MUTUAL CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ENGLISH NOMINAL GROUP IN D. K. OLUKOYA'S PRAYER POINTS

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Abstract

Existing non-linguistic studies on religious discourse have examined the philosophical foundation of faith, while the linguistic ones have explored stylistic and phonological issues in religious sermons. This paper investigates contextual beliefs in the nominal structures of D.K Olukoya's prayers with the view to describing how contextual variables facilitate meaning during prayer sessions in the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries (MFM). Odebunmi's notion of Mutual Contextual Beliefs serves as the theoretical anchor. Data were drawn from D. K Olukoya's *Prayer Rain* and *Pray Your Way.* 100 prayer points were purposively selected and subjected to contextual analysis. The nominal groups manifested the **m h**, **h q,** and **m h q** structural forms. The most frequent was the **m   h   q**. Contextual variables such as: shared cultural knowledge (SCK), shared situation knowledge (SSK), shared word knowledge (SWK),inference (INF) and referents were used to facilitate meaning between pastors and the congregation. The prayers addressed financial, demonic, spiritual, health and social-related issues in Africa. The use of the English language in the prayers of Pentecostal churches is influenced by sociocultural colourations of the African society.

1. Introduction

The English language plays the role of a national language in Nigeria. The multilingual nature of the country occasions the use of the English language as a national language. The linguistic situation in Nigeria is a complex one. This development prompts Babajide (2001) to submit that the nation is multidimensionally vast in terms of landmass, culture, population, belief and language. Many linguists are of the view that Nigeria is highly multilingual with heterogeneous ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages; (Bamgbose, 1993, Babajide 2001, Igboanusi 2002, Jibril 2005). The English language is the language of education, business, politics, technology, religion and social interaction in Nigeria. The arrival of Pentecostalism in Nigeria gave a wider acceptance to the use of the English language.

Pentecostal churches adopt the English language in conducting religious activities in the country. This development is necessitated by the linguistic composition of the churches. Members of these churches comprise people from different ethnic groups in country. Also, most members of Pentecostal churches have access to the linguistic codes used in the churches. This gives room for the proficient use of the English language as the language of interaction in those churches. The use of the English language in these churches is an offshoot of the accumulated threat against our indigenous languages. Bamgbose (1993) summarizes the factors threatening the development of our indigenous languages into language attitudinal problem, poor implementation of the national policy on education, problem of language conflict and inadequate publication in indigenous languages.

The English language thus continues to enjoy wide degree of acceptance in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and as such, its use tends to be influenced by sociocultural features. One of the major domains of its use in the churches is the area of prayers. Since prayer constitutes a means of communicating with divine power, it tends to adopt some forms of sociocultural influence. This view is corroborated by Geertz (2008) who asserts that prayer constitutes one of the most remarkably cultural mediated forms of normative dissociation and ubiquitous religious phenomenon. Christians resort to prayers to establish personal relationship with God. Luhmann et al (2010) observes that learning to experience God depends on socially taught and culturally transmitted process. To Ward (2005), what separates an individual from a true believer is the latter's worldview that is fundamentally shaped and reinforced by religious traditions and personal spiritual experience. Prayers are expressed verbally to God.

These prayers are laden with sociocultural contents of the immediate society or environment. Since language reflects the culture of the immediate society, prayers are meant to exhibit the linguistic peculiarities of the immediate society. In the case of Nigeria, the English language usage in Pentecostal churches tends to assume some sociocultural dimensions of indigenous languages, beliefs, traditions and worldviews.

This paper undertakes a mutual contextual description of the English nominal group in selected prayer points of D.K.Olukoya with a view to describing how socio-contextual variables are portrayed in the prayer points. This paper investigates the sociocultural influence of the use of the English language in the prayer points of the Ministry in question. The aim of the study is to examine the sociocultural influence of the use of the English language in prayer points of the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, henceforth, *MFM*. The objectives are to examine the structure of the nominal group, and describe the mutual contextual beliefs in the prayers. Apart from contributing to

the repertoire of studies in religious discourse, the study promises a good inclusion to existing materials in language teaching.

2. Background Information on the *MFM*

D.K Olukoya is the General Overseer of the *MFM* worldwide. The *MFM* is a Pentecostal church founded in 1989 in Nigeria with the headquarters located in Lagos. The Ministry is set to propagate the message of the Christian scripture around the world. It is committed to reviving apostolic signs, Holy Ghost fire and unlimited demonstration of the power of God to deliver. The ministry is a "do it yourself" gospel ministry, where hands are trained to wage war and fingers to fight battle. This militant tone is reflected throughout the teachings of MFM. Viable spiritual units in the church such as: Prayer Warrior, the Terrestrial Intercessors and the Lords Chosen Army are trained to wage violent wars against witchcraft, (Foundational Class Manual of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Southwestern Region 29, Mabolaje, Oyo, Oyo State).

Since the mission of the *MFM* is to wage war against the existence of witchcraft through fervent prayers, there is need to investigate how the shared codes, experiences, world knowledge and sociocultural experiences of the participants (the pastor and the congregation) influence meaning in the prayer sessions. This will enable a contextual description of how sociocultural variables in the prayer points serve rhetorical effects in the discourse.

3. Statement of the Problem

Religious discourse has attracted the attention of researchers in recent times. Quite a number of studies have been done on religious discourse. From the non-linguistic angle are those of Salako (2015), Olusanya (2015), Alakuko (2015), Adegbola (2016) and Ifedube (2016). These studies have examined philosophical issues in religious discourse. From the linguistic perspective, Owolabi (2012), Inya (2012), Ugot and Offiong (2013), Kamalu and Tamunobelema (2013), Acheoah and Hamza (2015) and Souk (2015) have examined the phonological and stylistic peculiarities in religious discourse. Studies are yet to engage contextual analysis of prayer points in Pentecostal churches. This study intends to reveal the sociocultural colourations in the use of the English Language in the prayers of the *MFM*.

4. Studies on Religious Discourse

A good number of scholarly works have been done on religious discourse. From the non-linguistic orientation, Salako (2015) discusses Islamic perspective on birth control by appraising available documents and scholastic opinions on the issue of birth control. He examines conceptual meanings of birth control, its historical reviews and discusses modern Islamically approved approaches to birth control. He opines that enlightenment campaign and

resource management should be considered in the issue of birth control. Commenting on the role of faith in religious discourse, Olusanya (2015) carries out a conceptual analysis of faith in Christianity. He examines the issue of faith and provides concepts for its understanding. He submits that faith develops incrementally, and it relies on realism for cognitive validation instead of evidentialism. He views faith as a human activity and a conscious response to divine invitation. Oderinde and Alakuko (2015) explore Paul's position on care for the poor. They opine that churches give placating instrument to the poor rather than empowerment of the poor. Using exegetical and contextual analysis, the study establishes that God is interested in the plight of the poor, and that the poor should work with their hands to provide for their needs.

Expounding Paul's teaching on Christian character, Adegbola (2016) examines Paul's teachings in Colossian 3: 12-15 as a model for the ideal character of an African Christian in a contemporary society. Advocating the place of prophecy, Aluko (2016) investigates the issue of African Pentecostalism and the issue of prophecy. He takes a look at the issue of the Love Terbanacle International, Ile-Ife. He adopts a combination of phenomenological and sociological method in describing the social realities in the churches. The study probes into the roles played by charismatic leaders who act as prophets in Pentecostal churches. He submits that charismatic leaders in Pentecostal churches have influenced the psyche of members through prophetic declarations. Ifeduba (2016) evaluates constructions of Africanity on Nigeria church website. He explores the extent to which communication on such websites construct or deconstruct Africanity by attempting to redefine the concepts of Africanism, mental decolonization, colonial mentality, African identity and indigenous knowledge. From the linguistic angle, Olumola (2015) investigates a speech act analysis of Olukoya's prayer points using the speech act theory to unpack the various acts performed in the prayer points. She selected three prayer points and observed that directive, commissive and representative speech act types help to communicate the different issues discussed in the prayer points.

These acts are deployed to achieve meaning and affirm the illocutionary instantiation of the speakers. From the philosophical perspectives, Owolabi (2012) examines rhyme, rhythm and rhetoric in religious discourse in Nigeria's ESL environment. The study adopts research observation method. He observes that courage manipulation serves as a veritable instrument used in making sermons persuasive. Messages from such sermons tend to be rhythmical, rhetorical and memorable. Inya (2012) explores pragmatic dynamics in thesis defense. He observes that defending a thesis involve series of pragmatic acts. He notes that the pragmatic acts performed are instantiations of generalized situation type. He observes that the acts of arguing,

substantiating, authenticating, challenging and defending in Christian apologetics are instantiations of the pragmeme defending a thesis.

On language use in Pentecostal churches, Ugot and Offiong (2013) investigate language and communication in Pentecostal churches in Calabar. They observe that language is conditioned by the doctrine of the church. The use of language, they observe, shapes aspects such as prayers, neologisms, kinetics and the music of the church. Kamalu and Tamunobelema (2013) assess linguistic expression of religious identity and ideology in selected postcolonial Nigerian literature. The study uses critical discourse analysis and stylistics to unpack the motifs that underlie the expression of religious identity in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Chidubem Iweka's *The Ancient Curse* and Uwen Akpan's *Say You Are One of Them.* The study reveals how socio-political climate in postcolonial Nigeria breeds a culture of hatred, intolerance, violence, exclusion and curtailment of individual group insights in the name of religion and how these acts are expressed in diverse grammatical patterns. Acheoah and Hamzah (2015) carry out a contrastive analysis of language use in Christian and Islamic sermons. The study adopts stylistic theory with insights from rhetoric and pragmatics. They observe that sermons in both religions are sacred and they involve series of stylistic devices which include: nomenclatures and contextual structures.

Morolake and Soku (2015) engage a linguistic description of language use by Nigerian and Ghanaian preachers. The aim of the study was to ascertain the impact and effectiveness of the message on the audience. The authors harp on the communicative goal of the preachers and the use of style as a means of communicating the pastor's message and the effects on the congregation. They observe that pastors use high-sounding adjectives, nominalization, compounding and synonyms and overgeneralization. From the foregoing, it is observed that the field of religious discourse has received a robust scholarly attention. However, studies are yet to engage contextual analysis of prayers points in Pentecostal churches. Studies have not probed the sociocultural colourations of the immediate society (Nigeria) in the prayers of these churches. The present study is relevant and timely as it intends to engage a contextual description of the prayers of the *MFM*.

5. Theoretical Framework: Mutual Contextual Beliefs

In human interaction, the belief or assumption held prior to or during occasions of interaction come into and facilitate the communication process. Such beliefs which tend to have a great deal of influence on human communication are referred to as contextual beliefs. Depending on perspectives, scholars have perceived the term 'beliefs' as 'mutual contextual beliefs', 'shared contextual beliefs', and 'shared assumption'. The notion of contextual beliefs adopted in this study is that Odebunmi (2001). The model takes insights from the works of

Bach and Harnish, (1979), Ochis 1993), Leech (1983), Mey (2001) Gumperz (1982), Thomas (1995) Adegbija (1999) and to mention a few.

There are two levels of beliefs: namely language level and situation level. At the language level, meaning is enhanced if interactants have equal access to the language of communication. At the situation level, assumptions are held on the basis of interactants' shared codes (linguistic and non-linguistic) and experience. It is at this level that both the variety or dialect of the language selected and other situational variables are used to facilitate meaning.

Contextual beliefs ride on interactants' independent experience of the world. This experience may be at the single individual level or the group level, for example, teacher-student or doctor-patient. Each at his/her environment notes and absorbs events in his/her environment each linguistic item matching their experience, and because the two have had related experiences drawing from the same society or world, meaning becomes more accessible as their beliefs are shared.

6. Aspects of the Situation Level of Beliefs

Situation level is considered on three plains which are: shared knowledge of subject topic, shared knowledge of word choices, referents and references and shared socio-cultural experiences, previous or immediate. Knowing the topic of interaction enables participants to contribute healthily in communicative interaction. The knowledge of the subject of discourse grants them access to a number of relevant linguistic items used in the discourse. Also, if the lexical choices made in interaction are known to all the parties, no communication hitch will occur in understanding utterances. The last aspect is that of shared socio-cultural and situational experiences, previous or immediate. Interaction moves smoothly when speakers have common socio-cultural and situational experiences. In Yoruba culture, for example, the word, 'introduction' carries a different meaning. It is a formal activity, marking part of the activities of a wedding programme, where family members of the prospective couple are known to one another. This same word may likely pose some problems to a non-Yoruba speaker if used in the same context, Odebunmi, (2001). Meaning interpretation depends a great deal on a number linguistic and non-linguistic variables identified above, and interactants dwell on the knowledge of these variables in processing meaning. This paper considers the theory appropriate in handling sociocultural issues embedded in the prayer points of D.K. Olukoya of the *MFM*.

7. Odebunmi's Notion of MCBs

The tenets of Odebunmi's notion of mutual contextual beliefs are summarised below:

Odebunmi holds that context is the spine of meaning. This implies that the beliefs of interactants exert a great of influence on meaning. He posits that meaning is achieved through contextual exploration.

He describes the notion of beliefs at two levels: the language and situational levels. At the level of language, communication thrives if interactants have access to the same language of communication. Interactants' access to the same language of communication gives potential clue to meaning. It is assumed by X that Y understands the language B when he communicates with him/her using B. He expects a response R because Y understands B.

His description of the situational level of beliefs holds that interactants's shared codes (linguistic and non-linguistic) and experience make meaning accessible. At this level, he opines that various situational variables are used to engage meaning.

Shared knowledge of topic/subject also influences meaning. If interactants are familiar with the topic of the discourse, probable hitches in communication are kept at bay. He harps on shared knowledge of the word choices, referents and references as important ingredients of meaning- making process. Communication thrives when interactants have access to the lexical choices made in the interaction. A good knowledge of the lexical choices help interactants to easily select referents and references of the choices made. He asserts that interactants' sociocultural experiences, previous or immediate; also contribute to fluidity in communication. If there are differences in the sociocultural background of the interactants, there would be potential challenges in communication.

Odebunmi's tenets of MCBs spelt out above are germane in describing how meaning is achieved in the data. The setting of the interaction is a church. The medium of communication is the English language. The English language is interpreted into Yoruba to cater for the Yoruba speakers in the church. The use of the English language and Yoruba tend to enhance mutual understanding between the pastor and the congregation. Mutual access to language makes the topics in the prayers accessible to the participants. Also, the prayer points of the data are laden with different shades of sociocultural influences of the African society. These shades of Africanity in the prayer points are understood by the pastor and the congregation, and this in turn, enhances meaning in the prayer points of the *MFM*.

8. The English Nominal Group
The nominal group is a group of word that has a noun or a pronoun as its head. Bloor and Bloor (2004: 31) see the nominal group as a group with a noun or a pronoun as its head and that a noun may be modified, but it does have to be modified in order to constitute a group. A nominal group can function as subject or complement in a clause and can function as complement of a

prepositional phrase. Halliday (1994) identifies that three dimensional components or metafunction are realised in language. These include: ideational, textual and interpersonal. Group structure is interpreted in terms of its ideational functions. The ideational component of the group structure is divided into experiential and logical. The logical component has to do with the logical semantic relations in the group and the relation in the group is that of modification. The element(s) that precedes the head is the premodifier and the one(s) that comes after the head is called postmodifier. Three positions identified in the logical component are: the premodifier, head and postmodifier. In the same vein, (Muir 1972:26) identifies elements within the structure of the nominal group as that which include: modifier, head and qualifier (mhq). The elements, **m** and **q** are optional while **h** is the only obligatory element in the structure of the nominal group.

Bloor and Bloor (2004) identify six experiential functions in a nominal group and these are: Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, Classifier, Thing and Qualifier. The elements which relate to the premodifer on the logical plain are Deictic, Numerative and Epithet. Deictic points to things and it is realised as a determiner, a possessive pronoun or noun. It also indicates whether a subject is specific or not. The Numerative function is realised by the word class. Numerals include cardinal number and qualitative words such as many, few and several. The Epithet indicates the features of the modified item and is realised by adjectives. The Classifier has the function of sub-classifying the modified item into a subclass of such an item. **Thing** is the head in the nominal group. It is realised by a noun or a pronoun. *Thing* may be a material inanimate thing, an animal, a personal, a substance or an abstract concept. Qualifier has to do with word(s) that gives additional facts about the **Thing.** It could be an adjective, a prepositional phrase or embedded clause.

9. Research Method
Prayer points of the MFM constitute the data for the study. Data were got through a close study of D.K Olukoya's prayer book, *Prayer Rain* and yearly bulletin, *Pray Your Way*. Three editions of the bulletin were got and read. 100 prayer points were purposively selected because of their related contextual issues. Structural and context classification of the prayers was done. Data were subjected to contextual analysis.

9.1Data Analysis and Discussion
The data for this study are all nominal groups and they are examined on the basis of their structures and social contextual beliefs. Data were analysed using mutual contextual variables such as shared situation knowledge, shared cultural knowledge, shared word knowledge, reference, and referent The nominal groups manifest the following structures:

Table 1: **Table showing the structure and frequency of nominal groups in the data**

| Structure of NG	Nominal items	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
m h	My head	27	27%
m h q	Every serpent assigned against my destiny	62	62%
H	Nil	0	0
h q	Powers of my father's house	11	11%
		Total: 100	100%

m h
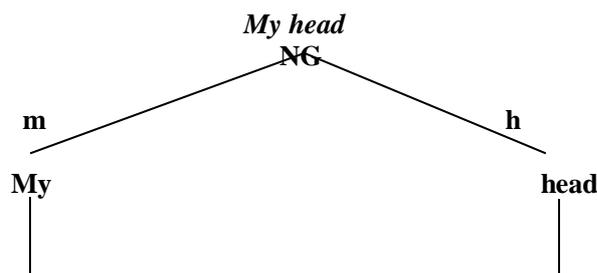
My destiny
This yielded 27% in the data. In the NGs above, the modifiers are **my** and **my** and the heads are **head and destiny** respectively. Using shared cultural knowledge, the participants in the prayers, pastor and the congregation, understand the significance of the concept of the *head* and *destiny*. In the Igbo and Yoruba culture, it is similar to *Chi, a small god* and *Ori.* The head, from the point of view of African tradition, is responsible for an individual's fortune or otherwise. This explains why the *MFM* places importance on the 'head'. The knowledge of the word choice and shared cultural background tend to influence the way the participant respond to the subject of the prayers.
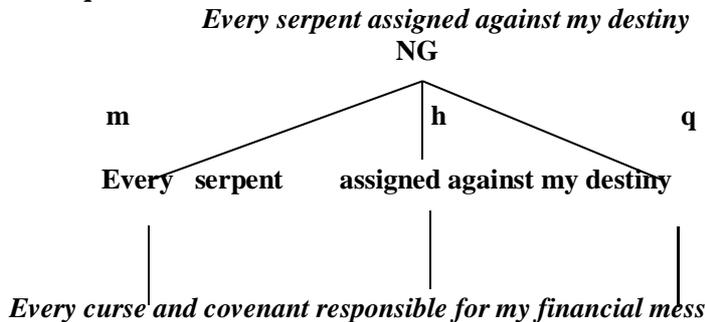
m m h

Every dark garment
NG

m   **m**   **h**
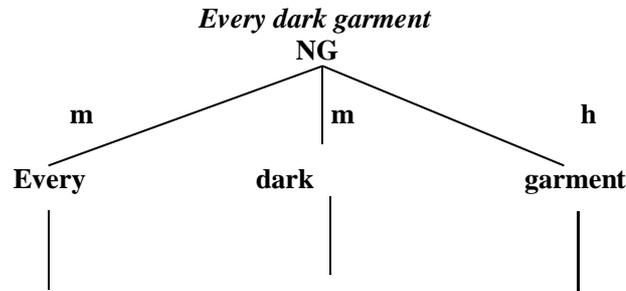
Every   **dark**   **garment**

Every spiritual strong man

The **m h** form of the NG has other structural manifestations in the data. One of them is the **m m h.** In the first NG above, the modifiers are **every** and **dark,** while the headword is **garment**. *Every dark garment* could pose ambiguity on the surface, but when situated in context, meaning is achieved. Considering the fact that the setting of the utterance is a church, and the participants are pastors and the congregation, the Ministry involved is the *MFM*, the word choices and their referents and shared situation knowledge, these variables help to understand the utterance better as both the speaker and the hearer understand the subject better. The word, **garment**, in the context of use, connotes spiritual infected clothes which is capable of making an individual miserable in all spheres of life. The nominal group is formed through collocation, dark garment. There is an agreement between 'dark' and 'garment'. The NG portrays the contextual realities in an African society. The second NG, *every spiritual strong man*, spiritual strong man in African context refers to a man or woman who is spiritually vibrant and filled with the Holy ghost Fire, but in the context of the utterance of such prayers in the MFM and in the African context, it refers to a man or woman who operates in the satanic world, and who is capable of waging spiritual war against someone else's destiny. This collocation at the NG helps to describe African beliefs.

m h q

Every serpent assigned against my destiny
NG

m   **h**   **q**

Every serpent   assigned against my destiny

Every curse and covenant responsible for my financial mess

80

This form of NG yielded 62% in the data. In the first NG above, **every** is the modifier, **serpent** is the headword while the qualifier is **assigned against my destiny**. Using shared religious knowledge, shared cultural knowledge and shared word knowledge, the NG connotes evil powers. The word, **serpent** culturally denotes an animal that is dangerously possessed with deadly venom that kills. Viewing from the cultural perspective, snakes are believed to be sent on errands by forces. This belief prompts the use of the qualifier, **assigned against my destiny**. In the second NG, **every** is the modifier, the head is the compound **curse and covenant** while the **q** is **responsible for my financial mess**. Using shared cultural and word knowledge, the prayer point describes the belief of the African man in the power of curse and covenant as that which control the affairs of man. The word choice, **curse and covenant** describe a demonic bond or tie under which an individual operates. It is believed that an individual's financial status is determined largely by external forces and not by dint of hard work or luck

m m h q

Every spiritual arrow in my system
NG

| m	m	h	q
Every spiritual	**arrow**	**in my destiny**	
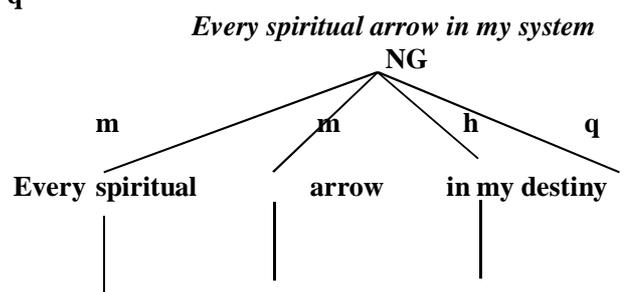
Every strange altar in my life

The **m h q** form of the NG manifested other structural forms which include: **m m h q** and **m h q q.** In the first NG above, the modifiers are **every** and **spiritual** while **arrow** constitutes the **h** and the **q** is **in my system**. In the second NG, **every** and **strange** are the modifiers, **altar** is the **h** while **in my life** is the **q**. In the first NG, the modifiers are formed through a determiner, an indefinite pronoun and a collocation. The prepositional headed adverbial group, **in my system** is the **q**. The first NG, from the point of view of shared cultural knowledge, shared religious knowledge and shared word knowledge, reveals Africans' strong belief in the potency of spiritual forces. The use of the word 'arrow,' an object which could pierce and ultimately kill. This word choice is used to incite the congregation towards the subject of the prayers. The same applies to the second NG, **every strange altar in my life**. **Every** and **strange** are the modifiers, the **h** is **altar** while **in my life** is the **q**. Considering the word choice and referents, shared religious and situation knowledge, the participants in the interaction, the pastor and the congregation, have a better understanding

of the need to engage the prayer points with the needed agility. **Altar** denotes a sacred place of worship. When used in the context of the prayer point, it connotes a demonic implantation in the life of an individual. The knowledge of the word makes meaning accessible in the interaction

m h q q

Any (m) power (h) attracting demon (q) in my life (q)

NG

m   **h**   **q**   **q**

any   **power**   **attracting demon**   **in my life**
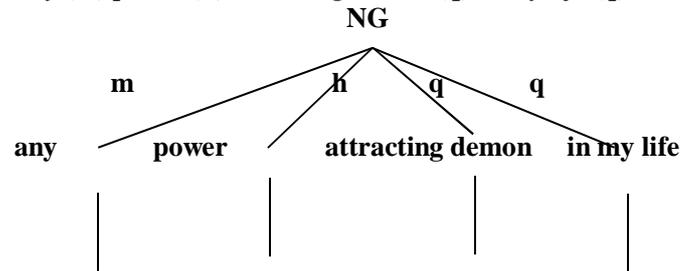
In the NG above, 'power' could be described with close attention to the Nigerian context. Using shared cultural knowledge (SCK) and shared situation knowledge (SSK), the concept of power is described in terms of evil forces which constitute an albatross for every African man. Such forces are targeted towards frustrating man's existence. The NG is laden with embedded prepositional headed adverbial group.

h q : As noted above, there were 11 occurrences of this form of nominal group in the data. Instances of these nominal groups include the following:

Powers of my father's house

NG

h   **q**

powers   **of my father's house**
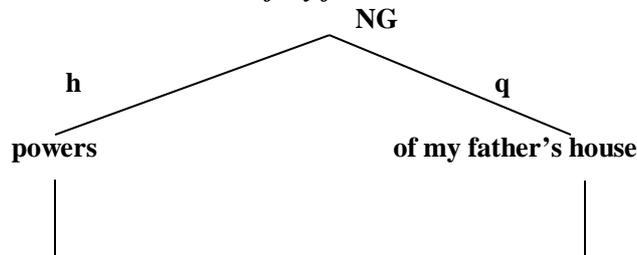
Poverty of my father's house

Since the paper is interested in the description of the head modification in the prayer points, it is imperative to describe the structure of the head in the NGs. In the first NG above, the head of the group is a noun, **power**, the qualifier is **of my father's house**. The post modifier element, **of my father's house** describes the source of the power. Meaning remains elusive until the NG is situated in context. Considering shared situation knowledge (SSK) and shared cultural knowledge (SCK), the group is better interpreted as barriers or blocks which usually take their source from one's father's lineage. It is believed in Africa that an individual's paternal home has a role to play in an individual's life. If an individual prospers, he or she must have been in harmony with the good spirits of his/her father's house. From the religious perspective, the *MFM* is noted for waging spiritual war against spiritual principalities. All these contextual variables tend to enhance mutual understanding and meaning between the Pastor and the congregation since the setting of the utterance is a church. In the second NG, **poverty of my father's house**, the obligatory element, (h) **poverty** is the head of the group while **of my father's house** is the qualifier or a post modifier. Using shared cultural knowledge (SCK), the NG describes the financial status of a typical African family. Poverty is deemed to be occasioned by forces from one's father's house. This explains why prayers of the *MFM* are usually directed toward settling issues with one's father's house. The significance of **father** in African society is also brought to the fore. A child is seen to be susceptible and controlled by forces majorly from his father's house. The word choices, references, referents, word knowledge and shared situation knowledge contribute to making meaning accessible.

9.1.1 Experiential Metafunction in the NGs
The linguistic metafunctions realised in the modifier are: Deictic, Numerative, Epithet and Classifier. The data revealed that 85 NGs are premodified. The frequency of the experiential function and their ordering in the NGs are shown below:
Deictic only ---*my head*— 13
Epithet only—*blood sucking demon*-- 21
Classifier only—*paternal curse*--16
Deictic plus Epithet plus Classifier--- *every strange marital battle*-- 32
Deictic
As seen above, the deictic has the function of identifying the subject of the noun, *Thing* in the NG. It indicates whether the subject is specific or non-specific. The data show that only 13 NGs are used as deictic. Examples are: My head
Every curse and covenant
My destiny
Every conspiracy etc.

Epithet

21 instances of epithets are seen in the data. The epithets were used to express some qualities of the *Thing* (a noun) described in those prayers. Examples are:

Blood-sucking demons

Evil arrows

Classifier

16 instances of classifiers occur in the data. Classifiers are adjectives used to describe the nouns in the *Thing* in the NGs. Classifier function in the data is realised by mainly adjectives and collocative words e.g.

Stubborn enemies

Destiny-destroying demons

Thing

Thing refers to the compulsory experiential element in the structure of an NG. It functions as the head in the group. In the data, there were only 15 instances of heads that are not premodified. *Things* are plain words that have some contextual colourations e.g. power, head, destiny, and finance, alter etc. The words are better understood in Nigeria context because they express contextual meaning.

Qualifier

This refers to the post modifier or element that follows the Thing. Its function is to describe or give other characteristics of *Thing*. The data revealed that 73 out of the 100 NGs are laden with embedded clauses and prepositional phrases. For example, **powers in my father's house**. In this NG, **powers** is the head while **in my father's house** is the qualifier, a prepositional headed adverbial group. Also, in the NG, **every arrow attracting demonic powers in my life**, the head of the NG is **arrow**, while the qualifier is **attracting demonic powers in my life**. The NGs in the data are embedded. The embedded groups serve some important functions. NGs are embedded to serve as a persuasive strategy in the prayers. The embedded NGs tend to crave the indulgence of the participants towards the subjects of the prayers. Awareness is created as to the manipulative influence of the demonic forces in the lives of the congregation. This, in turn, informs the responsiveness of the congregation towards the subject of the prayers. The embedded item tends to stimulate the congregation, and create emotional response in them during the course of the prayers.

9.1.2 Contextual Issues in the Prayers

This section is devoted to the contextual analysis of the issues addressed in the prayer points. The data are analysed with insights from shared situation knowledge, shared word knowledge, shared cultural knowledge, situational experiences, previous or immediate and shared religious knowledge. The prayers address financial, spiritual, demonic, social, health and environmental issues.

Table 2: Table showing the distribution of contextual issues in the prayer points

Contextual issues	Nominal items	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Financial	Powers seating on my wealth	16	16%
Spiritual	Every power of dullness in my spiritual life	21	21%
Demonic	Powers using my name and picture for evil purposes	32	32%
Health	Any ladder or pipe supplying evil current into my body	19	19%
Social/ Environmental	Marine alter in my environment	12	12%
		Total: 100	

Finance-related Prayers
In the data, 16 NGs are financial-related prayers. The prayer points address the financial problems of the congregation. Examples from the data are:
Every power seating on my wealth
Witchcraft alter raised against my prosperity
In the first NG above, the modifier is **every**, the head is **power** while the q is **seating on my wealth.** The prayer is said to wage war against financial wasters. The power referred to in this context could be linked to shared sociocultural meaning of the word power in African cultural belief system. Powers are forces responsible for terminating an individual's prosperity and such powers are out to frustrate man's level of productivity. The pastor and congregation who are participants in the discourse recognise the significance of the word, **power** in the context of its use. This recognition, coupled with the fact that it is a church where yokes are broken, the participants are poised to achieve the goal of the discourse, which is, being delivered from demonic influence. The same applies to the second NG. Witchcraft is believed to be an agent of darkness in African culture. The use of the word, **altar** denotes a shrine of worship built by these evil forces to propagate their diabolic acts.

Such alters could be raised against an individual's prosperity. The use of the collocation, **evil altar** reveals the sociocultural contents of the prayers.

Spiritual-related Prayers

Examples of spiritual-related prayers from the data are:
Every power of dullness in my spiritual life
Fire of revival
These prayers are said to resuscitate the spiritual strength of the congregation. Since emphasis is on spiritual life in *MFM*, the prayers are directed to purge the spiritual lives of the congregation. Data revealed that 21 NGs are spiritual-related. In the first NG, every(m) power(h) of dullness in my life(q), the word choice **power** and **dullness** are two key words that could be interpreted with insights from context. **Power**, in this context, is not concerned with the ability to work, but an institution of the enemy. Using shared cultural knowledge, the word is meant to steer the congregation to become aggressive in the course of their prayers. The word, **spiritual** also brings into question the spiritual sanctity of the congregation. They are challenged to purify themselves and identify with the basic tenets of Christianity which is holiness within and without. The word, **dullness** also borrows from shared word knowledge. To be dull means to be inactive or boring. Considering the fact that the congregation has access to the meaning of the word choice, meaning is made accessible. In the second NG, **fire of revival**, using shared word knowledge and shared religious knowledge, the word, **fire**, burns. It is filled with Holy Spirit in the context of Christian religion. Also, the word, **revival**, is a spiritual activity meant to change Christians and put them on their toes. This is in consonance with the mission of *MFM*, a Ministry that upholds the power in the fire of God which results into manifestation of apostolic signs.

Demon-related Prayers

Powers using my name and picture for evil purposes
Every satanic network attracting backwardness in my life
Using shared cultural knowledge, shared word knowledge and shared religious knowledge, the prayers are said to demonstrate the mission of the *MFM*. The Ministry is basically devoted to deliverance. It focuses on the need to destroy demonic activities. In the data, 32 NGs are devoted to demonic issues. The two NGs above, the first harps on the issue of power as raised in the previous prayer points. Apart from the use of word, **power**, certain issues which could be understood by virtue of the pastor and the congregations' contextual word knowledge, cultural and religious knowledge are brought to the fore. In African culture, it is believed that one's name and picture could be used for demonic purposes without the physical presence of the person in question. So, name and picture could attract evil purposes. Having this in mind, the participants in the

discourse are conscious of the significance of the pronouncement of such prayers. In the second NG, every(m) satanic(m) network(h) attracting backwardness(q) in my life(q), the word, **satanic** underscores the activities of the demon and **network**, based on the word choice, connotes the overbearing influence of the demonic forces at controlling and attracting demonic support from different sources to attack one's destiny. This presupposes the fact that these evils forces have gone virile and proactive in their quest in frustrating destinies. There is the use of the collocation and internet based term to describe how satanic forces creep into a person's life.

Health-related Prayers
Any ladder or pipe supplying evil current into my body
Witchcraft sponsored infirmity
19 NGs are health-related in the data. The above NGs are instances of health-related prayers. The prayers are meant to purge the physical system of the congregation. Using shared word knowledge and shared referent knowledge, the use of the word, **ladder** or **pipe**, the headword in the NG describes how spiritual forces wage war against health of individuals. The choice of **pipe** denotes a channel that has a hollow passage through which liquid or air flows. The referent presupposes a connection between two objects. One of the objects tends to gain strength from the other. The use of **current**, an electrical term, in the qualifier, denotes the nature of strength received through the pipe or ladder. A ladder is an object through which one ascends a hill top. These words are used to describe the process involved in the transmission of evil forces. Meaning is easily accessed in these NGs with the aid of the shared knowledge of word choice and shared knowledge of referent. The second NG, **witchcraft sponsored infirmity,** the prayer refers to a kind of health challenge occasioned by the activities of witches. The use of the word, **witchcraft**, and **infirmity** presupposes a connection between the two words. The latter is caused by the former. Infirmity is a state of physical or health disability. With recourse to the participants' knowledge of the word choice, the subject of the prayers is rigorously pursued in the course of the prayers.

Social or Environmental-related Prayers
Marine alter in my environment
All the agreement made between the people in my environment and satan
Prayers are also said to fight environmental forces. The data reveal that 12 NGs are prayers are devoted to the forces of the environment. Instances of the NGs are seen above. In the first NG, shared word knowledge comes into play to facilitate meaning between the participants in the discourse. The use of **marine**,- water influence or powers from the water and **alter** denotes water as the source of water manipulating the environment . The modifier is **marine**,

alter (h) and **in my environment** (q).The NG describes the existence of the marine power in the environment. Participants' knowledge of the word choice facilitates meaning in the prayers. In the second NG, all (m) the (m) agreements (h) made between the people in my environment and satan (q), there is the use of shared word choice and shared cultural knowledge to enhance meaning. The word choice in the NG, **agreement, the people in my environment and satan** are indications of the shared beliefs. **Agreement** denotes a form of mutual understanding between two social actors, the people in my environment and satan. Satan is an evil agent that takes joy in destructive activities. It is believed in Africa that no matter how close a person is to one, that does not mean the person cannot wage spiritual war against one. One's relations, friends, and neighbours are some of the perceived sources of spiritual problems. This mutual agreement constitutes problem which haunts an individual's life.

10. Conclusion

This paper has characterised and described the contextual beliefs in the English nominal group in the prayer points of D.K Olukoya of the *MFM*. Using Odebunmi's model of Mutual Contextual Beliefs, the study unpacks the nominal structures and contextual variables in the data. Prayer points of the MFM are laden with diverse sociocultural variables of the African society. The context-inclined nature of the prayer points tends to facilitate meaning among the participants in the interaction. In tandem with the objectives of the study, this paper has engaged a structural investigation of the NGs in the prayers of the *MFM*. The most frequent of all was the **m h q**. The NGs are laden with embedded phrases and clauses. Mutual contextual variables such as Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK), Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK), shared word knowledge, reference and referents facilitate meaning among the participants in the discourse. The prayers' reflection of the sociocultural colouration in the African environment is in tandem with the mission and vision of the *MFM*.

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