse. It therefore recommends that preachers and other religious communicators consciously exploit cohesive strategies to improve clarity, coherence and audience comprehension. Further studies are also encouraged to explore other linguistic and stylistic dimensions of sermonic discourse across diverse religious traditions.

Keywords: Cohesion, lexical cohesion, grammatical cohesion, sermonic discourse, systemic functional linguistics, stylistics, and William F. Kumuyi.

Introduction
Language functions as a primary medium through which meaning is constructed, shared, and sustained in human communication. In extended texts, meaning does not arise solely from isolated sentences but from the systematic ways in which linguistic elements are interconnected to form a

unified whole. This interconnectedness, commonly referred to as cohesion, enables texts to be interpretable, coherent, and communicatively effective. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe cohesion as the set of linguistic resources that create semantic ties within a text, allowing readers or listeners to perceive it as a meaningful and organized unit rather than a collection of unrelated sentences.

Cohesion operates through two broad mechanisms: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is achieved through structural devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, while lexical cohesion is realized through vocabulary-based relationships including repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, collocation, and lexical chains (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2004). Together, these cohesive resources facilitate continuity of meaning, guide interpretation, and enhance textual clarity. As such, cohesion has become a central concern in discourse analysis, text linguistics, and applied linguistics.

Within religious discourse, sermons constitute a specialized genre in which lexical and grammatical cohesion are fundamental to the organization of meaning, textual coherence,and audience comprehension. Sermons are designed to instruct, persuade, exhort, and inspire audience; often addressing abstract theological concepts and moral imperatives. To achieve these communicative goals, preachers rely heavily on cohesive strategies to ensure clarity, logical progression, emphasis and memorability (Crystal, 2008). Sermon outlines constitute condensed written texts that organize theological meanings for subsequent oral delivery. As such, cohesion is essential for maintaining clarity, continuity, and coherence of meaning through the effective organization of points and subpoints.

In the Nigerian Christian context, sermon outlines function not only as preaching guides but also as instructional texts used for Bible studies, leadership training, crusade fields, and personal devotion. Consequently, their effectiveness depends largely on how lexical and grammatical cohesion are deployed to connect ideas, reinforce themes, and maintain doctrinal consistency. Scholars such as Adegbite (2006) and Odebunmi (2005) observe that Nigerian Christian discourse exhibits distinctive patterns of repetition, reference, and conjunction that reflect both rhetorical intent and sociocultural context.

Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi, founder of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, is widely recognized for his systematic, expository and didactic preaching style. His sermon outlines, which are extensively circulated in both print and digital formats, are characterized by logical organization, thematic consistency and clarity of expression. Typically, the outlines present biblical teachings through carefully selected scriptural texts, well-formulated topics, systematically arranged headings and subheadings, relevant biblical references, and explanatory notes. These features make them a valuable resource for examining the use of cohesive devices in religious instructional discourse.

In spite of the distinctive textual features and widespread circulation of Kumuyi's sermon outlines, empirical linguistic studies on their cohesive organization remain scarce. Existing research on Nigerian religious discourse has predominantly concentrated on pragmatic, rhetorical, ideological, and sociolinguistic dimensions (Adegbija, 2004; Odebunmi, 2005), with relatively little attention devoted to the role of lexical and grammatical cohesion in the construction of meaning and textual coherence. As a result, the contribution of cohesive devices to the communicative effectiveness of sermon outlines remains underexplored, creating a gap in scholarship on African Christian discourse.

It is against this backdrop, the present study investigates lexical and grammatical cohesion in selected sermon outlines of Pastor William F. Kumuyi. By identifying and analyzing the cohesive devices employed in these texts, the study seeks to highlight the linguistic strategies that underpin coherence, and pedagogical effectiveness in contemporary Nigerian Christian preaching. The study also contributes

to broader discussions in discourse analysis and text linguistics by extending cohesion-based research to religious instructional genres within the African context.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cohesion is a fundamental linguistic property that enables texts to function as meaningful and interpretable units. Through lexical and grammatical resources such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, repetition, synonymy and collocation; writers establish semantic links that guide readers through complex ideas and ensuring continuity of comprehension (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In instructional and persuasive genres, including religious sermons, cohesive devices play a crucial role in organizing content, reinforcing key themes and facilitating comprehension, particularly when abstract or doctrinal concepts are involved.

Sermon outlines represent a distinctive written genre within Christian discourse. Unlike full sermon transcripts, outlines are condensed instructional texts designed to guide oral delivery, personal study and development, as well as communal teaching. Their effectiveness depends heavily on the strategic deployment of lexical and grammatical cohesion, as meaning must be communicated concisely without sacrificing clarity or coherence. In the Nigerian Christian context, sermon outlines are extensively used beyond the pulpit for Bible studies, leadership training, evangelism and theological education. Thus, the careful selection and organization of lexical items become essential to ensuring that the sermon outlines serve as valuable and practically useful resources for effective communication.

However, the gap is evident in the absence of focused research studies on cohesion in Kumuyi's sermon outlines. Consequently, the ways in which grammatical cohesive devices: such as reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction interact with lexical cohesion to structure theological arguments, sustain thematic continuity, and facilitate comprehension remain insufficiently understood. Furthermore, this deficiency limits broader insights into the operation of cohesion in African religious instructional discourse and restricts comparative investigations involving other religious and pedagogical text types.

As a result, there is a need for a systematic investigation of lexical and grammatical cohesion in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi. Addressing this gap will contribute to linguistic scholarship by extending cohesion theory from the views of an underexplored genre; also profering insights into the textual strategies that underpin effective religious communication. The present study addresses this gap by examining the types, patterns, and functions of cohesive devices in Kumuyi's sermon outlines, thereby enriching discourse-based studies of religious texts and enhancing the understanding of cohesion in specialized written discourse.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the patterns and functions of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in selected sermon outlines of Pastor William F. Kumuyi, in order to determine how these devices contribute to textual coherence, clarity, and effective communication in religious instructional discourse. The objectives of the study are to :

i. identify the lexical cohesive devices (repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, collocation and lexical chains) used in selected sermon outlines of Pastor William F. Kumuyi.

ii. identify the grammatical cohesive devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism) employed in the selected sermon outlines.

iii. analyze the distribution and frequency patterns of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices across the selected sermon outlines.

iv. examine the functional roles of these cohesive devices in organizing ideas, maintaining thematic continuity, and enhancing clarity in the sermon outlines.
v. evaluate how lexical and grammatical cohesion contributes to the overall coherence and pedagogical effectiveness of Pastor Kumuyi's sermon outlines as religious instructional texts.

The Concept of Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the linguistic mechanisms that link parts of a text together, creating semantic unity and continuity of meaning. Halliday and Hasan (1976) conceptualize cohesion as a set of non-structural relations that operate across clauses and sentences, enabling texts to function as coherent units. Unlike coherence, which concerns meaning at the interpretive level, cohesion is realized through observable linguistic forms. Scholars, most often than not, view cohesion in a written text as the logical flow and association of ideas from one sentence to the next, which is accomplished by using appropriate linguistic devices to link sentences together.

Halliday and Hasan (1976), as referenced in Shuaibu et al (2013) articulate that cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of a text and another (p. 8)". Cohesion is one of the internal signals that communicators use to construct desirable meanings. Yule (2006) sees it as the link and relation that exist within a document. Chen and Wu (2021) describe cohesion as the network of semantic and grammatical resources that links textual elements into a unified whole, enabling readers to interpret discourse coherently. They maintain that cohesive devices facilitate continuity of meaning and improve textual organization. Cohesion is often thought of and defined in terms of basic syntactic unification. They are also regarded as properties of syntactic units whose interpretation is determined by elements within the same grammatical structure rather than by elements external to it.

Cohesion is broadly classified into grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. These cohesive strategies are particularly important in instructional texts, such as sermon outlines, where clarity and logical progression are essential for effective communication.

Grammatical Cohesion

Grammatical cohesion is achieved through syntactic and grammatical relationships between textual elements. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), grammatical cohesion comprises five major categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and structural parallelism. Reference cohesion comprises personal, demonstrative and comparative references that identify participants, entities, or phenomena within or beyond the text. It functions by establishing semantic links between textual elements, whereby one item derives its interpretation through its relationship with another, thereby contributing to textual continuity and coherence.

Substitution is another grammatical cohesion which involves the replacement of linguistic items by others to avoid repetition. NOUN (2010) views substitution as the "replacement of one item by another in avoidance of a repetition of a particular item in a text" (p.72). Substitution can appear at the nominative, accusative and completive cases of any syntactic units. Furthermore, ellipsis, as another form of grammatical cohesion, involves the omission of recoverable elements in the text. The concept also implies the deliberate removal of linguistic elements that have previously been realized in the construction. In addition, it is said to be any linguistic item in a given language that occupies any of the discrete slots in syntactic units that can be left out. However, the scope of ellipsis is in part or how the elements of the sentence are described.

Conjunction is a closed-class grammatical item that functions to connect words, phrases, clauses and sentences within a text. As a cohesive device, it signals semantic relationships between clauses or larger

textual units, thereby facilitating the logical organization of ideas, events and phenomena. Through these connections, conjunction contributes to the overall coherence and continuity of discourse.

However, NOUN (2010) argues that “conjunctive elements are not cohesive in themselves but by virtue of their meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out to the preceding or following text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse” (p. 75). Thus, in the literature, conjunction functions by encoding logical-semantic relations such as addition, transition, contrast, causal and temporal sequence between syntactic units, thereby enhancing textual coherence and meaning-making.

Again, structural parallelism involves where “syntactic units in two or more sentences or parts of the same sentence are similar or identical" (NOUN, 2018, p.). This simply implies that, for a construction to be seen as structural parallelism, it has to fulfill the condition of similarity or uniformity of syntactic stretches in two or more sentences or parts of the same sentence in a proximate sequence. These patterns of construction are particularly utilized to draw the attention of the target audience to the significance of those linguistic units. They are often employed by creative writers to reinforce or elaborate on a particular idea which would have emotional effect on the readers/listeners. Besides, it creates a sense of relationship between words, phrase and sentences; when they establish a relationship between things and ideas. These devices guide readers through textual progression and ensure logical connectivity between propositions (Eggins, 2004).

Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion operates through vocabulary selection and semantic relationships among lexical items. In the literature, lexical items with similar semantic imports may form cohesive chains, and a text can contain several cohesive chains. It includes reiteration/repetition, synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms and collocations. Reiteration/ repetition therefore implies restating what has been stated in identical or similar manner but wearing the same effect. This stylistic device is meant for emphasis and clarity; leaving no atom of doubt and confusion regarding the decoding of the meaning of the message being communicated.

Synonymy, as a lexical cohesive technique, is viewed as a collection or list of synonyms, often interchangeably utilized, that share similar semantic meaning in written or spoken texts. Again, some linguists see synonymy, as a concept that expresses the relation between two lexical units with a shared semantic import. Linguists such as Ndimele (1997), refers to some synonyms as “total (absolute or complete) and near (broad) synonyms. Total or absolute are those words which mean exactly the same thing and have the same communicative effect in all the contexts in which they are used" (p. 45).

On the other hand, partial or near-synonyms are lexical items that exhibit semantic similarity without complete identity. Although they may be interchangeable in certain contexts, they often differ in collocational, stylistic, or contextual usage, while preserving the essential propositional meaning of the text.

Furthermore, antonymy is a semantic relation between lexical items that encode oppositeness of meaning. As a lexical cohesive device, it establishes contrastive relationships within a text, thereby contributing to the organization of meaning and textual coherence. Antonymic relations may be realized through binary or non-binary oppositions, depending on the nature and degree of the semantic contrast.

Hypernymy, as lexical cohesion, describes a situation in which the meaning of many terms are implied in the sense of a super ordinate word; for instance, the meaning of the word furniture may be included in the meaning of the words like desk, chair, bed, table, wardrobe, bookshelf, etc. In other words, it is a type of meaning relationship which describes a situation where the semantic implication of one word

is included within the meaning of other words. That is, the possibility of using words in generic sense, whereas hyponymy is a subordinate concept in which meaning is implied with grouping of words and phrases. Collocation which refers to habitual co-occurrence of lexical items (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). While Hartmann and Stirk (1976) as cited in Alo (1998), describe collocation as "two or more words considered as individual lexical items used in habitual association with another in a given language" (p. 112). From the foregoing debate, it is crystal clear to avouch that the concept of collocation of meaning extraction largely depends on two main principles, namely: the identification of "habitual association" of lexical items and the "mutual expectancy". Thus, a common observation that in sermon outlines, lexical cohesion often reinforces key theological concepts through repetition and semantic chains, thereby aiding memorability and emphasis (Crystal, 2008).

Sermon Outlines as Religious Instructional Texts

Sermon outlines are condensed written texts designed to guide the oral delivery of sermons and structured teaching. They differ from sermon transcripts in that they rely heavily on cohesive devices to maintain meaning economy and clarity. Scholars have noted that religious instructional texts require high level of cohesion to manage abstract concepts and moral reasoning effectively (Adegbite, 2006; Odebunmi, 2005).

From the foregoing discussion, a sermon outline may be conceptualized as a specialized written genre of religious discourse intended for oral delivery within a specific liturgical context. Its thematic focus is typically derived from a scriptural text and developed through the integration of supporting biblical references, with the communicative goal of persuading the audience toward a particular interpretive or doctrinal position. For effective comprehension of such texts, the lexical choices and semantic relations embedded in both the primary and supporting scriptural materials require careful identification, systematic analysis, and interpretive evaluation. Structurally, sermon outlines are conventionally organized into discrete functional components, namely the textual basis, thematic statement, introduction, exposition or discussion, and conclusion. In addition, each of these components contributes to the overall coherence, thematic progression, and rhetorical effectiveness of the message.

Halliday and Hasan's Theory of Cohesion

This study is anchored on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory, which provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how texts achieve unity through grammatical and lexical means. The theory distinguishes cohesion from structure and emphasizes semantic relations realized through surface linguistic forms.

Halliday and Hasan's framework has been widely applied in discourse analysis, stylistics, and applied linguistics, making it suitable for analyzing sermon outlines as written discourse.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

The cohesion framework is rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, which views language as a resource for making meaning in social contexts (Halliday, 1994). SFL emphasizes the textual metafunction, which concerns how language organizes information into coherent messages. Lexical and grammatical cohesion serve this metafunction by structuring thematic progression and continuity. Eggins (1994) argues that the textual metafunction explains how a text is organized as a coherent piece of written or spoken discourse. Accordingly, analysing a text involves identifying the cohesive and coherent resources that contribute to its organization, semantic continuity, and overall unity. Obviously, this meta-function deals with the creation of text with the inclusion of ideational and interpersonal

semantic components. Evidently, the interest of employing systemic functional linguistics as the theoretical foundation for the analysis of the inquiry is that it does not only describe the structure of language, but also explicates the attributes or characteristics of the discourse.

Studies on Cohesion in Written Texts

Several empirical studies have examined cohesion in academic, journalistic, and literary texts. For instance, Eggins (2004) contends that the coherence of a text depends largely on the systematic interaction of grammatical and lexical cohesion in the construction of meaning. Similarly, Bloor and Bloor (2013) show that repetition and reference are dominant cohesive devices in instructional genres.

Studies on Cohesion in Religious Discourse

Research on religious discourse has focused mainly on pragmatic and rhetorical features. Adegbite (2006) identifies the strategic use of repetition and conjunction in Nigerian sermons to achieve persuasion and emphasis. Odebunmi (2005) highlights how reference and lexical reiteration help preachers sustain doctrinal themes. Awonuga and Chimuanya (2016) employ systemic functional grammar to analyse the linguistic strategies evident in the sermons of Nigerian Christian preachers. Their study reveals that "such sermons are characterised by features such as repetition, grammatical parallelism, the use of imperative constructions, and rhetorical questioning, among other discourse strategies"(pp.1-2)

However, these studies often analyze spoken sermons or pragmatic intentions rather than written sermon outlines and do not provide systematic classification of cohesive devices.

Studies on Nigerian Christian Discourse

Studies on Nigerian Christian texts reveal that religious discourse reflects sociocultural realities and rhetorical traditions. Adegbija (2004) notes that Nigerian religious texts employ intensive lexical repetition to reinforce moral authority. This study seems to be insightful or intuitive, yet, it rarely apply cohesion theory explicitly rather focus on few clergy men.

For instance, Ajayi (2016) examines the "language of Christian burial services and sermons among preachers in South-Western Nigeria. The study identifies salient discourse features, including references to the deceased as a “body” rather than a “corpse”; emphasis on the deceased’s good deeds, invocation of shared biblical beliefs concerning death and resurrection, the use of consolatory songs, and the offering of prayers" (pp.42-43).

In a related study, Ajayi (2017) further demonstrates that "religious leaders in South-Western Nigeria deploy pain-relieving linguistic strategies to console the bereaved, thereby reinforcing the therapeutic and supportive functions of religious discourse" (pp. 43-44).

Akhimien and Farotimi (2018) analyse selected sermons of Enoch A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, with the aim of identifying the discourse techniques and persuasive elements that characterise his preaching. Their findings indicate that Adeboye’s sermons are "marked by the application of Emanuel Schegloff’s Conversational Analysis strategies. The study further reveals that these strategies manifest through discourse features such as feedback and call-response mechanisms, adjacency pairs, opening and closing devices, repair mechanisms, and the selection of the next speaker" (p. 4). These verbal "strategies are complemented by non-verbal conversational cues, including pauses, smiles, laughter, and gestural movements such as raising of the hands and head" (p. 18).

Ajayi (2019) investigates the generic structure potential of street sermons in South-Western Nigeria within the framework of Halliday and Hasan's (1985) model of generic structure potential. The study identifies both obligatory and optional linguistic features that characterise street sermonic discourse in the region and provides a descriptive account of their pragmatic significance. The findings reveal that Christian street evangelism in South-Western Nigeria typically "begins with songs, which are recursive and may occur multiple times within the discourse. Other structural elements include greetings, statement of purpose, preaching, prayer (also recursive), call for confession, welcome to the fold, and a closing segment. The analysis further indicates that certain elements follow a conventional sequence, particularly the requirement that a call for confession precedes the welcome to the fold" (p. 37). Inclusively, the study underscores that the inclusion or exclusion of specific elements, especially, the "welcome to the fold", constitutes a significant feature in the structuring of street evangelistic discourse in the region.

Odebunmi and Adetuyi (2007), as cited in Adetuyi and Patrick (2019), argue that "the success of religious discourse in whatever form, is rooted in the instrumentality of language, the reality of which is informed by the kind of language a speech community uses for the expression of its religious beliefs in the public" (p. 42). Furthermore, they emphasise that religious leaders must remain conscious of their heterogeneous audience and carefully select appropriate linguistic forms to communicate intended meanings effectively. The authors also noted that studies of religious language reveal distinctive discourse identities across domains such as prayers, sermons, Bible studies, invocations, and other ritual practices.

In a related observation, David Crystal (1987), as cited in Adetuyi and Patrick (2019), asser that religious English constitutes one of the most distinctive varieties among occupational registers.

Despite extensive research on cohesion and religious discourse, there is a dearth of studies that systematically examine lexical and grammatical cohesion in sermon outlines authored by Nigerian Christian leaders, particularly Pastor (Dr) William Folorunso Kumuyi. Existing studies tend to prioritize spoken sermons, pragmatic strategies, or ideological interpretations, leaving written sermonic texts underexplored. This gap justifies the present study.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design, grounded in discourse-based text analysis. This design is appropriate because the study seeks to describe, classify and interpret lexical and grammatical cohesive devices as they occur in written texts, rather than to test hypotheses or establish causal relationships.

Nature and Sources of Data

The data for this study consists of twelve randomly selected sermon outlines authored by Pastor William F. Kumuyi. These outlines are sourced from officially published materials of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, including Bible study manuals, revival teaching outlines and conference sermon materials that are publicly accessible in print and digital formats, such as https://www.dclm.org or https://www.dclm.org/sermons.

Sample and Sampling Technique

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

i. The sermon outlines must be clearly authored by Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi.

ii. The outlines must be written in English.
iii. The outlines must be complete texts, not excerpts.
iv. The outlines must display sufficient length and structural complexity to allow meaningful analysis of cohesive devices.

Purposive sampling is used because the study aims at indepth linguistic analysis rather than generalization across all sermons.

Unit of Analysis
The unit of analysis comprises clauses, sentences, and lexical items within the selected sermon outlines. These units are examined for the presence and function of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices.

Procedure for Data Collection
The selected sermon outlines are collected and converted into editable text format where necessary. Each outline is read repeatedly to gain familiarity with its structure and content. Instances of lexical and grammatical cohesion are manually identified and highlighted.

Method of Data Analysis
Data analysis is carried out in the following stages:
i. Identification: Instances of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices are identified in the texts.
ii. Classification: Identified cohesive devices are grouped according to Halliday and Hasan's categories.
iii. Description: Each cohesive device is described in terms of form and function.
iv. Interpretation: The role of each device in achieving textual cohesion and coherence is explained and interpreted within the sermonic context.

The findings are presented qualitatively with illustrative examples drawn from the data. Where necessary, simple frequency counts are used to support descriptive observations.

Ethical Considerations
All sermon outlines analyzed in this study are available in the public domain. Proper acknowledgment is given to the author and sources of the texts. No aspect of the data has been distorted or misrepresented. The analysis is conducted solely for linguistic and academic purposes rather than theological interpretation or doctrinal evaluation.

Reliability and Validity of the Study
Reliability and validity are essential criteria in ensuring the rigour and credibility of any linguistic analysis. To ensure reliability, clear analytical categories based on established frameworks of cohesion, particularly, those proposed by M.A.K. Halliday and Ruquaiya Hasan are consistently applied throughout the analysis. In addition, ambiguous cases are cross-checked using established linguistic descriptions of cohesive devices to minimize subjectivity and enhance consistency in coding and interpretation.

Validity, on the other hand, concerns the accuracy and appropriateness of the analytical framework in capturing the phenomena under investigation. This study ensures validity by adopting well-established theoretical constructs from systemic functional linguistics, which are widely recognized for analyzing cohesion in texts. The selected sermon outlines are representative of the preaching style and thematic

structure typical of the discourse under investigation. This representativeness ensures that the findings genuinely reflect the patterns of lexical and grammatical cohesion characteristic of the discourse type. In addition, careful attention is paid to contextual interpretation, ensuring that cohesive ties are not only identified structurally but also interpreted in relation to meaning within the sermonic discourse.

Lexical Repetition/Reiteration

Lexical repetition is one of the principal stylistic resources employed by the sermon writer to foreground key meanings, reinforce thematic development, and enhance the communicative effectiveness of the sermon. The device functions primarily to achieve emphasis and clarity, thereby eliminating ambiguity in the encoding and interpretation of meaning. It also facilitates effective assimilation of the message by the target audience. In this regard, Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi strategically deploys lexical resources to underscore and reinforce salient points within the sermons. Presented below are selected instances of lexical repetition identified in the texts.

Datum1.

i. The **saved** tongue
ii. The **unsaved** tongue
iii. The **transformed** tongue
iv. The **untransformed** tongue
v. The **tamed** tongue
vi. The **untamed** tongue

From the foregoing, it is observed that "tongue" is foregrounded both with positive and negative qualifiers to modify or recast the repetition of the tongue. It is obvious that the pastor with the recast is able to emphasize the benefits and consequences of the tongue.

Datum 2.

i. Peter was **rebuked** by Paul
ii. Peter **respected** Paul
iii. Peter **recognized** Paul
iv. Peter **recommended** Paul
v. Peter **rebuked** those misinterpreting Paul
vi. Peter **re-emphasized** the message of Paul
vii. Peter **released** his trusted sons to Paul

The above excerpt is obviously derived from Paul's confrontation with Peter at Antioch. Having observed that Peter's conduct stemmed from fear of human opinion, Paul condemned it as blameworthy, inconsistent, and incompatible with the truth of the gospel message of salvation.

Prior to this incident, certain conservative Jewish believers associated with James arrived from Jerusalem. According to Galatians 2:12, Peter had previously eaten with the Gentile believers; however, upon their arrival, he withdrew and separated himself from them out of fear of the circumcision group. Peter's conduct subsequently influenced the other Jewish believers, who likewise acted hypocritically, so much so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. This behaviour ultimately prompted Paul's public rebuke of Peter for acting inconsistently with the truth of the gospel.

Later, Peter realized his fault and repented of it. This is obviously evident in his second epistle to the brethren in Asia, Bithynia and Cappadocia (See. 2 Peter 3:15,16), where the pastor draws his inspiration

from; thus, showing Peter's respect, honour, and recognition of the calling and ministry of Paul the apostle. The lexical repetition is to demonstrate Peter's interface with Paul and his subsequent affirmation and recommendation of Paul's epistle.

Datum 3.
i. **Scoffers scoff**
ii. **Scorners scorn**
iii. **Freethinkers think**
iv. The **last minutes**
v. The **last hours**
vi. The **last days**

According to the tenor and context of the message in the above extract, the pastor wants every true disciple of Christ to be ready and prepared for Christ's second coming. It is the explication of the assurance and certainty of the Lord's day that prompts the repetition of those substantive words.
The day of the Lord is emphasized by the Apostle Peter in his second epistle to the disciples in Asia, Cappadocia and Bithynia. He accentuates the claim by saying, "**it will come as a thief in the night"** which gave the cleric the hint to affirm and avouch that the Lord Jesus Christ will come regardless of actions or activities of scoffers and scorners; hence, the reiteration of scorners and scoffers in the extract. Furthermore, the repetition of those content words, call for proper reflection and contemplation, if for any reason, their activities have diverted or distracted the focus and weakened the active faith of some. Again, the phrase "last days" is also reiterated with different definite time markers in an ascending order.

Datum 4.
i. **See Him** as the only way of escape
ii. **Seek Him** above all else on earth
iii. **Set Him** before us always as a perfect example
iv. **Satisfy Him** by doing only his pleasure
v. **Show Him** in fullness to the world around us
vi. **Serve Him** with all our hearts, soul, mind, strength and substance
vii. **Stand up for Him** before the people of the world….

From the above extract, the pronominal element "him" is made prominent by the use of message carrying items (content words) to buttress the significance of the word "him". Actually, the foregrounded functional element "Him" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ; hence, the pastor, is able to show how He should be treated and served; not only that He (Christ) should be esteemed and worshipped, but also, the pastor has succeeded in scripting and sculpting the noteworthiness or greatness of the referent in his congregants mentality. These are deliberately patterned or constructed to evoke memorability in them.

Datum 5.
"**The old man**, **carnal mind**, **dead spirit**, **uncircumcised heart**"
The preceding quotation describes an individual whose life is still entrenched or ingrained in transgressions. For instance, the use of the phrase "old man" depicts the wicked and corrupt disposition

of the unrepentant. Thus, all the other content words, such as, carnal, dead and uncircumcised are to foreground man's depraved, sinful, wicked nature before his conversion.

Datum 6.
i. **Pulpit** liars
ii. **Religious** liars
iii. **Latter-day hypocritical** liars
iv. **Service rendering** liars
v. **Praise seeking** liars
vi. **Position seeking** liars
vii. **Market pl**ace liars

Within the passage under analysis, the pastor foregrounds the nominal item 'liars' as a lexical resource for emphasizing a characteristic associated with the devil in Christian theology. This lexical choice is reinforced by negatively evaluative modifiers, which guide the audience toward institutional and social domains where acts of deception are portrayed as particularly incongruous. Accordingly, the recurrent of the word liars underscores the pervasive nature of deceit across different spheres of human activity and reinforces the central message of the sermon.

Synonyms
This term denotes a semantic relationship among words that share identical or closely related meaning properties. As a lexical cohesive device, synonymy involves the recurrent use of words or expressions with similar semantic imports, often employed interchangeably within spoken or written discourse. In linguistic scholarship, synonymy is also understood in terms of taxonomic relationships among lexical items or lexemes. In the texts examined, synonymous words and phrases occur frequently and function to reinforce meaning and maintain lexical cohesion. Selected instances from the documents are presented below.

Datum 7.
Table 1:
The Occurrences of Synonyms in the Texts

Talents	Abilities
Holiness	Godliness
Deceitfulness	Duplicity
The use of good words	Fair speeches
The great commission	Bringing souls to the Lord
The day of Joy	The day of merriment
Selfishness	Self-centeredness
Bitterness	Unforgiving spirit
Affirmed	Confirmed
Last days	Last hours
Seducing spirits	Seducing people
Days of deception	Deadly distortion
To deafen	To deaden
Local church growth	Kingdom growth

Talents	Abilities
Lies	Deceptions
The greatest preparation	the greatest responsibility
Their nominal Christianity	Their superficial Christianity
Devastation	Judgement
Willfully	Intentionally
The strongest of men will collapse	The most courageous men will crumble
Cunning	Subtle
The behaviours	The Actions
Pride	Vainglory
Strength	Power

(Adapted from Hadi & Guo, 2020, p.12)

Hypernymy/hyponymy

Hypernymy refers to a superordinate semantic relation in which a general lexical item subsumes the meanings of more specific items within its semantic domain. In other words, it describes a meaning relationship whereby the semantic content of a general term is inclusively realized in a set of more specific lexical items, allowing language users to operate at a generic level of reference. Hyponymy, by contrast, denotes a subordinate semantic relation in which specific words or expressions fall under a broader category. For example, animal functions as a hypernym, while dog, pig, goat and cat operate as its hyponyms. Crystal (2003) observes that hyponymy constitutes a hierarchical semantic relationship in which subordinate lexical items are organized under more general lexical categories, often across multiple levels of semantic classification. Within the Systemic Functional Linguistic framework, hypernym and hyponym relations contribute to lexical cohesion by organizing experiential meaning through taxonomic relations in the nominal group. In the sermons analysed, the pastor strategically exploits these relations to foreground, specify and consolidate key aspects of his message, thereby enhancing semantic clarity and reinforcing the intended communicative import for the target audience. Selected instances of hypernymy and hyponymy identified in the texts are presented below.

Datum 8.

"He has the **totality of power**– natural, supernatural, great, heavenly, eternal, and prevailing power"

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that the word **"power"** is an hypernymy, while the rest of the linguistic items that follow are hyponyms. The employment of this cohesive device is particularly pertinent to instill in the mind of his audience the grades and graduation or levels of **"power".**

Table 2. Hypernymy/Hyponymy Occurrence

Hypernymy	Hyponymy
Totality of power	Natural, supernatural, great, heavenly, eternal prevailing power

(Adapted from Ndimele ,1999, p.52)

Antonyms

Antonymy is a sense relation that denotes semantic opposition between lexical items within the same semantic field, thereby serving as an important lexical cohesive resource in discourse (Nwala, 2015). In essence, antonyms encode relationships of semantic opposition among lexical items across stretches of discourse. Such oppositional relations operate along varying degrees and dimensions, ranging from

binary to non-binary contrasts. Similarly, Cruse (2011) conceptualizes antonymy as a sense relation involving semantic opposition between lexical items within the same semantic domain, distinguishing among gradable, complementary, converse, and directional opposites. Thus, antonyms are further classified as complementary, directional or converse, depending on the nature of the opposition expressed.

Within the SFL framework, antonymy serves as a lexical cohesive device that expresses contrastive meaning in discourse. In the analysed texts, the pastor deliberately employs antonymic pairs to emphasize semantic oppositions and highlight major sermon themes. These contrastive lexical choices enhance clarity and aid the audience's understanding of the central messages of the sermons. Selected instances of antonymy identified in the documents are presented below.

Datum 9.

Table 3:

The Occurrences of Antonyms in the Texts

Young	Old
Rich	Poor
Tamed tongue	Untamed tongue
Transformed tongue	Untransformed tongue
Saved tongue	Unsaved tongue
They build	But destroy
They heal	And hurt
They teach to be strong	But tempt to weaken
Support	Sabotage
Lift up	Pull down
Endorse	Endanger
Refresh	Reproach
Righteousness	Unrighteousness
From light	To darkness
Evil	Goodness
Ministers	Members
The heaven	The earth
The narrow way	Broad way
Inwardly	Outwardly
Present	Future
Eternal sojourn	Earth dwelling
Public	Private
Supernatural	Natural

(Adapted from Hadi & Guo, 2020, p. 12)

Collocations

This concept refers to the patterned co-occurrence of linguistic items within a stretch of discourse, such that the presence of one item enables the prediction of another. Collocational expressions may be broadly classified into two categories. The first comprises fixed or semi-fixed collocations in which lexical items regularly co-occur to denote particular actions, events or situations. The second involves

verb–preposition combinations, where specific verbs conventionally select particular prepositions. Across the sermon outlines analysed, the pastor strategically employs collocational expressions to enrich imagery and enhance the communicative effectiveness of his message. Through the use of conventional word associations, he reinforces meaning, sharpens thematic focus, and promotes audience engagement. Selected examples of collocation identified in the texts are presented below.

Datum 10.
i. … show great **signs** and **wonders**
ii. … **commitment** and **consecration**
iii. … the creator of **heaven** and **earth**
iv. … **full** and **final**
v. … **rich** and **poor**
vi. … **soul** and **spirit**
vii. … **young** and **old**
viii. … **the father** and **the son**
ix. … **behaviors** and **actions**
x. … **healings** and **deliverances**
xi. … by their **lies** and **deceptions**
xii. … **impartial judge**

Grammatical Cohesions/Connectivities
Grammatical cohesive devices function primarily as relational resources within the syntactic organization of a text. Rather than contributing independent lexical meaning, they establish cohesive ties that promote textual continuity through reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism.

The analysis demonstrates that the preacher systematically deploys a range of grammatical cohesive resources to reinforce textual meaning and enhance the communicative effectiveness of the sermon. Data drawn from the twelve sermon outlines further reveal the extensive distribution of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism across the texts.

Substitution
Within the Systemic Functional Linguistic framework, substitution is a grammatical cohesive resource through which a linguistic item is replaced by an appropriate substitute, thereby maintaining textual continuity and preventing unnecessary repetition.
Noun (2010) views substitution as the replacement of one item by another in a text. It is the use of replacement instead of the repetition of a particular item. Substitution can appear in the nominative, accusative, and completive cases of any syntactic strings. However, the texts under consideration do not present any substantial substitution.

Ellipsis
Ellipsis refers to the deliberate omission of linguistic elements that have been previously realized in a given construction, with the omitted items being recoverable from the surrounding linguistic environment. Within the Systemic Functional Linguistic framework, ellipsis is viewed as a cohesive resource operating in the lexicogrammar, whereby elements occupying specific structural slots in

syntactic sequences may be left unexpressed without loss of meaning. In the texts analysed, several instances of ellipsis are observed, as the missing constituents are already inferred from the co-text, thereby contributing to textual economy and cohesion. Representative examples drawn from the documents are presented below.

Datum 12.

"They are clever, cunning, subtle and, through the use of good words and fair speeches, communicate errors".

The sentence exhibits subject ellipsis in the final coordinated clause, where the subject **they** is omitted before communicate. The omitted subject is readily recoverable from the preceding clause, thereby contributing to grammatical cohesion while avoiding unnecessary repetition.

Datum 13.

"There are false prophets who hold offices **in** church administration, Sunday schools ministry, prayer and deliverance ministries and prophetic ministries; yet, they do not know the Lord".

The excerpt exhibits prepositional ellipsis, as the preposition **"in"** is realized once and subsequently omitted in the coordinated structures. The omitted element is recoverable from the preceding construction, thereby contributing to textual economy while preserving semantic clarity. The aforementioned functional element is intentionally left out to avoid repetition.

Datum 14.

"**Judas** cannot practice it; he **was** self-centered, unrighteous and incorrigible and had a superfluity of naughtiness in him ".

The preceding extract illustrates clausal ellipsis (subject-predicator ellipsis) within a coordinated adjectival structure. In the sequence "he was self-centered, unrighteous and incorrigible," the subject–predicator combination **"he was"** is explicitly realized only once and subsequently omitted before the adjectives unrighteous and incorrigible. The omitted elements are recoverable from the preceding clause, thereby maintaining semantic clarity while promoting textual economy. This ellipted construction contributes to grammatical cohesion and allows the preacher to foreground Judas's negative attributes in a concise and rhetorically effective manner.

Datum 15.

"If your evangelism is not Christ-like, **it** has no recognition in heaven, **it is** a waste of time, energy and resources".

The above quotation is a clear manifestation of clausal ellipsis; specifically, the omission of the subject **"it"** and auxiliary **"is"** in the final coordinated clause, along with minor nominal ellipsis within the noun phrase. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics, clausal ellipsis occurs when elements of the clause, such as the subject or the finite verb are omitted but recoverable in the foregone elements. Here, both subject **"it"** and finite verb **"is"** are recoverable from the preceding clause. Both are grammatically necessary, recoverable, despite their omissions in the structure, the meaning of the sentence remains complete. From the antecedent, it is evident that ellipted construction enhances textual economy and rhetorical force while maintaining semantic clarity and cohesion. By avoiding unnecessary repetition, the speaker foregrounds the evaluative judgement and reinforces the sermonic message for the audience.

Datum 16.

"The message, when received and believed, leads to conviction, prayer, confession, and forsaking of sins".

The foregone excerpt demonstrates verbal ellipsis, specifically the omission of the auxiliary verb **"is"** and subject **"it"** in a reduced adverbial clause. The omitted elements are grammatically expected; and recoverable from the antecedent **"the message"**. The unellipted clause would have read thus: "when (**it is)** received and when (**it is)** believed". According to Systemic Functional Linguistics verbal ellipsis involves omission within the verbal group, such as auxiliaries like is, are, have, etc. Here, the auxiliary **"is"** is omitted but clearly understood and meaning remains clear despite the omission. This form of ellipsis contributes to textual economy while enabling a smooth progression of ideas and reinforcing the causal relationship between reception of the message and its spiritual outcomes.

Datum 17.

"When there is truthfulness and Christ-centred evangelism, people will turn from darkness to light, sin to the saviour, evil to goodness and unrighteousness to righteousness".

The ellipsis found in the above quotation is clausal ellipsis, more specifically adverbial clausal ellipsis. The initial adverbial clause "when there is truthfulness and Christ-centred evangelism" is omitted in the subsequent coordinated structures but is still understood from the first clause. Where the initial adverbial clause governs the succeeding coordinated clauses without repeated expression. The omitted clause remains recoverable from the context, thereby promoting cohesion, brevity, and rhetorical effectiveness. From the SFL perspective, this omission supports efficient meaning-making while maintaining clarity and emphasizing the transformational message of the sermon.

Conjunction

Conjunctions constitute a class of closed-system items that function to link words, phrases, clauses, and sentences within a text. They typically serve as cohesive resources by signalling logical and semantic relationships between clauses or larger textual segments, thereby facilitating the organization of ideas, events and experiential meanings. From Systemic Functional Linguistic perspective, conjunction operates as a grammatical cohesive device that relates propositions through additive, adversative, causal and temporal relations.

Taiwo (2010) explains, following Halliday and Hasan (1976), that "conjunctive elements are not cohesive in themselves but by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings, which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse" (p. 75). In the texts analysed, cohesion is largely achieved through the deployment of conjunctive adjuncts, also referred to as cohesive connectives.

A close examination of the texts reveals that these conjunctive items fall into the major SFL categories: one, **additive conjunctions,** which signal extension or addition of information (and, also); two, **adversative conjunctions,** which express contrast or concession (but, however, although, even though, yet); three, **causal conjunctions,** which indicate reason, result or condition (because, therefore, so that, since, if); four, **temporal conjunctions,** which mark sequence or time relations (then).

The frequent deployment of these conjunctive resources enhance textual coherence by explicitly marking logical connections among ideas, arguments and exhortations. Consequently, conjunctions play a crucial role in structuring the sermonic discourse and facilitating audience comprehension. Selected instances of these conjunctive elements identified in the texts are presented below.

Datum 18.
"**Since** we are in the last days and the time of evaluation is about to come, the charge to preach the gospel should be our focus". The above highlighted functional item demonstrates the reason for the focus of the gospel, hence is a clear display of causal conjunction.

Datum 19.
"**Thus**, we should be faithful in performing our responsibilities **because** the time is coming and judgment must begin at the house of God…". The conjunctive items "**thus"** and **"because"** function as causal conjunctions, establishing a logical relationship between cause and consequence. Their deployment contributes to grammatical cohesion by facilitating the logical progression of ideas within the discourse.

Datum 20.
"**Even though** the Pharisees and Sadducees permitted false teachers and prophets, He still emphasized the truth". The underscored expression "**even though"** functions as a concessive subordinating conjunction, signaling a concessive relationship between the subordinate and main clauses. Its deployment contributes to grammatical cohesion by explicitly marking a contrastive logical relation within the discourse.

Datum 21.
"The Psalmist expressed his passion **and** observation about the missing supernatural signs once experienced by God's chosen people". The referenced closed item in the text denotes an addictive effect; hence is seen as an addictive conjunction.

Datum 22.
"**Therefore**, it was easy for the people not to hearken unto false prophets in the time". It is obvious that the boldfaced word in the document expresses causative effect; hence, it is seen as causal conjunction.

Datum 23.
"**Because of** his prayer, the dead personality on Abimelech was cancelled **and** God healed his family". The highlighted expressions "**because of"** and "**and"** realize causal and additive relations, respectively. Their deployment contributes to grammatical cohesion by explicitly signaling the logical connections between successive propositions and enhancing textual coherence.

Datum 24.
"... the Lord is giving this warning **so that** believers will not be carried away by the wind of liberty, ease and convenience blowing all around them". The highlighted conjunctive expression "**so that"** realizes a causal relation of purpose by linking the Lord's warning with its intended consequence. Its deployment enhances grammatical cohesion through the explicit expression of logical dependency between the two clauses.

Datum 25.
"Apostle John clarified that this commandment is not **altogether** new **because** it had been given by God right from the beginning". The highlighted expressions serve distinct grammatical functions.

"Because" functions as a causal conjunction, whereas "**altogether"** is a degree adverb that intensifies the adjective new. Their deployment enhances the clarity and coherence of the message.

Datum 26.

"**But** the days of man will surely end; the Lord will be exalted for His day". Within Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, the highlighted expression but functions as an adversative conjunctive resource. It signals a contrastive logical relation between successive propositions, thereby contributing to grammatical cohesion and supporting the overall coherence of the text.

Reference Cohesion

Reference cohesion expresses the relationships that exist between elements within the text, allowing certain expressions to be interpreted in relation to others. Similarly, NOUN (2010), reference is a "grammatical device commonly used for cohesion in texts. A reference item is an item that cannot be interpreted semantically in its own rights. It has to be interpreted by looking at other elements that have been used before it or the ones that will be used after it "(p.70). The texts analysed below demonstrate this phenomenon.

Datum 27.

"**We** must always remember that the Lord [is] most high forever more. **He** is everlasting, mighty and powerful. **Our** praise and prayer should reflect **His** exaltation above all people, laws, principalities and powers. However, the people **whose** praise and service are acceptable to **Him** are **those** who are saved. **He** is a great God, and a great king above all gods. **This** realization should make **us** trust **Him** to solve every problem as **we** appear before **Him".**

In the preceding passage, pronouns such as **He** and demonstratives like **this** function as cohesive devices, linking sentences and ideas to maintain textual continuity. These reference mechanisms not only ensure coherence but also emphasize the theological message, guiding the audience toward a clear interpretation of divine attributes and the appropriate human response.

However, a closer examination of the data reveals the following personal reference items: **we** appear twice, **he** occurs twice, while **our** and **his** appear once each. Similarly, **him** is cited three times, whereas **whose**, **those**, and **us** appear once each. These anaphoric elements refer to nouns or noun phrases within the text and serve to establish cohesion. Most frequently, they point to specific characters or entities introduced in the discourse.

For example, the opening **we** functions as an anaphoric element whose referent is not explicitly stated in the text. Its interpretation is therefore context-dependent, creating an extra-linguistic reference to the pastor's primary audience. Likewise, **he** refers to the speaker and, by extension, to all those who will listen or read the sermon. In other instances, **he** refers cataphorically to "the LORD most high," whose worship is exalted above all, while **our** denotes the congregation.

Other anaphoric items include **whose**, **him**, **those**, **he**, **us**, and **we**. Specifically, **whose** refers to "the people" (the congregants); **him** denotes "the LORD most high"; and **those** ties back to "people whose praise and service are acceptable to Him." The pronoun "**he"** in certain instances is cataphoric, as its reference is realized later in the text, for example, in "a great God, and a great king above all gods." Finally, **us** and **we** serve as inclusive references, collectively encompassing both the speaker and the congregation. While **us** occurs in the accusative case and **we** in the nominative, both semantically denote the same entity.

Through these carefully deployed anaphoric and cataphoric references, the pastor ensures cohesion, reinforces the sermonic message, and strategically directs the audience's attention to both the divine subject and the participatory role of the congregation.
Reference cohesiveness typically validates the pastor's systematic and expository manner of preaching and teaching. As a result, his target audience is able to keep pace with the emergence of sub-topics; it is also a contributing factor to the advancement and progress of the cleric message.

Structural Parallelism
This constitutes another form of repetition, specifically realized at the syntactic level. In this respect, structural parallelism occurs when "syntactic forms in two or more sentences, or in parts of the same sentence, are similar or identical" (NOUN, 2018, p. 114). Thus, for a construction to qualify as structural parallelism, it must exhibit uniformity or close similarity of syntactic patterns across contiguous sentences or clauses.
Such patterned constructions are strategically employed to draw the audience's attention to the relevance of certain utterances. They are frequently used by creative writers and speakers to reinforce, elaborate or foreground key ideas, often producing a noticeable emotional effect on the audience, especially within religious discourse. In addition, structural parallelism establishes meaningful relationships among words, phrases and sentences by highlighting connections between related concepts. Through this process, the writer or speaker directs the readers' or listeners' attention to both similarities and contrasts, thereby enhancing interpretive depth and overall meaning.
The primary motivation for this stylistic choice is to foreground the message being communicated. In the texts examined, the pastor systematically deploys contrasting and complementary syntactic configurations to convey his intentions more forcefully to the congregation. Presented below are selected illustrative examples of such syntactic constructions.

Datum 28.
i. They are people who went out from us, but they were not of us.
ii. They claim to be long to Christ, but they have the Spirit of antichrist.
iii. They oppose Christ and contradict his doctrines and message.
iv. They overthrew the faith of those who listened to them.
v. They oppose God and godliness; Christ and Christ-likeness.
vi. They perform false miracles and lying wonders so that people who see them or watch them over the internet or on YouTube are easily drawn away from the truth unto error.
vii. They deny Christ and the efficacy of his sanctifying blood.
viii. They lead many away from the truth and their steadfastness.
ix. They work against Christ and the true church.

The excerpt exhibits parallel syntagmatic structures, which may be described as instances of anaphoric parallelism. Notably, the third-person plural pronoun **they** is recurrent across all the sentences, serving as a unifying anaphoric element. Furthermore, with the exception of the opening sentence which is compound-complex, the remaining sentences are realized as compound structures. This structural consistency renders the propositions co-equal, interrelated and syntactically balanced.
The deployment of this parallelism generates significant pragmatic effects on the audience. It not only reinforces the intended meanings but also heightens audience engagement by directing attention to the patterned repetition of form and content, thereby sustaining focus and enhancing interpretive impact.

Datum 29.
i. The command is not to love the world
ii. The corruption of the lust of the flesh
iii. The contamination of the lust of the eyes
iv. The condemnation of the pride of life
v. Our continuation in the will of God

It is apparent from the above data, that the grammatical structures of the extract are identical or parallel. The order seems to be a noun phrase, followed by a prepositional phrase (NP+PP). The data above is seen as a biblical allusion from the first epistle of John chapter two verses fifteen to seventeen. The pastor has purposefully paraphrased it, by pointing out the caveats and consequences of the believer's attachment (affection) to the world. By so doing, the pastor has efficiently foregrounded **love (lust)** in those syntagmatic strings. The message inherent, therefore, is that believers should be crucified to the affairs and enticement of the world, mortified to the philosophies and customs of the world, blinded to the fantasies and fame of the world, and ensure the continuity of the will of God.

Datum 30.
i. They teach to be strong but tempt to weaken;
ii. They support and sabotage;
iii. They lift up but also pull down;
iv. They refresh but later reproach;
v. They endorse but afterwards endanger;
vi. They build and destroy;
vii. The heal and hurt;
viii. They lack control and principle; and
ix. They are undependable and their tongue is lawless.

From the foregoing, we notice the repetition of the initial pronominal elements "**they**" as the subject of the sentence. Besides, the grammatical structure of those utterances are syntagmatically and paradigmatically parallel or identical. These types of grammatical forms are often referred to as anaphoric parallelism. The order is seen as follows: a third-person plural personal pronoun "**they**", followed by a verb or a verb phrase and a coordinating conjunction, either "**and**" or "**but**", then a verb or a verb phrase that concludes the sentence, thereby making the grammatical structures having equal weight, creating a strong rhythmic import, showing a balance and coherent ideas. In fact, they are antithetical critical in form and function. Following this style, the pastor has effectively and sufficiently communicated his message to his readers/audience. The grammatical units of those utterances are carefully selected to describe the activities and consequences of false brethren/prophets in the body of Christ.

Datum 31.
i. The Way to heaven is a straight narrow way;
ii. The way of repentance and salvation;
iii. The way of the cross and self- denial;
iv. The way of holiness and obedience to the lord.

The aforestated grammatical forms are similar in nature; in this case, a nominal phrase with a coordinate. The linguistic elements in the nominals give credence and clarity to the term heaven. According to the Christian Faith, heaven is "the final abode of the departed righteous souls". Thus, those syntactic stretches foreground the path to heaven and the desired model or lifestyle capable of attainment; thereby producing a strong sense of aesthetic value and pragmatic effect in the target audience.

Table 4.
Distribution of Lexical Cohesive Devices

S/N	Lexical Devices	Total	Percentage
	collocation	12	10%
	synonym	24	19.8%
	antonymy	23	19.0%
	hypernymy/hypononymy	1	0.8%
	lexical repetition/reiteration	61	50.4%
Total		**121**	**100%**

(Tabulation is adopted from Obied & Adia 2020, p. 5277)
The formula for the above tabulation is given below:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

P= percentage
F= the number of lexical cohesions that are found in the documents
N= the total number of lexical cohesions
The above table presents the distribution of lexical cohesive devices identified in the analysed sermon outlines. A total of 121 instances of lexical cohesion were recorded and categorized into five major types. Lexical reiteration emerges as the most dominant device, accounting for 61 occurrences (50%), indicating the preacher's strong reliance on repetition to reinforce key themes and sustain semantic focus. Synonymy and antonymy also feature prominently, with 24 instances (19.8%) and 23 instances (19.0%) respectively, reflecting deliberate lexical variation and contrast in the construction of meaning. Collocation occurs 12 times (10%), while hypernymy/hyponymy is minimally represented with a single instance (0.8%).
The percentage values in the table were computed using the formula: where **P** represents percentage, **F** denotes the frequency of each lexical cohesive device, and **N** is the total number of lexical cohesive items identified. These distributive patterns highlight the predominance of reiterative lexical strategies in the texts and underscores their role in enhancing cohesion, emphasis and audience comprehension in the sermonic discourse.

Table 5:
Distribution of Grammatical Cohesion

S/N	Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Total	Percentage
	substitution	0	0%
	ellipsis	14	16.8%
	conjunction	22	26.5%
	reference	21	25.3%

S/N	Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Total	Percentage
	structural parallelism	26	31.3%
Total		**83**	**99.9%**

(Tabulation is adopted from Obied & Adia, 2020, p. 5277)

The formula for the above tabulation is given below:

$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$

P= percentage

F= the number of grammatical cohesions that are found in the documents

N= the total number of grammatical cohesions

The table above illustrates the patterning of grammatical cohesion across the sermon outlines, revealing how syntactic and functional relations are used to organize discourse. Out of the 83 grammatical cohesive ties identified, structural parallelism accounts for the highest proportion (31.3%), highlighting the preacher's preference for repetitive syntactic frameworks to achieve balance, emphasis and rhetorical force. Reference (25.3%) and conjunction (26.5%) also feature prominently, indicating sustained attention to participant tracking and the logical sequencing of ideas within and across clauses. These devices function primarily to sustain coherence and guide the audience through complex theological arguments.

In contrast, ellipsis (16.8%) occurs less frequently, suggesting a more controlled use of grammatical economy and textual condensation, and substitution (0%) which presents no substantial data. The distribution reflects a communicative strategy in which explicit structural guidance is prioritized over implicit recovery of meaning. Using the formula

$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$

The analysis demonstrates that grammatical cohesion in the sermons is achieved less through reduction and replacement, and more through overt syntactic patterning and connective relations, thereby reinforcing clarity, emphasis, and audience accessibility. However, because of the avoidance of excessive volume, some of the grammatical cohesive items are not included here.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the data, the study found that cohesive devices are extensively employed across the selected sermon outlines, contributing significantly to textual unity and coherence. The identified cohesive resources fall into two broad categories: lexical cohesion appears 121 times while grammatical cohesion occurs 83 times in the corpus. Lexical cohesion is realized through collocation, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy/hypernymy, and lexical reiteration, while grammatical cohesion is achieved through reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism. The distribution of these devices demonstrates the systematic use of cohesive resources in organizing ideas and sustaining meaning throughout the sermon texts.

Firstly, the findings reveal that the preacher deliberately and consistently deploys lexical and grammatical cohesive devices to achieve effective textual organization across the selected sermon outlines. Rather than functioning merely as formal linguistic links, these cohesive resources systematically connect propositions, maintain thematic continuity, and facilitate the logical progression of ideas. Secondly, the analysis demonstrates that lexical cohesive devices, particularly lexical

reiteration, synonymy, and antonymy, are strategically employed to reinforce central theological concepts, sustain topical focus, and enhance the rhetorical impact of the sermons.

Thirdly, the study further shows that grammatical cohesive devices—including reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and structural parallelism—contribute significantly to textual cohesion by establishing explicit semantic and logical relationships among clauses and sentences. Collectively, these findings indicate that cohesion functions not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a deliberate communicative strategy through which doctrinal meanings are clarified, emphasized, and effectively conveyed to the intended audience.

Fourthly, the analysis reveals that the patterned distribution of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices contributes substantially to the logical organization of the selected sermon outlines. The recurrent use of lexical cohesion, particularly reiteration and semantic relations, together with grammatical cohesive resources such as reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and structural parallelism, facilitates the orderly progression of ideas across the texts.

Fifthly, the findings demonstrate that these cohesive patterns sustain thematic continuity and textual unity by maintaining consistent reference to central doctrinal concepts throughout the sermon outlines.

Sixthly, the study establishes that the systematic deployment of these cohesive resources enhances clarity of expression and minimizes semantic discontinuity, thereby enabling readers and hearers to process the sermonic message more effectively and with greater interpretive ease.

Seventhly, the findings demonstrate that lexical and grammatical cohesive devices operate interdependently rather than in isolation, with their combined deployment strengthening semantic connectivity throughout the selected sermon outlines. The interaction between lexical relations and grammatical ties enables individual propositions to function as components of an integrated discourse rather than as unrelated textual units. Eightly, the analysis reveals that the systematic use of these cohesive resources contributes to the preservation of doctrinal consistency by maintaining semantic links across successive sections of the sermon outlines, thereby ensuring the progressive development of theological arguments. Lastly, the study establishes that the strategic deployment of cohesive devices reinforces the instructional and persuasive character of the sermon outlines, enhancing textual coherence, communicative effectiveness, and the overall realization of meaning within religious discourse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined lexical and grammatical cohesion in selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi. Its scope was restricted to the written sermon outlines and did not extend to the analysis of their oral delivery or prosodic realization. In view of this limitation, the following recommendations are proposed for further research:

1. Future researchers should investigate lexical and grammatical cohesion in sermon outlines and other forms of religious discourse across different Christian traditions and denominations in order to broaden understanding of cohesive patterning in religious texts.
2. Comparative studies should be undertaken to examine the similarities and differences in the deployment of cohesive devices in the sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi and those of other Nigerian Christian leaders or religious traditions.
3. Future studies may apply alternative discourse-analytic or stylistic frameworks to the analysis of sermon outlines in order to compare their explanatory potential with Halliday and Hasan's cohesion model and thereby enrich scholarship on religious discourse.

4. Future inquiries should investigate the deployment of lexical and grammatical cohesion across different genres of Christian discourse, such as devotional literature, Bible study manuals, pastoral letters, and theological commentaries, in order to determine whether cohesive patterns vary according to communicative purpose and discourse genre.
5. Future research should examine a larger and more diverse corpus of sermon outlines covering different periods, themes, or biblical texts to determine the consistency of the cohesive patterns identified in the present study.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that lexical and grammatical cohesion constitute indispensable textual resources in the selected sermon outlines of Pastor (Dr.) William F. Kumuyi. The analysis reveals that cohesive devices are systematically and strategically deployed to establish semantic continuity, organize theological propositions, and facilitate the logical progression of ideas throughout the texts. Lexical cohesion, realized through collocation, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy/hypernymy, and lexical reiteration, reinforces thematic development and doctrinal emphasis, while grammatical cohesion, manifested through reference, ellipsis, conjunction, and structural parallelism, provides the structural links necessary for textual unity and coherence. Collectively, these cohesive resources contribute significantly to the realization of meaning and the effective organization of sermonic discourse.

The study further establishes that the strategic interaction of lexical and grammatical cohesion enhances the communicative effectiveness of the sermon outlines by promoting clarity, thematic consistency, and interpretive accessibility. Viewed from the perspective of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, the findings affirm that cohesion functions as a central textual resource through which meaning is constructed, sustained, and communicated within religious instructional discourse. Consequently, the study contributes to scholarship on discourse analysis, stylistics, and religious communication by extending the application of cohesion theory to Nigerian sermonic texts.

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