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## **Christians and demons on the battlefield. Spiritual warfare in the Italian Pentecostal worship songs**

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**Abstract.** Pentecostal worship songs, especially these related to charismatic communities, emphasize the presence as well as the power of the Almighty. God is believed to be the major donor of miracles and also, the supreme Commander responsible for the individual's victory in their spiritual warfare. The principal objective of this article is to analyse the linguistic content of the Italian Pentecostal worship songs which are being performed by the Neo-charismatic (*Third Wave*) churches, interested in the question of a spiritual battle. Careful attention will be given to the linguistic means of evaluation.

**Keywords:** Neo-Pentecostalism, Italy, worship songs, Christian charismatics, military concepts, appraisal, spiritual battle

### **1. Introduction**

**T**he emergence of the *Third Wave* (*Terza Ondata*) of the Pentecostal movement in the 1980s, gave rise to the new forms of leadership as well as the new approaches to conducting ministries. Enzo Pace and Annalisa Butticci (2010, p. 20) identify those responsible for implementing the incoming ideas as the *renewalists* (*rinnovatori*). They classify the contemporary Christians

into three major groups, namely: the Pentecostals (*Pentecostali*), charismatics (*carismatici*) and the this-worldly mystics (*mistici intramondani*). As far as the Pentecostals are concerned, this particular group relates to the members of the historical Pentecostal church, associated with the so-called First Wave, whereas the second and the third accentuate the presence of the Holy Spirit as well as the practice of performing miracles. When it comes to the charismatics, Pace and Butticci (2010, p. 21) note that in general, they belong to traditional churches such as the Catholic Church. Furthermore, this group also encompasses the individuals who started a new congregation outside the traditional church or those who are in open conflict with the mainstream. In 1967 in the USA, a group of Catholics inspired by the Pentecostals, formed a community focused mainly on the question of a spiritual awakening, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the supernatural phenomena. Nowadays, the above-mentioned community is widely recognized as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (*Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo*). Although the members of this particular congregation were formally Catholics, the religious practices they employed undoubtedly represented the Pentecostal movement. Therefore, they are known as the Pentecostal Catholics. As for the most popular practices, these are the following: speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*), divine healing (*la guarigione divina*), making prophecies (*profezie*) and praying for deliverance (*preghiera di liberazione*). According to Pace and Butticci (2010, p. 22), the third group, namely, the this-worldly mystics (*mistici intramondani*), consists of the individuals who both tend to be submissive to their leaders (*un leader carismatico*) and at the same time believe in the guidelines of the so-called Prosperity Gospel (*Il vangelo della prosperità*) which has already been popularized worldwide. The members of the third group are recognized as the Neo-Pentecostals due to the characteristics of their worship service, being significantly different from those typical of the *First* and *Second Wave*. Pace and Butticci (2010, p. 22) claim that the proper “charisma” starts with the leader’s personality, and then it manifests itself in the form of gifts (charisms) granted by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the more charismatic the leader is, the more generous the Holy Spirit will be. Besides, the authors also take the organisational structure of the charismatic churches into consideration, emphasizing, inter alia, their pyramidal functioning. They employ the term *chiesa-impresa carismatica* (a charismatic company-like Church) in order to specify its major characteristics. These are the following: (a) the presence of a leader who binds the whole community, (b) providing spiritual services based on particular religious practices such as divine healing, (c) implementing loyalty strategies (*una strategia di fidelizzazione dei membri*) with the intention of establishing a stable community and (d) employing mass media to spread the message that originated in the headquarters (*casa madre*) across the world.

To sum up, the this-worldly mysticism with its company-like structure focuses on the giver-taker relationship, where the gifts of the Holy Spirit accompanied by God's generosity, are expected to guarantee a successful life.

The principal objective of this article is to analyse the linguistic content of the Italian Pentecostal worship songs, performed by the Neo-charismatic churches which are based in different parts of Italy and which are interested, at the same time, in the question of a spiritual battle. The analysis will focus mainly on the expressions of appraisal as well as the incorporation of military concepts into the lyrics. The research will refer only to the communities meeting physically on a regular basis, especially during the so-called Sunday worship services. The selected groups operate according to the previously mentioned pyramidal (hierarchical) structure with their leaders being the centre of attention.

## **2. Dalla paura alla fede. From fear to faith in a spiritual battle**

The *Spiritual Warfare Theology* developed in the early 80s of the last century due to an enormous contribution Peter C. Wagner (1997, 2009, 2012) and John Wimber made into spreading the message. They were both American missionaries involved in the so-called *power evangelism*. According to Murphy: "we are at war. The war will not end until the final judgment of evil supernaturalism [...] recorded in Revelation 20. We are all involved in this warfare whether we are aware of it or not. We need to condition ourselves, so to speak, to put on our spiritual warfare eyeglasses to correctly view present reality" (Murphy, 2012, pp. 54-55). The author also emphasizes the fact that although the evil spirits exist, it appears possible to win the battle, following what Jesus Christ did. In other words, since demons always told Jesus the truth, an experienced deliverance minister who acts in His name has the same potential.

Murphy (2012, p. 55) notes that the war to be won concentrates mainly on the question of sin, and therefore he refers to human spiritual struggles as to a *sin war*. Besides, he highlights the nature of this particular encounter by claiming that human beings ought to learn to war against sin because of the fact that sin wars against human beings. The author also specifies the main characteristics of the above-mentioned spiritual enemy: "[...] sin – moral evil in contrast to natural evil – is not a passive something that appears where righteousness is absent. Sin is at war with righteousness. It is like an active, dynamic, negative spiritual energy field that seeks to carry away everything with it. It will oppress, enslave, and eventually destroy everything that stands

in its way” (Murphy, 2012, p. 55). Furthermore, sin is believed to release the so-called *sin energy*, responsible for tempting, seducing, deceiving, delighting and captivating. As a result, human beings experience spiritual tortures and finally – complete destruction. What is worth mentioning is the *multidimensional perspective of sin war*. First of all, Murphy (2012: 56) emphasizes its *personal aspect*, taking the human flesh into consideration, which he defines as the inner humanity, prone to perform evil actions. Secondly, he focuses on the *social* nature of sin, explaining that this particular problem is worldwide, since it affects the whole society. Thirdly, according to the author, sin is *supernatural*. To be more precise, it forms an integral part of Satan, his kingdom and power. Because of the fact that this particular dimension has a lot in common with evil spirits, it is obviously *spiritual* to a considerable extent. What is more, all these three dimensions appear to co-operate, which means that both flesh and the world serve as channels for Satan and his demons.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualities, Murphy (2012, p. 58) also elaborates on the levels of spiritual warfare, providing three, well-defined categories based on the wrestler-dark angels relationship, where the word *wrestler* is used in relation to a human being. The first category, known as the *objective level*, concentrates upon the difficulties connected with world evangelism. According to the author, the message of God cannot be easily spread since Satan “holds the nations in bondage to himself.” Therefore, the individuals who are not aware of God’s love (the unbelievers), automatically become slaves of the evil supernaturalism. Furthermore, owing to these obstacles and the risk of failure when it comes to preaching, the unaware are perceived as potentially demonized, although not demon possessed. Murphy (2012, p. 59) draws an important distinction between *demonic possession* and *demonization*. The former applies to total ownership for a specific period of time during which the possessed medium loses control over their emotions, will and actions, whereas the latter focuses on exercising direct partial control over particular areas of human life. With respect to partial control, “it can be exercised from without as well as from within the victim” (Murphy, 2012, p. 60). The author emphasizes the fact that the practice of implementing the western, reasoned approach when facing demons will prove ineffective. The gospel of power, followed by the individual’s will to accept Jesus Christ, appear to be the only solutions.

The second category, namely, the *subjective personal level*, encompasses the so-called true believers and their tendencies to ignore Satan’s deceptive strategies. According to Murphy (2012, p. 61), all the delegates of Jesus Christ have been given authority over the kingdom of the evil spirits being both already defeated as well as forced into subjection. Hence, spiritual warfare should be

based on faith, not on fear, taking the authority in Christ into account. Deliverance ministers deal with the cases of severe demonization which arise from the victim's ignorance and negligence. To be more precise, although the demons have already been defeated, they are still alive and also highly active in their search for responsive souls. The author claims that Satan's main purpose is to divert the believer's attention away from the practice of glorifying God. and therefore, with the aid of the available sin handles, he pushes the individuals towards disobedience.

The third category, described as the *Christian level*, concentrates upon the practice of offering deliverance prayers to the demonized Christians, taking the previously mentioned fact that true believers cannot be demon possessed into account. Murphy (2012, p. 64) differentiates between the severe demonization and the mild one, explaining that the former requires the help of others, that is, the deliverance minister, whereas the latter allows the possibility of employing a group of godly believers who pray for the demonized, since they know the reality of a spiritual battle. What appears to be interesting is the question of the so-called *self-deliverance* which can be implemented in minor cases. The author argues with the position of the Protestant Church on the demonic issues, claiming that demonization does not consist in *demonic indwelling* – the condition which has been denied by the Protestants, but it is rather the problem of *demonic attachment*: “The presence of the Holy Spirit does not, in itself, prevent demonization just as it does not, in itself, prevent Christians from sinning” (Murphy, 2012, p. 65). Moreover, it is believed that the Holy Spirit may enter the body of the already-demonized individual, accelerating, at the same time, the process of liberation.

Murphy tries to account for the enigma of the demonized Christians by focusing on two distinctive groups, namely, those who were “demonized before their conversion and the believers who picked up demons after their conversion through their own sins or the serious sin of others committed against them” (Murphy, 2012, p. 67). The author clarifies that accepting God is not tantamount to automatic and absolute spiritual purification. Instead, a new convert needs the so-called *post-conversion deliverance counselling* whose aim is to provide the neophyte with the proper, spiritual armour. It should also be stated that only a gospel of power will prove effective in such cases, as opposed to the western, analytical approach towards preaching, mentioned above. When it comes to the individuals demonized after their conversion, they are also prone to such an invasion despite the threefold protection involving *the hedge of God*, *the angels of God* and *the shield of faith*. Furthermore, the entering demon has the potential to attract other demons, thereby leading to multiple demonic invasions. As a consequence, the believer's inner life be-

comes disrupted since their emotions, mind, will, and spiritual well-being, no longer operate independently. According to Murphy (2012, p. 70), although in most cases the demonization of the spirit-filled, sincere Christians is mild, they do not appear to be free from the aftermath of the spiritual invasion. In other words, evil spirits generate inexplicable fear and confusion which result in the emergence of obsessive thoughts, affecting mostly the following sin areas: (1) illicit sexual practices or fantasies; (2) deep-seated anger, bitterness, hatred, rage and rebellion, often leading to destructive and self-destructive impulses; (3) a sense of rejection, guilt, poor self-esteem, unworthiness, and shame; (4) strange attraction to the occult and to the spirit world, often, but not always, with a desire for illicit power over their circumstances and over other people. The evil spirits need the entrance in order for them to have the possibility to invade the believer. Murphy (2012, p. 71) refers to this particular entrance as *the door*. *Generational sin* is one of these possibilities, especially when the ancestors have previously rebelled against God, whereas child abuse (sexual, psychological, physical and spiritual) is believed to be the second opportunity for the entering demons. The author clarifies that spiritual child abuse can be the outcome of the child's voluntary actions, involuntarily received occult forces that have formerly influenced the family line, and also the curse put on the individual or by the individual. Finally, the third door is connected with the believer's deliberate sinful initiatives, taken both in youth as well as adulthood.

To summarize, on the basis of the above-mentioned arguments, spiritual warfare starts with the demonic attachment which should not be mistaken for the demonic possession. The former concentrates upon partial control whilst the latter applies to total ownership. Christians are as vulnerable to demonization as non-believers, however, those who accept the Holy Spirit, have the potential to influence and accelerate the liberation process. Evil spirits tend to be extraordinarily powerful, since they control emotions. In consequence, the invaded individuals appear to be more inclined to take sinful initiatives.

### **3. Music as spiritual weapon**

The contemporary Neo-charismatic churches employ the practices typical of the Third Wave and base on the aftermath of the so-called *Toronto Blessing*, which took place in the early 1990s at the *Toronto Airport Vineyard Church* (renamed to *Catch the Fire* in 2010). This particular event became famous worldwide not only because of the ritual itself but also because of the supernatural phenomena that emerged during the worship service. In consequence,

the practice of *soaking prayer* in combination with *Godly love* gained popularity among the followers of Neo-Pentecostalism. These two concepts will be discussed further in this article, mainly in relation to the previously mentioned spiritual warfare.

According to Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse (2015), music is a significant aspect of charismatic worship, especially when contemporary pop music is taken into consideration. The participants tend to raise their hands, jump, dance, spin around and wave flags with the intention of expressing their faith. Lying on the floor, shaking, jerking, crying or laughing have also been reported. All these bodily movements serve as the introduction to a powerful ritual whose principal aim is to enable the individuals to enter an alternate world and as a result, to expose them to the Father's love. Moreover, the above-mentioned practices have already been properly classified, whereas the ritual itself has been termed as soaking prayer. The name originated in the 1970s and was predominantly used to refer to the physical as well as inner healing. Nowadays, the *soaking prayer* appears in a new form due to its gradual development over recent years. The modern version includes, for instance, resting in the Spirit, anointing, prayer of the heart, divine presence, contemplation, hearing God, prophecy, healing and impartation (Wilkinson, Althouse, 2015). What seems to be worth mentioning is the fact that the *soaking prayer* is definitely altruistic in its nature since the divine love experienced by the participants releases stimuli for further actions, namely, the acts of forgiveness, benevolence or reconciliation. In other words, the implementation of the soaking prayer facilitates the search for the Father's love and once experienced by the individual, it transforms itself into good deeds towards others. The concept of *Godly love* appears to be crucial when referring to a spiritual battle. Matthew T. Lee, Margaret M. Poloma i Stephen G. Post (2013) clarify the details of this particular relationship between a human being and the Almighty from the Neo-charismatic perspective. First of all, it should be mentioned that *Godly love* relates to the Christian "Great Commandment," according to which the believer is expected to love God above all. Furthermore, it also refers to the fact of receiving love from the Father and passing it on to others in a proper manner, as stated above. Lee et al. (2013) emphasizes the value of a personal experience within the context of Jesus's teachings on love, since the Gospel of John provides a clear explanation of what the proper manner really means. To be more precise, human beings will be able to love the neighbor only if they are touched by the Almighty themselves. Lee et al. (2013) claims that the divine touch helps the individuals to solve the problem of where to search for help in case of spiritual difficulties. In consequence, a true believer should not be afraid to address the Father when the evil spirits start the process of demonization.

Christian Neo-charismatic worship songs tend to be performed with the company of guitars, keyboards and the singers who convey the message from the auditorium's platform (Wilkinson, Althouse, 2015). According to the authors, "the two-stage progression of worship music begins with fast-paced music to encourage praise through bodily excitement, accelerating until it reaches a crescendo, and then quiets down in a calming manner for worship. It often includes emotional and/or bodily healing, manifestations and signs and wonders" (Wilkinson, Althouse, 2015, p. 41). The slower pace influences collective behavior and what seems to be most important, may be associated with the invitation to soak in the Father's love. On the basis of the above-mentioned facts, it can be stated that within the Neo-charismatic congregations, music functions as the catalyst which facilitates the process of initiating divine communication.

The Neo-charismatic worship service, could be compared to what Adam B. Seligman et al. (2008), calls a subjunctive, an "as if" or "could be" universe. To be more precise, the author refers to the so-called shared reality which emerges as a result of particular religious practices. Owing to the fact that this article concentrates on the above-mentioned musical bodies as well as the way they interact within the Neo-charismatic communities, the reality discussed here will mostly apply to *the subjunctive* created as a consequence of a live music performance. According to Seligman et al.: "[...] ritual modes of behavior can be usefully contrasted to what we term sincere forms of approaching the world. Sincere views are focused not on the creation of an *as if* or a shared subjunctive universe of human being in the world. Instead, they project an *as is* vision of what often becomes a totalistic, unambiguous vision of reality as it *really is*" (Seligman et al., 2008, p. 8). Within the context of spiritual warfare, the creation of the "as if" universe by means of theme worship songs, which is then followed by the previously mentioned *soaking prayer* associated with Godly love, could be compared to the moment of reaching the land of hope. It should be noted that for a demonized Christian the chances of winning a spiritual battle are definitely higher in the "as if" reality, contrary to the "as is" world. Due to the fact that the subjunctive universe is believed to be the symbolic world at the same time, the participants of a mutual illusion could be referred to as symbol users. Furthermore, the subjunctive universe tends to be defined as the world of potentiality with no limitations. In practice this means that the participants of the Neo-charismatic worship service cannot spontaneously share their feelings with other members of the "could be" reality but they have the potential to evoke similar reactions or a set of experiences, bearing in mind the power of a particular symbol.

Seligman et al. elaborates on the common features of ritual and play, declaring the subjunctive the point of reference: "Play, ritual, art, and festival each thus creates its own bounded community and world of action. Each is a shared and bounded human construction with a rhythm [...], rules of understanding and action, and powerful performative effects. Each deals with the dynamics of boundaries and boundlessness, maintaining a tension that is built into human existence [...]. Both construct a third space where we create, experience, and share alternative realities and orders" (Seligman et al., 2008, p. 70). Although these two human activities appear to be almost identical in many respects, the author claims that their "as if" worlds differ. In the case of ritual, the subjunctive sphere is true and eternal, whereas the one of play's manifests itself as the ephemeral reality. Furthermore, following on from key differences, it should be noted that ritual tends to implement its past owing to the endlessness of its world, whilst play is mostly characterized by its temporal dimension, in spite of the fact that it also uses symbolization to some extent. Ritual's past influences its present. On the basis of the common features ritual and play share, especially when the subjunctive universe is taken into account, Seligman et al. (2008, p. 77) provides the typology which may apply to both realms simultaneously. Bearing in mind the principal objective of this study, only two categories suggested by the author will be discussed, namely, *alea* and *ilinx*. The former emphasizes the importance of set roles as well as the identity of the performer, whereas the latter allows for the dissolution of roles in favor of total freedom. In consequence, the first criterion, that is, the criterion of hierarchy clearly emerges. In addition, there is also the second criterion which centers on the question of giving up self-control with reference to musical bodies. To be more precise, both *alea* and *ilinx* apply to the universe where the individual has the opportunity to cede responsibility to external forces. When it comes to the issue of hierarchy within the Neo-charismatic congregations, the above-mentioned *alea* perfectly reflects the reality of a typical, Neo-Pentecostal worship service in terms of the practice of following the charismatic leader. According to Seligman et al., "followers retain their roles, or sometimes occupy newly defined roles within the movement, but either way those roles define them both within and beyond the 'as if' moment. As with votive supplicants or diviners, though, they have ceded control over their own fates to an outside figure, in this case the charismatic leader" (Seligman et al., 2008, p. 80). In practice this means that with respect to the demonized Christians, the final defeat as well as victory are believed to come from the supernatural and not from the deliverance minister who only plays the role of a facilitator. Because of the fact that the participants give up self-control, they become highly vulnerable to the activity of the Almighty. As far as musical

bodies are concerned, the soaking prayer they attend might be associated with the subjunctive universe characteristic of the formerly discussed *ilinx* where the roles dissolve in favor of “the realm of mystical transcendence, ecstatic rapture, and inspired vision” (Seligman et al., 2008, p. 82). To be more precise, the implemented worship songs which help to establish divine communication, encourage the individuals to experience the world of endless possibilities with self-control given up completely at the same time. Hence, in this particular universe, the responsibility for the outcome of a spiritual battle may be ceded to God to Whom a demonized Christian submits.

Operating within a particular subjunctive universe, such as the selected Neo-charismatic practices, involves direct social interaction with other participants. Randall Collins (2004), discusses the question of the so-called *interaction ritual* (IR) as well as its aftermath in the form of *emotional energy* (EE). According to the author, rituals consist of a number of ingredients that are mutually dependent. In other words, these are the conditions which should be satisfied prior to the emergence of the desired outcomes. The ingredients provided by Collins (2004, p. 48) seem to be true for the musical bodies who operate within the universe of the soaking prayer. First of all, the participants of the charismatic worship service are physically assembled in one place. Secondly, they have a sense of who participates and who does not. Thirdly, the gathered tend to be focused on a common activity, communicating to each other their strong commitment. Finally, the participants share a common mood together with emotional experience. As soon as the bond has been established, the ritual outcomes can be observed, namely: (1) a tendency to express group solidarity; (2) demonstrating enthusiasm, elation and strength that contribute to the increasing level of emotional energy; (3) recognizing symbols, for instance, gestures and words, which identify those soaked in the Father’s love, and what seems equally important; (4) expressing a feeling of morality, understood as “the sense of rightness in adhering to the group, respecting its symbols, and defending both against transgressors” (Collins, 2004, p. 49).

With reference to divine communication and spiritual warfare, the question of the so-called primary emotions, namely, anger, fear, happiness and sadness, should be explained. It is worth mentioning that both anger and fear are located in the amygdala, that is, the evolutionary primitive part of the human brain responsible for emotional processing, whereas happiness and sadness are not identified with only one, specific area. As a matter of fact, apart from the amygdala, they are believed to be based also in the cortical and subcortical areas which were developed later from the evolutionary point of view. This particular information appears to be of vital importance for the research topic, especially because the above-listed areas play the crucial role

in human symbolic functioning as well. When it comes to fear, human beings share this emotion with mammals and that is why escape is regarded as the most probable reaction. A demonized Christian who intends to soak in the Father's love, believes in miracles and hopes to win his or her spiritual battle, will definitely not withdraw as opposed to a scared animal. Referring back to the formerly discussed ritual outcomes, the Neo-charismatic worship songs tend to evoke elation, effervescence, joy and enthusiasm which have altogether been ascribed to the psycho-physiological pattern, defined by Collins (2004, p. 107) as *high emotional energy*. According to the author, "EE gives energy, not just for physical activity [...], but above all for taking the initiative in social interaction, putting enthusiasm into it, taking the lead in setting the level of emotional entertainment [...]. Emotional energy, in IR theory, is carried across situations by symbols that have been charged up by emotional situations. Thus, EE is a central part of the arousal of symbols that humans use to talk and to think with" (Collins, 2004, p. 107). The accumulation of emotional energy during the Neo-Pentecostal worship service contributes towards the immediate recognition of the shared reality, namely, the "as if" world which in the case of the soaking prayer and spiritual warfare applies to the battlefield, dominated by two competing forces, it means, the evil spirits and the Almighty. As a result of interacting in the realm of powerful symbols, the participants show solidarity which transforms itself into both confidence and the long-term attachment to the community. Moreover, Collins (2004, p. 109) notes that emotional energy encompasses the feelings of what is right and wrong. Therefore, the individuals with high emotional energy tend to perform specific acts of altruism and love, reinforcing at the same time their sense of belonging.

Wilkinson and Althouse (2015, p. 43) refer to the topic of the subjunctive universe, claiming that "music has the capacity to take the body beyond itself in ways that transcend written communication and cognitive processes, and to shape behavior, form personal identity, and consolidate group fidelity". For this reason, it can be stated that the Neo-Pentecostal worship songs have the potential to evoke peak experiences, followed, in the first place, by powerful emotional responses which then turn into the feelings of peace, forgiveness and comfort. Owing to the fact that participating in the "could be" reality of the soaking prayer is tantamount to giving consent to experiencing the supernatural, phenomena such as mental images or prophetic communication should not raise questions. Wilkinson and Althouse (2015, p. 48) discuss the four visible segments that are typical of large renewal meetings, referring at the same time to how the musical bodies behave during the time of resting in the Father's love. The first segment concerns the energetic praise with enthusiastic singing which is then followed by the practice of lying down at the

front of the auditorium. This particular stage is believed to be the time when the previously mentioned divine communication actually starts. The second segment applies to a private prayer uttered intently and accompanied by slow music in the background. The third segment incorporates the message given by the charismatic leader, whereas the fourth stage involves testimonies of faith, among which the stories of miracles and healings play the crucial role.

The connection between music and spiritual warfare has been clarified by Andrew M. McCoy (2015) who emphasizes the importance of human suffering in Pentecostal worship. He claims that the Neo-charismatic gatherings enable the participants to confront with evil spirits and that the lyrics of particular worship songs, due to their direct reference to the war zone, might be regarded as both the powerful prayer and expression of despair. Therefore, according to McCoy, music is believed to be “a kind of spiritual weapon – which materially repositions the faithful for the reception of healing and renewal” (McCoy, 2015, p. 58). The emotional energy (EE), resulting from the interaction within the shared reality, helps the demonized Christians to take the fight. Because of the fact that the Neo-Pentecostal gatherings engage the crowd, a spiritual battle is definitely not the problem of just a single human being. Entering the war zone requires cooperation and mutual understanding, as mentioned by Collins (2004, pp. 75–81). He makes reference to the so-called high solidarity situations which give rise to rhythmic synchronization. To be more precise, bodily movements of those who participate in the soaking prayer, synchronize in response to the worship songs performed on stage. Moreover, rhythmic synchronization affects mutual empathy as well as directs the demonized towards the mutual focus of attention.

To sum up, the Pentecostal music should not be associated merely with pure entertainment, since the Neo-Pentecostal worship songs, whose lyrics appear to carry an important message, serve as a means of expressing despair. It is also worth mentioning that for a demonized Christian, searching for deliverance and interacting with the Almighty through the soaking prayer are tantamount to entering the war zone. Operating within the subjunctive universe could be thus compared to resting in the comfort zone, known also as the Father’s love.

#### **4. Military terms in the Italian Pentecostal worship songs: the analysis**

A number of key issues have been addressed in this study, however, the most significant seem to refer to the question of spiritual warfare the demonized

Christians engage in. This particular topic appears in the lyrics of the selected Italian Pentecostal worship songs which, owing to their core message, have been enriched in specific military terms. The data have been obtained from the YouTube channels dedicated to the Italian Pentecostal worship teams as well as from the websites related to the Italian Pentecostal musical output. The first part of the analysis focuses on the employed military terms that have been chosen for the purposes of this study, whereas the second part concentrates on the language of evaluation (*appraisal*) with careful attention given to the contrast between God and a human being. Furthermore, it should also be mentioned that the topic of spiritual warfare is common to all the communities specified by Pace and Butticci (2010) as the renewalists (*rinnovatori*), namely, the Pentecostals (*Pentecostali*), charismatics (*carismatici*) and worldly mystics (*mistici intramondani*). Because of the fact that the original lyrics are in Italian, an accurate translation has been made by the author of this paper.

#### I. Military terms translated from Italian into English

Source Text	Target Text
<i>La battaglia appartiene a Lui e non a noi.</i>	The battle is fought by Him and not by us.
<i>Il nemico saprà [...]. Lui non vincerà.</i>	The enemy knows that He will not win.
<i>Marcia insieme a noi.</i>	March together with us.
<i>Tu vinci per me le mie battaglie.</i>	You win the battles for me.
<i>Io vincerò comunque.</i>	I will win eventually.
<i>Più che vincitori siamo in Te.</i>	We are more than winners in Thee.
<i>Dio mi conquistator.</i>	God, my conquistador.
<i>Delle catene mai più avrò.</i>	I will be freed from the chains.
<i>In Te, io ho vittoria.</i>	My victory is in Thee.
<i>Combatti al posto mio.</i>	You fight on my behalf.
<i>Il solo scudo è Dio.</i>	God is the only shield.
<i>L'armata del mio Dio è sempre accanto a me.</i>	The army of my God is always close to me.
<i>Io dico no alla sconfitta.</i>	I say no to the defeat.
<i>Combattendo contro ogni paura.</i>	Fighting against fear.
<i>Hai sconfitto le tenebre.</i>	You defeated the darkness.
<i>Esplose in me.</i>	Explode in me.
<i>Il mio destino è vincere.</i>	My destiny is to win.
<i>Ho la certezza della Tua vittoria.</i>	I am certain of Your victory.
<i>La Tua spada ed il Tuo scudo son per me.</i>	Your sword and Your shield are for me.
<i>Il nemico fuggirà davanti a Te.</i>	The enemy will escape before Thee

On the basis of the above-mentioned examples, it can be assumed that, regardless of the category a particular group represents in relation to the typology provided by Pace and Butticci (2010), all these communities express

their interest in the topic of a spiritual battle. The terms incorporated into the lyrics of the chosen songs suggest that a Christian could be compared to the vulnerable target the evil spirits tend to attack, whereas God is perceived as a good Commander who helps the endangered individuals to win particular battles and the entire war. Therefore, it can be stated that the true believers will eventually defeat the controlling demons with the Almighty acting in their behalf.

Apart from the military concepts, the resources of appraisal used for negotiating social relationships should be discussed thoroughly. In this particular case, the contrast between God and a human being will be presented from a linguistic point of view. First and foremost, it ought to be mentioned that the basic system of appraisal encompasses three main aspects, namely, (1) attitudes, (2) how they are amplified, and (3) their sources. According to J.R. Martin and David Rose (2007, p. 28), attitudes can be further divided into the following categories: expressing emotion (*affect*), judging character (*judgement*), and valuing the worth of things (*appreciation*). Owing to the nature of this research, only the emotional as well as judgmental dimensions will be taken into consideration. Secondly, the source of these attitudes should be clearly specified. Bearing in mind that this particular analysis focuses on the subjunctive universe and its participants who are believed to have entered a war zone, it can be assumed that the demonized Christians function as the source in the selected lyrics.

To begin with, the judgmental aspect of an attitude will be discussed. Rose and Martin (2007, p. 68) claim that judgements, whether positive or negative, involve *normality* (how unusual someone is), *capacity*, *tenacity*, *propriety*, and *veracity*. Moreover, evaluation can be either explicit or implicit. Metaphors also seem to play an important role in judging. What is then *the source's* attitude towards God – the Commander? The following expressions have been found in the chosen lyrics: (1) *Tu sei la mia luce* (You are my light), (2) *Tu sei la guida* (You are the guide), (3) *Ti prendi cura di me* (You take care of me), (4) *guarisci il cuore rotto* (You heal the broken heart), (5) *con Te sono al sicuro* (I am safe by your side), (6) *sei fedele e buono* (You are trustworthy and gentle), (7) *Tu sei domani* (You are the future), (8) *sei il mio rifugio* (You are my shelter), (9) *sei potenza [...]*, *sei speranza [...]*, *sei la risposta* (You are the power [...], the hope [...], the answer), (10) *il mio Dio è irresistibile* (My God is irresistible), (11) *Dio infallibile e invincibile* (infallible and invincible God), (12) *non c'è dolore troppo grande per Lui* (too much pain is not a problem for Him), (13) *la Tua voce calma il vento* (Your voice calms the wind), (14) *sei Dio la mia certezza* (You are God, my guarantee), (15) *nessuno è come Dio* (there is no one like God), (16) *il fuoco sei che mai svanirà* (You are the flame that will never burn

out), (17) *Tu sei la forza* (You are the strength), (18) *La tua bontà dura per sempre* (Your kindness is everlasting). On the basis of the above-mentioned details, it seems obvious that *the source* (the demonized Christian/s) regards the Almighty as the ultimate authority. Furthermore, the implementation of metaphors indicates tenderness, commitment as well as a deep affection on *the source's* part. In the case of the selected lyrics, judgements have been expressed both explicitly (e.g. *sei fedele e buono*) and implicitly (e.g. *la Tua voce calma il vento*). Last but not least, when it comes to the formerly discussed categories of judgements, capacity (e.g. *sei potenza*), tenacity (e.g. *con Te sono al sicuro*) and veracity (e.g. *sei Dio la mia certezza*) prevail.

As far as affect is concerned, similarly to the judgmental dimension, it can be either positive or negative. On top of that, it can be expressed directly or indirectly. In this research, careful attention is given to how the demonized Christian (*the source*) feels upon entering a war zone, and therefore, the analysis of the linguistic content referring to *the source's* emotional condition should be carried out. For this particular reason, the following instances have been enumerated: (1) *quando sono afflitto, quando sono debole* (when I am afflicted, when I am weak), (2) *non ho paura mai* (I am no longer afraid), (3) *anche se forza più non ho* (although I lost my strength), (4) *più non cadrò* (I am not going to fall anymore), (5) *il mio cuor arde per Te* (my heart burns for you), (6) *sono stanco* (I am tired), (7) *io grido vittoria* (I am shouting the victory), (8) *abbiamo fame di Te* (we are hungry for You), (9) *io mi stringo a Te* (I cling to You), (10) *io riposo in Te* (I rest in You), (11) *brucia dentro me un fuoco per Te* (a fire burns inside of me for You), (12) *il mio desiderio è stare con Te* (my wish is to stay with You), (13) *servire Te è ciò che voglio* (serving You is what I want), (14) *sono vivo grazie a Te* (I am alive because of You), (15) *senza Te sono un quadro senza colore* (without you I am a colorless picture). The analysis clearly shows that *the source* at the first stage of their battle, feels weak and miserable (e.g. *sono stanco*). However, as soon as *the source* becomes aware of the Father's love and power, the attitude changes considerably. In consequence, *the source* decides to take an active part in their spiritual battle which is evidenced by expressions such as: *non ho paura mai* (I am no longer afraid). In other words, *the source* declares absolute trust in the Almighty. From a linguistic point of view, affect (positive as well as negative) has been expressed both directly and implicitly. The former applies to mental states (e.g. *quando sono debole*) and also to describing behavior which at the same time suggests *the source's* physical condition (e.g. *anche se forza più non ho*), whereas the latter focuses on describing emotions through the usage of metaphors, as in the case of the judgmental dimension (e.g. *senza Te sono un quadro senza colore*). The formerly mentioned contrast between God and

a human being manifests itself in what has already been defined as *capacity*. To be more precise, the lyrics present a human being as an afflicted individual who is not capable of winning a spiritual battle without the intervention of the supernatural. God, on the other hand, appears to be *the source's* ultimate hope and only choice because it is believed that a responsible commander never abandons their soldiers.

## 5. Conclusions

The main purpose of this article was to analyse the linguistic content of the Italian Pentecostal worship songs, performed by the Neo-charismatic churches which are based in different parts of Italy and which are interested, at the same time, in the question of a spiritual battle. The analysis focused mainly on the expressions of appraisal as well as the incorporation of military terms into the lyrics. The research referred only to the communities meeting physically on a regular basis, especially during the so-called Sunday worship services. The selected groups are characterized by the pyramidal (hierarchical) structure with their leaders being the centre of attention.

First of all, on the basis of this particular study, it can be stated that the selected songs are rich in both judgmental as well as emotional expressions. The former aim at describing God whereas the latter refer to the mental states of human beings, demonized Christians in fact, who have been defined as *the source*. Moreover, it should also be mentioned that the question of capacity seems to be the major issue here. *The source* has been presented as miserable and helpless, whilst the Almighty – as powerful and reliable. When it comes to the ways the attitude has been negotiated, both explicit as well as implicit examples appear in the lyrics. Employing metaphors together with the language of poetry, proves a strong spiritual bond between *the source* and the Father.

Secondly, this article clearly differentiates between demonic possession and demonization, which seems to be crucial when exploring, for instance, the problem of Pentecostal healing. Demonic possession is considered to be a serious condition, involving complete control over a human being as opposed to demonization which consists in only partial control or rather attachment. According to Pentecostal demonology, evil spirits tend to be named on the basis of the symptoms they induce. Catholic Church, on the other hand, recognizes demons by their proper names.

Thirdly, the importance of the soaking prayer has been discussed with special attention given to the topic of the subjunctive universe where those

who struggle on the battlefield, search for the Father's love. As mentioned before, spiritual warfare is believed to be demanding, however, music may be used as spiritual weapon against the evil spirits. Moreover, the relationship established with God during the soaking prayer is expected to influence the final outcome.

To summarize, it can be assumed that the Italian Pentecostal worship songs function as the catalysts whose main role is to initiate successful divine communication, whereas the ritual itself could be compared to the symbolic world, focused on both interaction and cooperation. The pyramidal structure discussed before places the charismatic leader at the centre of this unique environment.

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