Critical Stylistic Analysis of Discourse Strategies in Selected Christian Hymns

Lekan Oduola, Ph.D
IFRA Senior Research Fellow, and Lecturer, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.
abilacrown@gmail.com

Abstract
This study investigated the discourse-stylistic information housed in the aspect of christian hymnology to examine the functionally dynamic processes often deployed in presenting hymns with a message. Lesley Jefferies' Critical Stylistics (CS) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) provided the theoretical framework in the analysis of three major christian hymns selected to indicate the aspects of dialogue, rhetoric and ideological load that hinge on spirituality and religiosity. The findings reveal textual metafunctional elements that coalesce with certain textual-conceptual functions such as pronominal representations, naming and describing, apostrophisation, rhetorical negations, interrogative structures, modal and theme systems as well as simple and compound-complex structures. Other non-lexical devices like punctuation marks, rhythm and rhymes also feature to describe the encapsulating semantic and divine ecclesiastical imports of the hymns by engaging the real, imagined and personified interlocutors, and establishing the ideological view of Christ's vicarship and redemptive exploit. Gospel hymns and songs obviously have their syntactic and stylistic patterns with a functional use, not only in creating, building and projecting a Judeo-Christian worldview that emphasises man as the sole crown of the terrestrial creation, but also in securing the attention of the text-consumers with a full comprehension and acceptance of their theology beyond the aesthetic exposure. These thus provide adequate learning resources for learners of English in, especially, Nigerian second language pedagogy.

Key words: Discourse-stylistic information, Christian hymnology, textual-conceptual functions, Rhetorical negations, Second language pedagogy

Introduction

The term discourse-stylistics stems from the fact that the concept of style (that is, a situationally distinctive use of language covering every sphere of life) has a wide currency as it applied to diverse areas of human endeavour. If stylistics is accepted as the formal analysis of style and its variations in speech and writing, dealing with variety of investigated issues, discourse-stylistics, therefore, is the sub-discipline in discourse analysis whose analytical method observes parts of the text and what functions they perform in the context of the passage. It is in the light of the foregoing explanation that we attempt to assay some strategies as means of effective presentation of the socially and ideologically significant Christian hymnology. This is to the extent that language is a distinctive phenomenon whose intricate association with human mind and with human society makes it related to both cognition and communication (Widdowson, 1996:15). The concept of hymn and hymnological research has been one with long history; only that it is yet to fully capture the attention of linguists and analysts in the third world context and Nigeria in particular. Holmes (2011:1) validly defines sociolinguistics as the relationship that exists between language and society. Our hymnalysis, therefore, deals with the influence language has on members of the church community as well as how the church society influences the Christian music in language forms. This paper, consequently, is an essay on Christian musicology as a sociolinguistic instantiation of religious discourse. It exemplifies an exercise that emerge from studying the intertwine of textual materials in the performance of liturgical and other functions from the point of view of clear social and theoretical perspectives.

Background to the study

Music, as a vehicular phenomenon that conveys displeasure or otherwise about individuals' or societal ills, is a traditional "operating system" that has been carried on in the contemporary world. It has been one most powerful means of doing the social and humanistic engineering business, and by which individuals, issues, groups, the terrestrial and celestial spaces are examined and cross-examined. Music then, serves multi-dimensional purposes of entertaining, informing and orientating the general public with the sole aim of providing 'healing for the soul'. In doing this provision, Christian brand of music is such a unique one that both had a role in reflecting on the internal dynamics of the larger society. This is besides the fundamental characteristics of 'temporal' community intelligence, and global 'spiritual' solidarity.

The paper, seeks to examine Christian hymnology as a source of revelation higher than all wisdom and philosophy, presenting music not only as the movement of sounds to reach the soul for the education of its virtue but also shorthand of emotion. With this understanding, Christian hymnodists have largely accepted music as a moral law which gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and charm and gaiety to life and to everything. These, in critical stylistic analytical term, form the objects of our search.

Space fillers

Despite a deluge of scholarship on areas of religious discourse considered as necessary in sociolinguistics terms, the aspect of functional dialogic rhetoric that subsumes creative interrogation in Christian hymnology appears to be restively virgin. In socio-cultural terms, Awuah-Nyamekye's (2012) asserts that religion is at the root of African culture, and is the determining principle of African life necessary giving meaning and significance to their lives both *here and hereafter*. Looking at socio-contextual variables that account for linguistic variations in some selected Christian hymns, Adeyanju (2011) reaches the conclusion that a skillful management of linguistic resources impacts positively on the socio-religious world of the worshippers. An academic lacuna, however, exists in the aspect of contextually referenced discourse-stylistic strategies that foreground the social, spiritual and ideological orientations in Christian hymns in functional terms. This thus accounts for the need for renewed effort at examining the way the English language is used to communicate messages especially in Christian hymnology. The present study, therefore, forms part of that renewed effort with a view to carrying out unique 'hymnalysis' that guarantees

effective gospel communication as a socio-religious event.

Essentially, our analysis assumes both the impression and expression that are text-based. Our aim is to exemplify the fact that Gospel hymns and songs obviously have their syntactic and stylistic patterns with a functional use in the presentation of a Christian worldview to issues. This work is, therefore, significant as our "hymnalysis" is capable of helping to:

i. Understand and gain appreciation for the diverse linguistic forms and functions in the composition-styles of the hymns
ii. Understand the perspectival applications of various discourse strategies in Christian hymnology
iii. Understand the vital roles of dialogue, rhetoric and context in the constitution of the hymns

The question to be answered with this projected *'hymnalysis'* is that of how the hymn-text producers secure the attention of the consumers with a full comprehension and acceptance of their theology beyond the aesthetic exposure. The study is significant to the extent that it is capable of a conclusion that provides adequate learning resources for learners of English as a second language. This is in line with Omoniyi's (1990) argument that non-linguistic factors correlate highly with linguistic features in the analysis of language use patterns even at the levels of discourse and speech communities

Postulatum

To explore the dialogic rhetoric of language and creative interrogation in influencing the congregation for spirituality, and to entrench the foregrounded choices which the texts present, revealing the overt and covert ideologies in the text (Adetunji 2007;2013), Lesley Jefferies' Critical Stylistics, is found rewarding. Although Jefferies' textual-conceptual functions share some of the ideas pushed forward by the notion of the textual metafunction in the Hallidayan model of Systemic Functional Linguistics they, however, differ by their combination of textual feature and the ideological function. Projecting, unsnarling, and deconstructing the particular world-view and ideology at work find basis in ten textual-conceptual functions identified by Jefferies (2014:413-417) supported with analytical frame of the doctrine of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), that is, the kind of grammar which, in Olaniyi's(2016:160) view, is, for instance, a useful theory for the examination of mood in syntactic concatenations with a possible recommendation for effective learning and use English in second language context

Methodology

Such aims as enunciated above requires a methodological approach of Qualitative Content Analysis that facilitates the classification of basic discourse issues in the sample-texts into categories that make for easy analysis. The main thrust of our research engagement is to identify and analyze foregrounded features that present rhetoric, dialogic and poetic as the predecessors of stylistics. Our data were retrieved from the **International Copyright security ownership of The Rodeheaver Company** (Copyright, 1923; Renewal, 1951) which turns out to be a source with universal relevance. It contains gospel hymns and songs without denominational sentiment or bias. Consequently, our selected hymns are such whose use cuts across all gospel preaching denominations. The hymns and their writers are confirmed in Osbeck (1982). With interest in the religious ideological undercurrent, this study examines the dialogic rhetoric and creative interrogation amongst many other discourse-stylistic strategies so deployed.

To achieve this lofty goal, six textual conceptual functions are, on one hand, selected for the analysis of foregrounded signification while, on the other hand, a mechanism that handles creative interrogation according to the provision of three metafunctional component: ideational, interpersonal and textual is appropriated. In other words, the study finds the possibility of eclectic methodological approach in critical stylistics(CS) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to explain discourse-stylistic relations of material texts in Christian religious ideological thoughts as a real descriptive exercise and not as a mere commentary of texts (Halliday, 1985; Melrose, 1995; Leckie-Tarry, 1995). Within the provision of Critical Stylistics, then, our selected textual-conceptual functions are (i)Representing and Contrasting(ii) Equating and contrasting (iii) Prioritising (iv) Negating (v) Hypothesising (iv) Representing time, space and society (Idowu-Faith, 2016:396).

To really fully capture the forms and formations of the selected hymns, our hymnalysis should go enroute the checklist arranged in four categories by Leech and Short (1981) namely, lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech and adhesion, and content. With respect to the semantic implications, the analysis finds Halliday's six processes according to the category of meaning very relevant. Transitivity represents how the world is perceived in three dimensions.

On the whole, the discourse-stylistic focus of our thinking should cover, among other things, the lexico-grammatical arrangement, discographical format, creative interrogation and stylistic valuations. Blending these with cursory historical information and natural ecclesiatical settings provides vivid description of performance features in the selected hymns.

In the treatises

Obviously, there have been many approaches to the study of language functions in religious discourse. Many of these studies however have not paid attention to the need of looking at the aspects of hymnody in the perspectives of context in order to account for the identifiable techniques from language (Fairclough, 1989:4; Hunjo, 2010:43). This review therefore helps in the understanding of the existing approaches with a view to discovering language from the angle of its role to function within context.

As pointed out earlier, it is consequently made clear in Idowu's (2007) cohesive study that the resources that make up the cohesive potentials are part of the total meaning of the religious discourse, leaves a serious gulf in view of the unique significance of Christianity as a major social phenomenon in Nigeria whose communicative effectiveness requires subjecting such discourse to scrutiny to examine the sociolinguistic, pragmatic,

stylistic and critical linguistic traits that actually offer the adequate understanding of cognitive and communicative structures of language (Leech, 1974: xi). Thus, inspired by how the English Language becomes the driving tools, or directing and influencing force for our key players Christian religious discourse, Oyeleye and Oduola (2016), analysing selected sermons, present the instances of voice clashing across disciplines as intertextual evidence of the world as global village. Uzodimma (2016) similarly finds that excessive deployment of the same lexical cohesion is capable of heightening and projecting the thematic concern in text, thereby contributing to connectivity of semantic information.

Adeyanju (2011) seeks to address the age-long neglect of the aspect of hymnological investigation in spite of its long history by venturing into an analysis of Christian hymns in sociolinguistic terms. Examining socio-contextual variables that account for linguistic variation in the hymns through the theoretical lenses of Labov's variability theory and Hymes' ethnography of communication, Adeyanju reaches the conclusion that a skillful management of linguistic resources impacts positively on the socio-religious world of the worshippers. This notwithstanding, revealing some contextually referenced discourse-stylistic strategies that foreground the social, spiritual and ideological orientations in the hymns in functional terms remains an issue to account for.

Data presentation and stories behind the hymns

The concept of hymn and hymnological research, as earlier mentioned, has been one with long history dating back to the beginning of Romanticism in the early 1800s which was associated with a general fascination and discovery of the past. These are exemplified in such figures as Blakes, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Bryon who, in their various approaches to poetic creativity, view the Romantic ideal as a form of divinity springing from the individual's god-like nature, liberating him from all that detract from his irrepressible naturalness, and propelling him to seek, explore and create forms of conducive to his higher nature (Eruvbetine, 1990). As this prominently features in their works, our selected hymnalists wear the garbs of advocates for a dynamism which makes a provision for constant re-assessment, revalidation and regeneration of society through man's union with what Wordsworth refers to as pervading “Presence”. Posing questions of various forms, they seek to establish dialogic rhetoric in discoursing the Christian faith which they believe can be translated into practical institutions that bring out the best in man. It should be noted that as against mere literary or historical efforts, these hymnologists present their hymnic activities with deep-seated religiosity and theological annotations as listed below:

I gave my life for thee - Frances Ridley Havergal
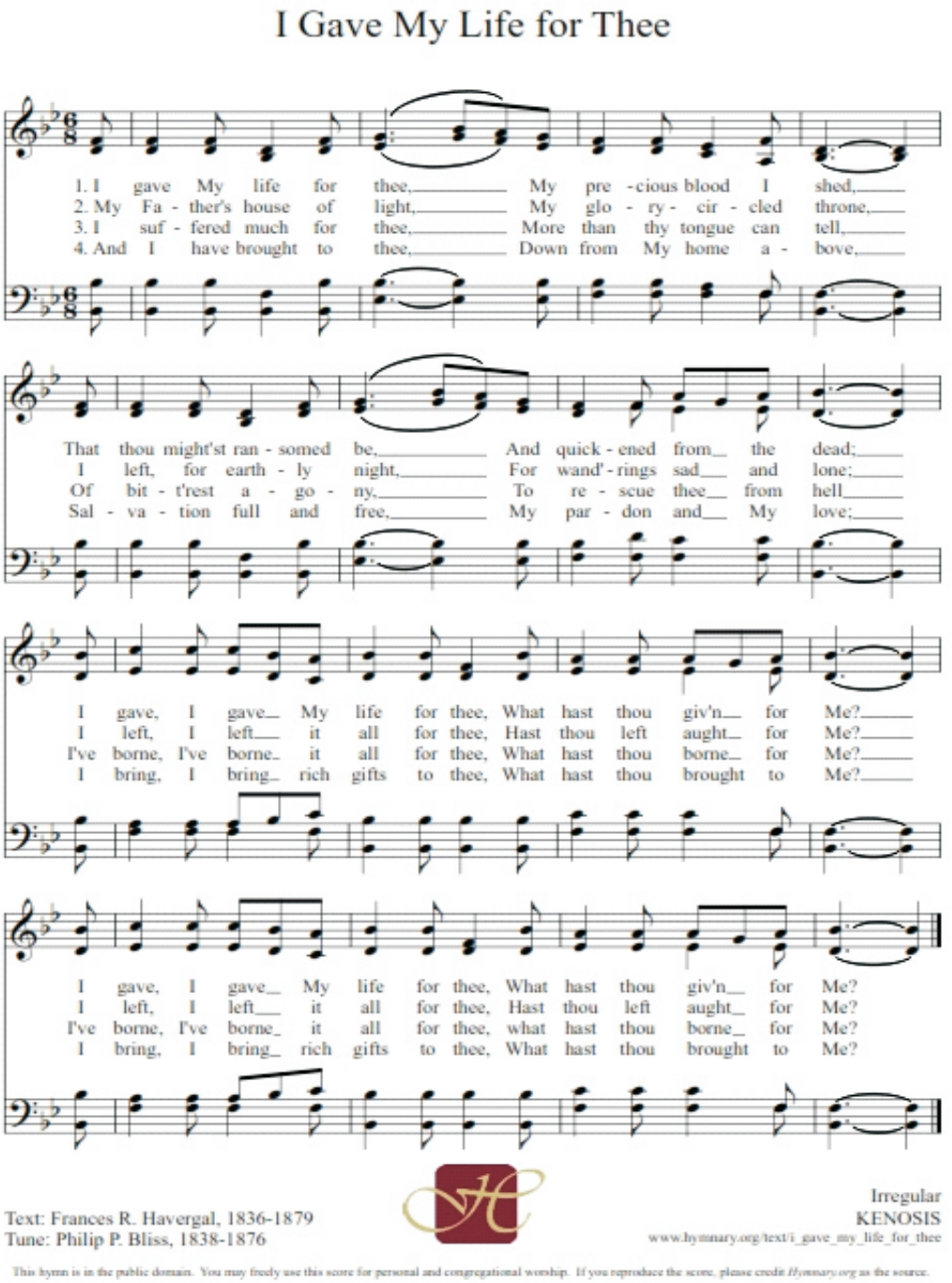
A song penned by Frances Ridley Havergal who was born December 14, 1836, at Astley, Worcestershire [England]. Miss Havergal was staying in the house of a pastor in Germany. In his study there was a picture of the crucified Saviour; underneath which was the motto: "I did this for thee. What hast thou done for me?" Inspired by the picture the Saviour's eyes resting upon her as she read the words, and the lines of her hymn flashed upon her. She wrote them in pencil on a scrap of paper, and presented as coming from the suffering Christ Himself. "I did all this for thee what hast thou done for Me?"

Rock of Ages - Reverend Augustus Toplady

This is a popular Christian hymn by the Reverend Augustus Toplady written in 1763 and first published in Gospel Magazine in 1775. As a preacher in the nearby village of Blagdon, and travelling along the gorge, he was caught in a storm. Finding shelter in a gap in the gorge, he was struck by the title and scribbled down the initial lyrics. Toplady was a staunch Calvinist and notorious for his dislike of and feuds with John Wesley. Though he had converted to Methodism, his study persuaded him that the Calvinist perspective, rather than Arminian theology supported by Wesley, offered the best understanding of salvation. The expressions, "Be of sin the double cure” suggest that the hymn is a rejoinder to the teachings of the Methodist preacher, John Wesley

Have you counted the cost? - J. Hordge

Penned by J. Hordge, the piece is a wake-up call on those who would rather exchange the hope of eternity for a moment of sinful pleasure. Yes, those that reject the Lord rush on with the masses of this world right to destruction. It is a conversation that supports the parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son as good idea. In this hymn, as in the parables listed above, you find some have to be searched for while others have to be let go of so that they may “come to themselves”. What line is crossed by those rejecting the Lord for worldly gain without counting the cost? Hordge thus opines that rejecting the Lord for worldly gain is a costly line drawn for eternal separation from God as there can be no scriptural reasonable objections one has to singing this song in worship to God?



I gave my life for thee"
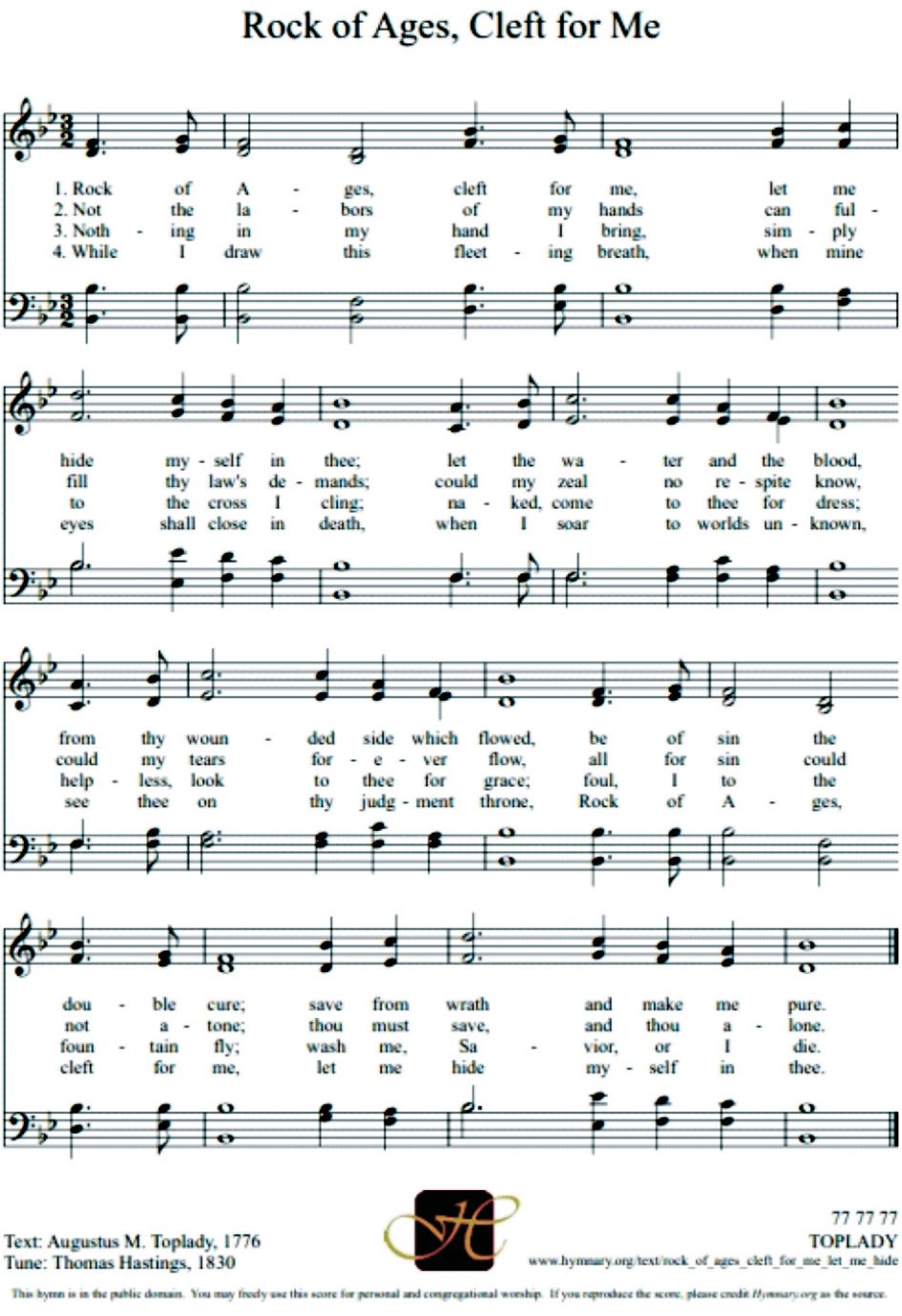
1. I gave My Life for thee,
   My precious blood I shed
   That thou might'st ransomed be,
   And quickened from the dead.
   I gave, I gave My life for thee:
   What hast thou given for Me?

2. I spent long years for thee,
   In weariness and woe,
   That an eternity
   Of joy thou mightest know.
   I spent, I spent long years for thee:
   Hast thou spent one for Me?

3. My Father's home of light,
   My glory circled throne,
   I left, for earthly night,
   For wanderings sad and lone.
   I left, I left it all for thee:
   Hast thou left aught for Me?

4. I suffered much for thee;
   More than thy tongue can tell
   Of bitterest agony,
   To rescue thee from hell.
   I've borne, I've borne it all for thee:
   What hast thou borne for Me?

5. Lord, let my life be given
   And every moment spent,
   For God, for souls, for Heaven
   And all earth's ties be rent
   Thou gav'st, Thou gav'st Thyself for me
   Now I give all for Thee



Rock of Ages, cleft for me1.

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
   Let me hide myself in Thee;
   Let the water and the blood,
   From Thy riven side which flowed,
   Be of sin the double cure,
   Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

2. Not the labour of my hands
   Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
   Could my zeal no respite know,
   Could my tears forever flow,
   All for sin could not atone;
   Thou must save, and Thou alone.

3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
   Simply to Thy cross I cling;
   Naked, come to Thee for dress;
   Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
   Foul, I to the fountain fly;
   Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
   When mine eyes shall close in death,
   When I soar to worlds unknown,
   See Thee on Thy judgement throne,
   Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
   Let me hide myself in Thee.

HAVE YOU COUNTED THE COST?

1. There's a line that is drawn by rejecting the Lord,
   Whe-re the call of His Spirit is lost,…
   And you hurry along with pleasure-mad throng-
   Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

Have you counted the cost, if your soul should be lost,
Tho' you gain the whole world for your own?...
Even now it may be that the line you have crossed,
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

2. You may barter your hope of eternity's morn,
   For a moment of joy at the most,…
   For the glitter of sin and the things it will win-
   Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

3. While the door of His mercy is open to you,
   Ere the depth of His love you exhaust,…

Won't you come and be healed, won't you whisper, I yield-
   I have counted, I have counted the cost.

Analysis and discussion

The main effort in this study is to explore the kind of influence that language has on, especially, the Christian community as an example of socio-religious world in functional terms in the bid to see how the relationship between members and the celestial is critically guided by the linguistic choices made in the selected hymns and songs revealing the textual-conceptual function of Representing time, space and society.

Effects of rhymes, meters and rhythmical patterns

Although this study is purely discourse-stylistic, making brief voyage into sound patterns could be rewarding since the issue of strategy cuts across all levels of language description to help arrive at interpretation of the poet's intention. Toplady, for instance, makes use of rhythmical pattern on which he is able to impose regularity that brings not only for convenience buy also for the reader or analyst to be aware of the effectiveness of the pattern and thereby accept the hymn a real music for the soul. Such imposition has maintained throughout the six lines of each of the four stanzas. One thing that makes 'Rock of Ages' peculiar is that, contrary to the insinuation that, of the four basic patterns, that is, iambic, Trochaic, Anapaestic and or dactylic by far the most common in English poetry is the iambic, Toplady finds relish in enlarging something that only looks like the trochaic rhythm as in:

x u xu x u x
Rock of Ages cleft for me
x u x u x u x
Let me hide myself in Thee
x u x u u u x
Let the water and the blood
x u x x u x
From thy riven side which flow
X u x u x u x
Be of sin a double cure
x u u u x u x
Cleanse me from its guilt and power

It is, however, practically impossible to determine the meter by name, but it contains more feet than hexameter which can be useful in suggesting 'slowness' and 'weariness'. It is, therefore, not out of place to think of 'solemnity' that should characterise the 'penitence' and 'repentance' ideological view of the hymn. This therefore, gives out the point that stress is not just the prominence exacted upon certain syllables to give a particular word shape but also a mechanism that the ideological currents that flow in the hymns. What makes each stanza of Toplady's piece stand out is, most of all, the unusual pattern of stress among other sound features.

Similarly, the selected writers are able to employ rhyme schemes whose values help in relating the form to the contents as worshippers' attention is attracted to discourse issues of high importance by the recurring use of similar sounds:

"I gave My Life for thee,
My precious blood I shed
That thou might'st ransomed be,

And quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave My life for thee:
What hast thou given for Me?

Havergal's '**I gave my life for Thee**', as displayed above, is an Elegy, a famous reflection on the subject of precarious death that establishes Christ's vicarship and redemptive exploit. The adopted rhyming pattern of **[abab]** necessitates that the hymn be sung in groups of four lines of hexameter (6 feet). With the rhyming round being thus so far apart, the effect is to slow down the apparent pace of the hymn. Hence, we have a discourse-stylistic strategy that rhetorically engages the worshippers on the reasonability of indifference to such supreme sacrifice of 'life-giving' and 'blood shedding' mission of weariness and woe.

Comparing this with what obtains in 'Rock of Ages Cleft for me', it is clear the pattern of rhymes must always be appropriate to what is being said. Toplady thus uses the rhyme arrangement for his purpose by writing in rhyming couplets – *aa bb cc dd.* Thus the complete rhymes at the end of every second short line result in fast flow that should ordinarily help to convey some essential lightness and speed. However, the hymnalist's craftmanship and poetic license is deployed to slow down the pace of the song in order to create a 'dramatic monologue' that representing the actual words spoken by the personae, that is, Christ- the Rock of Ages. This is obviously a conversation that makes the hymn sound completely and peculiarly natural.

In the beginning was the word

Having considered some of the most obvious ways in which sounds can contribute to the total meaning of a hymn, we shift to some of structural patterns that are peculiarly deployed in performing certain discourse functions. Such considerations should begin with essential explanations in order to make it possible to recognise and describe the lexico-grammatical arrangement in the hymns in simple ways. Toplady's hymn, for instance, deploys simple choices of lexicogrammar to achieve his *rhetorical apostrophisation*

of the personified 'Rock' by which he biblically alludes to Christ, the Saviour using such words and expressions as *Rock of Ages, water, blood, sin, double cure, cleanse, guilt, power, labour, atone, cross, thee, thy.* It is obvious that in the slots occupied by each of these items, the choice was made from an infinite number of possibilities – what O'Neill (1969:19) calls an open set. With respect to the grammatical choices, however, there are other slots filled from a strictly limited list of possibilities of occurrence by *for, that, and, from, in, of, down, to, oh* as used by Miss Havergal in '**I gave My Life for thee'.** This is also true of the ending *n, ing, ed* after draw, rejecting, count and cross respectively used in J. Hordge's **Have you counted the cost?** These are items filled from a finite stock of possibilities – a closed system. This means that the high quality of the hymns is therewith indicated as the lexicogrammatical choices are quite engaging. They are hymns of a very high productivity made to effectively attract the attention of the interlocutor(s) to convince or persuade but never to please the mind. Similarly, a most obvious textual-conceptual function in CS is that naming and describing serve for the revelation of the ideological underpinning and determines the choices a writer makes. Such ideological load and ideological construction in 'I gave My Life for thee**'** and 'Rock of Ages Cleft for me' are heavily anchored on the representation that is achieved through excessive deployment of pronominals in nominative, accusative and genitive cases such as 'Thou', 'Thee', Thy', 'thou' 'thee' 'thy', 'Me', 'me'.

Discourse structure and meaning in discourse stylistics

In the same way that cognisance is taken of hymnodists, like poets, often drawing reader's attention to some particularly significant discourse issues or goals using lexicogrammatical means, considering some sentence patterns that are germane to the semantic and divine ecclesiastical imports of the hymns is necessary. Whereas the first stanza of 'I gave My Life for thee' is a whole sentence of compound-complex clause structure, the second sentence is just one of complex clause structure without the refrains:

//ββ -clause complex//
β **β**
///I/ gave/ My Life/ for thee/, //My precious blood/ I/ shed//,/ That/ thou /might'st ransomed be/, /And quickened from the dead///

In the first instance, and based on the textual function of *Hypothesising*, we find that the poetic persona, in constructing his argument, uses this opening clause to create dialogic rhetorical effect of emphasising salient fact of God's supreme sacrifice. The two beta clauses establish the foundation, that is, the purpose for the performance of the actions expressed with the lexical verbs *gave* and *shed* in the two alpha clauses. Thus the transitivity system at the clause level accounts for the significance of the relatedness of the clauses that form the compound-complex sentence. The grammatical composition of the third clause introduced by the conjunction "*that*" deployed to explain the use of such adjunct complement of a finite clause of purpose with *putative meaning*. Such putative idea is anchored on the verbal operator "might'st" which expresses a subordinate statement of fact. We therefore, have a combination of unified thoughts expressed in two alpha clauses in combination with two beta clauses.

Again, our selected hymn writers, like their contemporaries in the poetic enterprise, often draw the reader's attention to something which is particularly significant by departing from the normally accepted patterns of language. This is peculiarly evident in Havergal's use of *structural inversions* which run through all stanzas of her song, lines 2 and 3 of the first stanza, for instance:

//My precious blood/ I/ shed//
/,/ That/ thou /might'st ransomed be//,
/And quickened from the dead

The theme system accounts for the positioning of elements of the clause structure within the clause. Specifically, it accounts for the available choices in the initial position of the clause. Ordinarily, clause elements are thought of as having the sequence – SPCA, SPA, SPC, and so on. Thus in the examples listed above, the writer makes choices in the theme system, making the initial position to be occupied by the complement *My precious blood* to arrive at CSP. Such inversions should be regarded as significant to the extent that they meet the requirements of rhyme and rhythm. Instead of the more normal 'I shed my precious blood', here we should not be seeking to find out why she wishes to lay special emphasis on 'shed'. She was merely seeking a line to rhyme with; and she found this in the fourth line 'And quickened from the dead' to produce the rhyming scheme – **[abab]**. Thus in the original, the hymn should read

/// I/ shed my precious blood//,[so] That/ thou /might'st [be] ransomed//, /And quickened from the dead///

In the same vein, Miss Havergal finds her ideological constructs of mental change, and psycho-spiritual responsibility nested in the grammatical devices of especially transitivity system to create a level of interaction with her readers as text consumers. For example, in the way the propositional contents of the second stanza have been constructed, it is noticed that, in the choice of clause structure there appears to be a careful balance of alpha () clause and clause-complexes of hypotactic structure (β or β) to represent the ideational sense of mental change as action of spiritual responsibility toward the Almighty Creator:

//αβ-clause complex//
α **β**
/// I /spent/ long years/ for thee/, / In weariness and woe/, /That/an eternity Of joy/ thou mightest know///

/// I /spent/ long years/ for thee/, / In weariness and woe/, /That/an eternity Of joy/ thou mightest know///

The structurally inverted nominal group "an eternity Of joy" of the transitivity system is a complement of the verbal group of mental process "**mightest know**" in the predicator position.

The grammatical composition of the sentence within such verbal group is technically deployed to create dialogic rhetoric for pleading some case beyond reasonable doubt.

Besides, this technique combines with sparse punctuation to produce enjambment, a situation where the running of lines together without serious pauses gives a regular pattern of rhyme which does not obtrude to make the conversation unnatural. In this way, Havergal is able to retain the accepted convention of the regular form, but at the same time to write in a language which really sounds conversational- creating a dialogue out of a dramatic monologue.

Unlike Miss Havergal, however, J. Hordge, in his hymn, comes direct to engage man who is so conditioned to trivialities. By means of linguistic resources, Hordge creatively interrogates the never dying soul (man) and make his hymn a full fountain out of which he (man) may draw water of Joy. His is a real contribution to our understanding of Christian hymns and songs. Though organised in formal pattern of verse, the poem is prosaic in structure. The prosaic form is achieved through abundant use of enjambment as the lines are made to run into one another for syntactic process of complex structure presented in second person omniscient view, the hymn is a narrative of apocalyptic vision of Christless eternity awaiting recalcitrant erring soul. The first three lines of each stanzas present proposition that is followed by a fourth line of inquisition- 'Have you counted the cost?' which bears some very strong rhetorical tone though deceptively. It is deceptively polar question or non-WH interrogatives. Analysing such structure as 'Have you counted the cost' requires knowing the knitty-gritty of the mood system which is basically concerned with the situation of the subject in the clause structure and the positioning of the subject if, at all, it is present. The hymn writer, in making such poser, makes his choice of indicative mood that shares plain with declarative sentences- 'you have counted the cost'. The traditional problem of lumping aspect together with the system of tense must, however, first be addressed before any meaningful analysis. To account for the stylistic choice made by the hymnalist, we must show how the structure transforms to the derived form as follows:

(i) Placing the operator before the subject
(ii) Giving the sentence a rising tone:

///you / have counted/ the cost/// →///Have you counted the cost?///

Thus, we have a class of questions that expect only affirmation or rejection of the preposition, going with a forceful rhetorical tone. This is evident in the response contained in the refrain of the last stanza- 'I have counted the cost'.

There are some other non-lexical devices that suggest meaning in the hymns selected for this study. Few of such devices are punctuations, mid-rhymes and shared imparatives. Our interest is to see the extent to which these contribute to the establishment of dialogic rhetoric and creative interrogation that bring Christian worshippers and other readers into conference of solemn assembly.

Punctuation marks

J. Hordge thrive so abundantly on the use of comma, ellipsis (…), hyphen(-) apostrophe which are deploy to slow down the pace of the hymn in order to create the 'dramatic monologue' that appeals to reason. The use of 'comma', for instance, assist the writer in varying the positions of the pauses necessary to force the interlocutor(s) into an affirmative response at the end of the whole discourse conversational.

In Miss Havergal's 'I gave my Life for Thee', one might have expected the comma at the end of the first line of the first stanza, for instance, to be replaced by 'and' to make the first two lines one sentence of compound structure and then, justify our analysis of the whole stanza as a whole sentence of compound-complex structure in structural term:

//αα -clause //

α α

///I/ gave/ My Life/ for thee/[**,**] //My precious blood/ I/ shed///

Similarly, a comma at the end of the second line of stanza 2 represents elision of adverbial item 'so' or 'in order' as in:

//αβ-clause complex//

/// I /spent/ long years/ for thee/, / In weariness and woe/[**,**] /That an eternity Of joy thou mightest know///

The point of emphasis here is that any mark- or its absence- can be significant; and their significance in the selected hymns for this study is the establishment of dialogic rhetoric.

Optative imperative clause

In this first stanza of his apostrophe, Augustus Toplady addresses the persona, suing for loving favour of mighty shield through the deployment of shared imperative. It is a common knowledge that an imperative is a command that which differs and possesses a finite verb that lacks endings for number or tense. As deployed in the second and third lines of the first stanza of "Rock of Ages cleft for me", therefore, the predicator "let" is proposed, followed by a subject in the accusative case – "Let me hide myself in Thee", for instance. The main consideration is who, if anyone, action named in the situation of the utterance is to carry out the action named proposition, that is, the performer. It should be noted that it is possible for the addressee to be the performers.

While it appears difficult to determine the class of these imperatives, it is, however, clear that Toplady makes the choice that appears like an *optative imperative clause* whose performance is an unseen power, which makes the whole hymn wishful or prayerful, and yielding a 'non-jussive volitive' clause although with some sense of VOCATIVE EMPHASIS.

Mid-rhyme

One other discourse-stylistic feature is one special form of rhyme known as **mid-rhyme**. In the hymn 'Have you counted the cost?', to add something important, J. Hordge introduced mid-rhyme – a word or sound in the middle of the line in rhyming with the word or sound at the end. The third line each of the stanzas carries a mid-rhyme as follows:

And you hurry **[along]** with the pleasure-mad **[throng-]**
For the glitter of **[sin]** and the things it will **[win-]**
Won't you come and be **[healed]**, won't you whisper, I **[yield-]**Enabled by the provision of our Critical Stylistics,

these mid-rhymes are carefully introduced to perform the textual-conceptual functions of 'Representing and contrasting' the choices that are open to the living but erring soul, for him to see reason and think about his looming fate of further travel on the broad road. To escape the doom that **sin** can **win**, there is the need to **yield** to the saviour's call and get **healed**. This is an instance, a great deployment of **pun** and an excellent choice that makes the hymn an important part of Christian worship, meant not just to entertain but actually to instruct mankind in the knowledge of God.

Rhetorical negation

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,

Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Toplady, in stanza 2 of 'Rock of Ages Cleft for Me', presents the case of passionate and penitent soul using 'negative orientation' strategy which is complemented by elements of disbelief, assumption and assurance. In such expressions as "Not...can (lines1 and 2), "could…no"(line 3), could…forever"(line 4), "could not atone" (line 5), the hymn writer expresses his disbelief in the prevailing assumption that personal efforts represented by "labour of my hands", "my zeal", "my tears" play vital roles in the salvation of soul; to this writer, these are nothing but filthy rags in redemptive work. This is an ideologically significant stance in Christendom, that is, "Jesus paid it all" with which Toplady stylistically and critically projects and unravels Christ Jesus as the sole author and finisher of salvation and object of worship

Findings and Conclusions

Our hymnalysis has captured the hymn-text producers' ability to pull together various linguistic (lexical and non-lexical) and discourse-stylistic strategies for securing the attention of the consumers with a full comprehension and acceptance of their theology beyond the aesthetic exposure. The task undertaken thus far is the Critical Stylistic analysis of foregrounded interactions between certain textual-conceptual function and textual metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistic orientation. With this combination, it has been convenient to identify such textual-conceptual function as 'Representing and Contrast', 'Equating and Contrasting', 'Prioritizing and Negating'. In addition to various systems in the facilities offered by SFG, this study has recorded those functions the writers employed in projecting, unraveling and describing the particular world-view and ideology at work in hymn-texts.

It is, therefore, clear that this eclectic methodological approach of critical stylistics (CS) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) has been successful. By this approach, the study has explained discourse-stylistic relations of material texts in Christian religious ideological thoughts as a real descriptive exercise. This way, certain textual-conceptual functions have shown that our selected hymn writers, like their contemporaries in the poetic enterprise, often draw the reader's attention to something which is particularly significant by departing from the normally-accepted patterns of language.

In this study, the attempt has been to postulate valid and constructive relationships between functions and forms. This has assisted us in revealing and confirming the different discourse structures and integrated semantic constructs as they are employed in the data following (both theoretically and practically) the grammars oriented around more functional principles. This position is consistent with the view of syntax as a functionally motivated linguistic phenomenon. With the understanding that the critical position of context is inescapable as all meaning is made by contextualisation. As background in considering the discourse-stylistic articulation of Christian hymns, it is clear that some basic characteristics of any particular language have always been a function of how any single individual or a group of people use it for the purpose of communication. It is, therefore, safe to affirm that the creative ability of every individual in a speech community (of which various kinds of performance are supreme examples) is of high significance in getting the audience to cooperate. Music is generally regarded as a universal language which permeates every cadre of society. There is music for every occasion because it gladdens the heart and has a fascinating link with consciousness, spirituality and behavioural pattern in the society. Consequently, our selected gospel lyrics are distinct, rendered with godly rhythm and are used in the Christian Church and other ecclesiastical contexts as means of worship, entertainment, encouragement, warning and correction.

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