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**THE SPIRITUAL GRAMMAR OF IDENTIFICATION IN AFRICAN
PENTECOSTALISM IN NIGERIA**

Abstract. The concept of the Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) occupies an important place in the study of African Pentecostalism because it explains how religious language and spiritual practices shape both personal and collective identities. One of its major positive aspects is that it strengthens social cohesion and reinforces the sense of belonging among members of Pentecostal communities. Another important advantage is that the idea of a divine calling promotes moral responsibility, commitment, and dedication to religious leadership and service. However, an excessive emphasis on exclusive spiritual gifts and divine election may contribute to the formation of rigid hierarchical structures and social boundaries within religious communities, limiting inclusiveness and collective participation. Therefore, this article attempts to reveal the philosophical and social essence of the Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) and its role in the formation of religious identity in Nigerian African Pentecostalism.

Keywords: Spiritual Grammar, Social Identity, Pentecostalism in Nigeria, Call

INTRODUCTION

In the context of this study, Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) is conceptualised as a patterned system of religious languages, through which Pentecostal communities construct, communicate and regulate collective identities in their symbols, narratives, ritual expressions and relationships. These expressions

provide shared rules for recognising belonging, legitimising authority and distinguishing in-group members from outsiders. While grounded in theological claims and spiritual experience, SGI operates socially by translating spiritual meanings into stable identities, organising roles, expectations and boundaries within religious communities. This conceptualisation draws analytically on Social Identity Theory, which emphasises that group membership provides individuals with a sense of belonging, meaning and self-definition.[Turner, 1979,]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodological approach grounded in textual and discourse analysis. The research relies exclusively on observations, secondary data drawn from peer-reviewed journal works on Nigerian Pentecostalism, social identity and religious discourse. The Acts of the Apostles is engaged as a primary biblical text, analysed critically rather than devotionally, to establish a theological baseline for understanding the concept of ‘call’. This approach allows for the integration of theological analysis with sociological theory, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how spiritual concepts operate as socially productive mechanisms. The methodology enables a coherent examination of SGI as an interpretive framework for understanding religious identity formation.

Social Identity Theory (SIT), originally developed by Henri Tajfel and later expanded by John Turner and colleagues, provides the primary analytical framework for this study. SIT postulates that a significant portion of an individual’s self-concept is derived from perceived membership in social groups, together with the emotional and evaluative significance attached to that membership [Tajfel, 1982]. Group affiliation, in this sense, supplies individuals with meaning, belonging, and a basis for self-esteem. At the core of SIT are three interrelated processes: social categorisation, social identification and social comparison. Social categorisation involves the cognitive organisation of the social world into meaningful groups, simplifying complex social environments into recognisable categories. Social identification occurs when individuals internalise group membership as part of their self-definition, adopting group norms, values and symbols. Social comparison, therefore, reinforces group distinctiveness by evaluating the in-group relative to relevant out-groups, often in ways that preserve positive self-concept [Tajfel, 1982]. John Turner’s Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) further refines SIT by emphasising the situational activation of identity and the cognitive mechanisms through which group membership becomes salient. Turner argues that individuals shift between personal and social identities depending on context, and that when social identity becomes salient, behaviour is guided by perceived group norms rather than individual preference [Hogg, Terry, & White 1995]. This insight is particularly relevant for analysing religious communities, where ritual, language and leadership routinely activate collective identity and social relationships in the society.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Pentecostalism has emerged as one of the most influential expressions of Christianity in Nigeria, significantly shaping religious life, public culture and social relations. Scholars have noted that Nigerian Pentecostalism is characterised by doctrinal diversity, experiential emphasis and strong leadership-centred identities [Hogg, Terry, & White 1995]. Central to this religious expression is the strategic use of language, that is, sermons, confessions, testimonies, slogans and ritual speech, which functions not merely as communication but as a mechanism for identity formation and social differentiation. Within this linguistic universe, many Pentecostal churches become publicly identified with particular spiritual emphases such as healing, prophecy, prosperity, holiness and spiritual warfare. These emphases function as symbolic markers of communal identity and institutional distinctiveness. From a social identity perspective, such markers facilitate processes of categorisation and comparison, enabling believers to define who belongs, what is valued and how their group differs from others [Hogg, 2016,]. Although there is a lot of research on African Pentecostalism, most of it has been about charisma, institutional growth or leadership. The SGI examines the insufficiently analysed patterned linguistic processes whereby "call" operates as a systematic identity mechanism. It identifies that Nigerian Pentecostalism employs languages and slogans as a principal instrument for social differentiation and bonding. Biblical texts such as Acts of the Apostles and 1 Corinthians 12 are frequently quoted to authenticate Pentecostal claims regarding spiritual gifts and divine calling. In these texts, spiritual gifts are presented as diverse yet collectively oriented manifestations of the Spirit for the benefit of the community (1 Cor. 12:4-11). However, in contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism, these gifts are often selectively associated with specific leaders or ministries, producing more specialised and hierarchical identity structures.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills [Bible, Revised Standard Version, 1 Cor. 12:4–11]

One of the most prominent elements within this spiritual grammar is the concept of call. Individuals frequently identify, and are identified by others, as being "called," with such claims shaping leadership legitimacy, expectations and authority within Pentecostal communities. While this emphasis draws symbolically on early Christian narratives, it also functions as a powerful mechanism of social identification and boundary formation [Hogg, Adelman & Blagg, 2010,]. Despite

extensive scholarship on African Pentecostalism, relatively little attention has been paid to how ‘call’ operates as a structured identity mechanism rather than merely a theological doctrine or personal experience. Therefore, the study focuses on the patterned linguistic processes through which call functions as a grammar of identification through the lens of Social Identity Theory, which offers analytical tools for understanding how categorisation, belonging and social comparison have shaped religious identity [Tajfel, 1982, 24–26]. In the Acts of the Apostles, the concept of ‘call’ is presented not primarily as a private vocational claim but as a communal and Spirit-mediated process (which occurred primarily in the narratives of Pentecost) through which individuals are incorporated into God’s redemptive mission. ‘Call’ in Acts is consistently embedded within narratives of divine initiative, collective discernment and public validation, underscoring its fundamentally relational and social character. Rather than functioning as an individualistic marker of status, ‘call’ operates as a mechanism that integrates believers into a Spirit-formed community with shared purpose and identity. The replacement of Judas (Acts 1:21–26) illustrates this communal dimension of ‘call’. The criteria for selection emphasise shared experience with Jesus and participation in the apostolic witness, and the final decision is reached through prayer and communal discernment. This episode demonstrates that a call is inseparable from communal recognition and mission alignment. Identity in this context is not self-generated but confirmed through collective processes that establish legitimacy and belonging [Leonardelli, Pickett & Brewer, 2010,]. The calling of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1–19) further highlights the interplay between divine initiative and communal mediation. Although Saul’s encounter with the risen Christ is intensely personal, his incorporation into the Christian community requires the intervention of Ananias and the subsequent acceptance of the believers in Damascus. The narrative thus resists interpreting call as a purely private experience, but instead situating it within a network of relational validation and communal trust. From a social identity perspective, this process reflects the transition from out-group to in-group membership, facilitated through Spirit-guided recognition [Tajfel, & Turner, 1979, 34–36]. Acts 13:1–3 provides one of the clearest illustrations of collective calling in the early church. The setting apart of Barnabas and Saul occurs within a worshipping community engaged in fasting and prayer, where the Holy Spirit speaks to the group rather than to an isolated individual. The act of laying on of hands publicly affirms the call and situates it within communal authority structures. This episode underscores that the call in Acts functions as a social authorisation for mission, not merely as an internal sense of vocation [Martiny, & Rubin, 2016,]. The inclusion of Gentile believers (Acts 10-11; 15) further expands the scope of ‘call’ by redefining the boundaries of belonging. The reception of the Holy Spirit by Gentiles serves as divine validation that transcends ethnic and cultural distinctions, compelling the early church to renegotiate its identity boundaries. ‘Call’ in this context becomes a mechanism through which the community reconstitutes itself in response to divine action, illustrating the fluid and adaptive nature of early Christian identity[Zomerren, Leach & Spears, 2012,].

Collectively, these narratives indicate that “call” in Acts is fundamentally communal, missioned and Spirit-driven. The Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) among Nigerian Pentecostals manifests through distinctive linguistic expressions, symbolic labels, ritual practices and narrative frameworks. From a social identity perspective, such grammars operate as shared symbolic resources that enable categorisation, reinforce in-group belonging and sustain positive distinctiveness within a competitive religious environment [Ellemers & Haslam, 2012]. Nigerian Pentecostal churches are frequently identified by specific appellations, slogans, greetings, or ritual emphases that operate independently of formal denominational names, as we have in the mainline churches. These identifiers often emerge from founders’ call narratives, doctrinal emphases or charismatic reputations. As well observed, they function as condensed symbols through which complex theological and historical meanings are communicated. In this sense, SGI operates as a religious grammar: it provides implicit rules that govern how identity is named, recognised and reproduced within the community. A prominent illustration of SGI is found in the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), which is widely associated with the appellation *Olomi Iye* (Living Water). This identifier derives from the revivalist ministry and call narrative of Joseph Ayo Babalola, whose healing practices frequently employed water as a symbolic medium. According to historical accounts, Babalola received three symbolic items a bell, a rod and a bottle of water each representing dimensions of his apostolic mandate [Idowu, 2007,]. The water, in particular, came to symbolise the healing and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, a symbolism that has endured within CAC’s collective memory [Ayegboyin & Ishola, 2013,]. The water functioned as a visible sign of divine power and restoration within the CAC revival movement, and its continuous use has become a collective identity marker that links contemporary members to a foundational sacred past. Through this SGI, members affirm continuity, spiritual legitimacy and communal belonging. Besides, it is noteworthy to mention that the book for daily devotional reading of Christ Apostolic Church is named “Living Water”. Still within the apostolic tradition, The Apostolic Church of Nigeria (TACN) uses *Omo iran Ologo* (“Child of Glorious Vision”) as an SGI, connecting members to a shared foundational vision. Similarly, CAC Agbala Itura (Vineyard of Comfort), associated with Samuel Kayode Abiara, employs SGIs Agbala Itura (Vineyard of Comfort), and *Ojo kii ro gbigbona* (Rain does not emit hot water”, symbolising divine assurance, peace and covenantal protection.

Similarly, the Living Faith Church Worldwide is commonly identified as Winners Chapel, while its adherents are referred to as Winners. This linguistic identity encapsulates the church’s theological emphasis on victory, dominion and success, translating doctrinal commitments into everyday self-description. From the standpoint of Social Identity Theory, such labelling fosters positive self-evaluation and reinforces collective self-esteem by embedding success-oriented meanings within group identity [Martiny & Rubin, 2016]. Other Nigerian Pentecostal examples further illustrate the diversity of SGIs. Living Spring Chapel,

led by Femi Emmanuel, is identified by the slogan “I Love My Pastor,” emphasising affective loyalty and relational leadership. In the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), founded by Samuel Bilewu Oshoffa, the greeting “Hallelujah” operates as a primary SGI. This simple yet powerful expression serves as an immediate identifier of membership, collapsing formal introductions into a shared spiritual code. The repetitive use of Hallelujah signals communal belonging and reinforces the church’s liturgical and cosmological worldview. Comparable greeting-based SGIs are also observable among various strands of the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) movement, where appellations such as Eternal Sacred Order, Holy Order and slogans like Ayo ni o (“It is joy”) serve as affective and relational identity markers that foster trust and familiarity among adherents. These linguistic practices align with what Social Identity Theory describes as identity enactment, whereby group membership is continuously performed and reaffirmed through routine interaction [Hogg, 2016,]. The Church of the Lord (Aladura), founded by Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu, as well observed, illustrates how SGIs can become so deeply entrenched that they transcend their original linguistic form. Although Aladura literally translates as “praying people”, the term has evolved into a primary identity marker that immediately signals theological orientation, worship style and historical lineage. Efforts to translate or replace the term have had limited success, underscoring the durability of SGI once it becomes socially embedded. Some SGIs originate not from official institutional designation but from broader social perception. The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM), for instance, is popularly associated with phrases such as ‘By Fire, By Force’, reflecting its aggressive prayer vocabulary and spiritual warfare theology. Although not formally codified as doctrinal labels, these expressions have become dominant identity markers that shape both internal expectations and external perceptions of the movement. This process exemplifies positive distinctiveness, as groups cultivate recognisable symbolic traits that differentiate them from religious competitors [Hogg, Adelman & Blagg, 2010, p 75] . Institutionally expansive churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) also deploy SGI through liturgical phraseology. The expression “Let somebody shout Hallelujah”, associated with Pastor Enoch Adeboye, has become a widely recognised marker of RCCG identity, replicated across congregations globally. Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT) employs “Gospel” as its SGI, reflecting its evangelistic mandate as indicated in the name, while members of Deeper Life Bible Church are frequently identified simply as Deeper, reinforcing moral and doctrinal expectations. SGIs also extend to leadership personas, where founders themselves become symbolic condensations of group identity. Titles, nicknames and slogans associated with charismatic leaders serve to personalise institutional identity and anchor communal meaning in recognisable figures. Such personalisation of identity reinforces hierarchical distinctions within Pentecostal communities while simultaneously strengthening collective loyalty and coherence [Hogg, Knippenberg & Rast III, 2012,]. An example of this could be seen in the Christ Apostolic Church, founded by Michael Ojo Olowere. The church is

nicknamed Church Olowere to distinguish it from other Christ Apostolic Churches despite the fact that it operates under the general Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria and Overseas. Collectively, these examples demonstrate that SGI among Nigerian Pentecostals is not merely decorative or rhetorical but constitutes a structured system of meaning that regulates belonging, authority and moral expectation. By translating spiritual claims into shared linguistic and symbolic forms, SGI enables Pentecostal communities to stabilise identity, maintain boundaries and reproduce themselves across time and social contexts. In this way, SGI functions as a practical outworking of Social Identity Theory within Nigerian Pentecostal Christianity, embedding theological language within durable social structures.

Pentecostals learn to speak the Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) through sustained processes of religious socialisation that are embedded in everyday church life. These processes are neither incidental nor spontaneous; rather, they are structured through teaching, repetition, symbolic reinforcement and mediated communication. From the perspective of Social Identity Theory, such learning reflects identity internalisation, whereby individuals adopt group-specific symbols, language and meanings as part of their self-concept [Ellemers & Haslam, 2012]. One primary avenue through which SGI is learnt is doctrinal and narrative instruction. In many Nigerian Pentecostal churches, SGIs are explicitly explained through avenues like sermons, leadership teachings and institutional histories that recount founders' call narratives or divine encounters. These narratives provide theological justification for particular identity markers and establish them as divinely authorised rather than merely human inventions. In the Christ Apostolic Church, for example, repeated retellings of the Great Revivalist, Joseph Ayo Babalola's call and revival experiences function pedagogically (Babalola Olomi Iye, meaning Babalola, the User of healing water), enabling members to associate Olomi Iye with healing, restoration and continuity of divine power [Idowu, 2007, 54–59.]. Incessant repetition plays a crucial role in the acquisition of SGI. Slogans, greetings and identity phrases are embedded within liturgical practices such as call-and-response prayers, congregational chants, prophetic declarations and sermon refrains. Through constant repetition, these linguistic forms become normalised and eventually adopted as habitual expressions of identity. Social Identity Theory suggests that such repeated enactment reinforces group salience, ensuring that religious identity remains cognitively and emotionally accessible during social interaction [Hogg, 2016,].

Material and visual culture further facilitates the learning of SGI by translating abstract identity claims into tangible forms. Churches frequently display slogans, symbols and identity phrases on banners, posters, altars, face caps, pens and architectural spaces. Additionally, branded objects such as stickers, wristbands, vehicle decals and devotional materials extend SGI into everyday life beyond the church space. Meyer (2004) notes that such materialisation of religious symbols strengthens affective attachment and renders identity publicly visible,

thereby reinforcing both internal belonging and external recognition [Meyer, 2004, 33, 453–456.].

Music constitutes another significant pedagogical medium through which SGI is learnt and transmitted. Pentecostal worship songs often incorporate key slogans, theological emphases, and identity markers, allowing complex ideas to be absorbed through rhythm, repetition and embodied participation. In the Christ Apostolic Church, songs celebrating healing water and revival memory reinforce Olomi Iye as a lived identity rather than a historical abstraction [Marshall, 2009, 89–92.]. Through music, SGI becomes emotionally charged and communally shared, deepening its internalisation. In contemporary Nigeria, digital media has become an increasingly important channel for learning SGI. Sermon clips, live-streamed services, social media posts and messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram circulate identity phrases far beyond physical church spaces. These mediated forms accelerate dissemination, normalise usage and allow members to perform identity in virtual environments. Ojo observes that Pentecostal media culture plays a crucial role in sustaining collective identity across geographic and social boundaries [Marshall, 2009, p. 89].² Through these processes, SGI is continuously reproduced and adapted within both physical and digital religious spaces. The Spiritual Grammar of Identification (SGI) moves from the spiritual to the social through claims of divine origin that are subsequently embodied in everyday practices, expectations and social relations. In Nigerian Pentecostalism, SGIs are frequently presented as revelations received through visions, prophecy, prayer or direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These claims frame SGIs as divinely sanctioned, granting them moral authority and symbolic legitimacy within the community. Once articulated, they are interpreted, taught and enacted in ways that shape observable behaviour and social identity [Kehily, 2009].

This process of translation involves what can be described as the embodiment of spiritual language. Identity phraseology such as “Winners” within Living Faith Church functions not merely as confessional statements but as normative expectations that members demonstrate success, excellence and dominion in everyday life. In this way, spiritual identity claims become behavioural scripts that guide conduct, aspiration and self-presentation. Social Identity Theory explains this process as the alignment of individual behaviour with perceived group norms, reinforcing cohesion and collective distinctiveness [Ellemers & Haslam, 2012].

SGIs also shape institutional structures and leadership hierarchies by legitimising authority through spiritual language. Leaders who successfully align their personal narratives with recognised patterns of divine calling are perceived as authentic and credible, reinforcing asymmetrical power relations within Pentecostal communities. This dynamic illustrates how SGI contributes to boundary formation between clergy and laity, even within theological frameworks that emphasise spiritual equality and inequality of the members. Hogg notes that

² [Ojo, 2006, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria*, Africa World Press, 214-218.]

identity-based leadership gains legitimacy when leaders are seen as prototypical representatives of group values [Hogg, Knippenberg, & Rast, III, 2012, p262].

Beyond internal organisation, SGIs influence how Pentecostal communities are recognised and engaged within wider Nigerian society. Identity markers such as aggressive prayer language, prosperity-oriented confessions or holiness slogans shape public perceptions and social interactions. These externally visible identifiers allow Pentecostal groups to position themselves within Nigeria's multi religious landscape, facilitating both attraction and differentiation. Van Zomeren, Leach and Spears argue that such identity expressions play a crucial role in mobilising collective orientation and sustaining group commitment [Zomeren, Leach & Spears, 2012,]. Through these processes, SGI operates as a mediating mechanism that translates spiritual meaning into social reality. Pentecostal worship is no longer just about "going to heaven"; it is about identifying as spiritual groups on Nigerian soil to effect social change. It links divine narratives to everyday practice, personal identity to collective belonging and theological language to institutional structure. In doing so, SGI demonstrates how religious discourse functions not only as belief but as a socially productive grammar that organises identity, authority and community within Nigerian Pentecostalism.

In Nigerian Pentecostalism, the discourse of call operates as a central mechanism through which boundaries are constructed. While Pentecostal theology often emphasises the priesthood of all believers, the practical deployment of call narratives frequently produces clear distinctions between leaders and followers as authority is legitimised. Through SGI, 'call' becomes a linguistic and symbolic resource that differentiates roles, ranks spiritual authority and structures participation within the religious community. Social Identity Theory helps to explain how these boundaries are formed and sustained. Call narratives function as categorisation devices, distinguishing those who are divinely authorised to lead from those whose role is primarily to follow. Once these categories are established, identification processes encourage members to assume their respective positions, aligning expectations and behaviour with perceived group norms [Tajfel, & Turner, 1979, 34–36]. Over time, these distinctions become normalised and embedded within institutional structures.

The success of the authority of Pentecostal leaders is often reinforced through alignment with recognised patterns of divine calling. Leaders who successfully narrate their experiences in ways that conform to the established SGIs are more readily accepted as authentic and spiritually credible. This process reflects what Hogg describes as prototypical leadership, where authority is grounded in perceived representativeness of group identity rather than formal credentials alone [Hogg, 2016, In McKeown, R. Haji, & N. Ferguson (Eds.), 2016, p 12]. Through such narratives, leaders embody the group's defining spiritual grammar, strengthening their legitimacy. Boundary formation through SGI also extends beyond internal hierarchy to shape relations with other religious groups and the wider society. Pentecostal identity markers such as aggressive prayer language, prosperity confessions and holiness slogans serve as signals of

difference that distinguish Pentecostal communities from mainline Christian denominations and other religious traditions. These distinctions reinforce in-group cohesion while simultaneously producing clear out-group boundaries, consistent with processes of social comparison identified within SIT [Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, in Lange, Kruglanski, & Higgins (Eds.), p 385]

Theoretical insights from Duderija's discussion of religious identity construction further illuminate this process. Although his analysis focuses on a different religious context, Duderija demonstrates how religious identities are discursively produced through boundary-setting narratives that define authenticity and belonging [Duderija, 2008]. Applied analytically, this framework helps to clarify how Pentecostal call discourse functions to regulate inclusion, exclude competing claims to authority and stabilise leadership hierarchies without direct reference to formal institutional controls. Through SGI, 'call' becomes more than a theological assertion; it operates as a social instrument that organises power, belonging, and moral expectation. By embedding authority claims within spiritual language, Pentecostal communities naturalise hierarchy and boundary distinctions, rendering them resistant to challenge. This dynamic illustrates how SGI translates spiritual concepts into durable social structures and acceptable societal ethics, reinforcing identity and cohesion within Nigerian Pentecostalism while simultaneously differentiating it from competing religious formations. Hogg observes that religious groups function as high-salience identity contexts because they provide comprehensive meaning systems that structure belief, behaviour, and belonging [Hogg, 2016]. Applied to Nigerian Pentecostalism, Social Identity Theory illuminates how spiritual language operates as a mechanism of group formation and boundary maintenance. Identity markers such as slogans, greetings and call narratives serve as tools of categorisation and identification, enabling members to recognise one another and affirm collective belonging and willingness to render help necessary, no matter how difficult the situation. Through repeated enactment, these symbols become internalised, shaping both self-understanding and social behavior [Ellemers & Haslam, 2012]. However, going by the immediate point above, Pentecostal SGI has caused a theological split. This theological competition in Nigerian Pentecostalism is obvious in the conflict between Prosperity Theology and Holiness (Ascetic) Theology. Each uses a different SGI to get and keep members. The prosperity SGI used by some churches is all about "dominion," "breakthrough" and "favour". Success to these churches, like Winners Chapel, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), The Redeemed Evangelical Missions (TREM) and many others, is not only a blessing but also a sign of spiritual identity. Members "speak success" to set themselves apart from the "suffering" crowd. However, holiness SGI, supported by groups like the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, stresses "purity", "separation" and "the narrow way". This leads to a "spiritual ethnicity" in which members set themselves apart by following rigorous rules of behaviour and modest dress up. These sets of "prosperity-focused" churches are perceived to be worldly or compromised, they criticise them or try not to have anything to do with them or do

fewer things with them, physically and spiritually. In spiritual terms, the SGI encourages "over-fraternisation", which makes members see people who do not share their "grammar" as "spiritual strangers" or "infants in the faith". Furthermore, politically, SGIs have given room for alternative State formation. Since the government has often failed to provide welfare and security needed by the masses, Pentecostal churches use their SGI to present themselves as an "alternative state," thereby providing, in their capacity, security, shelter and social infrastructures needed. These provisions are most times preference for the use of their members. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed: Additional investigations involving interdisciplinary research should connect SGI with Nigerian psychology to elucidate how this "grammar" facilitates mental health and trauma processing within the church. Furthermore, comparative studies across African and global Pentecostal movements are recommended to examine how SGI varies across cultural, institutional and theological contexts. This would help to assess the transferability and analytical robustness of SGI as a conceptual framework. Pentecostal churches should not use the effect of their different SGIs to dislodge from the expected ecumenical roles under Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, which are twin umbrellas for Pentecostal churches under the Christian Association of Nigeria. Finally, scholars of religion and identity are encouraged to apply the concept of SGI beyond Pentecostalism, exploring its relevance for understanding identity formation in other religious traditions where language, ritual and symbolic systems play a central role.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the concept of call as a central element of the Spiritual Grammar of Identification within Nigerian Pentecostalism, drawing on the Acts of the Apostles and Social Identity Theory as complementary interpretive lenses. The analysis demonstrates that call functions not merely as a theological claim or personal experience but also as a socially operative grammar that structures identity, authority and belonging within Pentecostal communities. By establishing a biblical baseline from Acts, the study shows that early Christian understandings of call were fundamentally communal, Spirit-mediated and mission-oriented. In contrast, contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism often deploys call discourse in more individualised and specialised ways, contributing to leadership legitimisation, institutional differentiation and boundary formation. Through SGI, spiritual language becomes a mechanism through which religious meaning is translated into durable social structures. The application of Social Identity Theory provides critical insight into these processes, revealing how categorisation, identification and social comparison are embedded within Pentecostal discourse. SGI emerges as the symbolic infrastructure through which these identity processes are enacted, sustained and reproduced. In advancing SGI as an analytical framework, the study contributes to African Pentecostal scholarship by bridging theology, discourse analysis and social theory. While the

study is limited by its reliance on existing literature rather than empirical fieldwork, its conceptual contribution lies in clarifying how spiritual language functions as a grammar of identification. By foregrounding SGI, the study opens new avenues for examining religious identity formation beyond doctrinal belief, emphasising the social productivity of religious discourse.

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ДУХОВНАЯ ГРАММАТИКА ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИИ В АФРИКАНСКОМ ПЯТИДЕСЯТНИЧЕСТВЕ В НИГЕРИИ

Аннотация. Концепция Духовной грамматики идентификации (SGI) занимает важное место в исследовании африканского пятидесятничества, поскольку позволяет объяснить, каким образом религиозный язык и духовные практики формируют личностную и коллективную идентичность. Одним из её важных достоинств является укрепление социальной сплочённости и чувства принадлежности членов пятидесятнических общин. Другим положительным аспектом выступает то, что идея божественного призвания способствует развитию нравственной ответственности и мотивации к религиозному служению. Вместе с тем чрезмерное акцентирование внимания на исключительных духовных дарах и особом божественном избрании может способствовать формированию жёсткой иерархии и социальных границ внутри религиозных сообществ, ограничивая открытость и коллективное участие. В связи с этим в данной статье предпринята попытка раскрыть философское и социальное значение Духовной грамматики идентификации (SGI) и её роль в формировании религиозной идентичности в нигерийском африканском пятидесятничестве.

Ключевые слова: духовная грамматика, социальная идентичность, пятидесятничество в Нигерии, призвание.

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NIGERIYADAGI AFRIKA PENTEKOSTALIZMIDA IDENTIFIKATSIYANING MA'NAVIY GRAMMATIKASI

Annotatsiya. Identifikatsiyaning ma'naviy grammatikasi (SGI) konsepsiyasi Afrika pentekostalizmini o'rganishda muhim ahamiyatga ega, chunki u diniy til va ruhiy amaliyotlarning shaxsiy hamda jamoaviy o'zlikni qanday shakllantirishini tushuntirishga yordam beradi. Uning asosiy ijobiy jihatlaridan biri pentekostal jamoalarda ijtimoiy birdamlik va o'zaro daxldorlik tuyg'usini mustahkamlashidir. Yana bir ijobiy tomoni shundaki, ilohiy da'vat g'oyasi diniy yetakchilik va xizmat faoliyatida axloqiy mas'uliyat hamda fidoyilikni kuchaytiradi. Biroq ayrim ruhiy in'omlar va alohida ilohiy tanlanganlikka ortiqcha urg'u berilishi diniy jamoalar ichida qat'iy iyerarxik tuzilmalar hamda ijtimoiy chegaralarning yuzaga kelishiga sabab bo'lishi, bu esa xilma-xillik va jamoaviy ishtirok imkoniyatlarini cheklashi mumkin. Shu bois ushbu maqolada Identifikatsiyaning ma'naviy grammatikasi (SGI)ning falsafiy va ijtimoiy mohiyati hamda uning Nigeriyadagi Afrika pentekostalizmida diniy identiklikni shakllantirishdagi o'rnini ochib berishga harakat qilingan.

Kalit so'zlar: ma'naviy grammatika, ijtimoiy identiklik, Nigeriyadagi pentekostalizm, ilohiy da'vat.

