

Speech and Ideologies of Nigerian Women in Works of Nwapa and Adimora-Ezeigbo: Pragmatic-Stylistic Study

Nnenna Gertrude Ezech

PhD, Department of English Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
Email: nnenna.ezech@unn.edu.ng; ORCID: 0000-0002-5381-7132

Abstract

In human communication, language has served as a social product used for the accomplishment of certain desirable goals and actions. Similarly, it has been used in presenting and deciphering the ideological patterns and perceptions of humans, in both spoken and written discourses, with the aim of achieving an intended message. The study attempts to use language to project the intrinsic and outer feelings of women, in relation to their experiences with societal ideologies. In the African context, specifically in the Nigerian society; women are labeled with a self-effacing identity and second class status which relegate them to the background. This societal attitude of scorn about women in all spheres of life, as the vulnerable and weaker sex; has permeated the psyche of the Nigerian women, that they have gradually accepted this ideology and have overtly and covertly (by words and actions) contributed to their subjugation and dominance in the society. Four novels written by two Nigerian female authors- Flora Nwapa and Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo- have been used as the primary data for the work, with a view to projecting the ideological perceptions of women, based on these two female authors. It also adopts an eclectic theoretical framework of speech act and critical discourse analysis. The writers' style of language in the texts was also considered to give the work, a pragmatic-stylistic essence. The result shows that Nigerian women have contributed to male dominance, especially by their linguistic nuances and dispositions which project them as weak and second class. It suggests that women should first convince themselves of their uniqueness, sensitize themselves mentally that they are not inferior to their male counterparts; and then assert themselves through their linguistic nuances and dispositions, to rightly assume their significant roles as partners in societal development.

Keywords: *Language, Speech Act, Ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis, Patriarchy, Pragmatic-Stylistics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool for social construction of world view and a dramatic replication of contexts (Van Dijk 2008; Nozar & Guatam, 2010). Linguistic research among scholars have established the fact that ideology plays a role in shaping and influencing linguistic structures and speech forms (Johnstone 2008; Locke 2004). Some scholars have argued that women tend to use linguistic forms that reflect and reinforce a subordinate role (Archer, 2004; Nnolim, 2009). This subordinate role of women cuts across virtually every culture of the globe, even though the practice may be more intense in developing cultures than the developed.

In the African context, specifically in the Nigerian society; women are labeled with a self-effacing and societal derogatory status which relegate them to the background (Nmadi, 2000; Ezeilo, 2017). This attitude of scorn about women has gradually permeated their psyche, with their acceptance of this ideology by words and actions; making them vulnerable to male

subjugation (Kira, 2003). The study uses language to project the intrinsic and outer feelings of women, in relation to their experiences and assesses the extent to which women have aided male dominance in the society.

Patriarchy refers to the social system orchestrated by male dominance over women in a given society. It oppresses women, leaving them mentally subdued, irrationally submissive and perpetual adherents to a stereotyped male chauvinistic culture (Makama, 2013). This form of social system is largely perpetuated by the customs and traditions of most African societies, especially in Nigeria; which regard women as second class (Adichie, 2004). The verbal nuances of women in Nigeria, betray their patriarchal woes and subtly expose the physical and mental ‘scars’ inflicted on them by male suppression.

Ebekue (2017) opines that the type of training given to girls in the Nigerian society, results to inferior mindset for them and forms the psychology with which they grow into womanhood.

Ideology determines how human beings think, act and communicate. It is a mental construct that propels individual and societal beliefs. In a general sense, ideology can be defined as a set of ideas, widely shared by members of a society that guides identities, behaviors and institutions. (Flairclough, 2003). Ideologies can be formed based on traditional values, religious beliefs and an epistemological understanding of the world in general.

On the linguistic level, ideology is an aspect of critical discourse analysis that studies how social and linguistic practices, reflect societal power relations and differences and how these differences are reinforced through language (Howard, 2007). The term ‘critical’ in critical discourse analysis, involves the identification of the passive relationship between language, power and ideology (Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This implies that special attention is paid to the various kinds of inequalities in the community, such as social, gender (sex) and ethnicity; through various interdisciplinary approaches.

This study adopts Van Dijk’s version of discourse analysis which adopts a cognitive approach that studies the mental processes (mental reactions which influence thoughts, feelings and perception) which are reflected through the medium of language (Dijk, 2008).

A speech act is a technical term in linguistics and the philosophy of language which is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance. It is the centre of pragmatics (Black, 2006)).

The speech act theory states that in uttering a sentence, the speaker performs three acts: the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts (Schiffrin, 2003). The locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of an utterance. The illocutionary is the extra or implied meaning of an utterance, as intended by the speaker in consideration to the context. This is the crux of the speech act theory which focuses on the intention or performative role of the speaker. The perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance on the hearer, which propels the hearer to respond in a certain manner, in conformity with the speaker’s act.

Searle’s theory of speech act categorized speech acts into assertives, expressives, directives, commissives, and declaratives (Umera -Okeke, 2008). Patriarchy holds that the speech mannerisms of men are directive and assertive, exuding authority and power; while the women communicate in an emotionally subdued and expressive language (Emenyonu, 2004).

Granted that the Nigerian society has contributed significantly to women’s suppression by their sociocultural ideologies about women, handed down from history; it is also obvious

that women have aggravated the situation by their psychological dispositions and acceptance of the societal ideologies which are evident in their linguistic nuances and actions in their daily interactions with men, in the society.

Although a lot of researches have focused on the second class status of women in the society, little research has been carried out on the self-assessment of women, and how they have contributed to subjugation and suppression in the society. This issue preoccupies this study.

Background to the Works of Flora Nwapa & Adimora Ezeigbo

Flora Nwapa, the acclaimed mother of modern African literature is a forerunner to a generation of women writers. Nwapa was the first female to publish her novel in English, and on the thematic concern for women affairs in her work, *Efuru* in 1966. Born in the year 1931, Nwapa grew up in Oguta, a small rural town in the eastern part of Nigeria. She graduated from the University of Ibadan, with an Art degree in 1958. As a married woman, she was opportune to experience the travails of marriage within the Nigerian society. She attempts to share the pains that the Nigerian woman has to contend with, to fully adjust to the demands of her society in most of her literary works with her debut, *Efuru*, *Idu* and other books. Her works defied the hitherto suppressed image of the African woman as passive, and marked a literary revolution that brought the Nigerian woman to limelight. Nwapa proposes the role of female writers as a tool of change for not just women alone, but for mankind and that partly explains why she refused to be called a feminist, which tends to divide men against women.

Nwapa in an interview on the poetics of economic independence in Umeh & Nwapa (1995) asserts that her aim is to inform and educate women all over, especially feminists (both with capital F and small f) on the traditional roles of women in Nigeria, their families and economic independence, as well as their status in the society. The author in her various creative works such as *Idu* and *One is Enough*, used for this study; projects the fact that in spite of social inhibitions, women are unique beings who have the self-will and ability to break out of societal inhibitions, take their destinies in their own hands and make independent choices for their self-emancipation and survival (Okunola, 2021). Her works present an assertive and Transformative mindset that seek to contend with the passive and lop-sided image of women, projected by male writers in her society.

Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo is another Nigerian female writer that has taken the risk to champion a historical upheaval and transformation of the image of the Nigerian woman, by generating new narrative techniques that will counter the aged -long patriarchal African tradition that has reduced the African woman to a tyrannized and psychological enslaved sex (Archer, 2004; Chukwukere, 1995). Ezeigbo started her writing career in the early 21st century as a university lecturer and subsequently, a Professor of English and has continued to be significant with her prolific writings in the genres of poetry, novel, short stories and children's literature. She is also an activist and a gender theorist.

Ezeigbo, like Nwapa is married and is poised to narrate her experiences through her literary works, which depict the challenges of the Nigerian wife and mother, in our contemporary times. Ezeigbo is unique for her ability to knit life experiences into art (Osofiason, 2018) and her fictional works capture the female experiences in Nigeria with literary ornamentation. She employs such artistic techniques as foreshadowing and the use of the third person omniscient narrator, to make these experiences realistic to the reader. She has

been defined as a feminist artist and scholar, committed to social transformation and gender equality for females (Fio & Ogamba in Asika, 2012)

Nigerian female writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, Chimamanda Adichie to mention a few; have joined their African counterparts such as Ama Ata Aidoo, Nadine Gormer, Seffi Attah and others; in championing women liberation and ideological change for women, through their creative works. The big question, however, is how far has the Nigerian woman leveraged on these efforts, to better her lot in the society?

Research questions

- 1) What ideologies do women have about themselves in the Nigerian society that have aided their suppression?
- 2) How has the linguistic habits of women enforced their societal inferiority in the sampled texts?
- 3) How can women gain self -emancipation and inclusiveness in the society?
- 4) What are the pragmatic-stylistic connectives used by the two female Nigerian authors to convey their literary works and the intended effect on the audience?

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative, descriptive methodology, considering that the data used are novels from selected authors, on the ideologies of women. The focus is to investigate how language is used to express ideologies in women. Much of the analysis, center around the lexical choices of the characters especially the female ones in the novels studied, as well as the structural and contextual considerations, bothering on the texts.

Four novels- *Idu & One is enough* by Flora Nwapa; *The Last of the Strong Ones & House of Symbols* by Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo serve as primary data for the work.

The choice of data was based on novels that project ideological perceptions of women in various communities in Nigeria, especially in the south-east; with preference for women authors aimed at getting a firsthand opinion of women on the study.

The textual analysis centers on ideological parameters and cultural beliefs of the Nigerian society, using a pragmatic stylistic approach which prioritizes the linguistic choices of a speaker, influenced by context; the relationship between speaker and hearer, the speaker's emotional attitudes and style, in conveying an intended message.

FINDINGS

Research Question One: What Ideologies Do Women Have About Themselves In The Nigerian Society That Have Aided Their Suppression?

Findings from the data show that women in Nigeria hold the following ideologies about themselves, in congruence with societal beliefs:

- 1) Women are weak and inconsequential.
- 2) Decision making in and outside the family is reserved for men.
- 3) The role of the woman ends in wife hood and motherhood and a successful woman is measured by the number of children she bears.

- 4) A woman can hardly earn respect and dignity without being under a man in marriage.
- 5) The woman is the property of her husband and a tool for male aggrandizement. These ideologies are sequentially discussed in themes, to establish a synergy of thought.

Theme One- Women are weak and inconsequential

This ideology leaves the Nigerian woman with the attitude of complacency and feeling of worthlessness. Nwapa and Ezeigbo capture this theme in their works, using the words of the characters, especially the female ones as follows:

In Nwapa's *Idu*, the following statement by the central character, Idu to her husband, proves this point that women consider themselves weak, in accordance with societal beliefs:

'I am not aware what I have done to you to cause your strange behavior over these two days. You choose to do to me, things that will kill my soul.... A human being like yourself will not beat me for nothing. It is not really me you want to beat. Go and look for men like yourself to beat. It is where I am that you have strength' (174).

The above statement, addressed to her husband Adiwere, reveals the ill treatment she receives from her husband for no just cause and her inability to retaliate, due to her weakness.

Similarly, in Ezeigbo's *House of Symbols*, the principal character Eagle woman also confirms this fact, as she retorted in her frustration:

'Ossai, this is not what we agreed, is it? All I ask of you is to be given some space to be myself, is that asking too much? Trust is part of it. Trust is love's closest companion. I will not be a beast whose back receives blows without a murmur' (205).

This is clearly the cry of a woman in emotional crisis, who wished that her husband could trust and treat her in a more civilized manner, instead of inflicting her with physical and mental torture. The mindset of the man that the woman must not be heard, compels him to treat her inconsequentially.

Theme Two- Decision making in and outside the family is reserved for men

The intellectual prowess and capability of the woman is underrated with all the powers of decision making accorded to men. Even wrong decisions by the men are accepted with docility and fear. In the novel, *The Last of the Strong One*, Mgbeke attempts to contest her husband's decision to work in faraway Igedu town, to the detriment of the family and she was arrogantly reminded by her husband Okorie, of the traditional behavioral code of women in the Igbo society which demands outright submission to men at all times. Okorie bluntly reminded her of this in these words:

'Mgbeke, are you now the man in this house? So you are now the one who says or decides what will happen in this family?....I am the one who married you and brought you into this house. I am your husband and you must not forget that. I am the one to make all the decisions in this house. You are growing wings. Your duty is to obey. The pumpkin stem that is left untended, creeps into excrement'(93).

This reminder left Mgbeke mute, as she reluctantly submitted to allowing her husband to leave for Igedu, at the expense of her family.

Similarly, in the novel *Idu*, there were many clues that established that decision making was reserved for the men, both within and outside the family; leaving the woman in a state of ‘intellectual bankruptcy’.

The words of Nwasiobi gives a clue of the assessment of women about themselves. Nwasiobi said:

‘But we women, we don’t really understand everything at times. We are foolish...’(104).

Theme Three- The role of the woman ends in wife hood and motherhood and a successful woman is measured by the number of children she bears

In the texts under review, the woman is measured by the number of children she has for her husband, and for her motherly role in the family and society at large. This belief results in a woman’s desperation to conceive and sustain her marriage at all cost, even under life threatening situation. A childless woman is a nuisance to both her husband and the society, with the resultant feeling of worthlessness on her part.

In the novel *Idu*, Adiwere was upset when his wife *Idu* could not bear children and that made him look for a second wife. Even *Idu*’s fellow women considered her situation unbearable and agonizing and made her ordeal, a point of discussion at their leisure times. Eventually, when *Idu* succeeded in bearing a child and delayed in having a second one, Adiwere was emotionally upset in the text as follows:

‘*Idu* was not yet pregnant again and *Ijoma* was over two years old. Adiwere has thought that after the birth of *Ijoma*, *Idu*’s womb would accommodate more children. It was not to be. What would he do if anything happened to him or his son? That would mean that his line would be extinguished forever’(90).

Even the women held the same view, which explains why Onyemuru accused and scolded *Idu* for not getting a wife for her husband, to continue the role of wifehood and mother to him. Onyemuru barred her mind to *Idu* in these words:

‘You said so. If you did not say so, he would have married another wife. You have already driven away the second wife he married, such a good wife!. We don’t do things like that here. You are a dangerous woman. Our people don’t act like that. A woman like you should marry many wives for her husband. Don’t go on as you are, it is not good’(90).

The use of ‘we’, and ‘our people’ in the above statement by Onyemuru to her fellow woman *Idu*, suggests that the life of the woman is submerged in the life and expectation of the society. The woman has no say in her own affairs and her actions must conform with societal beliefs, for her to be well adjusted in that society. She has to be at the whims and caprices of traditional ideologies, irrespective of her feelings, on any given situation. Even her fellow women will reprimand and put her to ridicule, if she fails to conform to societal expectations, both in her family life and the society. This explains *Idu*’s words to Adiwere, after Onyemuru’s confrontation:

‘Nothing, I only want you to marry another wife. I don’t want to be called a bad woman anymore. If you don’t want to marry, then that is another matter, but I want you to marry. You never Know what tomorrow will bring’ (91).

In another novel *One is Enough*, Amaka, the principal character attests to this fact that wife hood and motherhood is what matters for the woman in the society. In the face of the ill-treatment she received, as a result of her barrenness from her husband's family and the societal pressure on her, she realized the futility of endless hope and stared reality in the face, in her words:

... 'I thought the emphasis was on this unique relationship of man and woman, that children did not even matter. I was wrong. A childless marriage cannot last in the Nigeria of today. So if a wife is unable to have children by her husband, she should leave and try elsewhere' (6).

Amaka, the main character in the text had a very excruciating experience with her mother-in-law, in her marriage to her son, Obiora. Despite the fact that Amaka was a well-accomplished woman in her business, she was treated like trash in her home, for her childlessness. Her mother-in-law ridiculed her in these words:

'Let me take your points, one by one. You said you saw a doctor, or are [sic] about to see a doctor who could treat you and make you pregnant. I say you are a liar. All the doctors you saw said that you are incapable of bearing a child. You were dishonest not to tell your husband that he was wasting his strength on you' (14).

In another situation, Amaka recalled her painful marital experience with her husband and concluded in her thoughts: 'Her sole ambition was to be a wife and a mother. If she achieved this, then all the blessings of this world would come in God's good time. So she waited' (6).

Similarly, in the *Last of the Strong Ones*, Ejimnaka's mother did not take kindly to her daughter's unmarried state. She lamented about this at any slightest provocation. The reader feels her frustration with the unmarried state of Ejimnaka in her daughter's thoughts:

'My mother was heart-broken. Out of the three surviving children, I was the only daughter. She wanted me to settle down, like other girls, in a man's house. Her hopes were unfulfilled and she raged and grieved: Ejimnaka, my daughter, what will I do with you? Ewu... my chi, what do I do with a child like this one...?' (28).

Theme Four - The woman can hardly earn respect and dignity without being under a man in marriage

This belief results in degradation of self-worth of women in all spheres of life; the accomplished ones, notwithstanding.

In the text, *One is Enough*, the societal belief that the woman has little or no value without the man in marriage was reinforced in the words of Obiora to his wife, Amaka:

'I have made my decision and there is no going back... So brace yourself for a hard time. If you are sensible, you will stay here under my protection. A woman needs protection from her husband. If you want to act as if you are endowed with the wisdom of Solomon, and get wrong and stupid advice, all well and good... But let me warn you that if you step out of this house in protest when my wife and my two sons arrive, you stay out forever' (20-21).

Also, in the text *Idu*, we see women who contracted marriages, just to fulfill societal expectations and not of their desire; and those who stayed put in their marriages, even under life threatening situations; just to earn societal respect and dignity, in spite of their excruciating

marital circumstances. The words of Adiwere's second wife exemplify this, as she laments her marital situation to Idu, her co-wife in these words:

'No, I don't want you or anybody to talk to me like that. I don't want you to....I did not come as a maid, but as a wife. What kind of married life is this? Did I beg your husband to marry me? Eh, did I beg him? Please leave me alone. I can go back to my mother's house, her roof is not leaking. I was not starving there, either'(48).

Similarly, in Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*, the hostility that Ejimnaka suffered in the hands of Ijeoma attests to the societal pressure on women to get married and the animosity that comes with it when they fail to engage a man in marriage. Ejimnaka observed:

'Like Onyekozuru, she (Ijeoma) knew that Obiatu was not attracted to young maidens. Ijeoma nursed her ambition and was certain of her prize. Then I appeared from nowhere and snatched it (Obiatu) like a hawk would grasp at a chick, she could not forgive me. She was to direct her malice and hostility towards me, times without number'(39).

This statement shows the desperation that women exhibit in their quest to get 'hooked' to a man, to earn respect in the society.

Theme Five - The woman is the property of her husband and a tool for male aggrandizement

In Ezeigbo's *House of Symbols*, we see Soronje in a mental torturing situation with her husband, Moses; as their twelve years of marriage taught her a few lessons, as seen in this passage:

'She rises, shuffles to her bedroom. Over the years, she developed an instinct that warns her when the danger point is reached in their conversation: when the attack ceases to be verbal and becomes physical. An instinct for survival which she heeds as if it is the voice of an oracle...'(175).

In Nwapa's *Idu*, in spite of Idu's innocence of Adiwere's odd behavior towards her, she still begged her husband in order to save the situation, since she felt uncomfortable with her quarrelsome husband and sadly, Adiwere insisted on Idu appeasing him in these words:

'If I refuse your food, either for a just or unjust cause, you are expected to ask for forgiveness by giving me a present'. So Idu gave him a whole piece of eight yards of gorge'(175).

There are many other examples from the texts reviewed, to substantiate these ideologies held about women in the Nigerian society, and sadly, Nigerian women reinforce these 'oppressive beliefs' themselves, in their utterances and social interactions. The above attitudes resulting from a male dominated societal ideology have grossly hindered the self-actualization of women in the society.

Research question two: How has the linguistic habits of women enforced their societal inferiority in the sampled texts?

The utterances of women in the four novels by the two female authors –Nwapa and Ezeigbo – prove that women reinforce subordinate roles in their speech mannerism. While most of their utterances are expressive and comissive with limited assertive, the men are mostly given to making directive and assertive speech acts to reinforce their supremacy, as evident in the

above extracts. Such expressive speech acts, expose women's vulnerability to men, as expressed by one of the female characters in these words:

'... That night, I did not sleep well. What sort of man had I married? I asked myself again and again. What worried me most was his total self -sufficiency. He hardly talked to me...This way of living almost drove me mad. But there was no sympathetic soul to confide in, my parents, least of all'(The Last of the strong Ones, 135).

The above speech act contradicts with the directives made by the male characters in the text, for example:

'Akubata, take your daughter and give her some pieces of advice. Let her not go to her husband's house and prance about like a calf or throw her weight around. When I theme speaks, she should not answer him back. You know your daughter as well as I do, so I do not have to tell you what to say... '(Last of the Strong Ones,133).

Similarly, the verbal mannerism of women in the text reviewed, show their ideological stance in line with Van Dijk's beliefs - such as appeal to emotions, norm expressions and evocation of antecedents which impact on the emotions of the woman (Dijk, 2008). This mental disposition is orchestrated by docility, naivety, emotional suppression and societal-cum cultural manipulations of the female gender which has grossly affected the little resistance women have summoned, in the face of a stiff patriarchal system.

Research question Three: How can a woman gain self -emancipation and inclusiveness in the Nigeria society?

In Nwapa's *One is Enough*, the principal character, Amaka defied the odds, left her frustrating marriage in search of self- actualization, and became successful in every sense of the word in her society. Ironically, the same people who oppressed her in her childlessness - especially her husband Obiora, and her mother- in- law - came back to identify with her success, as can be deduced in the words of Obiora:

'Amaka is about to go back to Lagos and I heard she has got a lawyer to start divorce proceedings. I don't want that, Mother, I hear that she is very wealthy now, She has built a house in Lagos, she owns a car and moves in very high circles in Lagos. She could be very useful to me. I want her...Mother, I am miserable, without her'(92).

Similarly, Obiora's mother had to go back to her in- laws, begging that the returned dowry be reinstated to have Amaka back, as Obiora's wife in her words:

'... Yes, I am in your house, and I have come to tell you to return the dowry which Obiora's wife people brought back some weeks ago...Obiora has made up with his wife, and they are both going to Lagos to live'. (One is Enough,93)

Unfortunately, Amaka thought better of her situation and decided never to return to her marriage, which her husband and her mother- in -law made a living hell for her, on account of her childlessness. in her thoughts:

'...She neither wanted to be a wife anymore, nor be a mistress, or even a 'kept' woman. She wanted a man, just a man and she wanted to be independent of this man, pure and simple'(100).

Also in the novel, Idu, the principal character Idu. preferred her independence and blatantly refused to marry her husband's younger brother, as the tradition demands, after her husband's death. She rather preferred to die staying alone, than stoop to marry a hooligan, whom she and her husband fed, when her husband was alive.

She showed her resentment of her husband's brother Ishiodu, in these words: '...That's the trouble a bad brother causes- a brother who has no sense, married to an even more senseless woman'(205). Idu continued in the subsequent page, that:

'Ishiodu came to put the thread around my neck this morning. Did you hear? I just looked at him put the thread on and left. He was not sure of himself. He is the only brother of Adiwere. He should marry me and she laughed again. That's what it is. Ogbenyanu and I will marry Ishiodu. Do you hear what I am saying'? (216).

Her fellow women discussed this issue amongst themselves and one of them said: '...Marry Ishiodu?. She will not . Do you not know Ishiodu at all? .She won't. She will prefer to stay as I see her now. She won't agree to marry any other person'(217).

In summary, the four novels reviewed, show that the two authors believe that for women to gain respect and acceptance, they must swim 'against the tide' in the society, assert their rights and beliefs, and put their interests first, before those of the men; to gain emancipation in every aspect of their lives.

Research question four: What are the pragmatic-stylistic connectives used by the two female Nigerian authors to convey their literary works and the intended effect on the audience?

Pragmatic-stylistics pays special attention to those linguistic and related features such as particular techniques of foregrounding (deviations, parallelism, cohesion and coherence) that combine with a specific context, to achieve a desired effect in a text (Nozar & Guatam, 2010).The main preoccupation of a pragmatic-stylistic analysis of a text is its **context** that enhances audience appreciation and understanding of a literary work.

Hickey (1989:12) summarizes pragmatic-stylistics in these words:

'If linguists are interested in asking what do you say? Stylisticians ask 'How do you say? And Pragmaticians ask 'What do you do? Then pragmatic-stylisticians ask 'How do you do?. The answers they provide to these questions are all useful and interesting to language use'.

Pragmatic-Stylistic connectives are therefore features that help the texts to achieve a pragmatic end, using stylistic devices in the text. One of the essence of literature is pedagogic-ornamentation. It aims to pass information in a stylish way.

Nwapa and Ezeigbo in their attempt to portray the second class and demeaning status of women in the Nigerian society, achieve these objectives with artistic diction that x-ray the contextual peculiarities of the Nigerian society, to both Nigerian and foreign audience.

Similarly, the use of such familiar diction- cash madam, stark illiterates, indigenes and the usual sarcasm of women, give the audience, the shared understanding of the message and a nostalgic disposition to the texts.

Findings on the analysis of the texts, identify the use of such foregrounding devices as parallelism, rhetorical questions, symbolism, irony, deixis, imagery, sarcasm, contextual words

and others. Other devices such as repetition, ellipsis, subordination or embedding were used to achieve cohesion in the texts. A few examples of these techniques in the texts include:

- 1) Parallelism- 'Binding her to him. Pulling her into his grasping embrace. (House of Symbols,27)
- 2) Rhetorical question- What else do we want, if we have children? (Idu,150)
- 3) Symbolism-The complementarity of traditional religion and other conventional religions as symbolized in Ezenwanyi (House of Symbols, 47).
- 4) Deixis- ...But this one was her choice (House of Symbols, 110)
- 5) Sarcasm- '...Obiora's mother, you must see Kano and Lagos and other places. This Onitsha has a way of making one old and sad and even ignorant (One is Enough, 94)
- 6) Irony- Eagle woman projected as eagle -nobility and intelligence -which contradicts with the weak status of the woman (House of Symbols ,1)
- 7) Contextual words: Abanidiegwu (armed robbers), Ugwu Hausa (Northern Nigeria), Asa (a species of fish), Cash madam, Ten percent ministers, Stark Illiterate, Tilly lamp. African Patch Patch (culled from Idu, One is Enough, The Last of the Strong Ones and The House of Symbols)
- 8) Repetition-With my whole heart, with my whole soul, with my everything (One is Enough,109)
- 9) Ellipsis- Perish the thought, for we saw no tangible reason to entertain... (The Last of the Strong Ones, 11).

All these techniques, among others; culminate in giving the study a pragmatic-stylistic essence, by reflecting the contextual indices inherent in the texts, achieving a better understanding of the intended message of the writer by the reader, and attaining the literary objectives of information and ornamentation on the audience.

6. CONCLUSION

In recent times, Nigerian women have come to the realization that they are disadvantaged in the society, compared to the men; in several international and local fora organized to assert the woman both in the Nigerian society and across the globe.

This realization has led them to question the status quo, organizing different revolutionary fora and making other self- assessing efforts to better their lot. Notwithstanding, women have also contributed to their second-class status, by their inferior disposition in the society, both in their verbal mannerism and other ways.

The study discovered that these efforts by women to gain emancipation have been undermined with the societal system of male patriarchy in Nigeria. However, this situation can be improved, if women change their ideologies of undue 'idolizing' and dependency on men and strive for self-respect and actualization.

Having achieved a liberated ideology for themselves and about others, women will gradually overcome naivety and vulnerability and emerge emancipated in the Nigerian society, and even globally.

References

- 1) Adichie, C. (2004). *We should all be feminists*. New York: Vintage Books.
- 2) Adimora -Ezeigbo,A. (1991) *The Last of the Strong Ones*. Owerri: Lantern Publishers.
- 3)(2002). *House of Symbol*. Owerri: Lantern Publishers.
- 4)(1996).*Gender Issues in Nigeria: A Feminine Perspective*. Lagos: Vista Publishers.
- 5) Archer, J.(2004) Sex differences in aggression in real world setting :A meta -analytic review. *Review of General Psychology*,8: 291-322 doi 10.1037/1089-2680.8.291.
- 6) Asika, I. (2012). Folktales in Akachi Adimora - Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*, *House of Symbols and Children of the Eagle*. *ANSU Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 2,1: 19-29.
- 7) Black, E.(2006). *Pragmatic Stylistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- 8) Bloor, M., & Bloor, T. (2007).*The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Hodder Education Publishers.
- 9) Chukwukere, G.(1995). *The Role of African Women in Life and Literature, Gender Voices and Choices: Redefining Women in Contemporary African Fiction*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- 10) Ebekue, E.(2017).Intra- gender subjugation among women in Nigeria; A study of Stephanie Okere's *Dry*. *Creative Artist*,11,: 84-102.
- 11) Emenyonu, E.(2004). *New Women's Writing in African Literature*. London: James Currey Publishers.
- 12) Ezeilo, Joy.(2017). Draft report to the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDRAW).
- 13) Fairclough, N.(2003).. *Analysing Discourse Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge..
- 14) Howard, J.(2007). *Key Terms in Linguistics*. London: Continuum.
- 15) Johnstone, B.(2008). *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- 16) Hickey, L.(1989). *The Pragmatics of Style*. NewYork: Routledge Press.
- 17) Kira, S.(2003). Gender -related knowledge and the descriptive representation of women. *Political Behaviour*, 25,24.
- 18) Levinson, S.(1998). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 19) Locke, T.(2004). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum Publishers.
- 20) Lyons, J.(2009). *Language and Linguistics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- 21) Makama, G.(2013). Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The way forward. *European Scientific Journal*, 9 :101-110.
- 22) Nmadu, G.(2000) On our feet: Women in grass root development. *Journal of Women in Academia*,1, no.1:165- 171.

- 23) Nnolim, C. (2009). *African Feminism: The Scandalous Path*. Contemporary Nigerian Fiction. Issues in African Literature. Lagos: Treasure Publishers.
- 24) Nozar, N, and Guatam, R. (2010). *How to Study Literature: Stylistics and Pragmatic Approaches*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Publishers.
- 25) Nwapa, F.(1974). *Idu*. Lagos: Heinemann Publishers.
- 26) (1981). *One is Enough* . Enugu: Tana Publishers.
- 27) Okunola, A.(2021). Nigerian feminists coalition want women in positions of power. But why is that important?: An interview with Kiki Mordi and Ayodeji Oswobi @globalcitizen.org.
- 28) Osofisan, F.(2018). Eagles in the age of unacknowledged muse: Two Major New Writers in Contemporary Nigerian Literature –Akachi Ezeigbo and Promise Okeke. *African Literature Today*, 24 :21-42.
- 29) Schiffrin, D.(2003). *Approaches to Discourse Studies*.UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- 30) Umeh, Marie and Nwapa, Flora. 1995. The Poetics of Economic independence for female empowerment: An interview with Flora Nwapa. *Research in African Literature*, 26.2 :22-29.
- 31) Umera-Okeke, N.(2008). *Semantics and Pragmatics: Theories of meaning and usage in English*. Awka: Fab Anieh.
- 32) Van Dijk, T. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage Publishers.
- 33) Van Dijk, T. (2008). *Discourse and Power*. London: Palgrave Macmillian Publishers.
- 34) Van Leeuwen, T.(2008) *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Oxford Press.
- 35) Wodak, R.,& Meyer, M.(2009). *Method for Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publication.