

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Stacey H. Horne for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on June 7, 2022.

Title: Black Sermonology and Gospel Music: A Corpus Based Study

Abstract Approved: _____
Cass Dykeman

Individuals from marginalized communities often have difficulty finding and engaging with mental health clinicians who understand and appreciate them, their culture, and the historical struggles of being a part of an American subculture. Establishing a clinical relationship with mutual trust and respect between a client and clinician is a vital component that scaffolds a client's growth as they explore new constructs, and challenge their long-held beliefs. This manuscript-style dissertation contains two empirical research studies. The first study examines word use differences (i.e., keyness) and associations (i.e., collocations) that distinguish how Black protestant pastors craft sermons to meet the needs of their congregants from White protestant pastors' sermonology. Keyness was assessed by means of the log-likelihood ratio test (G^2) and collocations using Mutual Information cubed (MI3). These statistical analyses were completed using the R package Quanteda (Benoit et al., 2018). The word that most distinguished the Black pastor's sermons from the White pastors sermons was the word "Black". This study also explored the word networks around the words "black", "free", and "power". Limitations and implications for further research and clinical practice are discussed. The second study explored how Gospel music lyrics are utilized to build a connection between the performer and the listener. This study employed the same methodology and statistical analyses as the first study. There were eight words that were closely associated with the words "power" and "free".

Limitations and implications for research and clinical practice were reviewed. Both research studies increase cultural competence for clinicians in accordance with the 2016 CACREP standards, specifically standard 2.F.2.g which speaks to the impact of spiritual beliefs on the worldviews of clients as well as mental health clinicians (CACREP, 2016). The combined research studies were pursued with this CACREP standard in mind.

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Black Sermonology and Gospel Music: A Corpus Based Study

by

Stacey H. Horne

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Counseling

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University Libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Stacey H. Horne, Author

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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Dr. Cass Dykeman assisted with the methodology and research design of this study. Kwame Kankam provided statistical analysis for manuscripts 1 and 2.

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Chapter 1: A General Introduction

Overview

Spirituality is an important component in the lives of many Black Americans. Black American life has spirituality woven into multiple aspects. From what clothes to wear, what words to use when creating a dialogue with others, which television shows to watch, which jobs to pursue, how to treat those who harness similar and different belief systems, to seeking and maintaining personal relationships. Spirituality permeates these decision-making processes and challenges individuals to make appropriate but difficult decisions. A spiritual lifestyle is an ever-evolving, ever-deepening component of the Black experience in America. It is a profoundly personal and private lifestyle yet communal because spirituality challenges individuals to live a holistic life while also involving themselves with the well-being of the community. Spirituality provides a sense of structure and assists individuals with organizing their world and navigating the complexities of life (Fields, 2015). Proficient mental health clinicians are encouraged to understand the spiritual beliefs of their clients and how those spiritual beliefs impact the clients' worldview (CACREP, 2016).

Mental health clinicians continually seek to understand why their clients seek mental health treatment. Specifically, clinicians and clients benefit from engagement when the clinician understands why individuals from Black communities traditionally seek mental health via their pastors rather than with mental health clinicians (Mathews & Hughes, 2001, as cited in Hardy, 2012) and how clinicians might begin to bridge the gap between the spiritual and the clinical. Historically, the church in Black communities (the Black church) has been a place of worship and refuge (Swain, 2008), particularly during the "Jim Crow" era of the late 19th century. The church has also been and remains a resource for disseminating information to improve the physical and mental health of individuals in the community (Butler-Ajibade et al., 2012).

Additionally, mental health clinicians should recognize the stigma surrounding mental health therapies (Williams et al., 2010) in Black communities. Continued maltreatment in clinical settings is another reason individuals within the Black communities often forgo seeking clinical services from mental health clinicians and opt to seek care from their pastor or the church. It would behoove mental health clinicians to work to incorporate this knowledge into their sessions with Black Americans who align with spiritual doctrines as a means of rapport building. Understanding how Black pastors establish emotional connections with their congregants would provide White mental health clinicians with insight into working with Black clients who practice spirituality.

Black sermonology deals with how Black Protestant pastors create their sermons. The sermons of Black Protestant pastors interpret Biblical scriptures and the actions of God amid multiple forms of oppression (Fields, 2015). It is commonplace for Black Protestant pastors to utilize words and phrases, often with repetition, to connect with their congregations. Call and response and utilizing words incorporated with rhythmic patterns are common among Black Protestant pastors as they deliver their sermon. Also, storytelling (Britt, 2011) and providing information regarding their own lives allows Black Protestant pastors to connect with their congregants. Additionally, research has demonstrated that the language individuals use is typically a result of socialization within their community (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014). Therefore, the language that Black clients use during the course of a clinician session is likely the language they use in church, but also in their community, and is a part of their daily vernacular. Becoming familiar and comfortable with the language of clients should be paramount to the culturally competent clinician. Perhaps mental health clinicians can keep this information in mind when engaging in rapport building and providing support and safety for Black clients.

In the context of the Black church, the delivery of the sermons and the songs were born in Africa where music was woven into religious worship (Lincoln et al., 1998). The commingling of the preached word and musical worship in the Black Church continues to be a commonality that can be viewed as what God might sound like being present in the form of sound (Shelley, 2020).

Relationship of Dissertation Topic to CACREP Standards

The 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standard 2.2.g describes the necessary components mental health clinicians must achieve to be considered culturally competent. Specifically, clinicians should understand the role that a client's spiritual beliefs might play in developing and maintaining the client's worldview. Environment and experiences shape an individual's worldview and are the lenses through which the world is viewed. Therefore, it is incumbent upon mental health clinicians to understand their client's worldview to establish and maintain effective rapport. It is important for mental health clinicians to maintain an undying curiosity about their clients and clarify what is valuable to them. Maintaining curiosity regarding clients ensures that the client feels they are important and worthwhile and that the clinician is genuinely interested in their lives and wellbeing. Building solid relationships with clients allows clients to feel safe sharing all of themselves with clinicians and allows the clients the freedom to take chances to move their lives forward with the assistance of a capable clinician.

Description of Manuscript 1

Chapter 2 consists of a corpus-based study of Black sermonology, explicitly addressing the way in which Black Protestant pastors use linguistics to build connections (rapport) with their congregants. This research was born from the idea that when mental health clinicians become

familiar with church (liturgical) language, trepidation regarding engagement with clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle or present with spiritual challenges would be minimized.

The increase in Black Americans seeking to address their mental health issues demands that mental health clinicians be well-versed in engaging in meaningful dialogue with Black Americans. One component of engaging in meaningful dialogue is understanding why Black Americans have historically been reluctant to seek assistance outside of the church. By understanding that individuals of color have not been welcomed or accurately diagnosed by White mental health clinicians, it stands to reason that Black Americans would prefer to have their emotional/mental health needs met by their pastor rather than by mental health clinicians. Another reason Black Americans might choose to engage in mental health dialogue with their pastors is feeling disconnected from mental health clinicians who shy away from spiritual matters due to the obvious discomfort of the clinician to address the issue of spirituality for reasons the client may be unaware of. Although the client may be unaware of the reasons for the clinicians reluctance to address matters of spiritual, the client may be able to sense the uneasiness of the counselor.

Upon exploring the research of Black sermonology, five topics emerged. These topics were: (a) key definitions, (b) Black pastor sermonology within a Protestant tradition, (c) White pastor sermonology within a Protestant tradition, (d) what is known about word networks within sermons, and (e) what is known about the use of the words “power” and “free” in the Black American experience.

To better understand how Black Protestant pastors utilize words to connect with their congregants, chapter 2 utilized a corpus linguistic design to answer four research questions centered on the sociolinguistic process utilized by pastors.

The research questions were:

RQ1: Within the Protestant tradition, what words distinguish Black pastors' sermons from White pastors' sermons?

RQ2: What is the word network around the word that most distinguished Black Protestant pastors' sermons from White Protestant pastors' sermons?

RQ3: Within Black Protestant pastors' sermons, what is the word network around the word "power"?

RQ4: Within Black Protestant pastors' sermons, what is the word network around the word "free"?

The four variables utilized were word keyness, word collocation, node word, and race.

The level of measure was continuous for keyness and collocation and nominal for node word and race. For research question one, the statistical measure utilized to determine statistical significance was log-likelihood ratio test (G^2), and log ratio (LR) was used to determine effect size. Alpha was set at .001. For RQs 2-4, the measurement statistic was mutual information cubed (MI^3). MI^3 was utilized to increase the weight of observations and provide higher scores to frequently occurring collocations (Brezina et al., 2015). The greater the MI value statistic, the greater the likelihood that a collocation of words exists (Metin et al., 2014). The minimum collocation frequency was set at 5, and the minimum statistic value was 9.0.

An appropriate journal for submission for this manuscript is *Counseling and Values: Spirituality, Ethics, and Religion in Counseling* (CVJ). The journal emphasizes theory, research, and practice on the intersectionality of religion, spirituality, and ethics in counseling. Specifically, the journal focuses on integrating religion and spirituality into counseling in an ethical manner. In recent years, the journal has published several articles with content similar to

the information offered in this manuscript. In 2021, the journal published an article entitled “Community-Based Participatory Research With Black Churches” (Avent-Harris, 2021). The author researched help-seeking behaviors of Black Americans and the role that the culture of the Black Church plays in the lives of Black Americans. Another article published by *CVJ* is “Understanding and Incorporating God Representations Within Counseling” (Bayne et al., 2019). This article affirmed the concept that a client’s spiritual identity is relevant to the counseling process, so counselors should grow to feel comfortable integrating these components into therapeutic treatment. A complete list of all sermons included in this corpus-based research are on the project’s research page at <https://osf.io/fk8vq>.

Description of Manuscript 2

The second manuscript is a keyness and collocation study designed to invoke discourse around how clinicians might utilize church music lyrics to connect with their Black clients who are listeners of this genre. Church music often plays a significant role in the lives of Black individuals who actively engage in spiritual practices. Music is an integral part of most church services because music also plays a role in affirming identities, maintaining community, and regulating moods (Lonsdale et al., 2011). Music is often selected based on the lyrics' imagery during sacred services. This research considers what lyrics might resonate with Black Gospel music listeners because music can be a powerful medium for describing feelings, creating a visual image, and providing listeners with a space to feel connected to other listeners of the same music.

For this study, music lyrics were gathered according to genre (Gospel music and Christian music charts were utilized). One-hundred and twenty-five Gospel songs were utilized in this study, and 125 Christian songs were also utilized.

The four research questions informing this study were:

RQ1: What words distinguish Black contemporary Gospel lyrics from White contemporary Christian lyrics?

RQ2: What is the word network around the word that most distinguishes Black contemporary Gospel lyrics from White contemporary Christian lyrics?

RQ3: What is the word network around the word “power” in Black contemporary Gospel lyrics?

RQ4: What is the word network around the word “free” in Black contemporary Gospel lyrics?

For RQ1, a word cloud was generated visualizing words that appeared at least 100 times. Log-likelihood ratio test (G^2) was the statistical analysis tool, and the keyness statistic threshold was established at $p < .001$. For RQs 2-4, this study utilized mutual information cubed (MI^3) as set forth by Daille (1994).

An appropriate journal for this research is the *Journal of Media and Religion (JMR)*. This journal is peer-reviewed and publishes research that aligns with this research study. The journal publishes research centering on religious traditions from multiple aspects (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Eastern religious philosophies, and new/alternative religious movements). A recent article published in *JMR* is “Brother ‘Killer’ Kane: Resistance, Identification, and the Intersection of Rock Music and Religious Values in New York Doll” (Church, 2019). The author researched the cultural processes of identity development, oppression, and resistance. These concepts are woven into the worldview of individuals who align themselves with spirituality and may want to address these specific challenges during clinical sessions. Another article published by *JMR* is “From Where We Stand: Exploring Christian Listeners’ Social

Location and Christian Music Listening” (Williams et al., 2013). Their article examined how social location impacts the musical selection of racialized Christian music (i.e., contemporary Christian music and Gospel music).

A complete list of all song lyrics included in this corpus-based research are on the project’s research page at <https://osf.io/fk8vq>.

Glossary of Terms

Black sermonology: Black sermonology is the study of how black pastors create their sermons.

Christian Music: Christian Music refers to church music marketed to White listeners based on the musical preferences.

Church music: Church music is a broad category of music with subcategories of Gospel music and Christian music.

Collocation: Collocation is a pattern of words being in proximity to one another to the degree that it is not by chance.

Corpus/corpora: A corpus is a compilation of examples of language.

Corpus linguistics: Corpus linguistics is the study of language using computer-based analyses to study text appearing in natural settings

Eisegesis: Eisegesis is the process of interpreting biblical text from a subjective perspective.

Exegesis: Exegesis is the process of interpreting biblical text in the proper context.

Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics is the process of interpreting biblical text. It is the broad topic of biblical interpretation with subtopics of eisegesis and exegesis.

Gospel music: Gospel music is church music marketed to the Black church based on musical preference.

Keyness: Keyness refers to the frequency of a word appearing in a study corpus rather than a reference corpus.

Lexical pattern: Lexical pattern refers to where the words are in the text.

Liturgical language: Liturgical language is religious worship language used to describe or express religious thoughts, beliefs, or experiences.

Log-likelihood: Log-likelihood is a measure of statistical significance and determines how much evidence there is for a difference between two corpora.

Log ratio: Log ratio is an effect size statistic that represents how significant a difference is between two corpora concerning a specific keyword (Hardie, 2014)

Lyric: A lyric is a word of personal expression typically set to music.

Music: Music is an art form that can be written, recorded, distributed, and critiqued.

Mutual information: Mutual information distinguishes words with commonality by reducing uncertainty regarding their relationships. The larger the MI score, the more the uncertainty has been reduced.

Node word: A node word is a word or phrase the researcher is studying.

Sermon: A sermon is spoken words of an individual from a pulpit. Sermons typically contain a scriptural foundation upon which the pastor or speaker provides background.

Stop words: Stop words are common words that do not add to the meaning of a sentence. Common stop words are “the” and “a.”

Token: A token is a word in a text.

Thematic Linkage of Manuscript 1 and Manuscript 2

Both manuscripts presented are geared toward providing White clinicians with tools to connect with their Black clientele. The first manuscript centers around how Black Protestant pastors craft their sermons using specific words to build emotional connections with their congregants, while the second manuscript centers on how music is used during sacred services to connect with congregants. The thought is that understanding the dynamics at play in the lives of Black clients might shed light on how to engage Black clients in the therapeutic process. Additionally, both manuscripts serve to increase clinicians' cultural competence according to the 2016 CACREP standards by challenging clinicians to understand the worldview of their Black clientele and understand what role their worldview plays in their daily lives. Lastly, both manuscripts assist with increasing the cultural competence of mental health clinicians according to the 2016 CACREP standards.

Organization of Manuscript and Guide to the Reader

This dissertation consists of four chapters and is organized as follows. The first chapter is an overview of two research studies, a glossary of terms, and thematic linkage between the two manuscripts. The second chapter analyzes Black sermonology using the data analysis package R and quanteda. The third chapter provides the same organization as chapter two, but centers on music lyrics related to church music. Finally, the fourth chapter includes the results of both studies along with a discussion of the dissertation. A bibliography and appendices are included at the end of the dissertation.

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Chapter 2: A Research Manuscript


Black Sermonology: A Corpus Based Study

Stacey Horne¹ and Cass Dykeman¹

¹Oregon State University

Author Note

Stacey Horne  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0134-0173>

Cass Dykeman  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7708-1409>

The manuscript was prepared as part of the first author's dissertation. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Stacey Horne. Email: hornesta@oregonstate.edu.

Abstract

This research explored the sociolinguistic processes of Black pastors as they craft their sermons for purposes of establishing emotional and spiritual connections with their congregants. The objective of this research was to familiarize mental health clinicians with specific language that appeals to their Black clients in hopes that incorporating this language during clinical sessions would allow Black clients to feel comfortable and accepted. This keyness (i.e., word usage differences) and collocation (i.e., word relationships) study found that the word that distinguishes Black protestant pastors' sermons from White protestant pastors' sermons is "Black." This indicates that race is not a topic that Black pastors and their congregations shy away from, but readily speak about what it means to be Black and what the Black experience is in America. This study also explored the word networks (collocates) around the words "Black," "free," and "power." Limitations and implications for further research and clinical practice are discussed.

Keywords: Black Americans, sermonology, collocation, keyness, corpus linguistics, multicultural, spirituality

Black Pastor Sermonology: Implications for Professional Counselors

The preaching tradition that these early clergy fashioned would have profound impact on King's moral and ethical vision. They linked the vision of Jesus Christ as stated in the Bible of bringing good news to the poor, recovery of sight to the blind and proclaiming liberty to the captives, with the Hebrew prophet's mandate of speaking truth to power.

*Kenyatta R. Gilbert (2020)
Professor of Homiletics
Howard University School of Divinity*

Individuals from the Black community often have difficulty finding mental health clinicians who understand and appreciate them, their culture, and the historical struggles of being Black that continue to present themselves in contemporary America. Mutual trust and respect are vital components that facilitate positive relationships between a clinician and a client. However, finding connection points between clinicians who may be from the dominant culture and Black clients from marginalized cultures has proven challenging. An understanding of Black pastor sermonology offers clinicians a rich connection to the Black experience and worldview.

The rationale for the present research was twofold. First, while both the popular and academic literature expound on the importance of Black pastor sermonology, there exists little information on the specific linguistic features of this genre and the worldview it conveys. The current study's aim was to help fill this gap in knowledge. Second, the present study holds the potential to disrupt current clinical practices in counseling by providing insight into how mental health counselors can utilize linguistics to connect with their clients from the Black community to build rapport and gain trust. As individuals in the Black community seek assistance with a myriad of mental health challenges, finding clinicians who establish appropriate rapport by utilizing words and word phrases that hold meaning to individuals from the Black community is

essential to building trust. Understanding what words hold significance and weaving those words throughout the clinical sessions will provide White and non-White mental health clinicians with invaluable tools to establish meaningful connections with their Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle.

Although this study is grounded in quantitative research, the practicality for mental health counselors can be translated from quantitative to application by grasping the significance of the number of times and the context in which the words are used. Rosen and Skriver's (2015) research validates that social networks based on religion can inform linguistic behavior. Therefore, the linguistic patterns of individuals who spend significant amounts of time in religious services will carry over into secular domains of their lives. The aim of this research was to familiarize clinicians with some common liturgical node words and word collocations that Black Protestant pastors might utilize during sermons. Clinicians may begin to utilize these words within their clinical sessions to build rapport with their Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle. Additionally, if their Black clients introduce liturgical language during a session, the clinician may feel capable and comfortable continuing clinical sessions because the clinician is familiar with the language and the culture from whence it arises.

In an examination of the literature of Black pastor sermonology, five topics emerged. These topics were: (a) key definitions, (b) Black pastor sermonology within a Protestant tradition, (c) White pastor sermonology within a Protestant tradition, (d) what is known about word networks within sermons, and what is known about the use of the words "power" and "free" in the Black American experience. After these topics are discussed, the research questions will be detailed.

Certain key terms are critical to understanding research related to sermons and sermonology. First, we examined what a sermon is and why they are important to study. According to Gibbs (1947), the term *sermon* is a Latin term meaning “a stab” or “thrust” (p. 159). This definition fits with the purpose of the sermon, which is to pierce the listener with the word of God which is also known as the “sword of the Spirit.” (Eph. 6:17). Onions (1996) described a sermon as the spoken words of an individual from a pulpit. Sermons typically contain a scriptural foundation upon which the pastor or speaker will provide background information, interpret the text, and provide relevant insight that brings the biblical text to life in current terms the congregants understand (Robinson, 2014). The pastor or speaker may utilize personal life experiences to prove a point or highlight a particular theme (Martin, 2017). The structure of a typical protestant sermon flows as such: (1) opening, (2) scripture reading, (3) main points (containing the exegetical analysis which is the true and original explanation of the text as it was written), (4) hermeneutics (the interpretation and application of the text), and (5) conclusion (Robinson, 2014). The sermon is crafted to connect with the audience/congregation to which it is being delivered, according to Bell (1997). Pastors often use specific words and phrases to connect with the congregation as they teach the congregation about a specific principle found within the text. The principles found in the text may persuade congregants to increase faith and withstand challenges, or simply believe the doctrine being presented (Hogan, 2013). Although words are powerful tools used to engage the congregation, liturgical language (religious worship language) is different from spoken language used outside of the church.

The term *Protestant* is a key term in understanding the breadth of this research. For purposes of this research, Protestant is utilized in its broadest sense. The Protestant Reformation began when a German Monk (Martin Luther) nailed 95 propositions to the church door in

Germany. Luther was hoping to reform the Catholic Church with his belief that religious authority emanates from the Bible rather than the popes and bishops. Luther opposed the Catholic Church selling salvation by demanding family members pay for their loved ones to be blessed in the afterlife. Luther believed that salvation cannot be bought or paid for because it is a gift (Bishop, n.d.). Today, Lutheran churches make up a part of the Protestant movement along with Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterian, and Episcopal churches.

Thompson (2003) explained liturgical language as wording used to describe or express religious thoughts, beliefs, or experiences. Liturgical language is specific to the church as a whole although there are some differences as it relates to words chosen by the pastor/speaker. Several studies have confirmed the significance of language in the context of religion and the expansive role language plays in creating images and thoughts. Congregants often use liturgical language outside of the church settings to convey a thought or concept linked to spirituality. For counselors and others in the helping professions, it is useful to become familiar with liturgical language and to utilize it when creating dialogue with individuals who may frequently engage in spiritual practices.

Another term that should be explored for purposes of this research is *hermeneutics*. Hermeneutics deals with interpretation of biblical text. Once a pastor has chosen a specific text to work with, the next step is to study and understand the context in which the text was written. The pastor will also determine the point in chronological time the text was written, who the text was written to, and why the text was written to that specific group. Interpretations can be viewed through exegesis or eisegesis lenses. Exegesis concerns the original meaning of the text. It involves pure inductive reasoning (Wright, 1937). In contrast, eisegesis represents a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning with the primary goal of the edification of a congregation

(Wright, 1937). Protestant pastors are free to craft their sermons in the manner they believe will best meet the needs of their congregation. In order to get some sense of Black Protestant pastors' unique approach to sermons, their sermons were compared to those of White Protestant pastors.

Black sermonology depicts the method in which Black pastors craft their sermons so that the sermons are meaningful and impactful to their congregations. Black sermonology was born out of Black theology, which was created to address the indifference churches of the dominant culture felt and demonstrated in meeting the spiritual needs of people of color. Among individuals of color, the churches of the dominant culture were colonial and content to minister only to the needs of the dominant culture. The needs of individuals of color were prolific enough that Black pastors needed to find an appropriate method of connecting with their congregations. They also needed to create an avenue that specifically addressed their spiritual needs by integrating their traditional religion of their original heritage into the religion given to them by individuals of the dominant culture.

Traditionally, Blacks and individuals from the African diaspora placed great emphasis on passing down their rich, textured history using an oral tradition (Edwards & Seinkewicz, 1991). Bearing this in mind, traditional Black pastors may not initially write their sermons (Wharry, 2003), but the sermon may have an extemporaneous bend. Black pastors also tend to include the congregation in the sermon in the form of "call and response" (Smitherman, 1977). Call and response is the pastor's method of soliciting feedback from congregants regarding what has been preached. Call and response are invoked when the pastor and congregations choose to participate in the sermon in the context of a dialogue, rather than the pastor simply performing a monologue. Including the congregation within sermon performance creates unity between the pastor and the

congregation. This is the central reason pastors choose specific words and phrases to utilize when crafting their sermons.

Davis (1987) provided a framework for Black sermon performance. Davis explained the five major components of traditional Black sermons:

1. Preacher explains the sermon was inspired by God
2. Preacher provides the theme and a scripture to support the theme;
3. Preacher interprets the text (hermeneutics)
 - a. As a part of the hermeneutical process the preacher discusses the text in its originality (exegesis)
 - b. The preacher may also include their own thoughts and interpretations of the text (eisegesis)
4. Pieces of the sermon are dissected to locate specific points and are supported with additional texts
5. Conclusion

The structure of the sermons of Black Protestant pastors and White Protestant pastors was found to be the same as far as the hermeneutical sermon-crafting is concerned.

Like Black Protestant sermonology, White Protestant sermonology also begins with a hermeneutical process (Warnke, 2016). However, one difference between the two groups may lie in the eisegesis phase of sermon development. One method of eisegesis utilized among White Protestant pastors is the hermeneutic circle. Warnke (2016) noted that Schleiermacher described the hermeneutic circle wherein the reader's subjective understanding of the whole is individualized and understood in the context of the reader's subjective understanding of the individual parts in reference to the whole. Schleiermacher held that parts cannot be understood

without the whole, and the whole cannot be understood without the parts. The understanding is circular because to understand the parts, the whole must be understood. According to Gadamer (1976), because the reader is always in the hermeneutic circle, there is no specific entrance or exit points by which the reader can enter the circle.

Both Black and White Protestant pastors in the U.S. have used words to connect with their congregations. However, the usage and selection of words has changed over the past four decades (Malmstrom, 2016). Where sermons formerly utilized words of certainty and absolutes (Craddock, 2001) spoken to congregations, sermons now are commonly known as “New Homiletic” where the pastor speaks along with the congregation (Allen, 2010), which aligns with the call and response described earlier. Additionally, sermons are no longer strictly formulated using biblical hermeneutics. Sermons now incorporate congregation-centered hermeneutics to engage the congregation (Malmstrom, 2016). Since this research has shown that the sermonology of both groups is similar, perhaps there are differences in how the two groups perform the eisegesis piece of the hermeneutical process. It is well established that worldview is shaped by personal history (Ratts et al., 2014) as well as the specific heritage and culture. Perhaps the two groups of pastors interpret the scriptures differently based on their worldviews and the worldviews of their congregation. This research captures the significance of two specific words in the context of the Black experience in America.

The words “power” and “free” hold specific meanings in the Black American experience. Power in the Black community often references a movement of the 1960s, which sociopolitical activist Stokely Carmichael coined the “Black Power Movement” in 1966. To date, there is no standardized definition of what Black power is or what it means. However, according to Black liberation theologian Cone (1989), Black power is the complete “emancipation of Black people

from oppression by whatever means Black people deem necessary” (p. 6). Cone also explained that Black power means Black freedom and Black self-determination where Black people view themselves as human beings with the ability to create their destiny. Lutheran Protestant theologian Tillich (2000) believed Black power is affirming one’s being despite societal elements conflicting with one’s essential self-affirmation. It could be noted that Black power is the belief that Black people have inherent worth—not bestowed upon them by other groups who believe they are fit to confer worth onto others, but the inherent worth all individuals are born with and that is provided by God. A review of the literature surrounding what freedom means to Black people in America reveals what freedom looks like in the context of the Black experience in America. Fields (2001) explained that the Black experience involves finding reasons to promote the African diaspora's culture, values, and people within a society that promotes the destruction of cultures, values, and peoples outside of the dominant culture.

Foner (1994) wrote that freedom has been an essential, core construct for some groups and a spiteful game for other groups. Freedom has been the catalyst for wars and the content of songs. While one group may believe their freedom is essential, that group may not feel that the freedom of other groups is necessary or even desirable. During the antebellum era, Frances Scott Key penned the “Star-Spangled Banner” in 1814 proclaiming America as the “land of the free” while enslaved individuals in America experienced no such freedom (Key, 1814/1943). The word “free” has no agreed-upon definition because the definition is perpetually regenerated to convey contemporary convictions of the wordsmiths of the day. “Free” for this research was considered in the context of freedom of Black people and how pastors might use the word to connect with their congregants.

Given the aforementioned, four research questions were developed to guide this study.

These questions were:

RQ1: Within the Protestant tradition, what words distinguish Black pastors' sermons from White pastors' sermons?

RQ2: What is the word network around the word that most distinguished Black Protestant pastors' sermons from White Protestant pastors' sermons?

RQ3: Within Black Protestant pastors' sermons, what is the word network around the word "power"?

RQ4: Within Black Protestant pastors' sermons, what is the word network around the word "free"?

Method

Design

This research study utilized a corpus linguistic design (Brezina, 2018; Weisser, 2017). There were four variables in this study: word differences (keyness), word associations (collocation), node word (word being studied), and race (White/Black). The level of measure for keyness and collocation was continuous. For node word and race the level of measure was nominal. The unit of analysis was tokens (words). To determine the sample size required, a power analysis using G*Power 3.1 was completed. Since the planned analyses involved comparing proportions, this power analysis was for a chi-square, and the requisite Cohen's w was drawn from the average of this statistic that appeared in a recent article on moral reasoning and behavior (Kupfer & Giner-Sorolla, 2020). The input parameters were: (a) test family – χ^2 tests; (b) statistical test – goodness-of-fit tests: contingency tables; (c) type of power analysis – a priori: compute required sample size – given α , power, and effect size; (d) $w = 0.69$; (e) power

($1-\beta$ error probability) = 0.90; (f) $\alpha = .001$; and (g) degrees of freedom (Df) = 1. The output suggested a sample size of 44 with an actual power of 0.90.

Study Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was spoken texts, and the subregister was sermons. The scope was 147 sermons composed by Black Protestant pastors, and the sermons totaled 344,500 tokens (words). One of the parameters for the sermons was the sermons needed to be between 1990 and 2020. [PreachingToday.com](https://www.preachingtoday.com) and [SermonCentral.com](https://www.sermoncentral.com) provided the sermons contained in the corpora. These two websites were chosen due to the vast number of available sermons that meet the criteria of this research and the minimal cost factor associated with obtaining the sermons. A complete list of the sermons included in this corpus can be viewed on the project's research page (<https://osf.io/fk8vq>).

Preprocessing

To improve the accuracy of the research, spelling of the texts were normalized. However, care was taken to ensure continuity of thought and that context was not jeopardized (e.g., the word “fres” was changed to “fires”) in several places. Wording affiliated with the logos of the sermon websites was also removed.

Reference Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was spoken texts, and the subregister was sermons. The scope was 146 Protestant sermons composed by White pastors. One of the parameters for the sermons was they needed to be between 1990 and 2020. However, the sermons collected dated back only as far as 2000. The lack of earlier dates is likely due to the websites not being established until more

recent dates. PreachingToday.com and SermonCentral.com provided the websites contained in the corpora. Websites were chosen based on the vast offerings of available sermons that meet the needs of this research and the minimal cost factor associated with obtaining the sermons.

Preprocessing

Preprocessing was the same as for the target corpus.

Measures

Node Word

The node is a word or phrase a researcher is interested in studying. Nodes are examined in the context of how often they appear in a text (frequency) and their lexical pattern (placement).

Keyness

Keyness is the frequency with which a word appears in a study corpus rather than in a reference corpus. Keyness may lead the researcher and reader to a central theme the pastor may have been conveying. This information explains how a discourse can be facilitated and how the conversation may be different from another. For the purposes of this study, types of keyness are reported.

Positive Keyness. Positive keywords have frequencies that are higher than expected (Esimaje, 2014). Specifically, positive keywords are used more frequently in the study or focus corpus than in the reference corpus (Brezina, 2018; Rayson, 2019).

Negative Keyness. Negative keywords have frequencies that are lower than expected (Esimaje, 2014). Negative keywords are underused in the study corpus in comparison to the reference corpus. Stated differently, negative keywords are used with less frequency in the study corpus than in the reference corpus (Heritage, 2021).

Collocation

Firth (1957) introduced the term *collocation* to language studies (Bartsch & Evert, 2014). Firth is most well-known for the often cited saying, “You shall know a word by the company it keeps!” (p. 11). Collocation has been defined as the co-occurrence of words in proximity to each other to the degree that statistically cannot be by chance (Hoey, 1991). Frequently occurring word combinations that co-occur more often than by chance to provide natural sounding discourse is how Metin et al. (2011) defined the term collocation. Partington (1998) defined collocation as habitual associations of a word or a repeated co-occurrence of two words. The common thread among the definitions listed lies in the thought that some words join with other words at a frequency not seen with other words.

Stop Words

Stop words are common words (e.g., “the” and “a”) that add nothing to content meaning. Such words were not included in the corpus because they are not essential to this study. The Natural Language ToolKit (NLTK) stop word was used for this study (Bleier, 2021). The list of stop words filtered out for this study can be found at <https://osf.io/fk8vq>.

Apparatus

This study utilized the data analysis program R. Quanteda (Benoit et al., 2018) was utilized to organize and quantify text data.

Data Analysis

For RQ1, the general keyness analysis procedures detailed by Brezina (2018) were followed. The 10 words with the strongest positive keyness and the 10 words with the strongest negative keyness will be reported. The statistical analysis employed with these research questions were the log-likelihood ratio test (G^2). The keyness statistics threshold was set at $p <$

.001 with Williams' correction given the presence of multiple data cells with small counts (Williams, 1976). The effect size used was the binary log ratio (LR) where each additional point in the ratio represents a doubling in size of the difference between the study and reference corpuses (Hardie, 2014). For example, when the $LR = 1$, a word is two times more common in the study corpus than the reference corpus (Hardie, 2014). NLTK stop words were filtered for this analysis. For RQs 2–4, the statistical analysis employed was mutual information cubed (MI3; Daille, 1995). The settings were: (a) span: 5 right, 5 left; (b) statistics: 05 MI3; (c) thresholds: statistic value $MI3 = 9.0$; (d) thresholds: collocation frequency = 5; and (e) type; and (f) filters: NLTK stop words. This research study utilized the R statistical platform to analyze the data using the *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018).

Results

Regarding RQ1, the strongest positive keyword was “black” ($G^2 = 379.76$) and the strongest negative keyword was “david” ($G^2 = -153.74$). A list of the 20 strongest keywords in both directions can be obtained in Table 2.1. In terms of RQs 2-4, the top collocates for the node words were as follows: (a) RQ2: node = “Black” and collocate = “church” ($MI3 = 19.50$); (b) RQ3: node = “power” and collocate = “god” ($MI3 = 18.26$); and (c) RQ4: node = “free” and collocate = “set” ($MI3 = 17.46$). A complete listing of collocates can be inspected in Tables 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4

Discussion

This study explored the psycholinguistic processes Protestant pastors utilize that foster emotional and spiritual connections with their congregants. RQ1 revealed the word that most distinguish Black Protestant sermons from White Protestant sermons. RQs 2–4 involved

collocations around the word that most distinguished the sermons as well as collocations around the words “power” and “free.” The results are addressed in order of the research questions.

For RQ1, the word that most distinguishes the Black Protestant Pastors’ sermons from the White Protestant Pastors’ sermons is the word “Black.” There are two probable explanations for the obtained results. First, in order to connect with individuals, a speaker finds commonality between themselves and those the speaker is addressing. In churches where the pastor is Black, most congregants are Black as well. Therefore, the commonality of ethnicity can be used as a vehicle to establish a relationship between the pastor and congregants. This concept is affirmed by the writings of Bell (1997) who explained that the sermon must establish connection with the audience to which it is delivered. An alternative explanation may be that the pastors utilized an Aristotelian appeal (pathos) as laid out by Hogan (2013) to appeal to the congregants’ emotions in order to persuade congregants to engage in specific behaviors (or not engage in specific behaviors). The pastor might reference historical events that have benefitted members of the ethnic group or events that may have harmed members of the ethnic group in the past. Drawing upon the emotional consequences of past actions may encourage the congregants to make decisions that will lead to positive outcomes. For instance, the pastor is attempting to persuade the congregation to vote in an upcoming local election, so the pastor might provide examples of what happened when individuals failed to vote (undesirable outcomes for the Black community) and what happened when individuals voted (positive outcomes for the Black community). The desired outcome would be to invoke images in the minds of the congregants that would encourage them to vote in the upcoming election. Between former and latter, the latter is most probable because congregants will generally attend church services regularly so the rapport

building between pastor and congregation has been established. Because the relationship has been established, the pastor can easily and readily appeal to the congregants' emotions.

RQ2 looked at the word network around the word that distinguished the Black sermons from the White sermons. The most frequent word network around the node word "black" was the collocate "church." This collocation appeared 121 times in the study corpora and had the highest MI3 score of 19.5. The words "Black" and "church" used frequently in close proximity to each other suggest a connection between Black people and churches. This connection can be traced back to the period before and during antebellum when the spiritual needs of slaves were neither considered, nor addressed by White pastors. Slaves and former slaves created their own brush arbors (churches) where they could assemble for the purpose of addressing the spiritual, and emotional needs that accompanied being Black in America (Wright, 1937). The top 20 collocations for black are found in Table 2.2.

RQ3 centers on the network around the node word "power." The collocate "god" had the greatest MI3 score (18.26) and appeared 150 times in the study corpus. This suggests that power and God are closely related. The Bible makes several references to God having all power. Therefore, as pastors build their sermons upon specific biblical texts and explain the significance of the historical text in contemporary terms, it is reasonable to believe that the words "power" and "god" are closely related in the sermons of black pastors. Another explanation for the result was pastors may edify their congregants by explaining that if power is associated with closeness to God, the closer the congregants move toward God by applying the principals laid out in the Bible, the more power congregants have to change their lives. Between the latter and the former explanations, the latter is the most likely because it most closely aligns with the pastor's desire to connect with the congregation in ways the congregants can identify with, and the congregants

would be able to visualize themselves moving closer to God (aligning with the spiritual concepts) and having increased spiritual power as a result.

RQ4 researched the network around the node word “free.” The collocation with the greatest MI3 score (17.46) was the collocate “set.” A possible reason for this collocation is the pastor’s intent to tap into the shared experiences of the congregants to establish meaningful connection. The shared experience the pastors may have drawn on are the systemic hurdles and barriers to progress that handicap individuals of color is a common theme in the lives of Black individuals in America as they struggle to be set free from the bondage society has placed them in. It should be noted that “bondage” was the collocate with the second highest MI3 score (14.80). This parallels with the bondage narratives written about in several Bible passages including Ezekiel 34:27 and Jeremiah 30:8. The collocation of set and free may be an indication to the congregants that God can be seen as a liberator and will set them free from the physical bondage of inadequate resources and systematic racism, but also emotional bondage of mental health challenges, and substance dependence. It should be noted that oftentimes, marginalized cultures align themselves with the Israelites who were frequently enslaved by their enemies until they were delivered by God.

When considering limitations, there are three for this study. The first limitation concerns the keyness study (RQ1). This research considered the word that distinguishes Black sermons from White sermons. However, the research did not consider the word that distinguishes the White sermons from the Black sermons. Having an idea of what word distinguishes White from Black sermons might provide a more robust picture of how different words resonate with White congregants. This information can be helpful in providing talking points for clinicians who work with White clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle as the clients confront multiple spiritual

and social justice challenges. The second limitation could be the timeframe of the selected sermons. This study incorporated sermons from 1990 to 2020, although the majority of the sermons captured were from 2000 until 2020. Perhaps constricting the timeframe to 2010 until 2020 would have changed the outcomes due to current events that may shape influence which words are being used in society frequently. Another limitation may have been that this research included sermons from pastors across the U.S., which may not provide clinicians with specific information regarding Black pastors and Black clients in their specific region of the U.S. Perhaps collecting sermons by pastors in specific areas of the U.S. would produce results specific to clinicians in selected regions (e.g. Southeast, Midwest, West Coast, etc.) and could provide clinicians with an accurate picture of how pastors in their region select wording for their sermons. This is significant because Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2015), in their research regarding Mormons and non-Mormons in Utah, pointed out that linguistic behavior can be specific to geographic locations. Therefore, understanding how pastors across regions approach building rapport with their congregants can be helpful to clinicians in that area. There are additional limitations around the collocation study (RQs 2–4). The collocation window was set to five, which means we considered five words to the left and five words to the right of the node word. Increasing or decreasing the collocation window may have yielded divergent results, leading to different thoughts around contributing factors of the results. The obtained results also suggest implications for counselors and others in the helping professions in the area of clinical practice.

There are multiple implications for future research brought forward by this study. Although this research is based on quantitative data, clinicians can better understand which words to use in efforts to provide their clients with informed language that will allow their Black

clients to feel at ease, heard, and understood during counseling sessions. This may lead to lower dropout rates and increased rapport building with Black clientele. Some counselors may be uncomfortable using some wording associated with Black clients but counselors, according to ACA Code of Ethics preamble (2014), are tasked with honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach even if counselors must stretch their own limitations and step out of their comfort zone to meet the needs of their clients. For clinicians who are unfamiliar with the role that church plays in the lives of some Black clients, this research presents a spiritual lens through which clients might see their world (worldview). Understanding how clients see the world around them can assist clinicians in establishing rapport with their Black clients and help to facilitate long-term contact by using language with which the client feels comfortable.

Another implication of the results of this study for mental health clinicians is the need for individuals who ascribe to a spiritual lifestyle to have a welcoming, anxiety-free environment to explore their thoughts regarding how spirituality impacts various areas of their lives. Clinicians' offices should be safe for individuals to explore their inner most thoughts and confront fundamental, long-held beliefs that they may now be challenging. The keyness and collocation study presented in this research provides clinicians with insight into the historical context of how words can be utilized to build rapport with Black individuals who practice a spiritual lifestyle.

An additional implication for mental health clinicians is the challenge to become comfortable creating and engaging in discourse around spirituality and spiritual issues with clients. Traditionally, mental health counseling has had a nonspiritual (secular) bend that has marginalized individuals who align with a spiritual lifestyle. This may be detrimental to individuals who ascribe to a spiritual lifestyle when one considers that if clinicians are encouraging individuals to bring themselves in their entirety into the counseling session but are

reluctant to address issues of a spiritual nature, the client will seek alternative environments to seek safety as they process their thoughts and emotions of a spiritual nature. Also, according to the Pew Research Center (2022), 46.6% of the U.S. population is Protestant. Of that 46.6%, 6.5% are considered historically Black Protestant. Therefore, if mental health clinicians desire inclusivity and want their clients to bring all of themselves to counseling sessions, it is beneficial to minimize clinician anxiety by becoming familiar with liturgical language and spiritual practices of diverse communities to understand the worldview of the Black client. This will allow the client to feel relaxed and free to discuss any and all domains in their lives including their spirituality.

One final implication for mental health clinicians that may be useful is to incorporate methods and theories that work with a client's spirituality rather than insisting that a client forsake their spirituality in order to obtain optimum mental health. For instance, NTU (pronounced "*in-too*") psychotherapy consists of African and Afrocentric worldviews. It is based in spirituality with the goal of assisting individuals with creating balance that aligns with natural order. The basic principles are: (a) cultural awareness, (b) authenticity, (c) balance, (d) harmony, and (e) interconnectedness. NTU therapy is based in African culture but also incorporates western theory of humanistic psychology and neuroscience (Phillips, 1990). Therapies such as NTU utilize aspects of African culture that are relatable to Black clients. However, the therapy also includes western philosophies to scaffold the learning of clinicians of the majority culture so they might feel more comfortable with therapeutic models not often considered or studied in higher education. Another aspect of introducing spirituality into counseling sessions with Black clients surrounds the long-standing premise that one must choose between being spiritual and having a mental health clinician because the two are diametrically opposed. In many churches

pastored and attend by Black congregants, it is taught that mental health clinicians encourage clients to turn away from spirituality in order to embrace secular mental health theories and practices such as humanistic theories that exclude any reference to the spiritual. Rather than promoting balance, mental health clinicians often seek to redirect clients' attention away from spirituality toward secular principals in order to yield appropriate secular outcomes. When clinicians understand theories and approaches that incorporate spirituality, there is an opportunity for clinicians to learn more about their clients by engaging in discussions around spirituality. This allows clinicians to fully grasp the secular nature of their clients as well as the spiritual aspect of the client and how the two natures might co-exist in one individual.

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Table 2.1*Positive and Negative Keyness Results*

Type	Rank	Word	Study	Reference	G2
Positive	1	black	388	33	379.76
	2	african	196	2	267.02
	3	pit	118	6	132.44
	4	africa	83	2	105.08
	5	slave	184	48	95.61
	6	joseph	135	24	94.04
	7	sex	98	10	89.84
	8	slaveri	105	16	80.06
	9	revel	173	53	76.44
	10	man	819	570	65.69
Negative	1	david	112	403	-153.74
	2	content	26	211	-151.20
	3	giant	6	140	-142.59
	4	season	43	237	-134.00
	5	goliath	5	117	-119.23
	6	trust	107	315	-92.30
	7	worship	224	493	-84.51
	8	zacharia	0	59	-77.48
	9	hezekiah	6	86	-77.35
	10	mother	112	300	-75.66

Note: The critical value for G2 at $p < .001$ is 10.83.

Table 2.2*Top 20 Collocates of “Black” in Order of Descending MI3 Score (RQ2)*

Rank	Collocate	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	church	121	5.67	19.50	10.78
2	white	50	7.52	18.81	7.03
3	histori	31	6.55	16.41	5.51
4	men	35	5.25	15.51	5.76
5	brown	11	7.99	14.91	3.30
6	male	14	7.22	14.84	3.72
7	month	16	6.70	14.70	3.96
8	folk	17	6.25	14.42	4.07
9	communiti	19	5.92	14.42	4.29
10	red	10	6.81	13.46	3.13
11	intercessori	6	8.11	13.28	2.44
12	skin	9	6.92	13.26	2.98
13	american	15	5.34	13.15	3.78
14	percent	9	6.62	12.96	2.97
15	colleg	8	6.94	12.94	2.81
16	pilot	6	7.58	12.75	2.44
17	god	40	2.08	12.72	4.82
18	peopl	26	3.29	12.69	4.58
19	man	23	3.55	12.59	4.39
20	america	13	5.13	12.53	3.50

Table 2.3*Word network around “Power” in Order of Descending MI3 Score (RQ3)*

Rank	Collocate	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	god	150	3.80	18.26	11.37
2	holi	34	5.48	15.65	5.70
3	spirit	38	5.12	15.61	5.99
4	author	23	6.51	15.55	4.74
5	waster	14	7.12	14.73	3.71
6	jesus	46	3.66	14.71	6.25
7	church	39	3.86	14.43	5.81
8	god	27	4.80	14.31	5.01
9	mission	15	6.43	14.24	3.83
10	hand	21	5.03	13.82	4.44
11	thing	30	3.85	13.67	5.10
12	receiv	17	5.48	13.65	4.03
13	kingdom	18	5.26	13.60	4.13
14	given	18	5.10	13.44	4.12
15	expans	6	7.94	13.11	2.44
16	can	30	3.25	13.06	4.90
17	need	24	3.85	13.02	4.56
18	ghost	9	6.52	12.86	2.97
19	give	22	3.90	12.82	4.38
20	promin	7	7.16	12.77	2.63

Table 2.4*Word network around “Free” in Order of Descending MI3 Score (RQ4)*

Rank	Collocate	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	set	29	7.75	17.46	5.36
2	bondag	10	8.16	14.80	3.15
3	slave	15	6.57	14.39	3.83
4	neither	7	7.38	13.00	2.63
5	truth	9	6.08	12.42	2.96
6	captiv	5	7.38	12.03	2.22
7	open	7	6.19	11.81	2.61
8	shall	10	5.13	11.78	3.07
9	freedom	6	6.55	11.72	2.42
10	Youâ*	9	5.37	11.71	2.93
11	salvat	6	6.44	11.61	2.42
12	money	7	5.76	11.37	2.60
13	know	13	3.85	11.25	3.35
14	slaveri	6	6.06	11.23	2.41
15	live	11	4.28	11.20	3.15
16	christ	10	4.32	10.96	3.00
17	door	5	6.26	10.91	2.21
18	love	10	4.03	10.67	2.97
19	deliv	5	5.90	10.54	2.20
20	god	17	2.33	10.51	3.30

*youâ indicates there is an apostrophe and another letter after you (e.g., you're)


Chapter 3: A Research Manuscript


A Corpus-Based Analysis of Contemporary Gospel Music

Stacey Horne¹ and Cass Dykeman¹

¹Oregon State University

Author Note

Stacey Horne  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0134-0173>

Cass Dykeman  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7708-1409>

The research contained in this manuscript was part of the first author's dissertation, and given the published nature of the material studied, a human subjects review was not required.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Stacey Horne, Counseling

Acade^{mi}c Unit, Oregon State University, 104 Furman Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331-3502. Email:

Hornesta@oregonstate.edu.

Abstract

Gospel music has a powerful and historic resonance with Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle. This corpus linguistic study explored how Gospel music lyrics are utilized to build connection between the performer and the listener. The purpose of this keyness and collocation research was to provide mental health clinicians with a framework for incorporating music in their clinical sessions with Black clients for the purpose of establishing and building rapport. Gospel music and Christian music are differentiated with Gospel music being marketed to Black audiences and Christian music being offered to White audiences. The R platform was utilized to perform the data analysis. The word that distinguished Gospel music from Christian music was “lord.” The song “Believe For It” contains all eight of the top words closely associated with the words “free” and “power” (e.g., believe, miracle, sign, wonder, cause, Jesus, name, and god).

Keywords: Black Americans, Christian music, collocation, keyness, corpus linguistics, multicultural, Gospel music, spirituality

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Contemporary Gospel Music

Music can assist in achieving any number of goals. It can also provide information for reflection and reinforce long-held ideas. Music can also encourage and inspire, as well as challenge or bring about specific emotions. In contemporary church and religious settings, music is incorporated throughout the worship experience. It is incorporated into the praise and worship segment of the service to prepare the congregants to receive the preacher's message. Music can assist in moving the minds and hearts of the congregants from the secular world to the spiritual realm. To facilitate the worship process, the music lyrics, the instrumentation, and the melody are considered when choosing the music for a service.

The rationale for this research lies in the linguistics of the Gospel music and Christian music genres. Few researchers have studied how Gospel music lyrics can inform positive relationships between White clinicians and Black clients. Not only can music be used to bridge the gap between cultures, but clinicians can utilize music and lyrics to connect more deeply with their clients of color. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and other Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2016) provides scaffolding around how cultural diversity topics and theories might be taught within the academy. However, being culturally competent means more than enrolling in a cultural diversity course during the academic process. It also encompasses more than having individuals of color on the clinician's therapeutic caseload. Being culturally competent means appreciating other cultures and connecting with individuals from other cultures in a meaningful way so that clients within those cultures feel heard, understood, and appreciated during clinical sessions, rather than simply tolerated.

In an examination of the literature of Black Gospel music, seven topics emerged: (a) key terms, (b) the role of Gospel music in the Black community, (c) the role of Gospel music in the

White community, (d) what differentiates contemporary Gospel music from traditional Gospel music, (e) what is known about keyness and Gospel music, (f) what is known about collocation in Gospel music, and (g) what is known about the words “power” and “free.” After these topics are considered, the research questions are explored.

Specific key terms are critical to understanding research related to Gospel music. First, what music is and why it is essential to study are explored. Although there is no static, universally accepted definition of music, the consensus is that music is a social construct shaped by culture and social arrangements (Roy et al., 2010). Music can be adapted across time and place and be used in multiple settings to create emotion. Music can also be considered an art form and can be written, recorded, distributed, and critiqued. Musicologist Small (1998) crafted the term “musicking,” meaning that music is an activity or a process that individuals engage in, rather than simply listen to passively. Consider the live music showcase where the musician plays songs from their musical repertoire with minor changes as the crowd sings along and dances. The engagement in the experience is an example of individuals participating in the music. The same can be said for church services when the musicians play (musicking) as congregants participate in praise and worship. Small (1998) believed that music continuously changes and improves but is never entirely completed.

Another word to understand as it relates to this research is *lyric*. The meaning of the word has changed since its inception during the late 18th century. The definition no longer involves only music or classical works but now refers to the genre of personal expression (Burt, 2016). Therefore, any text can be a lyric, whether set to music or not. Lyrics can provide a means of self-expression and allow the composer to describe a thought or emotion, transporting the reader/listener to a specific time or place or eliciting specific emotions or thoughts.

Just as churches and denominations are segregated largely according to ethnicity (Emerson et al., 2001), music is no different. Church music is divided into two distinct categories: Gospel and Christian, with Black artists representing contemporary Gospel music and White artists representing contemporary Christian music. The racializing of Christian music is evidenced in music charts such as Billboard. Within Billboard music charts, a distinct difference is made between Christian and Gospel music.

Christian music utilizes rock music as a method of reinforcing Christian worldviews of individuals professing salvation (Banjo et al., 2011). A divergent opinion provided by Pauley (2005), is that Christian music attempts to reach out to non-Christians without being a part of Christian culture. Additionally, Christian music is populated by and marketed toward White American audiences. Christian music is created by and distributed to White listeners because the music incorporates alternative, heavy metal, and rock music sounds that appeal largely to White audiences who would not be drawn to Gospel music, and the themes in Christian music tend toward individualism (Phelps, 2007). Gospel music, however, is largely populated by and marketed toward Black audiences. The music often has themes regarding the collective struggle of Black Americans.

Both genres are considered sacred music because both affirm Christian principles (Pauley, 2005), so it seems unnecessary to split them into categories. Williams et al. (2013) explained that the marketing of the music serves to pit one racial group against another rather than unify both groups under the Christian faith. This is done by incorporating racial cues regarding identity into a song's lyrics for the purpose of sending messages regarding the racial identity of listeners.

Church music encompasses multiple genres (Harrison, 2008) and incorporates language that speaks to specific groups of listeners. Harrison explained that the word “gospel” targets Black listeners and Gospel music is known to have a sound, lyrics, and style specifically targeted to Black audiences while Christian music is generally marketed to White audiences by incorporating sound, lyrics and style created for White audiences. Given that individuals’ music preferences are incorporated with the social category, it is understandable that music genres would incorporate cues that speak to the class and ethnicity of its listeners (Rentfrow et al., 2009).

In their groundbreaking work regarding themes in the Christian music genre, Banjo et al. (2011) found notable differences between themes across the genre. Their research pointed out that in the Gospel music genre, themes of protection and overcoming were predominant. However, in the contemporary Christian genre themes of perseverance and self-motivation were pervasive. Perhaps these themes speak to the way our cultural identity impacts our spirituality or how our spirituality informs our cultural identity.

Gospel music plays a distinct role in the Black community. Historically, Gospel music provided a musical accompaniment that delved into faith and culture with calls for freedom, transformation, and renewed worship (Wilson, 2018). Evidence of Gospel music accompanying the Black faith and culture lies in the songs slaves sang (e.g., “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” and “Go Down Moses”). These songs, along with “Steal Away to Jesus,” wove signals of freedom (Lincoln et al., 1990) and rebellion within their words. Contemporary Gospel music continues to speak to the realities of the Black community, and according to Weekes (2005), is an important component of identity formation for Black people.

Contemporary Gospel music has begun incorporating individuals not customarily associated with Gospel music, such as rappers (Nicki Minaj, Snoop Dogg). Tasha Cobbs Leonard's 2017 CD titled *Heart. Passion. Pursuit.*, features Nicki Minaj singing "I'm Getting Ready." The inclusion of artists not typically associated with Gospel music provides a broader audience for Gospel music.

Christian music plays a role in the White community, albeit in a different manner than the role that Gospel music plays in the Black community. Harrison (2008) posited that Southern Gospel (Christian) is music targeted to White ethnic groups. Harrison explained that incorporating music, lyrics, and religious experiences into Southern Gospel music provides a vehicle for the cultural conversion evangelicals utilize to understand Protestant doctrines and make meaning of conservative Christian values. Although Christian music and Gospel music are both forms of religious expression, individuals ascribing to southern Gospel believe the Gospel music is a tool for evangelical conversion. Additionally, "ministry" for this group is the musical equivalent of Protestant sermons.

There is minimal literature on the study of keyness in music and no scholarly research related to keyness in Gospel music. Banjo et al. (2011) contributed a significant body of work around music, and their research provided themes across Gospel music genres (Gospel, southern Gospel, Christian music). However, there was no information regarding specific words in Gospel music. Relatedwords.org captured a list of words used in Gospel music, but there is no system for ranking the frequency of the words across Gospel music types. After an extensive search to locate scholarly research regarding Gospel music using the terms "gospel music," "black church music," and "southern gospel music," the glaring gap in scholarly literature surrounding keyness

in Gospel music indicates this is an area in need of additional research. This current study aimed to fill that gap.

There exists a body of scholarly literature on song lyrics using collocation analysis. For example, Goyak et al. (2021) found that three mental verbs (know, want, love) are highly likely to be found beside or close to the personal pronouns “I” and “you” in country, reggae, new age, rap, and rock genres. Duma (2013) studied collocations and religious language in lyrics and reported that in 50 non-Christian songs containing the lexical word “God,” the most frequent collocation was “God is,” followed by “if God,” “my God,” and “oh God.” At present, collocation research has not included the study of Gospel music. The aim of this study was to address this essential and long-ignored topic.

What is known about the words “power” and “free” in Gospel music is extremely limited. However, these words may carry significance to individuals who routinely listen to this genre of music and thus should be studied. The word “power” speaks to the concept that God can intervene in human situations to provide divine outcomes. The word “free” denotes that individuals can be free from life's challenges (e.g., substance addiction, racism, discrimination, and illness). Perhaps the lack of research in this area is due to the words not resonating with lyricists or listeners of Gospel music. Or, perhaps the words are not compelling enough to warrant extensive research around how clinicians might utilize these words or songs containing these words during sessions or between sessions. This research aims to shed light on this important area.

Given the aforementioned, to guide this study, the following research questions were crafted:

- RQ1:** What words distinguish Black contemporary Gospel lyrics from White contemporary Gospel lyrics?
- RQ2:** What is the word network around the word that most distinguishes Black contemporary Gospel lyrics from White contemporary Gospel lyrics?
- RQ3:** What is the word network around the word “power” in Black contemporary Gospel lyrics?
- RQ4:** What is the word network around the word “free” in Black contemporary Gospel lyrics?

Method

Design

This study utilized a corpus linguistic design (Brezina, 2018). The variables employed were race, word difference, word associations, and register. The register was Gospel music. The levels of measure were continuous (word differences and associations) and binomial for race and register.

The unit of analysis was tokens (words). Power analysis using the G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) platform was completed to determine the sample size required. Since the analyses involved comparing proportions, the power analysis was for a chi-square, and the requisite Cohen's w was used to obtain a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). The input parameters were: (a) test family: χ^2 tests; (b) statistical test – goodness of fit tests: contingency tables; (c) power analysis – a priori: compute required sample size given α , power, and effect size; (d) $w = 0.30$; (e) power (1- β error probability) = 0.80; (f) $\alpha = .001$; and (g) degrees of freedom (Df) = 1. The output suggested a sample size of 190 words with an actual power of .80.

Study Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was Gospel music, and the subregister was Black contemporary Gospel music. Songs for this research were compiled from Billboard.com. Billboard demonstrates longevity in the music industry by providing a wide array of musical genres and an extensive archive of musical genres. Billboards Top 100 songs were selected based on sales (digital and physical), airplay, and streaming. From Billboard's top 100 songs of each year between 2016 and 2020, the scope was the top 25 Gospel songs from each year, totaling 124 songs because one song needed to be discarded. After obtaining appropriate songs, their lyrics were obtained from AZlyrics.com, lyrics.com, and songlyrics.com. The study corpus contained 21,247 tokens. A complete list of the song lyrics included in this corpus is on the project's research page (<https://osf.io/fk8vq>).

Preprocessing

There was no preprocessing done for this research study. No text was removed from the songs including repeating versus or choruses. Title words were not deleted from the text, and no corrections for spelling were made.

Reference Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was Gospel music, and the subregister was White contemporary Gospel music. Songs were gathered from Billboard.com, and the scope was the top 25 Christian songs from each year between 2016 and 2020. A total of 125 songs were captured from Billboard's Top 100 contemporary Christian songs. Billboard compiled the top 100 songs for each year based on sales (digital and physical), airplay, and streaming. After obtaining appropriate songs to

include in this research study, the lyrics were obtained from AZlyrics.com, lyrics.com, and songlyrics.com. The reference corpus contained 18,194 tokens.

Preprocessing

Preprocessing was the same process utilized for the study corpus.

Measures

Node

The *node* is a word or phrase a researcher is interested in studying. Nodes were examined in the context of how often they appeared in a text (frequency) and their lexical pattern (placement). The stems chosen for this research were “power” and “free.”

Keyness

Keyness represents the frequency with which a word appears in a study corpus rather than in a reference corpus. Utilizing keyword analysis allows for obtaining the best understanding of the lyrics and assists in identifying how lyrics can facilitate connections between the artist and listener. Additionally, the connection between artist and listener can translate to connections between clinician and clients who affiliate with Gospel music.

Collocation

Collocation refers to words being in proximity to one another to the degree that it is greater than chance. For purposes of this study, the stems chosen were “power” and “free” in the context of music lyrics. These words were chosen due to the historical significance they hold with the target audience of Gospel music listeners. To obtain a clearer understanding of the context associated with the stems, words within five positions of the stems were considered.

Apparatus

The statistical analysis was completed utilizing the R package *quanteda*. The package allows for both statistical analysis as well as visualization of the analysis.

Data Analysis

For RQ1, the keyness analysis procedures presented by Brezina (2018) guided this analysis. The statistical analysis utilized was the log-likelihood ratio test (G^2). The effect size was the binary log ratio (LR) where each additional point in the ratio represents a doubling in size of the difference between the study and reference corpuses (Hardie, 2014). The words with the strongest keyness will be presented visually as a word cloud using the Smarter Wordclouds R script (Gruber, 2019). This word cloud was created with the parameters: (a) x axis: log likelihood result for each word, and (b) y axis: log ratio result for each word (i.e., level of overrepresentation), (c) word limit: top 130 in terms of keyness, (d) word size: count, (e) color: overrepresentation, (f) color gradient: low = "red", high = "blue", and (g) stop word filtering; NLTK English stop word list (Bleier, 2010). In terms of s 2–4, statistical analysis employed mutual information cubed (MI3; Daille, 1994). The settings were: (a) span: 5 right, 5 left; (b) statistics: 05 MI3; (c) thresholds; statistic value MI3 = 9.0; (d) thresholds: collocation frequency = 5; (e) type; and (f) filters: NLTK stop words.

Results

In terms of RQ1, the word with the strongest keyness was “lord” ($G^2 = 222.42$). A word cloud displaying the 130 words with the strongest keyness can be inspected in Figure 3.1.

Regarding RQs 2-4, the top collocate for the node words were as follows: (a) RQ2: node = “lord” and collocate = “need” (MI3 = 16.49); (b) RQ3: node = “power” and collocate = “believe” (MI3

= 15.22); and (c) RQ4: node = “free” and collocate = “everyone” (MI3 = 15.30). A complete listing of collocates can be inspected in Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore lyrics that resonate with Black clients in order to provide mental health clinicians with a linguistic framework for introducing liturgical music into their clinical sessions. The purpose of introducing liturgical music into clinical sessions is to indicate to the client that the clinician is comfortable with the client bringing all of themselves into the clinical session to process the challenges they wish to address. The second purpose of introducing liturgical music into clinical sessions is to expose clinicians to alternative forms of therapy that appeal to a broad array of clients but especially clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle. The first research question explored the keyword that most distinguishes Gospel music lyrics from Christian music lyrics. RQs 2–4 explored the collocations of the word that most distinguishes the Gospel lyrics from Christian lyrics.

RQ1 examined Gospel music lyrics and compared them to Christian music lyrics to determine the word that differentiates the study corpus from the reference corpus. The top keyword (highest log likelihood ratio— G^2) was “lord.” The word was referenced 464 times in the study corpora versus 91 times in the reference corpora. The word “lord” is generally a term of reverence used to acknowledge to sovereignty of an individual who is assigned greater authority than the speaker (Vine et al., 1996; Young 1984). One individual may be subservient to another individual as in the historical slave-master relationship where one person is the owner of another person. The likely reason for “lord” being used in the context of Gospel music is to reaffirm the relationship between the individual (believer) and their lord to whom the believer

remains in the position of servanthood with the Lord having greater authority than the servant. A word cloud used to represent the keyness is found in Figure 3.1.

RQ2 explored the collocation around the word lord utilizing the MI3 statistic. The results revealed the words with the strongest collocates for the word “lord” were “need,” “yes,” “gotta,” and “yeah.” This suggests a theme of being in a dependent relationship with the “lord.”

Individuals aligning with a spiritual lifestyle often verbalize their increasing dependence upon God (lord) in the context of their natural or physical day-to-day lives to maintain their emotional, physical, and psychological health, as well as overcoming systemic challenges and barriers that go along with being a person of color in America. Additional collocates around the word “lord” include “yes,” “gotta,” and “yeah.” These words suggest a role of subservience that believers embrace as a component of their relationship with their creator. Musso et al. (2019) explained that musicians/lyricists have often developed competence in the area of linguistics because of their understanding of the written word, but also because they develop skills in the domains of lexical knowledge by using words, tone, and pitch to convey emotion. Therefore, including positive words in lyrics as “yes,” “gotta,” and “yeah” would lead the listener to correlate a positive relationship between the listener and their creator. This thought aligns with the research Strait and Kraus (2011) presented which suggests that musicians are adept at maintaining auditory attention to language. This means they are intentional with their word selections—perhaps because they are aware of the impact their chosen words would have on the listener. The top 20 collocates of “lord” can be found in Table 3.1.

RQ3 centers around the collocation of the word “power.” The word with the strongest keyness is “believe.” The word “believe” being closely associated with “power” suggests there is a connection between having spiritual power, based on believing that the power comes from the

“lord.” Although the lyrics captured for this research were between 2016 and 2020, it should be noted that at the time of this writing “Believe For It” (Hill et al, 2021) incorporates several of the keywords mentioned which points to the relevance of this study. Other words closely associated with “power” were “miracl,” “sign,” and “wonder,” which suggest a supernatural relationship between power and miracles, signs, and wonders detailed in the song “Believe For It.”

*They say this mountain can't be moved
They say these chains will never break
But they don't know You like we do
There is power in your name*

*We've heard that there is no way through
We've heard the tide will never change
They haven't seen what You can do
There is power in Your name
So much power in Your name*

*Move the immovable
Break the unbreakable
God we believe
God we believe for it
From the impossible
We'll see a miracle
God we believe
God we believe for it*

*We know that hope is never lost (oh)
For there is still an empty grave
God we believe no matter what
There is power in Your name
So much power in Your name*

*You are the way
When there seems to be no way
We trust in You
God You have the final say, yeah*

*God we believe
God we believe for it*

The top 20 collocates for “power” can be found in Table 3.2.

RQ4 centers on the collocation around the word “free.” The collocate with the greatest MI3 score was “everyone.” This suggests a collective ideal that everyone can experience freedom. Freedom may come in the context of being free from past emotional trauma, substance addiction, behavioral addictions (bad habits), or unfortunate current life situations. Freedom may also come in the form of physical freedom from physical slavery which is unpaid labor. One reason for “everyone” to have the prominence that it does in this research may be due to the collectivist socialization entrenched in Black culture which is the demographic with which Gospel music is aligned. Although “everyone” had the greatest MI3 score (15.30), the word with the greatest frequency (11) was “call.” Perhaps this means that the lyricist is making the point that the listener is called to be free. Additionally, it should be noted that “call” is the only collocate of “free” that met the criteria of a frequency count of nine or greater. The results of RQ4 can be found in Table 3.2.

A review of this study brings to light three limitations. The first limitation relates to the preprocessing phase of this research. There was no preprocessing of data prior to completing the analysis. Because there was no preprocessing, songs having a chorus that is repeated multiple times may have skewed the keyness output by including repetitive words within the same song. Additionally, the lack of preprocessing may have skewed the collocation results by inflating the number of collocations associated with the words “power” and “free.” Setting a parameter to include only two choruses per song may sufficiently address the over-incorporation of identical lexical patterns. However, employing such a constraint on the repetition may distort the meaning the lyricists was trying to convey by what they chose to repeat. The second limitation centers around choosing the words “power” or “free” to build collocations around. Although the words

“power” and “free” chosen for this research yielded the current results being discussed here, choosing alternate words to explore collocations around would have produced different outcomes. For example, perhaps researching collocations around the words “sin” or “war” would have yielded different results than the results we obtained using “power” or “free.” The difference in results may shed light on additional areas of research that might be explored. The final limitation lies within the collocation piece of this research in that the collocation was five words to the left and five words to the right of the node words. Perhaps increasing the collocation window to seven words from the node would have created different outcomes that would have revealed the significance of different words in the corpora. The difference in the words selected could have a different meaning and significance than this research revealed.

There are multiple implications for future research provided by this study. First, this study in linguistics was limited to Gospel music, largely listened to by individuals aligning with a Christian worldview. However, because America is growing increasingly diverse, music associated with diverse religions and spiritualities can inform clinical sessions with individuals who align with religious or spiritual lifestyles other than Christianity. Future research can also explore Gospel music lyrics using a developmental lense. This approach can explore how individuals’ musical choices assist with identity development and feelings of inclusion since religious music often contains racial cues (Banjo & Williams, 2014) that can create a sense of commonality among listeners. Finally, linguistic research has been conducted regarding how spiritual language and socialization impact the daily lives of individuals (Baker-Smemoe & Bowie, 2015). However, additional research can reveal how spiritual music lyrics (outside of Gospel music) impact the lives of individuals aligning with a spiritual lifestyle, allowing clinicians to obtain greater insight into the lives of their clients.

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Table 2.1*Collocates of the Node Word “Lord” (RQ2)*

N	Node	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	need	81	3.81	16.49	8.36
2	yes	55	4.09	15.66	6.98
3	gotta	49	4.39	15.61	6.66
4	yeah	60	3.72	15.53	7.15
5	nobodi	41	4.53	15.24	6.12
6	fix	28	5.23	14.85	5.15
7	trust	36	4.42	14.75	5.71
8	like	42	3.89	14.68	6.04
9	jesus	52	3.09	14.49	6.36
10	fall	30	4.01	13.82	5.13
11	know	48	2.61	13.78	5.79
12	thank	32	3.77	13.77	5.24
13	everi	31	3.78	13.69	5.16
14	call	30	3.48	13.29	4.98
15	glori	23	4.23	13.28	2.81
16	near	13	5.41	12.81	3.52
17	ohhh	14	5.15	12.76	3.63
18	hold	23	3.64	12.69	4.41
19	shall	18	4.16	12.69	4.00
20	mention	12	5.29	12.46	3.37

Table 3.2*Collocates of Node Word “Power” (RQ3)*

Rank	Collocate	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	believe	28	5.60	15.22	5.18
2	miracl	24	5.23	14.40	4.76
3	Sign	10	7.63	14.28	3.14
4	wonder	12	7.02	14.19	3.43
5	Caus	19	4.69	13.19	4.19
6	Jesus	20	4.10	12.74	4.21
7	name	15	4.61	12.43	3.71
8	god	17	3.05	11.23	3.62
9	worker	8	5.20	11.20	2.75
10	sound	5	6.52	11.16	2.21
11	None	4	7.09	11.09	1.99
12	perform	6	5.84	11.01	2.41
13	Fall	9	4.66	11.00	2.88
14	mighti	6	5.20	10.37	2.38
15	Wall	4	5.73	9.73	1.96
16	mountain	4	5.31	9.31	1.95
17	victori	6	4.04	9.21	2.30
18	king	4	5.09	9.09	1.94
19	rest	4	4.99	8.99	1.94
20	move	6	3.81	8.98	2.28

Table 3.3*Collocates of the Node Word “Free” (RQ4)*

Rank	Collocate	Raw count in 5L5R window	MI	MI3	T score
1	everyon	7	9.69	15.31	2.64
2	whole	7	9.16	14.77	2.64
3	sacrif	5	10.05	14.70	2.23
4	thought	8	8.10	14.10	2.82
5	call	11	6.57	13.49	3.28
6	insid	4	8.73	12.73	2.00
7	die	5	7.67	12.32	2.23
8	tell	7	6.13	11.75	2.61
9	forev	5	6.76	11.40	2.22
10	name	7	5.67	11.29	2.59
11	life	6	5.78	10.95	2.40
12	heal	4	6.63	10.63	1.98
13	know	8	4.57	10.57	2.71
14	gotta	5	5.63	10.28	2.19

Chapter 4: General Conclusions

Overview

CACREP standards challenge mental health counselors to address the spiritual/religious domains of their clients' lives (CACREP, 2016). Spirituality is often a large component in the lives of Black clients and understanding the role that spirituality plays can provide clinicians with insight into the lives of their Black clients as a means to establish and build rapport. Having familiarity with the language that resonates with Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle can quickly establish familiarity with clients, causing them to feel comfortable, safe, seen, understood, and appreciated. Establishing positive clinical relationships can be associated with fewer missed appointments, less attrition, and greater emotional connection. Embracing the linguistic and emotional significance of liturgical language can provide clinicians with a framework to scaffold their cultural competence learning. The following sections comprise this chapter: (a) summary of findings, limitations; (b) thematic link between the two manuscripts; (c) implications of collective manuscripts; and (d) conclusion.

Summary of Findings

The first manuscript titled, "Black Pastor Sermonology: Implications for Professional Counselors," revealed that the word "Black" most distinguished Black protestant pastors' sermons from the sermons of White protestant pastors. This indicates that Black clients are comfortable discussing matters of ethnicity among those with whom they feel comfortable. The word network (collocates) around the word "black" was also revealed. This study also explored the word networks (collocates) around the words "black," "free," and "power."

The second manuscript, "A Corpus-Based Keyness & Collocation Analysis of Contemporary Black Gospel Music," showed that the word that most distinguishes contemporary Black Gospel music from Contemporary White Gospel music is the word "lord," which can be understood to mean that Black Gospel music lyrics embrace the lordship of the creator over the

listener. Using specific language that embraces the lordship of the creator is an intentional act as verified by Strait and Kraus (2011) who posited that lyricists are adept at maintaining auditory attention to language and choose words with intentionality. The collocates for the node words “lord,” “free,” and “power” were analyzed and discussed through the lens of contemporary Black gospel music.

Limitations

These studies pose multiple limitations. The first study incorporated sermons from 1990 to 2020. Perhaps constricting the timeframe to 2010 until 2020 would have changed the outcomes due to current events that may have shaped which words are being used in society frequently. Also, changes in language due to online trends may provide researchers with information explaining how languages change and under what circumstances. An additional limitation is that the lack of preprocessing may have skewed the collocation results by altering the number of collocations associated with the words “power” and “free.” A final limitation focuses on the selection of node words “power” and “free.” It is likely that the selection of divergent node words would lead to different outcomes as it relates to the collocation around the selected node words.

Thematic Link

In both manuscripts the thread of purpose is woven throughout the research. The purpose for this research is to prepare clinicians with information that would prove helpful in establishing meaningful relationships with Black clients who profess a spiritual lifestyle. Additionally, the research points to the concept of cultural competence which counselors are encouraged to embrace. Both manuscripts provide scaffolding to assist clinicians with minimizing the stigma and reluctance around broaching spirituality during counseling sessions. In both manuscripts, the

variables of word keyness and collocation, as well as node word (free and power) and ethnicity, remained constant.

Preprint Disposition

Preprints for manuscripts 1 and 2 were deposited on this dissertation research project's webpages with Open Science Foundation (<https://osf.io/fk8vq/>).

Recommendation for Future Research

There are multiple areas for future research in the area of corpus linguistics especially in the context of spirituality and the framework that can be provided for mental health counselors. This research study was informed by the research of Esimaje (2012). The author completed corpus-based research using sermons in Nigeria and explained the significance of high-frequency words utilized in sermons. High-frequency words can signal importance within the context of the sermon, or song. Therefore, when counselors understand which words are incorporated by pastors and lyricists and why the words are being used, the clinician can develop a greater appreciation for their Black clients by understanding important themes and topics.

Future research can also explore specific Protestant denominations (e.g. Baptists, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.) to determine how pastors affiliated with the denominations use words to connect with congregants and emphasize perspectives. Understanding this information and incorporating it into clinical sessions increases cultural competence because all Black clients will not be Baptists, and all White clients will not be Lutheran or Presbyterian. Therefore, mental health clinicians can obtain greater awareness of the similarities and differences among their Black clients by exploring corpus linguistics relating to specific denominations. Further research can explore geographical determinants of linguistic behavior within the same denomination. Keiser and Hartman (2012) explored linguistics relating

to the correlation of linguistic behavior and geographical location. However, research exploring correlations between linguistic behavior and geographically-based linguistic behavior has not been found. For example, the topic of linguistic differences between Baptist pastors and congregants in North Carolina versus Baptist pastors and congregants in New York can be explored. Or research around linguistic similarities between Lutheran pastors and congregants in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Exploring this information may provide clinicians a greater level of comfort when building rapport with their clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle in divergent locations within the United States.

An additional direction for further research would be to study linguistic changes of liturgical language over time. The benefit of this research is that language can be generational so older individuals who ascribe to a lifestyle of spirituality might use different lexical patterns than younger individuals who ascribe to a spiritual lifestyle. For example, older individuals might use terms such as “holiness” or “sanctify,” whereas a younger individual might use “blessings” or “my life,” depending on which terms are more relevant to the community and their relationship with their creator.

Implications for Future Practice

Implications for future practice are discussed to provide a framework for clinicians to begin to feel comfortable broaching the topic of spirituality/religion with their Black clients. This is an important skill to grasp because of the impact spirituality may have in the lives of Black clients. The research studies presented here revealed significant words and their possible meanings within the Black community.

The first study revealed that Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle are not reticent about discussing racial/ethnic issues with those with whom they feel comfortable. In

churches where Black pastors lead a Black congregation, issues of race/ethnicity are commonly discussed because the issues are pertinent to the communities the pastors and congregants occupy. Challenges associated with social justice, economic, legal, and political issues are commonly discussed among Black congregations. Therefore, culturally competent mental health clinicians must be willing to explore these topics with their Black clients from an empathetic stance. Another clinical implication is related to linguistic style matching between the counselor and the client. Such matching is a known marker of working alliance (Aafjes-van Doorn et al., 2020; Borelli et al., 2019). As Aafjes-van Doorn et al. (2020) clearly noted, counselors are responsible to notice when they are matched to their clients and when they are not. The results of this study can assist counselors to engage and maintain working alliance with Black clients for whom spirituality is a ground for worldview.

The second study explored the significance of music lyrics and how the lyrics might impact clinical sessions with Black clients. Although specific words were cited that hold significance with Black clients, there was also the theme of collectivism. The Black experience in America has historically demanded a collectivistic worldview because it has been necessary for the survival of the Black race in America. This information is confirmed by the work of Coon and Kemmelmeier (2001) who completed a meta-analysis study wherein African Americans (and Asian Americans) scored higher than European Americans on collectivism and explored the ethnic differences. For clinicians working with Black clients, it is important to view clients through the lens of the client's traditions, proverbs, religious beliefs, and oral traditions as affirmed by Nobles (1991) rather than using current methodology and theories that are created from a Western worldview.

Future Research Agenda

This research study was intriguing in so many ways. I learned how to create a corpus which was a new experience for me. Understanding how corpus linguistics can be applied to so many wonderful and exciting areas offered new ways of processing the church services I have participated in my entire life and the music I have spent my life listening to. Conducting a corpus linguistic study that explores how a single Black protestant pastor has changed linguistically over a period of time would be a next logical step. Also, creating a qualitative study exploring the sermonology of a small group of pastors to determine which words they prefer when creating their sermons would be an appropriate future research undertaking.

Additionally, it would be interesting to explore whether Black clients who do not align with a spiritual lifestyle use liturgical language to the same degree that Black clients who do align with a spiritual lifestyle do. Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2015) explored linguistic behavior with individuals who profess spirituality, but little research has been conducted with Black clients who do not profess spirituality to determine what liturgical language they use, if any. Perhaps having this information would inform mental health clinicians about the language their Black clients use in their everyday lives and the possible impact that spirituality might have on the Black community regardless of spiritual acknowledgement.

Conclusion

Demonstrating cultural competence means understanding and valuing cultures outside of one's own. It is not simply understanding that other cultures exist; it also incorporates understanding the importance and significance of that culture, especially to the people who are a part. To this end, the overarching purpose of this research study is to provide mental health clinicians with a starting point to begin to understand the culture of their Black clients. The

research studies presented here emphasized the linguistic practices of Black protestant pastors and Gospel music writers. The first study revealed that Black clients do not shy away from ethnicity-based conversations, while the second study provided words that resonate with Gospel music listeners. Both studies provide counselors with the foundational knowledge allowing them to begin incorporating specific words into clinical sessions, or at least feel comfortable when clients use liturgical language during clinical sessions. Future studies exploring the experiences of clinical sessions with Black clients who align with a spiritual lifestyle and how their linguistics influence clinical sessions are warranted if cultural competence is to continue to be the aim of counselors. This research holds relevance to this researcher and practicing clinician as an African American having grown up in the Baptist church in the southeastern United States. Additionally, the researcher is a listener of gospel music and has participated in multiple church choirs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Disposition

The title of this study is Black Sermonology and Gospel Music: A Corpus Based Study. This study meets the definition of research but does not involve human subjects under regulations set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services 45 CFR 46. Additionally, there is no funding source for this research. Due to the published nature of the material presented, information was not submitted to the Human Research Protection Program and International Review Board for consideration of oversight determination in the Research Office at Oregon State University.

Appendix B: Author Biography

Stacey Horne is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor in North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, NC. Her Master of Science degree in Community Agency Counseling was completed at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina where she was a Graduate Assistant to the Chair of the Counseling Department. Stacey is currently pursuing a doctorate in Counseling at Oregon State University. She now services as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Qualified Supervisor, an outpatient telehealth clinician, and a Licensed Care Coordinator at a local Managed Care Organization in North Carolina.