

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GENDER IDEOLOGIES IN IBIERE KEN
MADUAKO'S SOUNDS OF MOTHERHOOD**

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ABSTRACT

The emergence and application of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to the study of gender ideologies has enabled discourse analysis to analyse text or poem beyond its surface meaning, accounting for how language use, is, in most cases, influenced by social linguistic factors. Employing the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis methods of CDA, therefore, this paper investigates the gender ideologies such as lexicalization of gender violence, naming strategy as sex preference, the question of bride price and women's rights in order to show how Ibiere Ken Maduako employs language in a critical manner in responding to social vices. The poem: Sounds of Motherhood was purposely sampled for analysis. The methodology involves linguistic and extra textual analysis of excerpts taken from the sampled poem. The analysis exposes the different experiences of womanhood from infancy to adulthood and the sweet, bitter sides of the women's life. Also revealed in the analysis is how ideas and meanings are hidden in words.

INTRODUCTION

Critical discourse analysis, as an emerging approach to discourse analysis, has engaged the attention of many discourse analysts perhaps. Its criticality has made it possible for discourse analysts to apply its methods to text analysis. For example, James (2011) cited in Abodulli-Idiagbon (2014, p.5), employs various approaches to the study of language which encounter different definitions of discourse and with other disciplines which subsequently necessitated the emergence of new forms of discourse analysis. The application of social and political theories espousing institutionalised social, political values and ideologies has given birth to critical discourse analysis and political discourse analysis while the need to isolate and focus on paralanguage, multimedia and modes of communication such as voice quality, motion and still pictures and signs has led to a new form called multimodal discourse analysis.

In analysing poems, critical discourse analysis sees language as social practice and considers the context of language use to be crucial to the interpretation of the multilayered nature of feeling. It explores the connection between the use of language and the socio-political contexts in which it occurs. It also interrogates ways in which "language constructs and is constructed by social relationship" (Paltridge, 2006, p.179 quoted in Aboh, 2014, p.84). According to Ushie and Aboh (2014), a critical discourse analysis requires a detailed textual interpretation in order to uncover hidden meaning and messages as well as possible interpretation.

Gender is a crucial component in the way people perceive the world. It is also salient in the way people produce, understand and interpret poems. Gender hence, can be taken as one of the axis through which society is divided into groups, mainly in order to give hegemonic control to one group over the poem (sounds of motherhood), so as to serve the interests of the dominant group which is assigned powerful positive at the cost of other marginalised groups. Other axis of division in including gender, of course, serve the purpose of dividing a society into different groups and a discursively formulated and implemented strategy makes one group powerful and dominant, whereas the other weak and subordinated.

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Put differently, gender ideologies can be examined from a magnified context of violence, bride price, women's rights and sex preference. These are the concern of this paper. To do this, Ibiere Ken Maduako's *sounds of motherhood* is selected as representative poem.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Feminist critical discourse analysis

This paper examines language and gender from a critical discourse analysis perspective with the diverse directions to feminist critical discourse analysis. It simply applies transparent structural relationships of dominant maltreatment of women, power and control as manifested in language.

The combination of the insights of critical discourse analysis and a range of feminist studies of language gave birth to this new approach: feminist critical discourse analysis. The main goal is to demystify taken for granted or commonsensical assumptions about gender by showing that these assumptions are most of time ideological (Lasar, 2005, Litosselitic and Sunderland, 2002). Lasar (2005) views that the marriage of feminism with critical discourse analysis can produce a rich and powerful political critique for action. In furthering Lasar's views Walsh adds that feminists, among others, have shown great interest in the perspectives offered by critical discourse analysis. They have exploited many of its tools to investigate gender stereotypes and gender discrimination produced and perpetuated in discourse. Walsh (2013, p.208) also believes that studies related to gender are still worth the effort. They can provide us with incredible accounts about power in discourse. Gender remains highly salient, not only in terms of the public identities women and men construct for themselves, but also in terms of how they are perceived and judged. Feminist critical discourse analysis scholars aim at supporting the victims of such oppression and encourage them to resist and transform their lives. Their investigations revolve mainly around how discourse acts against women and how, in turn, discourse can be exploited to act for their benefits.

Gender Ideologies in *Sounds of Motherhood*

One of the aims of the Gender Approach to Development (GAD) in Nigeria is to address gender issues in the country, to understand and highlight the imbalances between the males and females at different levels of human endeavour such as education, health, law, economy, culture, power, policy and decision making. Having addressed these issues, to design appreciate intervention strategies to correct these imbalances. The approach is based on the realisation that men and women play different but complementary roles in the family made and society. In other words, gender issues do not only concern the women. Gender studies must be concerned with every form of discrimination against both the male and female sexes. On this basis, the following gender issues are recognised.

- ~ Gender relations in decision making both in the family and society;
- ~ Sex preference
- ~ Child labour/abuse
- ~ Women's rights
- ~ Wife/husband battering
- ~ High bride price.

Lexicalisation of Gender Violence

Gender violence addresses different forms of physical abuse such as hitting, beating, rape and sexual assault (Buchi Emecheta, p.84). It often reflects the notion of gender inequalities in homes, offices and areas of human interaction. Physical abuse may be used to describe every form of bodily contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, suffering and every form of contact that results in bodily harm. The poet captures this experience in many poems.

some of these lexicalisation their linguistic feature with the contextual meaning are presented in the table below:

Lexicalisation of Gender Violence

LEXICALISATION	LINGUISTIC FEATURE	CONTEXTUAL MEANING	POEM
Hammer blows	Noun phrase	Blows that are as painful as when a hammer lands on a person's head	Hammer blows (p.40)
Blows of your imposition	Noun phrase (NP)	As when a painful part of life is introduced	If you go (p.55)
Batter	Noun phrase (NP)	It shows the physical abuse of the perpetrators who act painfully to a woman	Batter (p. 100)
In tempestuous range	Prepositional phrase (pp)	Causing women of normal sensibilities fear of injury of harm	Hob nob (p.67)

All the phrases in the above table are noun phrases and prepositional phrases that describe the physical abuse which cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, and suffering. For example, the noun phrase "Hammer blows", a morphological process of blows that are as painful as when a hammer lands on a person's head has gender violence connotation. It refers to the physical abuse such as hitting or beating of women by men. 'Hammer blows' are blows that come upon the head, heart, emotions and body of a woman which also pounds down her hopes and expectations of womanhood, captures the situation succinctly:

Hammer blows;
Upon my head;
Upon my heart
Upon my emotions
Upon my body (hammer blows pp. 40-41).

If the denotative meaning of the word "hammer blows" is relied on, the actual meaning will be lost. So the connotative meaning has a painful situation. Hammer blows could have positive meaning if it refers to using a hammer in doing carpentering work, for example. But in the context of the poem it has a negative connotation. It serves as physical abuse such as hitting, beating, injuring, pain, suffering and every form of contact that results in bodily harm of a woman. It shows the unseen torture man inflicts on a woman and also calling her names like goat and foolish woman thus making the woman's expectations and hopes shattered.

Next to the above example is the use of "blows of your imposition" in the poem "If you go" (p.55), a linguistic feature that shows the pain inflicted upon a woman even when the woman is tender, man still squeeze of her hardened grip upon her tender suffering and troubles to her denotatively, woman show love and care to man but they still introduce an unfair or unreasonable thing to them such as connotative meaning depicts brutality and violence as the woman tries her best to show love and care while man still act as an evil agent of destruction by squeezing the woman. These experiences are represented in the poem "If you go" (p.55):

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If you go
What pain
Shall my hear crave...
The pain
Of your inflictions
Upon my tender heart
The blows of your imposition
Upon my tender will
The squeeze of a hardened grip
Upon my tender flesh or
The grinding of the knuckles...

In another example below, the word "Batterer" depicts the physical abuse of a person who performs the act of hitting and also performing a violent attack that injures a woman. In the poem "Batterer" (p. 100), the poet does not only relate to the experience of physical abuse in the description of the woman's hearts as frail:

Ho! Batterer
Batter not again
The heart loves thee so for its frail
Break, it would with much bettering (p.100)

The woman described in this first stanza is soft, tender, frail, and weak. She fits into the traditional stereotype of an African woman who must be submissive, gentle, emotional, and prone to tears. But the man instead of treating such a woman with care and love, thus, inflicts her with pains by making a violent attack that brings in injuries and damage to the woman. This action breaks the heart that loves thee. the prepositional phrase "In tempestuous rage" in the poem "Oh! My Eyes!" (p.75) is another poem that reveals physical abuse that causes injury (blindness) to the eyes of a woman who desires to love and fully glare at the face of her dear husband. In tempestuous rage is a linguistic consequence of the stereotypical African woman whose gender role is to dote on the husband. She is not angry that he got her blind. She still craves and desires to behold his face so dearly. According to the poet, persona, the man did not do it intentionally but it was an ill wind that misdirected his "rage" to her eyes.

Related to the example above is "to pounce and clench" (p.67) describes causes, pains or injury. It is an aspect of gender abuse revealed in the poem. Critically, the full meaning to pounce and clench shows intimidation which is used to describe any form of intentional behaviour (on the part of one's spouse) to cause someone of normal sensibilities fear of injury or harm. All forms of violent coercion to instill fear in a spouse fall under this category. Ken Maduako explains the situation taken from the poem "Hob Nob" (p. 67).

Hob-nob/ would
With the educated...
I love to mix...
But hob-nob now I can't
For behold
Behind my door
Terror lies in wait
To pounce and clench
As soon as I enter in (Hob Nob p. 67)

The Poet persona here expresses fear of injury of harm because terror lies in wait if the woman dared to "Hob-Nob" as the poet explained in the first stanza.

Naming Strategy as Sex Preference

Another gender issue captured in sounds of motherhood is that of sex preference. In many African cultures, male children are preferred to female ones. The poems "Gone with the Wind", "Obiechina" and "What's in a Name?" clearly relate the experiences and the plight of the woman in dire need of a male child to carry on the family's home. In the poem, "Obiechina" (p.5), this is an Igbo word meaning let the house not shut down and it is a name given to a male child who has been long awaited after many girls might have been born. 'Obi' is the name of an Igbo man's house and it is given as a prediction that the house of image will not be lost or closed. The poem clearly reveals the psychological and emotional torture of a woman in a society that prefers male children until she can birth a son. Some women have died in the process while some are still having series of childbirths in this quest to have a son.

Again, the poem "What's in a Name?" (p.7) addresses the issues of names given to female children in a society that prefers male children. In such communities, girl children are given names inconsequentially. That is, names that typify stereotypes and gender role. Some of the names are either predictions about their husbands or predictions that the male child will soon be born. Examples of the female names are:

Obidiya	-	The heart of her husband
Ogbenyealu	-	A poor man shall not marry this one
Ikodiya	-	Concubine to her husband
Enyidiya	-	Friend to her husband
Ngwahudiya	-	The man's clothes and his accessories
Elewechi	-	Let's be hopeful that tomorrow will bring what we desire (a male child)
Amaoge	-	Who knows when God will do it (give a male child)
Ndidi	-	Patience, endurance and faith that the son will come.

The male children on the other hand are given significant and meaningful names. Some of them represented in the poem are:

Ikenna	-	My father's strength
Ikemefuna	-	My strength shall not be lost
Obinna	-	My father's heart

Through this poem, the poet is able to reveal the level of gender disparity in our communities. Also reflects how gender stereotypes and roles influence the name that are giving to male and female children. If a child is giving a name in relation to the husband she is yet to meet, it affects her world view and attitude to life generally, limits and inhibits her so that all she cares about is to get married and become her husband's hearts (Obidiya) or his concubine (Ikodiya). According to traditional gender roles, the female sex is not supposed to be ambitious to create or make wealth. Her role is to be submissive and dependent on the man for her substance. The names are society and culturally appropriate, depicting the traditional female gender stereotype. However, the girls in the poem are liberated and gender sensitive. They are not satisfied with status quo and wonder why should be given such inconsequential and meaningless names. The poet raises pertinent gender-related questions in the particular poem, which is rendered dramatically in a dialogic form.

The Question of Bride Price

Ikegulu and Familusi (1999, p.7) "Listed High Bride Price as one of the gender issues in Nigeria". This practice is common (according to them) in some areas of Nigeria where people emphasis money rather than love in marriage. This may eventually lead to divorce or broken homes. In the above poem, one of the girls is not happy that she was given a name that would haunt her throughout her lifetime, predicting and reminding her that she is for sale to the highest bidder, the implication being that she cannot marry for love.

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Regarding the principle of gender stereotyping it is predicated on the traditional roles assigned to both males and females in the society. Needless to point out the women are more concentrated in non-specialised jobs that are characteristically less - paying while the specialised highly skilled jobs are usually given to the men. Okriqwe (2013, p.13) emphasized this in her work and stated that in the Nigeria Federal Civil service in 1992, 64% of the secretarial and typing cadres are women. On the other hand, globally the percentage of women found in professional, technical, administrators and managerial jobs is only 15% (UN report on world's women 2014, p.125). Consequently, women's participation in top managerial and decision - making jobs is very low.

In *sounds of motherhood*, gender stereotyping is reflected in different poems that show how the woman is intimidated and not allowed to take her decisions. Let us consider some examples: In "Hob-nob", the poet paints the picture of a liberated woman who loves to mix and interact with the educated, illiterate rich, poor, young and old alike because she learns much through such interactions. But after marriage, her husband will not let her because the societal expectation is that the woman should be quiet, shy, gentle, and so on. Cameron and Lalonde (2001, p.59) believe tha gender stereotypes are pervasive and carry relatively well-defined prescriptions for typical male and female behaviour. Thus, the husband insists that the wife fulfils societal expectations for the woman and supervises her actions to ensure that she behaves accordingly. Other societal roles (gender stereotypes) assigned to the woman as the home keeper, bearer of children, caregiver are expressed in other poems such as, *Sounds of motherhood*, "Womanhood", "The Woman: A Pledge" and many others. In some of the poems, the poet beautifies these roles. She shows the woman as one who has a significant role to play in every home. If she is not there, things go very wrong. For example, 'Na Hands like the Mothers' (p.10) and My Leaky Little Nose' (p. 13).

Women's Rights

The rights of women have been a topical issue among Nigerians in current times and as a member of the United Nations, Nigeria has made certain declarations with regard to the right of women. Consequently, the following are the rights of women as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution:

- ~ Right to regulate fertility
- ~ Right to inherit property
- ~ Right to marriage
- ~ Right to education
- ~ Right to equal employment
- ~ Right to access to equal economic opportunities
- ~ Right to be protected from all forms of abuse, cruelty discrimination and exploitation (Kegulu and Familusi 2002, p.6).

These are some of the issues raised in the Sound of Motherhood as revealed in following poems:

What about the rights
Of the Wife?
To Good Education?
Who Will Tell?
The Husbands and the Children?
What about the Right,
of the Wife
To Rest
The Right to...

Who will tell the Husband? (Human right p.54).

The poet addresses the multiple demands on the woman at home from both husbands and children. This one cannot be helped by the rights advocated in the Nigerian constitution because a woman must attend to her children 24 hours of the day and to her husband all round the clock. That is why the poet calls human rights an ideology which is unreal and unproductive for the woman. No constitution can tell a mother not to breast feed her child on demand because it is the child's right to be cared for and protected. The woman must also obey her husband no matter what the constitution says. If she does not do this, peace departs her home. In another poem; "Better act Right than to Right" (pp. 31-32) is an advice from the poet to the women to do all that they can to create peace in their homes.

The poet further portrays the injustice on the side of the woman who has been told all through her life to be chaste, do not play with boys etc. after she has managed to gain self-control and to meet all her husband's (who may have been more adventurous than she was) sexual needs. The woman is jolted and perplexed at this new obligation something she spent all her life trying to avoid; now she has to do it with reckless abandon. We also find this revealed in the poems "Strange Twist (p.71) and "A New Commandment" (pp.72 & 73).

It can only take an understanding and gentle husband to help the women out of this confusion to enable her fulfill her God - given roles. We must also reiterate that the poet not just paint a one-sided pictures as with some feminist writers, she tries to balance it out, in line with current gender studies, in Nigeria which also considers the man who is being victimised. Some poems in the collection reflect the experiences of a man who undergoes series of injuries in the hands of his wife, for example "Denial Fraudster" (p.88) and from "a Pained Heart" (p.89). Consequently, the poet tries to provide reasons for the wife batterer and shows that the woman also batters the man with her tongue. In the poem, "The Match" (p.151) the poet equates the effect of the man's violent hands on the woman to the effect of the woman's lashing tongue on the man.

CONCLUSION

We have sought to show in this paper that Ibiere Ken-Maduako's *Sounds of Motherhood* is a collection of poems in which the poet attempts to highlight the different experiences of womanhood from infancy to adulthood. She presents the sweet and bitter sides of the woman's life, her innocence, assumed maturity and courage which all come with experience. Through her poems, she highlights many of the gender issues in Nigeria such as gender stereotyping, child abuse, rape, wife/husband battering, high bride price, sex preferences, women's rights and others. Her message to the woman who has been hurt badly by her husband and society is forgiveness. It is hoped that her message would get to the right people who need the healing that can only come with forgiveness.

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