

PREPOSITIONS AS DEICTIC MARKERS IN SELECTED ENGLISH HYMNS

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Abstract

This study examines the deployment of prepositions in selected English hymns from the 17th and 18th Centuries. Despite extensive research on prepositions in language pedagogy and contrastive linguistics, their role in hymns remains underexplored. This knowledge gap serves as the motivation for this study. It focuses on the functional role of prepositions in hymns. Hymns play a vital role in Christian worship, conveying fundamental truths about the Christian faith. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyse prepositions embedded in five English hymns, examining their functions within the contexts of these hymns. The analysis of this study is grounded in Quirk et al's (1985) theoretical framework on prepositions. The data consists of purposively selected hymns from three prominent hymnals: The Catholic Hymn Book, The Baptist Hymnal and The Redeemed Hymnal. The selection encompasses five distinct categories of hymns (Birth of Christ, Character of God, Praise, Christian life and Prayer) which reflect unique themes. The study's findings highlight the use of seven (7) types of prepositions in the selected hymns and the crucial role they play in shaping the spatial, temporal and relational dimensions of worship as reflected in the hymns. This study offers a nuanced understanding of English hymns, demonstrating how prepositions function as pointers that orient believers towards God, foster communal worship and facilitate spiritual connection.

Keywords: Prepositions, Deictic markers, Pointers, English Hymns, Christian Worship

Introduction

English prepositions are closed items that are ranked among the most frequently used words, and they play an important role in discourse (Lee & Manganhela, 2001; 2016). Prepositions are widely used in literature, technology, judiciary, academic disciplines and also on billboards, minute of the meetings, legal verdicts, treaties, newspapers and advertisements (Ibrahim, Haruna, Ibrahim & Yunus (2018). Prepositions equally play essential role in religious discourse such as Christian hymns. Mistrík (1983:98) defines prepositions as non-inflectional, auxiliary grammatical words expressing the relations of circumstances and objective relations in connection with cases. Crystal (1988:164) reiterates that a preposition expresses a relationship of meaning between two parts of a sentence, most often showing how the two parts are related in space or time. Prepositions may express various relationships between words or phrases in sentences. Quirk et al (1985:657) note that, “In the most general terms, a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence”. Prepositional relationships include those of time, space and varied degrees of mental and emotional attitudes. Therefore, this study examines how prepositions are used as deictic markers in pointing out the spatio-temporal and relational dimensions of English hymns in Christian worship.

According to Lyons, (1969:275) deixis is a word borrowed from the Greek word ‘deiktikos’ meaning “pointing out” or “indicating”, that is, using linguistic forms (i.e. pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, anaphora, tense, prepositions etc) to point at certain things, such as people, places, time or objects within an identifiable context. Deixis has been adapted into linguistics to refer to the spatiotemporal context and the subjective experience of an encoder in an utterance (Green, 1992:2). Deixis in this study serves as pointers to the space, time, discourse and persons referred to in English hymns.

For the purpose of this study, hymns refer to a type of religious song composed for worship. The practice of singing hymns in Nigerian churches owes its origins to the influence of early Christian missionaries, a tradition that has endured to the present day. Hymnals have become an indispensable companion to the Bible in Christian worship, used in tandem with Scripture. According to McElwain (2009:55), “Christians have been known as people of two books, the Bible and the Hymnal”. Many classic hymns that are sung in churches and cherished by Christian communities were written centuries ago. These timeless compositions remain ubiquitous in many church hymnals and have been translated into various indigenous languages. This paper examines English hymns composed between the 17th and 18th centuries. The objectives of this study are: to identify the prepositions employed in these hymns and to analyse their pragmatic functions within the selected hymns.

Literature Review

Extensive research has investigated the use of prepositions in various contexts, including language pedagogy and by second language acquisition. Scholars have examined how prepositions are employed in instructional settings and acquired by second language learners. Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) examined Iranian learners’ problems with English preposition. Okanlawon and Ojetunde (2007) examined the usage of English spatial prepositions by selected senior secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. In a similar study, Ahmad (2011) investigated the learning problems and analysed the errors in the use of articles and prepositions by secondary school students in Pakistan. Saravanan (2015) examined the writing skill of the students at the undergraduate level, with a special focus on the use of prepositions of place, time and direction in English. Hung & Zhang (2022) explored 40 Chinese English majors’ use of locative prepositions in English writing.

Some other studies have focused on the contrastive analysis of English prepositions with other languages such as, Slovak, Pakistan, Urobo, Chinese, Idoma etc as seen in the studies of Bázlik (1985)

who did a contrastive analysis of Slovak prepositional constructions that paired with the accusative and their English equivalents. Bilal¹, Tariq, Yaqub & Kanwal (2013) investigated the English prepositional errors exhibited in the written specimen of secondary school students of Pakistan while learning English as their second language. Irikefe (2016) did a contrastive analysis of Urhobo and English Prepositions. Yue, Cao and Huang (2022) also analysed studies that have analysed the extension of English preposition and the influence of native language thinking on English learners through the comparisons of English and Chinese preposition meaning as seen in the studies of He (2010), Li (2008) and Ma (2001). Abah, Ogenyi & Ngonebu (2024) also undertook a contrastive analysis of English and Idoma languages' prepositions.

A few others have examined prepositions in newspaper headlines as seen in the studies of Ibrahim & Yunus (2017) who investigated the usage of English spatial prepositions on the headlines of the Nigerian newspapers. Their study revealed that politicians use newspapers as a model to communicate to people before and after elections. In a similar study, Ibrahim, Haruna, Ibrahim & Yunus (2018) describe the usage and communicative functions of spatial prepositions "in", "on" and "at" in the headlines of four major Nigerian newspapers.

This study aims to bridge the gap in literature by examining the functional role of prepositions deployed in selected English hymns. Specifically, this study examines the deictic functions of prepositions in these hymns, exploring how they contribute to meaning and context.

Story Behind Hymns

Hymns have been significant vehicles of the Christian faith from the earliest days. They have been sung particularly in the daily offices of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, and they have featured prominently in the Sunday worship of many Protestant churches, especially the Lutheran and Methodist (Bagayang, 2018). Singing of hymns in the Christendom is a Biblical injunction. St. Paul says: "Address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (Ephesians 5:19). There are also various stories behind hymns. According to McClelland (2002:5):

The compositions of hymns were intensely personal, a reaction to some life experience, some have been born out of life's tragedy or trial. Others have been breathed out of a soul touched by the experience of a fleeting moment. Still others have been inspired by some lessons in scripture.

Hymns are equally written for different occasions such as: Christmas, Easter, and Lent. Others are used to encourage reverence for the Holy Bible or to celebrate Christian practices such as the Eucharist, baptism, offertory, funeral or wedding ceremonies.

In this study, hymns of Laureate Nahum, Reginald Heber, Isaac Watt, George Duffield and John Sammis written between 17th and 18th centuries are selected to identify and analyse the pragmatic function of prepositions as used in their hymns. The hymns analysed include: "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night", "Holy! Holy! Holy!", "Our Help in Ages Past", "Stand up! Stand up! For Jesus" and "When we Walk with the Lord".

The hymn "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night" is attributed to Poet Laureate Nahum Tate (1652-1715). It was written in 1700. It is based on the story of the shepherds and angels as found in Luke 2:8-14 in the Bible.

The hymn "Holy! Holy! Holy!" was written by Reginald Heber in 1861. The text speaks specifically of the Holy Trinity and paraphrases the book of Revelation 4:1-11 of the Bible.

The hymn "Our Help in Ages Past" was written by Isaac Watts in 1714 and it paraphrases Psalms 90 in the Bible. His desire to write the hymn was born, in part, out of his dissatisfaction with the church music of his day inspired him to write the hymn. He complained that metrical psalms they had to sing

were grim and ponderous. To sing anything other than the actual words of the scripture was seen by Watt as an insult to God. His father challenged him to write something better. Watts began penning religious verses and became known as “The Father of English Hymnody” or its “liberator”.

George Duffield, Jr. wrote the hymn “Stand up! Stand up! For Jesus” in 1858 based on the dying words of Dudley Tyng (1825-1858), one of the most stirring preachers in the North Eastern United States during the mid-nineteenth-century. Tyng was maimed in a farming accident. Before he died, he told his father “Tell my brethren of the ministry, wherever you meet them, to stand up for Jesus”. Duffield then wrote the hymn based on those words and also incorporated the phrase “Ye that are men now serve Him” from Tyng’s memorable sermon the month before he died.

John Sammis wrote the hymn, “When we Walk with the Lord” but Daniel Towner composed the tune in 1887. This song is inspired by the testimony of a young man who rose in a testimony meeting in Brockton, Massachusetts, where he said, “I am not quite sure-but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey”. David Towner was at that meeting and he jotted down the sentence and sent it with the story to John Sammis who was a Presbyterian minister, who later wrote the hymn.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik’s (1985) theory on preposition. They note that prepositions can be classified into simple and complex prepositions. Simple prepositions consist of one word such as: *in, at, in, on, for, from, about, across, along, below, under, until, upon, toward, to, upon, deposit, down, during, into, like, near, past, outside, behind, before, beneath* etc (Quirk et al, 1985). According to Essberger (2009), there are more than 94 simple prepositions in the English language. Complex prepositions consist of more than one word. According to Quirk et al (1985) complex prepositions may be subdivided into two and three-word sequences. In two-word sequences, the first word is an adverb, adjective or conjunction and the second word a simple preposition. Examples: *up against, as for, apart from, away from, except for, instead of, ahead of, due to, as far as, in exchange of, with/in respect to* etc Three-word sequences consist of preposition, noun and preposition. Example: *in view of* the election. *In line with* the latest fashion.

The aforementioned classifications of prepositions are used in identifying and analysing the pragmatic functions of prepositions in English hymns. This is because prepositions can have more than one meaning. They are polysemous lexical items (Taylor, 1993) and therefore, can be very confusing. For instance, prepositions such as: *in, on, at, to, for, of* and *from*, perform unique functions because they point to location, place, direction and time. Quirk et al (1985:672) state that a preposition expresses a relation between two entities and some prepositional uses may be elucidated best by seeing the way they function in a sentence or in their relation to a clause.

Methodology

The data for this study are lyrics of English hymns written in the 17th and 18th centuries, drawn from the compilations of three hymnals: The Catholic hymn book, Baptist Church and the Redeemed Christian Church of God. The sampling design is purposive. Five hymns with unique themes such as: birth of Christ, character of God, praise, Christian life and prayer written by different hymnists are selected on the bases of their popularity amongst the three hymnals. The hymns include: “While Shepherds watched”, “Holy! Holy! Holy!”, “O God Our Help I Ages Past”, “Stand up! Stand up! For Jesus” and ‘When we Walk with the Lord’. These hymns are analysed using Quirk et al’s (1985) theory of preposition.

Data Analysis

The lyrics of the hymns are analysed line by line to elicit the type of preposition(s) embedded in hymns. Thus, a diagram of table is used to point out the type of prepositions inherent in the selected hymns. The hymns are numbered serially for clarity and easy identification as shown in the first column of the table. The second column is inputted with the title of the hymn analysed, and subsequent columns of the table, are inputted with the types of prepositions used in the lyrics of the hymns.

Table 1: Identification of Prepositional Type in Selected English Hymn

S/N	Hymn	Temporal Preposition	Spatial Preposition	Preposition of Possession	Preposition of Purpose/Reason	Preposition of Recipient	Preposition of Manner	Preposition of Comparison
1.	“While shepherds watched their flocks by night”	While shepherds watched their flocks by night Line 1 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith Line 18 Good will henceforth Line 24 Begin and never cease! Line 26	All seated on the ground Line 2 And glory shone around Line 4 To you, in David’s town, this day Line 9 Is born, of David’s line Line 10 In swaddling bands Line 16 And in a manger laid Line 17 And to the earth be peace; Line 23 From heaven to men Line 25 All glory be to God on high Line 22 And to the earth be peace; Line 23	The angel of the Lord came down Line 3	Fear not! Said he; for mighty dread Line 5 Glad tidings of great joy I bring Line 7 To human view displayed, Line 14	To you and all mankind Line 8 To you, in David’s town, this day Line 9 Of angels praising God, Line 20 All glory be to God on high Line 22 And to the earth be peace; Line 23		
2.	“Holy! Holy! Holy!”	Early in the morning Line 3	Our song shall rise to Thee Line 4 Around the glassy sea Line 11 Falling down before Thee, Line 13 Thy name, in earth and sky, and sea; Line 27			Our song shall rise to Thee Line 4 God in three persons Line 7, 30	Perfect in power, in love, and purity Line 23	There is none beside Thee, Line 22

3.	<p>“O God our Help In Ages Past”</p>	<p>O God, our help <i>in</i> ages <i>past</i>, Line 1, 21</p> <p>Our hope <i>for</i> years <i>to</i> come, Line 2, 22</p> <p><i>Before</i> the hills <i>in</i> order stood, Line 9</p> <p><i>From</i> everlasting Thou art God, Line 11</p> <p><i>To</i> endless years the same. Line 12</p> <p><i>Before</i> the rising sun. Line 16</p> <p>Dies <i>at</i> the opening day. Line 20</p>	<p>Our shelter <i>from</i> the stormy blast, Line 3</p> <p><i>Under</i> the shadow <i>of</i> Thy throne Line 5</p>	<p>O God, our help <i>in</i> ages past Line 1, 21</p>		<p>A thousand ages <i>in</i> Thy sight. Line 13</p>	<p>Are <i>like</i> an evening gone; Line 14</p> <p>Short <i>as</i> the watch that ends the night. Line 15</p> <p>They fly, forgotten, <i>as</i> a dream Line 19</p>
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4.	“Stand up! Stand up! For Jesus”	<p>Till every foe is vanquished, Line 7</p> <p>In this His glorious day, Line 12</p> <p>And <i>watching unto prayer</i>; Line 22</p> <p><i>This day the noise of battle</i>, Line 27</p>	<p>Forth to the mighty conflict, Line 11</p> <p>Stand in His strength alone; Line 18</p>		<p>The arm of flesh will fail you, Line 19</p>	<p>Stand up! Stand up for Jesus, Line 1, 9, 17, 25</p> <p>Ye soldiers of the Cross! Line 2</p> <p>To him that overcometh, Line 30</p> <p>A crown of life shall be; Line 31</p> <p>He with the King of glory Line 32</p>	<p>From vict’ry unto vict’ry Line 5</p> <p>And strength to strength oppose. Line 16</p> <p>Put on the gospel armour. Line 21</p>	
5.	“When we walk with the Lord”	<p>When we walk with the Lord, Line 1</p> <p>Until all on the altar we lay Line 20</p>	<p>In the light of His word Line 2</p> <p>What a glory He sheds on our way! Line 3</p> <p>To be happy in Jesus, Line 9</p> <p>not a cloud in the skies Line 11</p> <p>Until all on the altar we lay Line 20</p>		<p>But to trust and obey Line 10</p>	<p>But we never can prove the delight of His love Line 19</p>		

Discussion of Findings

Identification of Prepositions used in Selected English Hymns

As presented on the table above, seven types of prepositions are used in the selected English hymns. These prepositional types are identified through their relation with other words in the lyrics of the hymns. They include, prepositions of time which occur as: **by, forthwith, henceforth, begin, never, in, past, for, before, from, to, at, till, with, unto** and **of**. Spatial prepositions which occur as: **on, of, around, in, of, to, from, before** and **under**. Preposition of possession occurs as: **of**. Prepositions of

purpose/reason occur as: *for, of* and *to*. Prepositions of recipient occur as: *to, of, on, in*, and *for*. Prepositions of manner occur as: *from, unto, to* and *on*. Prepositions of Comparison occur as: *beside, like* and *as*. Hymns are borne out of various inspirations thus, the prepositional types deployed reflect the hymnists' subjective intentions in the hymns.

Pragmatic Function of Prepositions in Selected English Hymns

Each prepositional type performs unique function(s). Below is a discussion of how each prepositional type function(s) in the selected English hymns.

Temporal Preposition

Preposition of time also called temporal preposition in this study points to the subjective time referred to in the hymns. It functions in four ways in the selected hymns. Firstly, it points to the timing of action of characters portrayed in the discourse of the hymns, for instance, in the nativity hymn (Hymn 1, see Table), the temporal prepositional phrase "*by night*" in, *the shepherds watched their flocks, by night*, points out the time of the day in which the angel appeared to the shepherds. It also highlights a moment of spiritual significance (i.e. the birth of Christ) and divine timing in the hymn. In hymn 2 (see, Table), the temporal preposition "*in the morning*", projects the time of Christian worship to be in the morning, example: *early in the morning, our song shall rise to Thee*.

Secondly, preposition of time points to a proximal time of action relative to the time depicted in discourse of the hymns such as: *Good will hence forth* (Hymn 1), *forth with the mighty conflict* (Hymn 4), and *this day the noise of battle* (Hymn 4). These prepositions in relation with other words point to the moment of utterance of the speaker in the discourse of the hymns (i.e. the angel who spoke to the shepherds as seen in the hymn 1, and the hymnist in hymn 4). It also depicts the manner in which an aspect of time is viewed from a Christian religious perspective; It is immediate and there is simultaneity between the words uttered and the action done.

Thirdly, temporal preposition points to a distal time of action delineated in the discourse of the hymns (see, Hymn 3), *Our help in ages past, before the hill in order stood, from everlasting thou art God*. It establishes connection of historical events linked to present Christian worship. Also, temporal prepositions as used in Hymn 3, point out the immortal/timeless attribute of God; His divine eternal attributes and unchanging nature. It also expresses eternal truths in Christianity about eschatological hope. Temporal Preposition is also used to project and situate the subjective time of Christian worship as seen in: *before the rising sun* (Hymn 2).

Fourthly, temporal preposition indicates projections to futuristic time or a mental time of action in the discourse of the hymns, as seen in: *Our hope for years to come* (Hymn 3), *till every foe is vanquished* (Hymn 4), *when we walk with the Lord, until all on the altar is laid* (Hymn 5). In these instances, temporal preposition expresses as well as helps to locate actions or events in Christianity that are futuristic. These linguistic elements also portray how worshipers are united across time.

Spatial Preposition

Spatial prepositions show the location of things and people in the discourse of the hymns. In this study, spatial prepositions function in five ways. Firstly, they point to the subjective locations of the referents or thing referred to in the hymns. For instance, in connecting worshipers to biblical events as seen in the narrative hymn, "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night", the location/space the shepherds were seated is pointed to as: *on the ground*; their surrounding is referred to in: *and glory shone around*. Other implied referent's location in the hymn is pointed to as: *to you in David's town*. The genealogy of the new born baby (Jesus) is referred to using the spatial preposition, "of" as in, *is born of David's line* and the location he is laid is pointed to through the locative preposition, "in" as

in, *in a manger laid*. The place in which the new born baby Jesus is wrapped is conveyed as, *in swaddling bands* (Hymn 1). Similarly, spatial preposition is used metaphorically in pointing out God's mightiness, for instance, the location of God's work is pointed to as: *in earth and sky and sea* as seen in hymn 2. The location of other creation of God, such as saints (Christians) are projected to be: *Under the shadow of Thy throne, around the glassy sea*, as seen in the hymn "O God our help in ages past". The subjective location of worship is highlighted in hymn 5, *until all on the altar is laid*.

Secondly, spatial prepositions point out the way location is represented in hymns. For example, *under the shadow of Thy throne* (Hymn 3), *stand in His strength alone* (Hymn 4), *to be happy in Jesus* (Hymn 5), *until all on the altar is laid* (Hymn 5), these italicised and embolden spatial prepositions in the context of the hymns, connote actions done within a mental/spiritual space (i.e. God's presence); this also spotlights on the relationship between Christians and God, as intimate. Likewise, sacred spaces are identified through spatial prepositions e.g, *around* the glassy sea (Hymn 2), *from* Heaven to earth (Hymn 1), *under the shadow of Thy throne* (Hymn 3), *our shelter from the stormy blast* (Hymn 3), *until all on the altar is laid* (Hymn 5). These subjective locations point out how hymns set apart sacred spaces from the mundane.

Thirdly, spatial prepositions also point to the orientation or direction of a referent or thing referred to in the discourse of the hymns. For instance, the direction of God is depicted to be "on high", example, *to God on high*, as seen in hymn 1 (see Table). The direction of Cherubims and Seraphims' act of worship is depicted in, *falling before Thee*; as seen in hymn 2, (see Table). These spatial prepositions as used in the co-text of the hymns indicates the status of God as sovereign and majestic and also inspire awe and reverence for God. The direction of humans are pointed to as: *and to the earth* as seen in hymn 1 (see Table). This shows the supremacy of God over humanity. Spatial directions are also used in directing Christians or believers in performing an illocutionary act; as well as creating a sense of communal action and togetherness as seen in: *forth to the mighty conflict* (hymn 4).

Fourthly, spatial preposition depicts movement(s) in the hymns. This movement is either away from or towards the location of a speaker, referent or location(s) portrayed in the discourse of the hymns, for instance, *from heaven to earth* (Hymn 1). The prepositions, "*from*" and "*to*" point to movement from a distal and spiritual location (i.e. the location of God or spirit beings), to a proximal and physical location, that is the location of humans. Spatial movement portrays the relationship between divinity and mortals or humanity in the hymns. It also points to the spiritual truth held in the Christendom about the significance of the birth of Christ as expressed in Hymn 1. In hymn 2, the spatial preposition, "*to*" in, *our song shall rise to Thee*, depicts not only movement upwards to the location of God, it also portrays an act of worship and a relationship between believers and God.

Fifthly, spatial prepositions point at distance in the discourse of the hymns, for instance, in hymn 1, the preposition, "*of*" in relation with other words such as, "*the angel of the Lord came down*", points to the movement of the angel from a distal location to a proximal location, that is the location of the shepherds. And the prepositions, "*to*" and "*on*" in, "*to God on high*" depict distance. These prepositions depict the location of God as distal and spiritual. Similarly, in hymn 2, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" the preposition, "*before*" in, *falling down before Thee*, depicts a distal and spiritual location. Thus, prepositions that portray distance point out the distance between humans and supreme beings (such as angels and God) as spiritual. It Implies that the status of angels and God is superior to humans.

Preposition of Possession

Preposition of possession expresses ownership in the discourse of the hymn, for instance in hymn 1, the preposition, "*of*" in; *the angel of the Lord* depicts ownership. It portrays stewardship, as the angel did not come to deliver his own message but God's. It equally, depicts the status of God as superior to an angel. The preposition, "*in*" as seen in: *O God, our help in ages past* in hymn 3,

emphasises divine ownership, that is God is a source of help to Christians because they belong to Him. It also points to the cordial relationship between Christians and God.

Preposition of Purpose

Preposition of purpose accentuates the reason behind the action of a referent in the discourse of the hymn. For instance, the preposition, “**for**” in, *fear not! Said he **for** mighty dread* in the narrative hymn, “While Shepherds Watched their flocks by Night” (Hymn 1) paints an imagery of the terrifying appearance of the angel as the reason for the shepherds’ fright. It reinforces the biblical account and events on the birth of Christ. The significance of the coming of the angels and the biblical truth about the plan of God for redemption is also portrayed through the prepositions, “**of**” and “**to**” as seen in, *glad tiding **of** great joy I bring, **to** human view display*. In hymn 4, the preposition “**of**” in, *in the arm **of** flesh will fail you*, points to a spiritual truth held in the Christendom on the danger in relying in human strength or human effort and not on the sovereign power of God. This is also re-echoed in, *but **to** trust and obey*, as seen in hymn 5.

Preposition of Recipient

Preposition of recipient points to the receiver of an action in the discourse of the hymns. The function of this prepositional type is to direct one’s focus to the intended recipient in the discourse of the hymn. These recipients are, shepherds, mankind, angels, God, Christians or the thing referred to in the hymns. Examples of prepositions of recipient as seen in the hymns: ***to** you and all mankind* (Hymn 1), ***to** you **in** David’s town* (Hymn 1), ***of** angels praising God* (Hymn 1), *God **in** three persons* (Hymn 2), *ye soldiers **of** the cross, **to** him that overcometh, a crown **of** life shall be* (Hymn 4).

Preposition of recipient also points to acts of worship and to God and Jesus as the receiver of the action. Examples: *all glory **to** God **on** high* (Hymn 1), *our song shall rise **to** Thee* (Hymn 2), *stand up! Stand up!* (Hymn 4), ***For** Jesus, but we never can prove the delight **of** His love* (Hymn 5). Apart from orienting believers towards God as the receiver of worship, preposition of recipient also signal allegiance or commitment Christians must make to God.

In addition, preposition of recipient highlights the divine attributes of God. It points to His temporal perspective, example: *a thousand ages **in** Thy sight* (Hymn 3).

Preposition of Manner

Preposition of manner expresses the way something is done in the discourse of the hymns. Preposition of manner in the hymns capture the charge for Christians to be steadfast and committed in their beliefs as seen in: *strength **to** strength oppose, **from** vict’ry **unto** vict’ry* (Hymn 4). Christians are also directed to: *put **on** the gospel armour* (Hymn 4), this spotlights the importance of evangelism in the Christian faith.

Preposition of Comparison

This type of preposition makes comparisons between two or more things. It serves some functions in the hymns. It points to God’s divine uniqueness, example: *There is none **beside** Thee*. The preposition of comparison also points to the omnipotent and immortal attribute of God, example: *are **like** an evening gone, short **as** the watch that ends the night, they fly forgotten **as** a dream* as seen in the hymn 3.

Conclusion

This study examines prepositions as deictic markers in hymns. The study enriches the understanding of Christian English hymns written in the 17th and 18th centuries. It showcases the types of prepositions used in the selected hymns, which comprise: preposition of time, space, possession, purpose, recipient, manner and comparison. Each of these prepositional types performs unique deictic function in the hymns. This study reveals that prepositions in Christian hymns highlight the temporal, spatial and relational dimensions of worship in the Christendom. It also highlights the significance of hymns in recounting biblical narratives, reinforcing spiritual truths and portraying acts of worship. The study establishes that prepositions function as pointers providing valuable insights into how hymns orient believers towards God, foster communal worship and facilitate spiritual connection.

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