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EXPLORING I-YOU INDEXICALS IN GHANAIAN CHURCH MUSIC

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Abstract
Indexicals are important to contextual inference and generally, in semantic interpretation (Hanks, 1999). The present study set out to examine the use of the I-You indexical pronouns in Ghanaian Church Music. It was revealed that the I-Y spheres of the indexicals received relative frequencies of 4.55% and 3.35% in the data. Again, the study showed various referents of the I-You indexicals and their implication in the data based on their contextual and co-textual cues. The study extends knowledge on the subject of indexicality.

Keywords: church music, Ghana, indexicality, indexicals, pronouns

Introduction
Indexicality as one of the universal features of human language (Hanks, 1999) has been examined and interrogated by various scholars in the field of language and linguistics. Silverstein (1976) defines indexicality as the aspects of a person's identity that are not static but rather constructed through the use of language. Similarly, Braun (1995) believes that it is a verbal statement whose meaning alters based on the environment. Moreover, Stojanovic (2020) postulates that indexicality is a context-based linguistic situation. One recurring theme in these definitions leans on the understanding that indexicality wholly depends on the context or situation of utterance. It can therefore be seen as a linguistic expression that may have different referents in different contexts. For instance, two different speakers who may use the indexical pronouns *I* and *you*, which are paradigmatic, in a sentence may be communicating different things. Thus, the indexicals could pick out a different speaker and addressee as well as a different object in different situations of utterance. Indexicality therefore can be explained as a special kind of context dependence. Generally, indexicals have two kinds of meaning – *linguistic or character meaning* and *content meaning* (Villena, 2018; Kaplan, 1989). Though an indexical possesses a single constant character or linguistic meaning, it may vary in its content from context to context.

Various scholars have examined and classified indexicals according to how their references and contents are identified in context. For example, Kaplan (1989) classifies them as pure indexicals and true demonstratives. He notes that while the content and reference of the true demonstrative are specified by the gestures or

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intentions of the speaker, they are not specified or determined by the same in the case of pure indexicals. The content and the object of *that*, a true demonstrative, are in part determined by the speaker's demonstration or intention of showing a specific item. On the other hand, *I*, a pure indexical, has its reference as the speaker no matter the context in which it is used. Villena (2018, p. 2) notes thus:

> Determining the reference of "I" involves necessarily ascribing a context of utterance to the expression, namely in the case of "I" we need only determine the speaker of the expression to determine the referent.

Perry (1997; 2001) posits some types of indexicals: automatic and discretionary indexicals, and narrow and wide indexicals. Automatic indexicals, such as *"I"* and "*Tomorrow"*, have references that are determined by their linguistic meaning and contextual facts. Such contextual facts are the speaker, in the case of *I*, and the day of the utterance, in the case of *tomorrow*. Unlike their counterpart, the discretionary indexicals have their references determined by the intentions of the speaker (examples include, *he*, *she*, and *that*). Perpendicularly, the references of narrow indexicals are determined by the speaker, time, or location (*narrow contexts*) whereas that of the wide indexicals are specified by contextual items such as the intentions of the speaker and the assumptions of the communicative participants (*wide contexts*). Indexicals are utilized in our everyday communications as humans. For Hanks (1999, p. 125), they are "crucial to contextual inference, reflexivity, and semantic interpretation more generally". Considering the semantic role of indexicals in human communication, the present study sets out to examine the use of indexical pronouns, *I* and *You*, in Ghanaian Church Music.

Church music – for example, hymns, chants, canticles, psalms, and carols – is one such form that Christians enjoy as a form of prayer. Early missionary worship in Ghana favored the limited number of educated elites because of the Westernisation of the worship. Therefore, traditional forms of worship such as singing and dancing were the sole means of spiritual fulfilment for the poor or illiterate (Agordoh, 2000). To encourage the converts to be part of the missionary worship, various hymns, and Christian songs were translated into the local languages for their use in worship (Atiemo, 2006). Today, Ghanaian Christian melodies have become more popular in Charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox Churches for mass or service, evangelism, and other religious events (Agbezoelie, 2014). Most Ghanaian Christian songs have their texts found in the bible – hence they speak of timeless and universal truths (Agordoh, 2000). Such songs transmit Christian values, beliefs, doctrines, and teachings to their listeners.

Personal pronouns, such as *"I"* and *"You"*, have been studied by various scholars in areas of language use, such as in academic lectures (Friginal, Lee & Robertson 2017; Akoto 2020; Akoto, Oppong-Asare & Fordjour 2021; Akoto, Amoakohene & Oppong-Asare, 2021; Akoto & Afful 2022; Akoto, 2023), speeches (Bennet, 1995; Chen & Hu, 2022) and literary works (Balossi, 2014), because of their roles in indicating the speakers' and interlocuters' level of engagement, commitment, and connection in discourses (Akoto, Oppong-Asare, & Fordjour, 2021a; Akoto & Afful, 2022). In this study, we, primarily, examine the semantic implications of the indexical pronouns, *I* and *You*, in Ghanaian Church music – one

of the aspects of the life of the Ghanaian people that they cherish. To realize this overarching objective, the following research questions were answered:

1. How frequently have the indexical pronouns *I* and *You* been used in Ghanaian Church Music?
2. What are the various referents of the indexical pronouns *I* and *You* in Ghanaian Church Music?

Method

Data Selection Procedure

The researchers purposively sampled thirty (30) musical scores (music sheets) of Church music authored in English by Ghanaian composers. Considering the focus of this study, the lyrics of the sampled scores were examined. The thirty (30) music constitute choral anthems, carols, hymns, and psalms written by popular Ghanaian composers: Newlove Kojo Annan, James Varrick Armaah, George Mensah Essilfie, Alfred Patrick Addaquay, Ohene Adu-Nti, Amos Tetteh-Attaah, J. H. Tachie Menson, W. K. Tamakloe, David Osei Opoku, Y. J. B. Danquah, and Albert Adusei Dua.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the *"I"* and *"You"* indexicals are investigated in two ways. The study begins with a statistical examination of the dyad pronouns as they appear in the data, followed by a qualitative description of them. This highlights the semantic interpretation of the pronouns' referents. The I-sphere refers to the composer and all other entities to whom the composer directs as the utterance's addresser. The You-sphere, on the other hand, refers to the objects or persons that the composers point to and the listeners of the utterances. These enable the researchers to examine the interpersonal changes – for example, where "I" refers to the addressee and "You" is the addresser. The statistical analysis was conducted through computer-mediated software, the Wmatrix POS (Part-of-Speech) Tool (Rayson, 2008; 2003).

The linguistic components (lyrics) were manually extracted from the music sheets and inserted into Microsoft Word after data collection. This was later transferred to Wmatrix 5.0 for the statistical analysis of the pronominal forms. The Wmatrix 5.0 was used because it recognizes the genitive (i.e., the – s' in the possessive singular and the apostrophe in the possessive plural), the suffix for the past form 'd' (e.g., ask'd), the shortened or contracted form of the third person singular pronoun 't' (e.g., "What is 't"), and dashes (e.g., '- -'). It also analyses ancient pronominal forms like 'thou,' 'ye,' and 'thy' and assigns them to the proper Part of Speech. Other pronominal forms related to the I-sphere and the Y-sphere were added to the I-Y pronouns to classify them. This is seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. I-Y spheres

I-sphere	You-sphere
I	you
my	thy
mine	thee
myself	your
me	thine
	thyself
	yourself
	yourself
	ye

Before putting the e-text into Wmatrix5.0 for automated processing, the researchers inserted angle brackets around the title of the music and names of the composers (e.g. <Lo, He comes by Newlove Kojo Annan> so that they would be ignored. Following these changes, the Parts of Speech output was transferred into Excel for post-editing of the following cases: The genitive singular and plural were not counted as a single token. The past tense suffix 'd' was also not counted as a token (for example, 'd' in ask'd).

Following the statistical analysis, the researchers employed the concordance tool in AntConc3.5.9 (Anthony, 2015) to scan the corpus for *I* and *You* pronouns. According to Baker et al. (2008), using the concordance analysis allows the researcher to investigate linguistic forms in co-text whereas the researcher accounts for the context in which he/she is aware and may infer from the co-text. We then manually evaluated each occurrence to identify (1) whether it is a pronoun as in 'I' in the contracted form of the subject and verb 'I've' and 'I'm,' and (2) who or what the pronouns refer to. To determine their referents, all examples of the I-sphere and You-sphere, as well as their variations, were searched and studied. The contextual and co-textual information surrounding the pronouns were used to determine the discourse referents. To gain contextual and linguistic cues, the researchers closely studied the concordance lines of each of the pronouns, guided by the collocating verbs linked with the pronoun. This is because Ädel (2006) finds that contextual hints in data typically indicate something about the scope of a pronoun.

Findings and Discussion

Statistical Analysis

An examination of the Parts of Speech (POS) automated output of the data, composed of the full language of music, created using Wmatrix5.0 indicates that the pronouns 'my,' 'you', 'me', 'I,' and 'they' are among the most often appearing function words as seen in Figure 1 below (see Burrows, 1987).

Word	POS	Frequency	Relative Frequency	
the	AT	111	5.72	Concordance
and	CC	66	3.40	Concordance
of	IO	62	3.20	Concordance
is	VBZ	50	2.58	Concordance
my	APPGE	38	1.96	Concordance
our	APPGE	34	1.75	Concordance
lord	NN1	31	1.60	Concordance
to	II	27	1.39	Concordance
you	PPY	26	1.34	Concordance
he	PPHS1	26	1.34	Concordance
in	II	26	1.34	Concordance
all	DB	26	1.34	Concordance
his	APPGE	25	1.29	Concordance
me	PPIO1	23	1.19	Concordance
i	PPIS1	23	1.19	Concordance
we	PPIS2	22	1.13	Concordance
to	TO	22	1.13	Concordance
joy	NN1	21	1.08	Concordance
great	JJ	20	1.03	Concordance
on	II	20	1.03	Concordance
thy	APPGE	20	1.03	Concordance
god	NN1	18	0.93	Concordance
him	PPHO1	16	0.82	Concordance
God	NP1	16	0.82	Concordance
for	IF	14	0.72	Concordance
us	PPIO2	14	0.72	Concordance
peace	NN1	14	0.72	Concordance
let	VV0	13	0.67	Concordance
glory	NN1	12	0.62	Concordance
o	ZZ1	12	0.62	Concordance

Summary information:

Number of types shown: 540
Total frequency of types shown: 1940 (100.00%)
Total frequency overall: 1940

Number of items shown with a given frequency:

Frequency	Types	Tokens
1	296 (54.81%)	296 (15.26%)
2	98 (18.15%)	196 (10.10%)
3	38 (7.04%)	114 (5.88%)
4	32 (5.93%)	128 (6.60%)
5	13 (2.41%)	65 (3.35%)
6	6 (1.11%)	36 (1.86%)
7	4 (0.74%)	28 (1.44%)
8	5 (0.93%)	40 (2.06%)
9	2 (0.37%)	18 (0.93%)
10	7 (1.30%)	70 (3.61%)
> 10	39 (7.22%)	949 (48.92%)

Figure 1. Frequency of POS obtained through Wmatrix5.0

The inclusion of these pronouns indicates the presence of a foregrounded linguistic aspect, which may be related to the unity of the prayer contact between the I-addresser and the Y-addressee. When all additional pronominal forms belonging to the I-sphere are included, the high frequency of I-Y pronouns among the top 30 terms is statistically significant. The pronoun 'we,' for example, refers to more than one person, including the speaker. These pronominal forms are classed as part of the I-sphere for simplicity and clarity. Table 2 displays the frequencies and relative frequencies of all pronouns in the I-Y dyad.

Table 2. I-Y sphere of pronominal forms frequency and relative frequencies

I - sphere	Frequency	Relative freq.	You - sphere	Frequency	Relative freq.
I	23	1.19	you	26	1.34
My	38	1.96	ye	5	0.26
Mine	4	0.21	your	5	0.26
Myself	0	0.00	yours	0	0.00
Me	23	1.19	yourself	7	0.00
Total	88	4.55	thy	20	1.03
			thyself	0	3.35
			thine	0	0.00
			thou	2	0.10
			thee	7	0.36
Total items	1,940		Total	65	3.35

As illustrated in Table 2, the I-Y spheres reflect the relative frequency of occurrence in the data. Overall, the I-sphere has a relative frequency of 4.55%, whereas the Y-sphere has a frequency of 3.35%. The we-sphere, which has been classified as an I-sphere since its referents include the speaker, has likewise seen an increase in frequency in the data.

Table 3. Frequencies and relative frequencies of the we-sphere

We-sphere	**Frequency**	**Relative freq.**
We	22	1.13
Us	14	0.72
Our	34	1.75
Ours		
Total	70	3.6

The composer and other entities, who serve as the subjects of the discourse, and the addressers, to whom the composer and other individuals identify, are praying. This contributes to the we-sphere's predominance. The pronoun 'us,' for example, refers to the composer and other worshipers, but the second-person pronoun 'you,' refers to the addressee and object. It is observed from the distribution that although the we-sphere occurs several times, the I-sphere garnered a 4.55 relative frequency. This presupposes that Christians see themselves as a unit as identified with the we-sphere. Prayer is mostly an interpersonal relationship between the individual and the addressee, thus, the occurrence of a lot of the first-person pronouns. These pronouns are used to personalize the prayer and also persuade the addressee to do the bidding of the one praying.

Semantic interpretation of the pronouns

The researchers, after the statistical analysis, run the data through the concordance software to determine the referents of the pronouns used in the text. Particular attention was given to the context and co-text of the pronouns to determine their referents.

I-sphere Referents

According to Benveniste (1971), the first-person pronoun 'I' occurs in the instance of the speaker, therefore each time 'I' is used, it has a singular and definite referent; the speaker. The speakers in this study are recognized as the respective composers of the music.

I for addresser (composer)

The composers mainly reference themselves in their work. This is shown in the usage of the first-person pronoun 'I,' as well as other self-mentioning pronouns such as "my", "me", "mine", and "myself" to denote oneself throughout the corpus. The concordance analysis demonstrates that lexical verbs such as "love," "bring", "rejoice", "know", "sing", and the verb 'to be' frequently co-occur with 'I' for the composer. The context and co-text of the I-sphere indicate that it refers to the speaker (i.e., the composer). It is not unexpected that composers employ the I-sphere because it is congruent with the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of the first-person pronoun.

The usage of the pronoun 'I' as composer emphasizes the composers' wish to project their personalities to personalize the actions they are doing in the ongoing conversation. For instance, James Varrick Armaah in his *"I've Learnt to Trust in Jesus"*, personalizes the act of trust as a conviction that was not forced on him by any person, but by his personal decision. He projects this in the use of the personal pronoun 'I'. Similarly, Ohene Adu-Nti reveals how he has trusted in God so much that he is convinced the devil has no power over him through the use of the personal pronoun 'I' in his "Kept by the Power of God" music. The examples in the figure below demonstrate the concordance of the pronoun 'I' for the composer as an addresser with their respective co-texts.

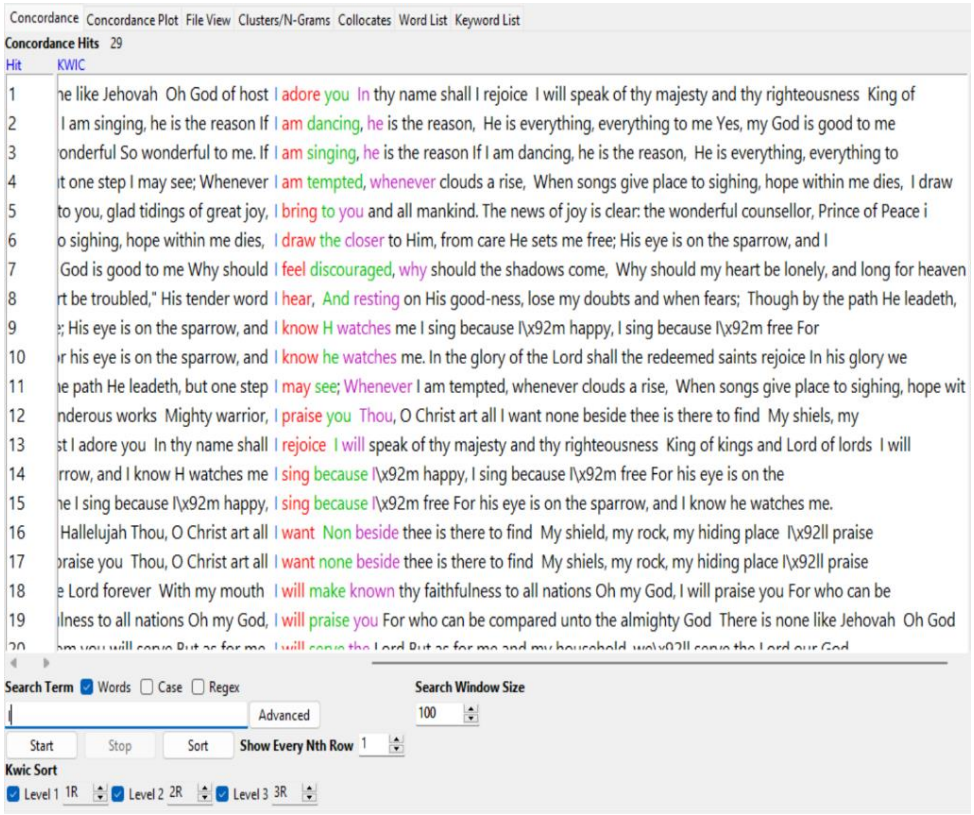
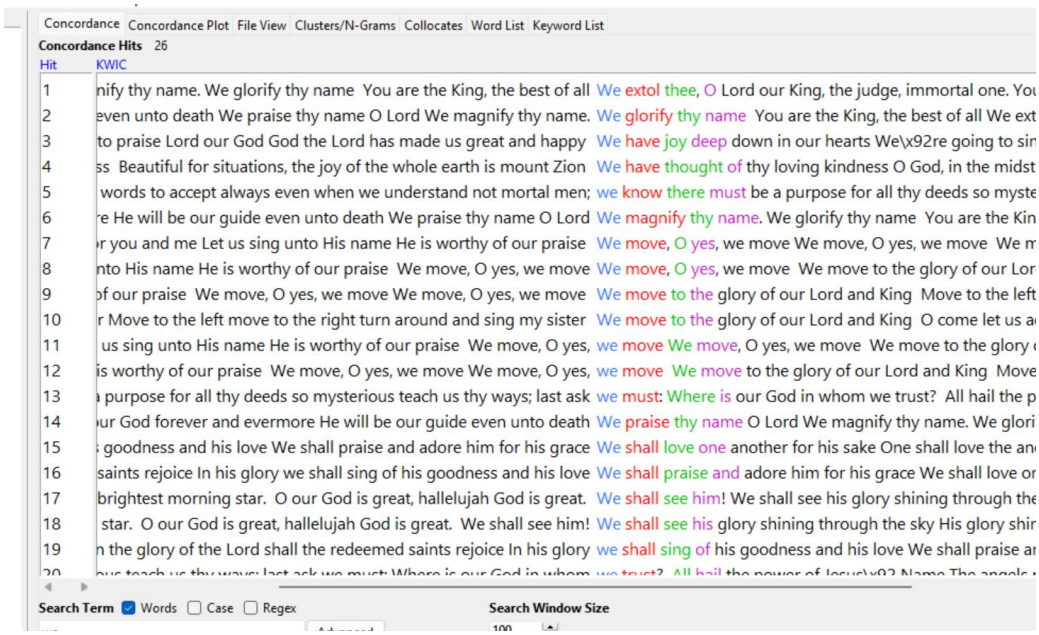


Figure 2. Concordance of the first-person pronoun 'I' for composer

The composer is expressly mentioned in all of the indicated I-sphere in the figure above. This discursive method aids the composer in making their voices heard in their music. It also reveals how composers establish their individualities and distance themselves from the communal nature of Christians in discourse groups. The focus on their personality demonstrates their dedication to the relationship with the addressee (God, Jesus, or any human being) as conveyed in the music. They, thus, demonstrate their agency, which arguably depicts them as being responsible and accountable for their acts, demonstrating some type of ownership for the assertions presented (Martin, 2003).

We for the addresser (composer)

The investigation showed the composers' usage of 'we'. The pronoun 'we' was used for self-identification in the same way that 'I' was. The 'we' here refers to the composer of the music. This supports the idea of inter-personal shift, in which a speaker employs alternative pronouns to identify himself (Gibbons & Macrae, 2018). This is referred to as nosism – the scenario in which the referent of 'we' is a single speaker (Maxey, 2016; Akoto & Afful, 2022). It was found that the linguistic resources of the music utilized the nosism 'we' as a kind used for individuals rather than collective speakers. This is because the composer is recognized as the speaker. The figure below illustrates these shifts.



The we-sphere, which also includes additional forms like ‘our,’ ‘ours,’ and ‘us,’ frequently collocates with lexical verbs that signify action across the corpus. The composers attempted to project and increase their presence in the communication by using the nosism ‘we’. This also positions the particular composer as a spokesperson for all composers and Christians who use church music as a form of prayer. The usage of ‘we’ for ‘I,’ as seen in the figure above, supports the idea that ‘we’ for ‘I’ is used in church music as a tactic for commonality in God’s worship, thus, Christians see themselves as one unit at one end and God at another. This also shows the distinction between man and God as entities that do not share the same level of referential qualities.

I for the addressee (God, Jesus, or other human beings)

Inter-personal alterations in the identification of selves such as the speaker, the listener, and others are prevalent in verbal discourses (Yates & Hiles, 2010). There are cases in the current study where a pronoun conjures up many referents (Ädel, 2010; Fortanet, 2004; Rounds, 1987a; Yaakob, 2013; Yeo & Ting, 2014). Farb, et al. (2007) referred to this as referent shift. This study discovered the use of ‘I’ for the addressee, which conforms to the concept of inter-personal pronoun shift, in which the speaker utilizes a specific pronoun to denote the addressee (Gibbons & Macrae, 2018). Benveniste (1971) also noted that the personal pronoun ‘I’ is employed as the referent of an addressee in quotes or other cases.

According to the concordance study, the I-sphere was utilized to denote Jesus. The instance below illustrates the only use of I for the addressee (Jesus).

1. He said, “Peace be unto you, glad tidings of great joy, **I** bring to you and all mankind” (*Christmas Day* by Ohene Adu-Nti**).**

The usage of this ‘I’ can be regarded as Jesus being demoted from the position of high power to that of low power who executes the bidding of mortal men. This change exhibits the concept of belongingness to strengthen deeper common

grounds between men and Jesus and defuse the concept of isolation and alienation, particularly on the side of people who do not feel as deserving of Jesus' command.

You-sphere Referents

Grammatically, 'you' is considered addressee-oriented (Akoto & Afful, 2022). Hyland (2009) has also argued that "you" is the clearest way a writer can acknowledge the reader's presence. The key pronominal address phrase for God, Jesus, and another human being in the music to build a dialogic link between the addresser and addressee of the Church music is you-for-addressee. The 'you' form found in the corpus contains the features +addressee and –composer, indicating that it is audience-oriented. The researchers discovered two addressee-oriented you-referents throughout the analysis: one addressee (God), one addressee (Jesus), and a cross-section of addressees (Christians). The excerpts below are examples of *you* for corpus addressees.

1. **You for the addressee (God)**
   In **You** all things are rendered pure;
   All things are sanctified by **You**,
   Containing all that **You** have filled
   Serene and certain in **Your** ways,
   You are the light of endless days
   (*Blessed Lord creator God* by David Osei Opoku).

2. **You for the addressee (Jesus)**
   You've always been there beside me (*Amazing Love* by Albert Adudei Dua).
   You are the alpha and omega of my life (*Jehovah turns my life around* by George Mensah Essilfie).

3. **You for the addressee (Christians/ human beings/ audience)**
   In royal, David's city is born to you this day (*The New-Born Prince of Peace* by Capt J.H. Tachie Menson)
   He said "Peace be unto you, glad tidings of great joy, I bring to you and all mankind (*Christmas Day* by Ohene Adu-Nti)
   Blow **your** trumpet, blow it out to praise Lord our God (*Blow your trumpet* by James Varrick Armaah).
   Choose **you** this day whom you will serve (Choose you this day by Newlove Annan).

The highlighted 'you' form in the above excerpts is metadiscursive. In the ongoing conversation, they refer to the addressee. This conclusion confirms that in music, the addressees are primarily the recipients. The usage of 'you' for addressees essentially makes the music more conversational to demonstrate prayers, which is considered a form of communication.

Conclusion

The present study asserts that the use of the I-You pronouns is employed by composers of Ghanaian Church Music mainly to establish the varied relationship

between the addresser and the addressee in Ghanaian Christian music. The I-You dyad pronouns are used to indicate the addresser-addressee relationship of Christian prayers, with "I" being used to show the singer's relationship with God or other people, and "You" is used to express the relationship between the singer and the addressee. The present study also revealed that the composers tend to use I-sphere pronouns or pronouns that do not refer to the self, to focus on the relationship between the singer and the addressee. The authors argue that this choice demonstrates the composer's agency, as they take ownership of the assertions presented in the song. Additionally, the use of "we" for "I" is found to create a sense of commonality among Christians in their worship of God, while still maintaining a distinction between humans and God.

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