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## Christian Communication, Forms, Secularity, and Dimensions of Language in a Multifaceted Cultural Setting

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**Rufus Olufemi Adebayo**

Durban University of Technology

[rufusa@dut.ac.za](mailto:rufusa@dut.ac.za)

**Sylvia Phiwani Zulu**

Durban University of Technology

[zulus@dut.ac.za](mailto:zulus@dut.ac.za)

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### Abstract

*Christian communication and the various dimensions of language are profoundly connected and interchangeably used in a multifaceted cultural setting. Christian churches in South Africa, similar to any other African countries, profess their philosophies, passions, and beliefs to multi-cultural congregations through the use of sacred languages and communication. This study posits that the uprising of Pentecostal churches has paved the way for nonspiritual dialectic languages and has also greatly lessened spiritual communication. As a result, the study highlights the relationship between language and religious communication among Pentecostal churches in a culturally diverse environment. This study employs a qualitative approach, through the gathering and categorisation of information between 20 churches located in Durban, South Africa to recognise Christian communication and the influence of secular linguistic features and their relationships with spirituality. This study has found that there are different forms and secular dimensions of language which differ from spiritual language and Christian communication. The study reveals that as modern Christian churches emerge, a revolutionised communication has evolved as compared to the language of orthodox churches. The study recommends that the use of language for religious communication and discourse should necessitate expounding spiritual values and courses of action.*

**Keywords:** *Christianity; secularity; communication; cultural setting; Pentecostal churches*

### Introduction

According to Arens (2011:249), religion makes use of different forms of communication, aimed at disclosing reality and creating community: prayer and preaching, worship and witnessing, reading, and listening to sacred texts, singing, and sharing, prophetic discourse, ritual practice, and theological reflection. Thus, this study does not only appeal to the secularity of some spiritual/liturgical languages but also how language should revolve around spiritual content in modern Christian churches. Specifically, that the language is not limited to the above meaning or concept, it also incorporates the traditional language spoken in the Durban area of South Africa. Hence, this implies that the culture and the traditional language (isiZulu) reflect in the worship, song/singing, prayer, and sermon of the Durban Pentecostal churches, similar to the Hellenists or Grecian Jews, with the use of Greek language in worship.

Given the religious language of the church, first it is contextualised that language (secular or spiritual) has connotations and denotations for a subset of the population (the congregants). Secondly, that religious language informs action, thereby implicating language as a form of action and persuasion among the denominations. The basis for this study is that language and communication are now strategic because of the multi-cultural nature of the congregations, and instead of church language and communication being more sacred and prophetic, a complicated decentralised system has emerged. However, this study was aimed at understanding how religious language is formed, similar to secular language and communication, and semantically, how the Christian language and communication may lose its voice(s) when being communicated. In the process of the church being strategic in its communication, the study focusses more on the relationship between the contending powers of spirit-filled languages and secular languages.

From Brancoveanu (2011:155), there could be a relationship with what Avineri (2015:138) describes as 'Language Ideologies', where language ideologies are, among many other things, about the construction and legitimation of power, the production of social relations of sameness and difference, and the creation of cultural stereotypes about types of speakers and social groups. Thus, Durban is characterised by Black, Indian, White, and Coloured South Africans, but language provides certain distinctive dimensions to religious worship, as opposed to the traditional hymns being sung with organ accompaniment by the orthodox churches. A similar situation to the Aramaic language (in 2 Kings, Chapter 18, Verse 26-28 - King James Version - KJV) was developed in South Africa. Mukuka (2014:1) states that the reason given by different churches is not based on race but on language: the Zulu people want their own language, and they sing their own hymns and so forth.

In this study, the emphasis is on Pentecostal and Orthodox churches as they share similarities while at the same time there are also discrepancies. According to Damick (2016:3) one of the things that Pentecostals share with the Orthodox is a lack of fear of materiality when it comes to the spiritual life. The Orthodox believe that holiness can reside in physical things, including one's own body, and so do the Pentecostals. In another sense, the study reconsiders the distinctive aspects of language between the Pentecostal and Orthodox churches. Firstly, the secular language that could be produced by the church or a reusable language rule that associates with a constrained sub-category of a nonspiritual language, as a replacement for a syntax of a liturgical language. Secondly, a semantic view of sacred language and how a shared semantic abstract syntax is linked to providing the characteristic of a religious tradition.

From the foregoing, this paper, however, unfolds into four thoughts: firstly, it generates insight into the concept and forms of language by the church for effective communication. Secondly, the article examines the extent and the level at which some linguistic characteristics are formed and can serve spiritual interests. At this point, the article analyses the role of these linguistic resources and how spiritual leaders can assert their impact without losing their voice. Thirdly, the paper examines the link between religion, communication, and the church's own definitions of language, and the embedded meaning of prophetic language. Lastly, the paper identifies some similarities between denotation and connotation of languages among charismatic churches in the Durban area of South Africa. Hereafter, the paper draws on the relationship between the language of religion and secular language to generate philosophical problems raised by the various ways in which language and religion may intersect. Among others, the paper intends to examine the relationship between religion and the use of different forms of communication while also ascertaining how language and communication are crucial in the religious communication context. Finally, the paper addresses how communicators as well as preachers, communicate, preach, sermonise, teach, and socialise in a multifaceted cultural setting.

## Literature Review

According to Ugot and Offiong (2013:148), Pentecostalism as a religious phenomenon owes its origin to the event of the day of the Pentecost in Acts of the Apostles (chapter 2, v. 1-4). Ugot and Offiong (2013:148) state further that Pentecostalism derives its name from the historical event of the Pentecost, and is experiential Christianity, resulting in the baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit, as shown by speaking in tongues. It is pertinent to point out that Pentecostalism emerged in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa before the 1960s, introduced by J. A. Rowlands (Pillay, 1994:13), but gained its popularity in Durban in the early 1970s and 80s. The Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church penetrated the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Full Gospel Church of God, and the Rhema Church in the 70s, resulting in many groups becoming branches of the Apostolic Faith Mission. However, unlike many African countries, where Pentecostalism displays qualities of American Pentecostal inspiration in their language techniques and concepts (Ugot and Offiong, 2013:148), South African Pentecostalism was influenced by the effort of some Pentecostal missionaries from Britain and North America, with the establishment of the Assemblies of God, in conjunction with the African Faith Mission (AFM) and the Full Gospel Church (FGC), it was one of the ancient Pentecostal churches in South Africa (Christianity, 2014:7). In the early 1980s, the idea of Orthodox grew with more room for Pentecostalism, giving songs, worships, a ritualistic form of worship, sacraments, gifts of the spirit (1 Cor. 12), and so forth, more emphasis than a liturgical fixed form of worship.

Over the past years, most especially after South African independence in 1994, Christian churches, particularly the Pentecostal churches or so-called born-again churches and their clergy, have been in a sort of transition in communication and have become sophisticated in their language. However, in Christian churches, language can be termed as 'sacred language', 'liturgical language', 'holy language' or 'divine language', being the means of expression to traditional, conservative, and even charismatic Christians. According to De Marco (2017:1), the languages used by the church in her official worship are known as liturgical languages. Thus, liturgical language is expected to follow a pragmatic, ancient, linguistic form with firmness. This implies that sacred or liturgical language is a form or style that is separate from the usual or common language, it is pastoral. Hence, Terzic (2013:238) states that 'pastoral language' is the language that is often heard from the religious leaders within sacred places such as churches and mosques.

Lytra (2019:127) points out that language has been fundamental in the maintenance, development, and spread of religion and religious practices (e.g., in constructing and clarifying doctrine, representing religious beliefs and experiences, and participating in religious rituals). Thus, many South African Pentecostal churches depend largely on having a systematic reliance (Knight 2016:12) on language to communicate, most especially in preaching. Adebayo (2018:45) alludes that preaching, and sermonising are regarded as religiously motivated campaigns or discourses, whereas professional communication is regarded as being persuasive communication towards social or communicative engagement. However, in preaching or in a sermon, there should be an experience of spiritual exchange that can be determined by the use of language by the preacher as the message is passed across. The preacher is believed to invite the audience (congregants) to follow as he or she navigates and presents. Sometimes, feedback is possible through clapping, shaking of the head, and the shouting of 'Hallelujah' by the audience (congregants). According to Ugot and Offiong (2013:150), preaching involves a varied voice for emphasis, with the pitch of voice rising and falling dramatically. Gestures and facial expressions are used effectively for non-verbal communication. However, Ugwueye and Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2011:173) state that language is the expression and communication of emotions, ideas, or thoughts between human beings using speech and hearing.

One should, however, understand these practices and participation of faith and the appreciation of the sacraments in some Pentecostal Christian church's language today, even within the vernacular

translation of the Christian church's language. Similarly, one could note that sacred language correlates with the practical inspirations in behaviour and stylistic communication of religion by the Pentecostal churches. However, a striking dimension of language and communication could arise from the doctrine's characteristics of the Pentecostal church. Essentially, from the early days in South Africa, there was no language specified for religious use in Christianity, neither sacred nor holy. With the advent of Western churches, there was an interweaving of sacred or holy language, faith language, prosperity language, and miraculous language, to mention but a few, which has been criticised by many preachers and writers. Arguably, prosperity language, which according to Kuoppamäki (2017:3) is disseminated mostly by Pentecostal churches, is not originally an African phenomenon. Often, this brand of Christianity has elements of spiritualism and shamanism, which attribute supernatural powers to the priests and pastors. One noticeable point, however, is that the miraculous language has been undermined to accommodate prosperity; devaluing miracles or healing to prosperity by some Pentecostal churches.

These aspects within the Christian communication and dimensions of language, including rhetorical devices in preaching and prayers (Adebayo 2018:41), psalms, hymns, and musical ministrations in the church; culturally shape, connote and denote churches. For instance, a study conducted by Aleshinskaya and Gritsenko (2017:45), with the analysis of multilingual songs that combine lyrics and music from different countries (and cultures), revealed the role of language alternation as a resource of meaning-making and an instrument for constructing ethnic, local, and global (transnational-but-localised) identities. There are Pentecostal churches with different identities or nicknames characterised using language and communication. Such nicknames include: 'Healing and Prosperity', 'Health and Wealth', 'Celebration Church' – no funerals, and 'Oasis Church', as well as 'True Spirit Ministries', 'New Life', 'Abundant Life Ministry', and 'Healing Place', along with 'Overflow Church' and many more. Therefore, one cannot rule out that the effect of the church is not only in its philosophies and dogmas but also in its different forms of language and dimensions of communication, which have characterised Pentecostal churches in Durban.

According to Laka (2015:99), communication is defined by terms such as 'imparting,' 'sending,' 'transmitting,' or 'giving information to others.' Communication is thus implied to not only be about language, but also human behaviour; the way in which communicators act their words. Thus, communication for this study is not only about secularisation, but instead, it also concerns a sacred or ritualistic form of communication that serves spiritual purposes. Terzic (2013:239) mentions that the use of specific religious concepts is very limited in secular language and communication: words such as mercy, blessing, prayer, reconciliation, divine justice, and forgiveness, are not to be found in the statements. Notably, there is also no place for other phrases that are often associated with religious rhetoric and discourse. This implies that most statements that do not appear to be religious in expressions, conversely, encourage a secular and theological shift in religions. Although, Asad (2018:1) argues that secularism is not only an abstract principle that modernity espouses but also a range of sensibilities and the shifting vocabularies associated with each of these sensibilities are fundamentally intertwined with different ways of life.

Budd (2016:1-2) asserts that secular language is a language that is used among culturally oriented people who speak various languages, rather than genuine spiritual conversations with anyone within Christian faith. Thus, Christian communication and language depart from all other forms of public speech, professional communication, marketing communication, discourse, or dialogue, in rising above secular activities (Adebayo 2018:46). It is, however, noted that some languages, such as prosperity language, wealth language, and miraculous language have been imbibed and extended to other languages, such as Hallelujah, amen, prayer, and speaking in tongues, along with song and music, and quotations, by the Pentecostal Christian Churches in Durban, South Africa. Within this context, it is recorded that while concepts of religious language may not clearly define matters exactly in the world, they do have a set description, which is accepted by its users. In this way, religious

language can be seen as adjusting to how the view of the world changes, and some words have meaning beyond the literal truth (having connotation).

Ugwueye and Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2011:186) reveal that in contemporary times attention has shifted to how statements or declarations could be verified or falsified. This implies that language, declarations, communication, prophecy, and so forth, could be linguistically correct but spiritually inadequate, without accompanying sacred behavioural commitment. Terzic (2013:236) notes the theological principles of secular languages and affirms that it is not only appropriate to take account of their chronology, content, context, specific purposes, and the audience but also the form and language in which they were communicated. Terzic (2013:236) adds that Christianity communicates in its specific religious languages, but if these languages are to be changed or adjusted for specific audiences a very important issue becomes imminent, namely, to translate the religious language for the use in the public sphere – secularity may be involved.

### **Christian Communication: Forms and Dimensions**

According to Adebayo and Govender (2015:253), persuading someone is performing an act, that of affecting someone’s beliefs or desires, using some form of communication, usually language. Given the significant and prominent role of sharing, fellowship, and persuasion, by implication, Christian churches acquire systematic communication. Ugwueye and Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2011:173) point out that the training of priests in the use of religious language becomes an important cultural investment, and the use of the language is perceived to give them access to a body of knowledge that untrained lay persons cannot have. Language, therefore, becomes the most important means by which God’s faithful can communicate, fellowship, or commune with Him and each other (Ugot and Offiong, 2013:148). Among Pentecostal, charismatic Christian churches, some terms are characterised as languages (connotation and denotation) used to communicate and hold fellowship with God and with one another: songs and music, quotations, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs.

As documented in the Bible, Hallelujah is believed to be a language spoken and sung in heaven and accepted by the charismatic Christians in this present milieu. It is also believed that the shout of Hallelujah that destroyed the wall of Jericho, as recorded in Joshua, chapter 6, Verses 1–27, was the one that miraculously demonstrated the power of God. The manifestation of this typical language use is adopted and has become a stereotyped language that has developed into responsive communication in the Pentecostal churches in the Durban area of South Africa, as reflected mostly in preaching, praying, and singing. Hallelujah has become a manifestation language and statement of feelings, thoughts, or beliefs between the preacher and the congregants. However, the preachers or pastors of most Pentecostal, charismatic churches make use of this in English and in dialects (isiZulu language) as depicted below:

#### *Reactive communication in the Pentecostal churches*

<b>English- Preacher/Pastor</b>	<b>English congregants’ – response</b>	<b>Zulu Preacher/Pastor</b>	<b>- Zulu congregants’ – response</b>
Hallelujah!	Amen!	Haleluya!	Ameni!
Amen!	Hallelujah!	Bazalwane!	Ameni!
		Ameni!	Ameni!
Let somebody shout Hallelujah!		Thanini Haleluya!	

The two terms (Hallelujah and Amen) are related, but there are noticeable differences. ‘Hallelujah’ is often used with ‘Amen’ to stimulate communication, generate response, confirmation, and agreement. Amen, in the Hebrew language is said to be ‘Faith confirmed’ (Beerepoot 2012:1). According to Anderson (2013:1), the word ‘amen’ comes from a Hebrew root verb, which in its various verbal forms can mean: to support, to be loyal, to be certain, and to place faith in. The cognate particle ‘amen’ is commonly translated as ‘truly’. In most Pentecostal churches, when the preacher or pastor articulates loudly, the preacher also waits for responses from the congregants. A preacher may, at times, interactively make general requests such as those illustrated below:

*Interactive requests*

<b>Preacher/Pastor</b>	<b>Congregants’ response</b>
Somebody praise the Lord!	Hallelujah!
Somebody say Amen!	Amen!

However, Anderson (2013:2) expresses that the use of the word ‘Amen’ can be categorised under four headings, of which the first two are by far the most important:

1. Acceptance of a curse expression. When priests (or other office bearers) utter a curse formula on behalf of the Lord then the addressee(s) accept the consequences of the curse with the word ‘amen’.
2. Concurrence with an expression of praise to the Lord. ‘Amen’ is also used after a Baruch (praise) formula by the person speaking the formula, as well as all those who hear it. This type of praise-formula has a standard structure and always begins with the word Baruch: translated as ‘Blessed/Praised be....’
3. Concurrence with a prophecy or an announcement made by another person. In Jeremiah 28, v. 6, Jeremiah expresses sarcastic agreement with the false prophecy of Hananiah with the words: “Amen! May the Lord do so.” In Kings 1, v.36, Benaiah concurs with David’s announcement that Solomon will be anointed as king. He literally says: “Amen! May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, say so.” The fact that both these passages appear to translate the word ‘amen’ gives the impression that one is dealing with exceptional situations.
4. As a characteristic of God. In Isaiah 65, v.16, the Hebrew text twice speaks of “the God of (the) Amen.”

Terzic (2013:238) states that liturgical language is the language of individual or congregational prayer. Prayer is also seen as a form of expression and communication among Pentecostal, charismatic churches in Durban. Fisher (2016:1) describes prayers as communing with God, talking to God, or petitioning God, making requests, or asking God to meet one’s needs. One should note that prayer is not just a one-way conversation but involves us listening to God”. Simply put, prayer is fellowshiping with our Heavenly Father. Goldsworthy (2006:15) adds that a simple definition of prayer is that it is speaking to God. Thus, the language of the Pentecostal church is similar and is reflected in prayer. Although those who use decrees and slogans are an exception to the rules. One of the most linguistic forms is prayer with semantic decrees and slogans:

*Pentecostal church language*

<b>English version</b>	<b>isiZulu version</b>
Say father in the Name of Jesus...	Thanini baba Egameni likaJesu
My father...	Baba wami...
Almighty father...	Baba Onamandla onke

Father Lord... I command... Oh, Lord... Lord... Holy Ghost fire...	Baba Nkosi... Ngiyayala... O! Nkosi... Nkosi... Moya Oyingcwele umlilo...
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'Cast', 'bind', 'loose', and 'destroy', as well as 'fire', are common words used in various dimensions as either connotative or denotative. Fire, for example, is often associated with the 'Holy Spirit', as seen in the Pentecost in the book of Acts, Chapter 2, Verses 1-5. In an explicit or direct meaning, fire, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005:554), is the flame, light, and heat, and often smoke, produced when something burns. Hence, fire is used by the church as language and as a semantic connotation and symbolic representation of something divine or holy. According to Ugot and Offiong (2013:148), baptism in the Holy Spirit follows conversion and is evidenced by speaking in tongues. The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is referred to as '*glossalias*', a Greek word meaning 'tongues'. Speaking in tongues is considered as another language within the Pentecostal churches. Whenever this is used, it is used as a spiritual language that communicates while also being treated as a foreign or 'holy language'. Communal prophetic words are also associated with prayers among Pentecostal, charismatic churches. The preacher or pastor may articulate a prophetic declaration in a loud voice during his preaching, this is usually a one-to-group communication:

### *Prophetic declaration*

#### **English version**

I prophesy to someone...  
 I prophesy to someone today...  
 Bless you...  
 All is well... or All will be well... or it is well...  
  
 Receive your... (it could be miracle, healing, deliverance, or blessing)

#### **isiZulu version**

Ngiyaphrofetha kothile ....  
 Ngiyaphrofetha kothile namuhla ....  
 Inkosi ikubusise...  
 Konke kuhamba kahle...noma Konke kuzohamba kahle...noma Kuhamba kahle...  
 Yamukela (ummangaliso, ukuphulukiswa, ukusindiswa noma isibusiso)

Music is another dimension of communication. According to Johnson, Rudd, Neuendorf, and Jian (2010:48), music is used as a form of communication throughout the world, not just for entertainment purposes. Worship songs and music keeps the church's audience (the congregants) alive. It is believed that as a church congregant, one is likely to persistently show one's love for God in worship, consecration, and practical service. In a similar sense, Tönsing *et al.* (2015:1) reveal that in many Christian congregations today, the question of music is an emotive issue as the service and its music touch the hearts of people and their faith. Many people are attracted to services, or discouraged, by the kind of music played and sung, and their walk of faith is interwoven with songs that have shaped and sustained their faith. Although to some Pentecostal churches, worship songs could be formal or informal; a preacher may call for hymnal songs or a worship song to precede a sermon or preaching, at the same time, while preaching, there may be a sudden burst into a song that the congregants sing along with the pastor or preacher. Smith (2015:543) adds that much of the 'impromptu' music within a service, chanted prayers, lined hymns, or 'called up' hymns, for example, are spontaneously introduced by a member of the congregation, one of the deacons, or a minister. Thus, one can argue here that it is certain that worship and music styles and language will continue to evolve and change. What is, however, important, as some Pentecostal churches would say, is spirituality concerning music (Westermeyer, 2013:571).

The quotation is another dimension of communication or language used by Pentecostal, charismatic churches. A message from God is believed to be the language of God to the people. Thus, we see some

sermonic use of language by some preachers with – “God said...”, “God told me...”, “The Bible says...” and so forth. Hence, there is a conceivable case where the preacher consults the original creator for permission, mentions the source of an extended excerpt, and in most cases, gives a full quotation of any excerpt or references. Text from Psalms is mostly used for prayers, illustrations, and declarations by the Pentecostal preachers or pastors. As Buice (2017:1) explains, the ‘God told me’ method of communicating makes for interesting, suspenseful, and entertaining stories, when what people need most is to hear from God. The term ‘God told me’ implies that God does communicate with His servants (probably prophets, pastors, or preachers), which in turn could be an approval or a validation of their status, their ministry or level of their spirituality.

## **Research Method**

To investigate this research, the researchers used a qualitative methodology to gather data from 20 churches in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Also, six pastors of Pentecostal churches in the Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa were interviewed, with six focus groups conducted from six other churches, while services of eight churches were observed. To understand the formation of linguistic and communication resources that were set up for serving the spiritual interests, sampling was primarily conducted using random sampling. Thus, a focus group discussion was conducted with ten-member respondents, focussing on ordinary members of each church. Interviews with participants and personal interviews with a prepared guide (questions) were manipulated to include either sacred or holistic language, wealth language, miraculous language, or no religious language (ordinary communication or language).

Although specific questions about their religious affiliations were not asked, it is worth noting that nearly all the Pentecostal congregants in the sample had grown up in mostly Orthodox churches and that in most cases, the majority were born to and have been active participants in the Orthodox churches. The researchers interviewed pastors individually at their church in one session (per interview) that lasted 30-45 minutes on average. All sessions were videotaped so that the data could later be coded. Themes were generated and questioned, based on the impression on the Christian communication and dimensions of language by the Pentecostal churches and the Orthodox churches, and how they are categorised as Pentecostal or Orthodox churches. All responses to these were recorded and coded.

This study targeted Pentecostal, charismatic and Orthodox churches and the sample was recruited through snowballing sampling, using the network (Kumar 2011:208). This was a cumulative sample of 218 respondents who were identified as Pentecostal and Orthodox, in the target area. The researchers chose this sample in relation to the context of this study because the research aim is based on the different forms of communication, and the dimensions of language among Pentecostal and Orthodox churches. This sample extended in age from 24- to 75-year-olds and is comprised of 60 per cent females and 40 per cent males. With regards to educational levels, 28 per cent of the sample indicated having achieved a high school degree, 32 per cent attained some college or bachelor’s degree and 40 per cent a master’s degree, Ph.D. or higher. Of this sample, 77 per cent identifies as originally Orthodox and 23 per cent as New Believers (New Pentecostals). The 77 per cent Pentecostals who converted from Orthodox churches, such as Methodist, Catholic, and so on, indicated that they had little or no experience of these languages before, especially those of prosperity and wealth. While comparing the 23 per cent of the new Pentecostal sample with 23 per cent of the general sample, it was found that the latter expressed total familiarity with these languages and communications.

## **Results and Discussion**

First and foremost, in religious language, there are clear forms of communication and dimensions of language among Orthodox and Pentecostal churches. It is evident that there are linguistic differences

among Pentecostal churches based on their level of spiritual activities, nicknames, beliefs, and dogmas within their religious traditions. It was gathered that in most of the Pentecostal churches in Durban, traditional hymns have been modified using drums, saxophones, and the piano to personalise songs and choruses. Although, some of the choruses are chanted regularly in the language of the community, the English language, and the local language (isiZulu) in Durban.

As mentioned, the spiritual implications and the nature of these dimensions of communication and languages or choice of words are interesting, as is the nature of the differences. It was sustained that secular or motivational speakers do not think about the law and spirituality when presenting a message. Instead, they attempt to persuade and motivate people to change their behaviour. The same tends to happen in connection with preaching, in a one-to-group-communication. There should be more of an agreement between preacher and audience (congregants) with something vital, living, and corporeal taking place. In this way, it is not the mere conveying of knowledge or motivation; there exists something much bigger. The total person is expected to be engaged on both sides, the level of spirituality and language composition. The data indicates that there was an iota of association between stylistic communication and the language of the Holy Spirit.

Generally, one would like to become more charismatic in the sense that one sees more prophecies, miracles, and fruits of the spirit. However, it is noted that not all Pentecostals are Orthodox and not all Orthodox are Pentecostals. These, as reflected in language use and communication, and are out of balance. Nonetheless, to an extent, this study has found that Christian communication varies from the everyday discourse, and religious leaders should find a communality between the forms and dimensions of language and how to cope with the power of spirit-filled languages. The result also indicated that, while language and communication can on the one hand be used by the church, how effective the message is, depends largely on the power of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the power of secular communication used by professional communicators. On the other hand, the study shows that a preacher who preaches what the public wants as Christianity, distorts spiritual language and communication, thereby, becoming a barely credible communicator. It was found that quoting the Word of God can be positive or negative and that one can also pervert the Word of God while quoting, because of language use or quoting the wrong translation or version.

Similarly, it was noticed from the Pentecostal churches under study that God does speak in various dimensions and that communications do exist between God and believers. However, it was also observed that many Pentecostal churches employ the 'God told me' language today, to make up their own rather than God's story. Buice (2017:1) points out that the 'God told me' language is apt when the phrase is immediately followed by a text of Scripture and that the preacher should consider the connection between the 'God told me' language and the sufficiency of Scripture. Concerning this and with the findings of this study, some Orthodox churches, such as Seventh Day Adventist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Zion Christian Churches were not found to participate in or employ the 'God told me' language.

More importantly, it is observed that religious language is metaphorical in nature, thus, the study records that there are attributes attached; on the one hand, there is prophecy, faith, belief, and miracles, while on the other hand, persuasion, speech, and action are symbolic among the groups. Significantly, the researchers found that communications can be coded as well as a language among Pentecostal churches when persuading and informing target groups to take action about their religiousness. Moreover, when speaking to a group (the congregants), it was found that a language that relates harmoniously with them is strategic and biblically measurable.

## **Conclusion**

Language and communication are complex phenomena and at the same time crucial in the religious context, especially in a multi-cultural setting. Though language and communication could be separated, they cover a variety of similarity in terms of ideas, notions, concepts, and practices. Due

to these similarities, it is envisaged in this study that some Pentecostal, charismatic Christian churches do not observe the differences, thus, raising the complexity of language when passing across spiritual messages. It also poses a challenge to a multifarious cultural and dialectical setting similar to South Africa. Communicators as well as preachers, therefore, have problems as they communicate, preach, sermonise, teach, and socialise. Many a time, some preachers consider that worldly language and communication are more suited and most often interchanged when passing the message to different cultural or dialectical congregants.

It has, however, emerged that some spiritual messages have been compromised and the language has changed from spirituality: salvation, healing, and deliverance to wealth, fame, and blessings. Also, the various dimension of language and communication continue to emerge across Pentecostal churches that has led to distortions, inconsistencies, and negativity in delivering the word from the Bible. This study believes that an insightful discussion of the Christian communication, forms, secularity, and dimensions of language among Pentecostal churches are therefore imminent and has discussed liturgical language and language as a form of action that emerged during this empirical research and how best-sacred language and communication could be preserved, most especially during preaching. The study was conducted and limited to a specific province in South Africa. Thus, the results on the forms of communication, secularity, and dimensions of language by the Pentecostal churches in passing spiritual messages to their various congregations as argued in this work may not apply to other provinces and other countries. However, the study contextualises a set of spiritual language and communication similar to other studies in other provinces and other African countries thereby contributing valuable references for general studies in the field of religion as well as language and communication studies.

From the above, it can be concluded that the evolution of Pentecostal churches has not only raised different forms of communication and various dimensions of languages but has also become paradoxical and ambivalent in forms and nature. As noted, while language could be a means for the propagation of Christian messages and discourse, there should be a logical, mystical, and scriptural form so that one can develop a better understanding of the Christian communication difference from secular communication and various dimensions of language within the Pentecostal or charismatic churches in Durban, South Africa. In general, this study has contributed to existing knowledge in the field of language practice, religion, and communication by examining dimensions of language by the church to communicate effectively to its target audience, without forgetting its objectives.

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