

# A Study of the Conversational Features and Discourse Strategies in Select Sermons of Pastor E. A. Adeboye

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**Abstract** Religious sermons are aimed at persuasion with the speaker's intention often to influence the audience to adopt, reinforce or modify certain beliefs. Although, sermons are not normal conversations, this study investigates select sermons of Pastor E. A. Adeboye with the view to identify and analyse the discourse strategies and conversational features that characterise the sermons and the role they play in influencing audience perception and response to achieve the speaker's intended goals. Three selected sermons of Pastor E. A. Adeboye are examined with the view to identify and analyse the conversational features that characterise the sermons. The theoretical framework of Schlegloff's Conversational Analysis (CA) was adopted for the study. Transcribed audio versions of the sermons were obtained and analysed using CA to reveal the conversational features that characterise the sermons. The findings showed that the sermons are characterised by conversational features such as feedback (call-response, adjacency pairs, openings and closings), repair mechanism, and selection of next speaker. The study further revealed the presence of non-verbal conversational features such as pause, smile, laughter raise of the hands and head. The study concluded that Pastor Adeboye carefully combines these features to enhance his audience involvement and to trigger his desired response from the audience. The presence of conversational features in the sermons suggests that sermons could be classified as a type of conversation and not monologues as previously held by some scholars.

**Keywords** Christian religious discourse, Sermons, Pastor E. A. Adeboye, Conversational analysis, Conversational features

## 1. Introduction

Religious discourse exhibits many features that make it an interesting area for linguists including this study. According to Akpowowo (2002:16), the language of Christianity has different purposes ranging from communicating information to asserting religious truth. But one of the most effective aspects of the genre lies in its power to arouse, evoke and influence emotions and attitudes. Religious discourse or language of religion encompasses the language of sermons, prayer, songs and greetings within religious contexts. As a genre of religious discourse, sermons are characterised by certain distinct language features. Olanrewaju (2004:93) observes that 'the language of sermonic discourse is a distinct form of the spoken language as it is noted to be marked with some peculiar features such as the use of biblical quotations, theological terms, prophetic utterances, impersonal statements, interruptions, paralinguistic codes, repetitions, metaphors, paradox and euphony'. Akpowowo

(2002:19) also observes that 'sermons occupy a central and strategic place in Christian services as it aims to reveal basic truths to humans (the audience) with the hope that they will accept and utilise these truths.

This study examines the features that characterise the language of sermons within Christian Pentecostal religious discourse. The choice of the study of sermons, among other forms of Christian Pentecostal religious discourse, is primarily informed by the perceived impact of the discourse as reflected in the congregational responses such as clapping, jumping, raising of hands, positive responses to the prayers (declarations) by the clergy, and response to invitations from the altar (altar calls). More specifically, the study focuses on the sermons of Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, a cleric, whose sermons trigger positive responses from a multitude of socio-culturally and racially diverse audience. His style of delivery and content of his sermons constitute an integral part of his success as reflected in the astronomical growth of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG); a pentecostal denomination under his leadership.

This study therefore investigates the language of sermons, in particular, the conversational strategies used to evoke responses from the audience. The specific goal of the study is to Identify the conversational features employed in the

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Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/linguistics>

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selected sermons of Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye.

## 2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The data for this study are select sermons of Pastor E.A. Adeboye that were delivered at the Holy Ghost Services of the Holy Ghost Congress of 2009 with the theme '*Our God Reigns*', 2010 with the theme '*All Will be Well*' and 2011 with the theme '*A New Thing*' respectively. The scope of the study is restricted to these sermons among several other sermons preached by Pastor E.A. Adeboye because of the need to limit the data to a manageable size. The choice of sermons of the Holy Ghost services of the Holy Congress is informed by its significance as the peak of an annual week long programme which usually comes up once in a year in December to mark the end of the church programmes for the year. It is often attended by millions of people from all continents of the world. The choice of these particular sermons is primarily dictated by the fact that they are recent and are relatively available. Efforts to get earlier recorded sermons proved abortive. Secondly, is the fact that the aspect of his sermons which this study focuses on has not been addressed by other studies.

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework: Conversational Analysis of Discourse

Conversational Analysis (henceforth **CA**) was developed by Sacks, Schlegloff and Jefferson (1974). Conversational Analysis is an approach to the analysis of discourse with focus on conversational interactions such as formal and informal talk or discourse. It is an approach to the study of conversations that accounts for the recurring patterns distribution and forms of organisation across naturally occurring conversations (cf. Levinson, 1983:286-287 and Fakoya 1998:50). This fact distinguishes CA from other approaches to discourse analysis. It is the study of the social organisation of talk. The analysis of natural language in CA provides order and management of the social settings in which the conversations take place. CA thus provides description of the way in which conversations achieve order. It focuses on the details of actual events.

Conversation, according to Levinson (1983) is defined as 'familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, and generally occurs in specific settings' that include religious services. Conversation has been viewed as informal talk by scholars, as formal talk by some, and as both by others. Hornby (1974) and Procter (1978) view conversation as informal talk in which people exchange news, feelings, and thoughts. Schlegloff (1972) and Yule (1985) on the other hand, view conversation as a formal talk with a restriction rule on turn taking. Odekunbi (2006) views conversation as both a formal and informal talk. The varying views concern the number of participants involved; and turn taking patterns.

Certain types of discourse are characterised by conversational features and sermons are an example. According to Heritage (1984), three assumptions characterise CA namely, (1) Interaction is structurally organised; (2) contributions to interactions are contextually oriented; and 3) these two properties show that in the details of interaction no order of detail can be omitted or dismissed, a priori as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant (Fakoya 1998:50). This informs the necessity of the study of discourse structures and features in religious sermons and the role they play in achieving the intended purpose of the sermons.

CA provides the methodology for analysing patterns in talk, for instance how turn taking is managed in a conversation. Features such as 'adjacency pairs' comprising question and answer pairs, pauses of different lengths, or how some utterances are 'repaired' by the speaker according to their occurrence and role in a conversation and they constitute data for CA (Heritage, 2001).

A review of literature on the concept of conversation in CA suggests that sermons can be viewed as conversation; and as such the patterns that characterise the data for this study, Pastor E.A. Adeboye sermons, fall within the scope of Conversational Analysis. Patterns such as recurring verbal and non-verbal features and interactional strategies in the sermons are identified and analysed using CA approach. Examples of these studies include: Classroom Discourse (Fakoya, 1998), (Nwachukwu, 2011), Religious Discourse (Adedun, 2010) and (Rotimi, 2007, 2011). The studies demonstrate the adequacy of Conversational Analysis as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the discourse features that characterise discourse in general, and religious discourse in particular and further justify the use of CA in this study for the analysis of discourse features in sermonic discourse.

Religious discourse has also been studied from diverse approaches ranging from Stylistics (Patricia, 1994) and Ogunbode (2008), Discourse Analytic (Adegoju, 2002), Systemic Functional theory, (Adeniran, 2004), Politeness (Olanrewaju, 2004) and Oloruntimehin, O. 2012.

For example, Adeniran (2004) focused on the language use of preachers in two different settings (the Orthodox and Pentecostal). Using Systemic Functional Grammar to analyse selected sermons Pastor E.A. Adeboye and Bishop Ayo Maria, Adeniran highlights certain linguistic variables found in selected sermons of these clergy. The study explicates how the style of these preachers is determined by situational elements of topic, participants and setting. The analysis of their sermons revealed that the language of religion exhibits some unique features which make it a variety of language. He concludes that language and religion are inseparable. From the foregoing, it is apparent that the language of the sermon is a genre of religious discourse.

Olanrewaju (2004) used the Birmingham model of Systemic Functional Grammar and Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness theory for the analysis of the selected

sermons of Pastor E.A. Adeboye. The study revealed the dynamism of the language of sermons and how lexical items have been expanded beyond their primary meanings. The findings of the study included the use of repetitions, euphony, paradox, and paralinguistic codes to simplify the message of the sermons; the prevalent use of simple, active and declarative sentences; speaker's adoption of the communal use of 'we', 'many people', and 'us' to maintain good social relation with the audience; and the speaker's use of information- elicitation and directive acts to achieve effective communication.

Rotimi (2011) adopted Schlegloff's (1974) model of Conversational Analysis to analyse discourse of selected evangelical films. The study showed that both verbal and non-verbal features such as talk initiation, talk elicitation, adjacency pairs, discourse interruption, discourse errors, lighting, sounds, and colours are important means of communicating with the audience. She observed that the verbal features are also connected in the way they manifest in talk constructs. For example, an interruption in the flow of a conversation may lead to a speech error, and this may lead to a subtle repair mechanism.

The above review shows that although there are several studies on religious discourse, only few are on Pastor E.A. Adeboye's sermons. While the studies examined different features of sermons from various perspectives, this study examines the sermons in terms of the speaker's intention and the audience inferences using Conversational Analysis. Thus, it provides an analysis of an aspect of these sermons within the context of religious discourse that has not been addressed by previous studies from Speech Acts and Conversational Analysis perspectives.

### 3. Sample Data Analysis

In this section, patterns and distribution of conversational features within the sermonic discourse are identified and analysed using Conversational Analysis methods.

Conversation Analysis (CA) studies interactional sequences and phenomena such as turn taking, interruptions, pauses, laughter, opening and closing conversations, and many other properties and strategic moves of spontaneous talk (cf. Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; and Drew & Heritage, 1992). According to Jaworski and Coupland (1999:20), 'Other conversational features which CA addresses include openings and closings of conversations, topic management and topic shift, showing agreement and disagreement'. Conversational features found in the sermons are feedback, which involves turn taking and repair mechanism.

In the analysis below, the Conversational features observed are identified and analysed to reveal how they are employed by Pastor Adeboye to elicit his desired responses from the audience. The conversational features found in the sermons are, feedback, call-response, adjacency pairs, repair mechanism and opening and closing.

#### 3.1. Feedback

In the communication process, feedback refers to a response from the receiver which gives the communicator an idea of how the message is being received and whether it needs to be modified. Conversation analysts highlight ways speakers provide each other with feedback in verbal interaction. Such feedback show that hearers are listening.

The data shows that the audience exhibit different linguistic and non- linguistic forms of feedback and they indicate perlocutionary effects of the sermonic discourse on the audience. They take form of verbal and non-verbal forms of feedback from the audience such as the congregation rising to their feet or lifting of hands, jumping, clapping and dancing or shouting. Immediate response to prayers by the speaker is one form of feedback to the sermons. Feedback in conversation involves turn taking. The forms of feedback observed in the sermons exhibit turn taking feature.

##### 3.1.1. Turning Taking

Turn taking deals with how people take and manage turns in verbal interactions. Usually in a conversation, one participant speaks while another listens. It may simply be a sound like 'uh' or it may be made up of a word, a phrase, a clause or a sentence with change between speakers occurring at the end of any these units or during them, if another speaker succeeds in taking the floor Gardner (2004) cited in Brian (2006:113-115). Other examples include the end of a turn such as the use of falling intonation; and pausing. The end of a syntactic unit can also be signalled by 'mmm', or 'anyway' and 'yeah'. Examples of turn taking in the data are shown below:

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| (1) | S | The Lord says there is someone tonight<br>he says very soon people will be<br>begging for permission to help you                      |
|     | A | Ame::n  |
| (2) | S | The Lord says there is someone tonight he<br>said the miracle which you lost, he will<br>replace it with three. (Sermon2, line 47-52) |
|     | A | Ame::n  |
| (3) | S | Father tonight in the life of everyone of us,<br>do something new   |
|     | A | Amen  |
| (4) | S | Do something wonderful  |
|     | A | Amen  |
| (5) | S | Do something miraculous   |
|     | A | Amen (Sermon 2, line 50-51)   |

The core idea of conversation is based on the understanding that turns have to be taken. The examples (1) to (5) above show that the speaker expects feedback from the audience and the audience provides the feedback each time after the speaker.

##### 3.1.2. Call- Response Feedback

It is a form of interaction between a speaker and the listeners in which every utterance receives verbal or

non-verbal response. A call and response feedback is identified by a statement followed by a quick response from the audience or listener(s). For example,

- (6) S And then last month of the year in the life of ALL these your children, put an end to sorrow  
A men  
S Put an end to hardship  
A Ame:::n  
S Put an end to failure  
A Amen
- (7) S The Lord says there is someone tonight he said the miracle which you lost, he will replace it with three  
A Amen (Sermon 2, line 47-49)

From the above examples, the shout of ‘Amen’ affirms that the positive audience’ response to the speaker’s utterances (prayer and declaration).

### 3.1.3. Adjacency Pairs

Adjacency Pairs are fundamental units of conversational organisation and a key way in which meaning are communicated and interpreted in conversations. Adjacency pairs are utterance produced by two successive speakers in a way that the second utterance is identified as related to the first one as an expected follow up to that utterance (Brian 2006: 115). Adjacency pairs are exchange structures in pairs. Adjacency pairs are constructed through turn-taking behaviour. They are reciprocal and complementary, and often feature as question/answer, greeting/greeting, offer/response, complaint/apology, and complaint/justification. The data show that adjacency pairs in the sermons are a form of feedback. For examples, in (8-13) below:

- (8) S I want to ask somebody a question and I want you to answer this question truthfully; when do you want your miracle?  
A NOW (shouts with a loud voices with different posture showing excitement and their expectation)
- (9) S Let me hear the answer again=  
A =Now (in a louder voice).
- (10) S Now, what is the meaning of [NOW?]  
A [NOW]
- (11) S Thirty minutes from [now]?  
A [now]
- (12) S Ten minutes from [now]?  
A [NOW]
- (13) S Five minutes from [now]?  
A [NOW] (Sermon 1, line 207-218)

The examples above illustrate question and answer type of adjacency pairs. The audience provides a matching answer to the speaker’s questions.

### 3.1.4. Openings and Closings

According to Osisanwo (2003:11), discourse openings is a ‘preliminary exchange, no matter how brief, designed to start off a conversation’. Every conversation no matter how formal or informal must have an opening. This may take the form of greeting, or summons. There is also usually a closing to every conversation. Like an opening, closing may be greeting or repetitions of the discussion. A conversation can also be terminated by paired utterances such as, a question and answer or a request and acceptance. The data show that the speaker opens and closes his sermons with summons and is presented in (14) to (16) below:

- (14) S Lift your hands to the Almighty God and begin to worship His holy name  
[Bless the king of kings...]  
A [the congregation lift their hands in praise and worship (Sermon1, line 1)]
- (15) S Let’s lift our voice to the Almighty [God...]  
A [Begin to pray  
(Sermon 3, line 1-3)]
- (16) S Let me hear someone shout halleluiah!  
A Halleluiah  
(Sermon 3, line 423-424)

The speaker, in form of feedback, instructs the audience to worship and praise God both at the openings and closings. Examples (14) and (15) are openings while example (16) is a closing. The use of the opening and closing marks the beginning and end of the sermonic discourse. However, apart from the structural function performed by these features, they show that sermons share a feature of feedback with a normal conversation, since every conversation usually has an opening and closing. Every speaker in a normal conversation tries to establish a relationship that facilitates feedback and comprehension. This motive guides a speaker (in a religious sermons) and therefore uses the openings and closings to elicit such response. The transcription notations in the above feedback examples are used to illustrate some aspects of communication interaction. These features include stress, overlapping and contiguous utterances. Overlapping in the sermons is common. The response of the hearers often overlaps with the speaker’s utterances especially with prayers and prophetic in declarations.

### 3.2. Non-verbal Feedback

Sometimes, the feedbacks elicited by the speaker’s utterances are non-verbal. For example,

- (17) S Thank you father  
A Jubilations with various gestures  
(Sermon 1, line 312-313)
- (18) S The Lord said to me “son, this is redemption camp, the city that I promise you is yet to be built”.  
A Roar  
(Sermon 2, line 249-250)

### 3.3. Repair Mechanism

Conversations are characterised by correction, of speech errors by a speaker or other participants using repair mechanism. This is usually done through restatement, withdrawal of statements or repetition. Brian (2006:119) describes repair as the way or strategy employed by speakers to correct things they or someone else has said, and check things they have understood in a conversation. In the data, examples of repair mechanisms are presented in (19) and (20):

(19) Some of you prayed here on Tuesday for creative miracles and (you have been) you are already hearing testimonies. (Sermon 3, line 190-193)

(20) When I open my eyes, there was a big moon (right there ahead) on top of me. There was no moon when I was going into the bush... (Sermon 3, line 231)

The type of repair mechanism found in these sermons is the self-repair mechanism. The speaker corrected himself. The speech errors are in the brackets in the example above. Though, this is a conversational feature, it is not used to elicit response.

### 3.4. Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are words or phrases in conversation (discourse) used to signal speaker's intention to mark boundary; a change in speaker; topic or sub-topic. According to Wharry (2003) discourse markers in sermons are used to introduce the key sections or sub-units within the sermons, highlight the main points, and transitional units which are referred to as textual. They also include formulaic expressions (e.g. Amen, Let somebody shout Halleluiah) which perform a variety of functions that includes call-response, fillers or delay tactics. As a call-response discourse marker, Wharry notes that formulaic expressions can be verbal or non-verbal responses such as laughter, pause, stress (emphasis), and facial expressions or gestures.

#### Functions of Discourse Markers in the Sermons

The discourse markers in these sermons perform structural, call-response, filler and delay tactic functions.

#### 3.4.1. Structural Function

The structural functions performed by the discourse markers indicate structural breaks and highlight main points in the sermonic discourse which facilitate the audience understanding. The structural functions include initiating discourse and marking boundaries in discourse (shift or partial shift in topic) as the examples in (21) – (23) below show:

- (21) S     **Thank you, Jesus.** Go ahead. Lift your hands to the Almighty God.  
(Respond by praying). (Sermon 2, line 1)

The example above illustrates how the speaker initiates discourse by making a call for prayer with the use of the discourse marker '**Thank you, Jesus**'.

- (22) S     Let somebody shout halleluiah!  
A     Halleluiah  
S     Shake hands with one or two people and say our God reigns  
A     (audience walk around shaking one another) (Sermon 1, line 65-68)  
(23) S     Let somebody shout halleluiah!  
A     Halleluiah! (Sermon 2, line 124-125)  
(24) S     Thank you Father,  
A     (Jubilation with various gestures) (Sermon 1, line 312-313)  
(25) S     Let somebody shout halleluiah!  
A     Halleluiah! (Sermon 2, line 123-124)

In (24) the audience respond non-verbally while in (25), they respond verbally.

In examples (21) and (23) above, the discourse marker '**Let somebody shout halleluiah**' marks a shift in discourse topic and shift in sub-unit of the sermons to another sub-topic and sub-unit.

#### 3.4.2. Call –Response Function

Aside the structural functions, these discourse markers serve a call-response function and are used at various points in the sermons to elicit responses from the audience. They could be in form of verbal or non-verbal response. For example.

#### 3.4.3. Filler Function

The discourse markers observed in the sermons also perform filler functions. For example, a variant of a discourse marker is used by the speaker to indicate a shift as in (27a) '**Thank you, Lord**' (Sermon 1, line 259); and a filler in (27b) '**Thank you, Almighty**' (Sermon 1, line 438).

Exclamatory expressions also perform filler functions in the sermons. (e.g. 'mmm', 'ah ah...' 'Oh' and 'my good God'). Examples (33) – (37) illustrate this function:

- (26) S     Oh! My good God! Daddy asked me to tell you a story. (Sermon 1, line 146)  
(27) S     (mmm) Daddy says...'  
A     Amen (Sermon 2, line 339-342)  
(28) S     (Oh...) And she will say have you returned from the river? (Sermon 2, line 397)  
(29) S     (Ah...) Daddy says there is someone here tonight; he said before the New Year, there will be abundant evidence that all things are different now. (Sermon 2, line 343-345)  
A     Amen  
(30) S     Oh! My God! (he exclaimed) I think you should shake hands with one or two people and say thank God I am here tonight. (Sermon 3, line 232).  
A     (Go around shaking one another following the directive).

The examples above illustrate the speaker's use of

exclamations, verbal features and the hearers' use of non-verbal features to perform filler functions.

### 3.5. Discourse Strategies

In attempt to elicit response from the congregation, Pastor Adeboye employs some strategies. These strategies are geared towards achieving his perlocutionary acts. They include:

#### 3.5.1. Summon

According to Osisanwo (2003:15) summon is one of the vital techniques used in taking turns. It is also another attention-catching device that involves calling the name of the current speaker to establish contract before introducing a new topic. Pastor usually uses this strategy in catching the attention of the audience, at transitional points of his sermons.

- 31 S: Let somebody shout halleluyah  
A: (chorus) Halleluyah  
32 P: Let me hear you loud and clear....  
C: (The congregation repeats what he says at this time)  
33 P: Shake hand with one or two people and tell them 'Our God Reigns'  
C: (The congregation hold hands with one another and say) Our God Reigns!

#### 3.5.2. Elicitation

This is the process of demanding a response, verbal or non-verbal from an interlocutor by questioning. The clergy uses this strategy often to get his audience participate in the service. This is audience participatory device. For instance shake hands with one or two people and say my God reigns. When he says the entire congregation does this. What this implies is that the audience are steer up to get involved and his belief about God he transfers to them. Examples of this strategy are:

- 34 S: Did he lie?  
A: No (chorus)  
35 S: When do you want your miracle?  
A: Now.

#### 3.5.3. Proverbs

He often uses proverbs to explain and buttress some ideas. These proverbs are usually directly interpreted from Yoruba language most times to English language. His strategy is to use the traditional and cultural knowledge about the world around the audience to relate the sermons to them. Examples of proverbs used in these sermons include:

- 36 S: If I am to tie it together, the elders in Africa have a saying; they say the cat travelled, the house became the house of mice.

#### 3.5.4. Narration

Close to proverbs, is the use of narration of usually stories

of past events, testimonies of what God did in the past, biblical events, etc. The clergy often used this strategy to steer up the faith of his audience. For instance: when he narrates the miracles done to people in the past either in the church or in the bible. He does this to convince the audience that God has done it in past and He can do it again especially in their lives. He sometimes told them God asked him to tell them some stories all these acts are geared towards influencing their faith. At times, the narration is to buttress or confirm what he says. They sometimes are used to illustrate biblical injunctions.

- 37 S: You have heard testimonies, you even heard one tonight, when he changed the genotype of someone from SS to AA,...
- 38 S: I have told some of you before, when I was younger, when I was a child, we will be in the village playing football, and the football is made up of rotten orange. My mother will call me, she couldn't speak English so she called me, she will say "ELOCHU" (Enoch), Elochu go to the village stream and get some water, I will say "no, I am not going I am enjoying myself". She won't say any other thing, very soon I will say "mummy, I am hungry, can I eat"? And she will say have you returned from the river? I will say, "I will go to the river, give me food", she will say go to the river, food is here but you have to go to the river first, and I will begin to weep, 'what kind of mummy is this, please give me food, and she will say please go to the river. Until I go to bring the water, no food.
- 39 S: Several years ago, when my last son was very small, I have a prayer closet next to my bedroom. very little closet, once am there nobody comes to bother me at all, all except this one; I will be flat on my face praying for nations, and he will come in and say daddy I want cookies. Don't bother me go and ask your mother, No! Daddy I want cookies. The more I tried to push him off the louder becomes, so I learnt from experience, that whenever he come in, I must suspend my prayers, attend to him before I continue.
- 40 S: I will tell you a story and then we will pray; a true story.

I am sure some of you have heard it before; some of you may not have heard it before. My first miracle after I became born again; my child was born naturally after three caesarean operations, became sick after two years, he refused to eat. He couldn't go into the toilet, first day, second day... we had taken Jesus as our doctor, and the boy had never used any drug before. We prayed, we fasted, first day, second day, one week, eight days, nine days, ten days... Two year old boy; no food for ten days! No going to the toilet for ten days! The boy was practically dying. I cried to God, what else am I suppose to do, I have pray, I have fasted, I have bind and I have loosed, why don't you loose my son and he answered me immediately, He said "because he is your son" and the Holy

Spirit helped me and I understand immediately. Because this boy is a miracle boy, I treasured him so much; he has practically become an idol to me. So I changed my prayer, I said father heal your son, he is not my son anymore, heal your son. Within one hour; the child has gone to the toilet, the child has eaten, the child was already playing, and there was no trace of sickness left because I allowed him to take control.

#### 3.5.5. Question-answer Adjacency Pair

He sometimes uses question-answer adjacency pair as a strategy to elicit response from the audience. This strategy also affords audience of participation in the sermons. For instance He also uses a close strategy to this. He state questions and immediately provides answer to the questions. This strategy is in form of rhetorical question. The use of rhetorical questions seems to allow the preacher allow the audience provide answer to the question. This increases expectations and readiness in their heart to know the answer that the preacher will give. The answer given by the preacher is the assumed correct answer. This allows the audience to match their answers with the preacher's.

#### 3.5.6. Conditional Statement

To elicit response from the audience, the clergy sometimes uses conditional statements that usually prompt the audience into immediate response. The use of the conditional statement allows the audience to make a choice. This strategy also spurs the audience in to participatory acts.

##### Excerpt 1

... If you want me to speak a word to your life, stand on your feet.'

The audience immediately responds to this statement by rising to their feet.

#### 3.5.7. Discourse Markers

The use of discourse markers in his sermon is common among other strategies employed to instigate audience participation. The discourse markers are often used to perform different functions and they, most times, occur at some specific points which hint the next thing the clergy is to say or do. The discourse markers identified in his sermons include: let somebody shout halleluiah, thank you father, halleluiah, daddy says..., I think I should say amen to this....

For instance 'let somebody shout halleluiah' is used as transitional marker. It is used at the introductory, body and concluding parts of the sermons. The second discourse marker is 'thank you father'. This usually precedes 'informatives' that is word s of knowledge. In fact when the preacher utters this statement there is usually a corresponding actions such as roaring, clap, people raising their hands as if to receive something from God, etc. indicating the expectation of the audience. This focus marker occurs at any position of the discourse since the preacher supposedly does not have influence on this specific speech acts. 'Halleluiah' identified here as focus marker is an

alternative marker used by the preacher to introduce 'informatives'. Related to informatives focus markers is the phrase 'daddy says' which usually act as the introductory phrase for informatives.

## 4. Summary and Conclusions

The CA analysis reveals the presence of such conversational features in the sermons as opening and closing, turn taking, adjacency pairs, repair mechanism (usually self repairs because of the status gap between participants), feedback and selection of next speaker. Apart from these vocalised discourse features other non-verbal features identified include, body gesture such as smile, raising of hands, pointing to the congregation and pointing up to the sky, coughing, exclamation, pause or silence, laughter, gaze or looking and turning round, looking up to the sky, deep breath, kneeling, increase in the pitch or loudness of voice, prolonging vowels in a syllable, etc.

The use of non-verbal features (listed above) explained the importance of paralinguistic features in communication. The features aid and complement communication (sending and understanding) as it is observed that the audience responded to them. For instance, he raises his hands and lift up his face when he wants to talk about God or heaven. This gives the impression that God is high above all, His abode is shown to men and possibly all men should look up unto Him for help. He often smiles, laughs or pauses to show exclamation-surprise or how great God is usually when he wants to give the word of knowledge. These expressions though not expressed in words are usually understood by the audience because their actions such as clapping, jumping, raising of hands as to receive something from God, etc revealed that these gestures communicate the intention of the clergy.

The study further revealed the use of proverbs drawn from the environment of the audience, question-answers, conditional statements as some of the discourse strategies used by pastor Adeboye to elicit appropriate responses from his audience.

From the foregoing it is clear that religious sermons exhibit some conversational features and a careful deployment of these features by preachers, in this case, pastor E.A. Adeboye, help the preachers to elicit the desired ultimate response. Finally, from the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that contrary to popular beliefs that sermons are monologues the presence of the above features that the sermons shared with normal conversations confirm that religious sermons, may indeed be a type of conversation.

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