Power and the Manipulative Function of Language: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Tracie Chima Utoh's our Wives have Gone Mad Again

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ABSTRACT

The study of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)is a recent field that is concerned with the analysis of texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated within specific contexts. This paper examines how effective use of language and other discursive features were employed by women in the text- "Our Wives have Gone Mad Again" to dominate and subjugate their male counterparts. Using Norman Fairclough's theory of CDA and quantitative method of analysis, 20 excerpts, purposively selected based on the discourses between Inyang, Funmi, Mario, Ene, Ifeoma and Odera were analyzed under the auspices of discoursefeatures- discourse opening and closing, turn taking, discourse interruption, speech errors, role sharing, and elicitation in talk. Findings showed the controlling will and use of language by women in power with special focus on how they portray power in different context of discourses, depicting how ideologies of women are used to manipulate men and how women used language to control the actions and thoughts of their husbands in the text.The paper therefore, concludes that effective use of language holds great panacea towards engendering mutual trust and peaceful co-existence on one hand and on the other hand, acts as a tool for power dominance and subjugation.

Key words: Subjugation–Power–Dominance–Discourses–Control

1 INTRODUCTION

Numerous researchers active in the field of discourse have advanced divergent yet entwined definitions for the concept of discourse. [1] described discourse as a building block constructing the social identities, knowledge systems and beliefs of the individuals. While [2] viewed discourse as a system of knowledge and memory, when compared to text it simply represents actual vocal utterances or written documents. In the same vein, [3] observed that through its well-founded principles to analyze discursive practices fixed within text and ideology, discourse has come to be a popular analytical discipline concerning discriminations in race, ethnicity, and culture reflected in text. Although discourse ananalysis approaches, according to [4], emphasize the connection between discourse and power; they differ in how they attach the concept of discourse to other concepts such as knowledge, ideology, ideas and truth. In another light, [5] maintained that discourse means language-in-use (language ac-

tually used in specific context). He further opined that when we study language-in-use, we study language not just as an abstract system (grammar) but in terms of actual utterances or sentences in speech or writing in specific context of speaking and hearing or writing and reading. Thus the aim of discourse analysis is to reveal the ontological and epistemological premises which are entrenched in language, and which allow a statement to be understood as rational or interpreted as meaningful.

Looking at the foundation of the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis, [6] asserted that it was developed in the late 1980s as a pragmatic development in European discourse studies directed by a number of scholars notable among them is Norman Fair clough. They opined that it is rooted in critical theory of language, which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. In contemporary times, as stated b [2] , Critical Discourse Analysis is used to refer more precisely to the critical linguistic approach adopted by scholars who find the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communicating ideas. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis has been used to examine any form of communica-

tion that may be used to manipulate the impression given to the reader. Buttressing further, [7] pointed to the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis along with other related disciplines attempts to reveal hidden meanings i.e. the ideological loads of the language and the exercise of will. Being a modern approach to the study of language and discourse in societal institutions Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are crafted through written words and speeches in a society with the aim of investigating critically social inequality as it is conveyed, signaled and instituted by language use in power dominance.

Although, various works have been done on Critical Discourse Analysis, a subject with focus on how language is used to illustrate power and ideologies in the society; this study however, ex-rayed the controlling will and use of language by women in power with special focus on how they portray power in different context of discourses, depicting how ideologies of women are used to manipulate men and how women use language to control the actions and thoughts of their husbands as found in the text 'Our Wives have Gone Mad Again'.

2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Reading for most people is for the purpose of entertainment, which means that not everybody is equipped with a 'critical eye' for what really lies beneath the mere words on the pages of the book being read. Hence, the need to critically analyze figurative information so most people can begin to see the world with, more discerning eyes. Analysis on a discourse level has mostly been used in the analysis of speeches, however, this study, undertakes the impression certain men have of women. As women seem to speak a 'strange' language that is very different from what was expected of the men. This area of feminism strives to ascertain the essential basis of women's subordination in order to advance a comprehensive explanation as it concerns the origin and essence of women domination in the society and to also establish the use of language in the portrayal of power and the philosophy of women over men.

According to Stubbs (1995), Discourse analysis is the conglomeration of attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause. Discourse analysis is the study of larger linguistic units including written texts. To him, Discourse analysis involves larger conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language in use in social contexts and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers. [8], defines discourse analysis as; the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purpose, or functions which their forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

In understanding Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an assessment process it should be noted that CDA connects the relationships between three levels of analysis; the Text, The Discursive Practice, and Social Context.

2.2 Text

The text, according to [9], is a term used in linguistics to refer to any passage spoken or written, of whatever length which does form a unified whole as a unit of language in use. It is neither a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence nor defined by its size. It is best regarded as a Semantic unit; a unit that is not of form but of meaning. To [8], a text is the verbal record of communicative event. It is not frequently characterised as random occurrence and lacking in relatedness. It is the homogeneity in it that makes it a united whole. Text seeks to present the relatedness between the lexical relationship of utterance and what links them with meaning in a particular discourse, especially in interpersonal discourse, a set of sentences are put together in a specific way to constitute a text and to achieve this, some cohesive devices must have been used to map out the textuality.

2.3 The discursive practice

The discursive practice, according to [10], are the rules, norms, and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour in specific roles or relationships used to produce, receive, and interpret the message. These are the spoken and unspoken rules and conventions that govern the way individuals learn to think, act, and speak in all the social positions they find themselves in life.

2.4 Social context

Social context, according to [11], are relationships used to produce, receive, and interpret messages, and comprises of diverse situations by which discourse occurs, each with a set of conventions that determine rights and obligations expected of people. Concisely, the text becomes more than mere words on papers, rather, it unveils how the words are used in a given social environment. In explaining the notion of critique, [12] asserted that it is understood differently depending on what school of thoughts one belongs, as some may adhere to the Frankfurt school, some others the notion of literary criticism, and on the other hand some may adhere to Marx's notions. Essentially, 'criticism' is to be understood as having distance to the data, embedding the data in the social context, taking a stance openly, and a focus on self-reaction as scholars engaged in research. The cores of critical theory were to assist in 'remembering' a past that was in danger of being forgotten, to struggle for liberation, to clarify the reasons for such a struggle and to define the nature of critical thinking as the case may be.

2.5 Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It studies how language is used, how it is obtained, how it is illustrated in the human brain, how it develops over time and the study of language in use is known as Discourse, which refers to expressing oneself with the use of words. Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again by Tracie ChimaUtoh is a text that focuses on the abuse of the feminist ideology by elitist females in the society. Set in an urban society, the play projects power-play, politics, family crisis, prostitution, girls trafficking, role reversal, sex battle, infidelity, blackmail and assassination. The story revolves around different families with serious supremacy crisis. In an attempt to have superior control as politicians,Ene frustrates her husband Inyang out of his matrimonial home; Chief Irene divorces her husband Felix for Gambo while Ifeoma murders Zeus through a fight. However, the Police Officer who came to arrest Ifeoma for murder is lured with money by Chief Irene and commissioned to assassinate an opponent. The play ends with a clear mockery of the Nigerian Police who resorts to accepting bribe from Chief Irene and her allies for assassination and other atrocities and allowing the campaign to continue.

This current study projects the perception of men towards their women counterparts especially from a feminist point of view. This sort of feminism seeks to identify the fundamental basis of women's subordination and male subjugation, as well as develop an all-inclusive clarification as it relates to origin and essence of women domination in the society. This is attained by embarking on a Critical Discourse Analysis of the text to establish the use of language to portray ideology, power and dominance of women over men.

2.6 Power and Language Use

The most prominent product of power play is social inequality which is a phenomenon that permeates the various strata of various social relationships in the society. This includes; language and language use, economy, religion, politics, professional carriers and marriages as depicted in the text under analysis where inequality is intrinsically connected with the manipulative use of language by women against their male counterparts in the text- 'Our Wives have Gone Mad Again'.

According to [13] Nigeria is "one nation where prejudice in language use transcends the ordinary linguistics to a practical reflection of the internal mindset of the user" this is evident in the use of lexicons as employed by women in the text which setting is also Nigeria.

3   POLITENESS THEORY

The concept of Politeness theory was developed in the 1970s and 1980s by two researchers, namely; Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, at Stanford University. They drew heavily from face theory which was advancing in the direction of, and with a focus on, politeness. In this endeavor, they dug deeper into the ideas of face put forth by Goffman in the 1950s and expanded on his theory, specifically with attention to politeness and face threatening acts. Politeness assumes that we all have face, and this implies that interlocutors need to protect their faces in a talk event. Further, there are different types of face-threatening acts, and sometimes the face threats are to the hearer, while other times they are to the speaker. The weight of a face-threatening act is determined by considering the combination of three variables: power, distance, and rank.

3.1 Power

Power refers to the perceived power dynamic between speaker and hearer. In a discourse, it is pertinent to ascertain if the targeted hearer is superior, a subordinate, or at about your same social level. It is the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way. It is also referred to as the power or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. (Oxford English Dictionary)

3.2 Distance

Distancerefers to the amount of social distance between speaker and hearer. As a speaker, it is a duty to determine if the targeted hearer is a close friend, a subordinate a colleagueor a distant acquaintance.

3.3 Rank

Rank refers to the cultural ranking of the subject - the degree of sensitivity of the topic within a particular culture. Politeness theory posits that choices in employing a particular politeness strategy depend upon the social circumstances in which the speech act occurs in a discourse. That is, the speaker ascertains to whom he or she is speaking with, what the social relationship with that person is, and what the topic is. Politeness theory relies, in part, on the idea that there are different kinds of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face reflects an individual's need for his or her wishes and desires to be appreciated in a social context of speech event. This is the maintenance of a positive and consistent self-image. Negative face reflects an individual's need for freedom of action, freedom from imposition, and the right to make one's own decisions. Together, these types of face respect the face needs covered previously, which include an individual's, face needs for autonomy and competence. This theory relies on the assumption that most speech acts inherently threaten either the speaker or the hearer's face, and that politeness is therefore a necessary component of un offensive and non-face threatening, communication and implies the redressing of positive and negative face.

Drawing from these assumptions, researchers have identified three main strategies for performing speech acts: positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness. In positive politeness, the speaker's goal is to address the positive face needs of the hearer, thus enhancing

the hearer's positive face. This is also known as positive face redress. Positive politeness strategies highlight friendliness and camaraderie between the speaker and hearer; the speaker's wants are in some way similar to the hearer's wants. There are many ways to accomplish this familiarity and claim common ground.

First, the speaker can notice and attend to the hearer's wants, interests, needs, or goods. Second, the speaker can exaggerate his/her interest, approval or sympathy with the hearer. Third, the speaker can demonstrate an intensified interest to the hearer. The speaker can also use in-group markers, which demonstrate that both the speaker and hearer belong to the same social group, such as a work culture or religious affiliation. These can include forms of address, use of in-group language or dialect, use of jargon or slang, and linguistic contractions [14].

Where positive politeness enhances the hearer's positive and consistent self-image through recognizing the hearer's need for his or her wishes and desires to be appreciated socially, negative politeness addresses the hearer's need for freedom of action and freedom from imposition in making his or her own decisions. To [14], there are occasions that give rise to face-saving, face-losing and face threatening activities in discourses. Therefore, it is the duty of interlocutors to strive to protect both their own face and also that of the others in the cause of talk event. Those that occupy the +HIGHER Role position in discourses should understand that language is a source of both face-saving and face-threatening activities. Occasions that involve malicious face-losing often give rise to confrontation, open abuse, direct attack and less critical blunt statements. This is usually a dangerous linguistic game which gives rise to ambiguity and distrust and ultimately, a break down in discourse, hence faces are threatened.

4   METHODOLOGY

This paper is essentially a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of "Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again" by Tracie ChimaUtoh.20 excerpts from the text based on the discourse between Inyang, Funmi, Mario, Ene, Ifeoma and Oderawere selected with the purposive random sampling technique. The selected sample was quantitatively analyze dusing thetool of the various discourse features of; discourse opening and closing, turn taking, discourse interruption and speech errors and repair mechanisms, role sharing, and elicitation in talk,under the frame work of Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The theory states that critical discourse analysis is an approach which focuses upon social conflict in the Marxian tradition and tries to detect the linguistic manifestations in discourses in particular elements of dominance, difference, and resistance. To him, productive activity, the means of production, social relations, social identities, cultural values, consciousness, and semiosis are dialectically related elements of social practice [15, 16].

5   ANALYSIS

The explanation of the analysis is stated as follows;

Below is an excerpt of the discourse opening of one of the characters in the text- Inyang, who opens the conversation with a question, while Ene responds;

5.1 Discourse opening and closing

This discourse feature marks the beginning and the end of a conversation as seen below:

Excerpt 2 pg. 35

INYANG: Madam Ene, I do not throw away money.

ENE : (Cuts in) Get out of my sight! (To Ifeoma) Ify, I will come and see you tomorrow. Mairo and Funmi let us go and eat before we lose our appetite because of this jobless parasite.

Discourse closing as a feature is one of the hardest things about having a conversation. This is because ending a conversation works against the 'pairwise' organization of an ongoing talk. Conversations that are instrumental or transactional in nature (such as asking a teacher some questions about an assignment) are easier to end. This is because they ended naturally when the purpose of conversation is fulfilled. On the contrary is interactional discourse between friends and acquaintances. Here it is much harder to end as pleasantries and felicitations are usually open-ended. Discourse Participants usually start ending the conversation well before the actual closing, offering what is called 'pre-closings' signals and unusual pauses to the person they are talking which shows that they want to end the conversation. Ending the conversation abruptly like Ene did in excerpt 2 above creates the implication that she is angry at Inyang and this is face threatening.

5.2 Turn taking

It is a type of organization in discourse which involves the rule of give and take in a conversation where participants speak one at a time in alternating turns. In a discourse event, it involves the processes for constructing contributions, responding, commenting and transitioning from speaker to a different speaker using a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic cues. Examples are as follows:

Excerpt 4 pg.36

ODERA: I can't believe what you are telling me. Inyang, are you sure you did not make up this story

INYANG: Honestly, I am not forging the story. The thing happened before my korokoro eyes. Come and see blood everywhere. The man shouted and shouted till he fainted.

FELIX: (Incredulous) Inyang hold on for a moment. Are you telling us that a woman picked up a sharp razor blade and deliberately cut off her husband's private part? I don't believe such a story.

The method of calling or naming the next speaker is refered to as next speaker selection. This is to alert the next speaker that it's his turn to speak. Here, Odera mentioned Inyang's name to reassure him of the veracity of the story he

just told them. The conversational segment shows the relationship among the speakers. Odera, Inyang and Felix are at the mercy of their wives. Although, Felix who is polygamist seems not to care about the opinions of his other wives, he goes along with other in the ensuing conversation.

5.3 Discourse interruption

This is an occurrence which takes place in a speech event when one person breaks-in, interjects or butts-in into an ongoing talk when the current speaker has not reached the Transition Relevant point in a talk. Interruptions usually occurs in the face of certain social factors which include; gender, social status, race, ethnicity, culture and political orientation and status and role of the current speaker and that of the next speaker.

Excerpt 6 pg.35

INYANG: Madam Ene, I do not throw away money

ENE: (Cuts in) Get out of my sight (to Ifeoma)Ify, I will come and see you tomorrow. Mario and Funmi, let us go and eat before we lose our appetite because of this jobless parasite.

When another speaker cuts in or butts-in before a speaker finishes his turns it is called overlapping. Ene overlapping Inyang here is to show that she is irritated by his utterance which is termed stupid. Ene seems to be superior in this conversation, thereby occupies the +HIGHER Role position. Here she interjects into the ongoing talk because she doesn't find Inyang worthy and takes over the conversation in anger. It is worthy of note however that Ene's interruption was positively responded to as he was allowed to take over the conversation.

5.4 Speech Errors

These actually are the mistakes made when a turn is going on. Speech Errors are sometimes indicated by the use; hesitations, repetitions or the use of slot fillers such as 'eh', 'er', 'well', 'em', 'I mean', 'you know' etc. For example:

Excerpt 10 pg. 38

FELIX: I will like to get between them. I mean... What is the use of beautiful legs if you don't spread them?

This choice of word 'I mean…' indicates the use of slot fillers as used by Felix in his turn in the conversation.

5.5 Role sharing

This is determined by participants' status, profession, age, sex, education, occupation, achievement, or religious status or gender in a speech event. Hence, speakers are sometimes allocated turns based on their position or status. In the text under analysis, the women are superior in the society and are portrayed to be more educated, exposed, and with more connections than the men.Ex.

Excerpt 12 pg. (56-57)

IFEOMA: (struggling to wrestle out of his vicious grip) you know I am not an illiterate. I have a master's degree in Economics. You are the one who has no qualifications. We have been married for ten years and I have never seen your certificates. If you know you have the qualifications you claim you have, then show me your certificates.

ZEUS: It is your father who is a homosexual. Your father and your brother's

IFEOMA: Don't change the subject. I want you to show me your certificates t oday, M otor P ark i lliterate. (Ifeoma succeeds in wrestling out of his grip and dashes to a corner of the room)

From the above excerpt above, Ifeoma is educated while Zeus is illiterate. Ifeoma expects Zeus to yield to every of her orders and ideas and Zeus seems to be not yielding to that.

5.6 Elicitation in talk

Here is the process where a participant in a talk process demands a response from a co-interactant. This could be verbal or non-verbal from an interlocutor, usually through questioning or suggestion.Ex.

Excerpt 15 pg.

INYANG: Honestly, I am not forging the story. The thing happened before my korokoro eyes. Come and see blood everywhere. The man shouted and shouted until he fainted.

FELIX: (Incredulous) In yang hold on for a moment. Are you telling us that a woman picked up a sharp razor blade and deliberately cut off her husband's private part? I don't believe such a story.

In yang is narrating a scene where a woman cuts off her husband's penis and the gory story perplexed Felix to thow the question which requires a clarifying response.

The analysis is represented in the table for below in order of majority.

The table above shows that turn-taking accounts for the highest number of percentage by 50.2%, followed by role sharing 20.6%, then discourse opening and closing 10.4%, discourse interruptions 9.9%, then speech errors 5.9%, and elicitation in talk 3.4%.the total percentage is hundred and the statistics is further elaborated with the bar chart below;

6   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the chart above, the turn-taking discourse technique depicts the power relation between discourse participants in the conversation. The turn taking technique was influenced by factors such as status, personality, occupation and political power and wealth. Role sharing here has been used to also portray power relations too by speakers in higher position occupying the +HIGHER Role and those in lower position occupying the –HIGHER Role position. Hence, Ene, who is perceived to occupy the +HIGHER Role, easily overlapped in the talk event with Inyang. The analysis therefore underscores the various functions which interlocutors can perform with the use of their utterances.

brings out the, society in the text which reflects the happenings in the society.

The text is a social drama which the author has used to expose some societal ills in the society which includes;

Table 1. Showing the discourse features in the play, Our Wives Has Gone Mad Again.

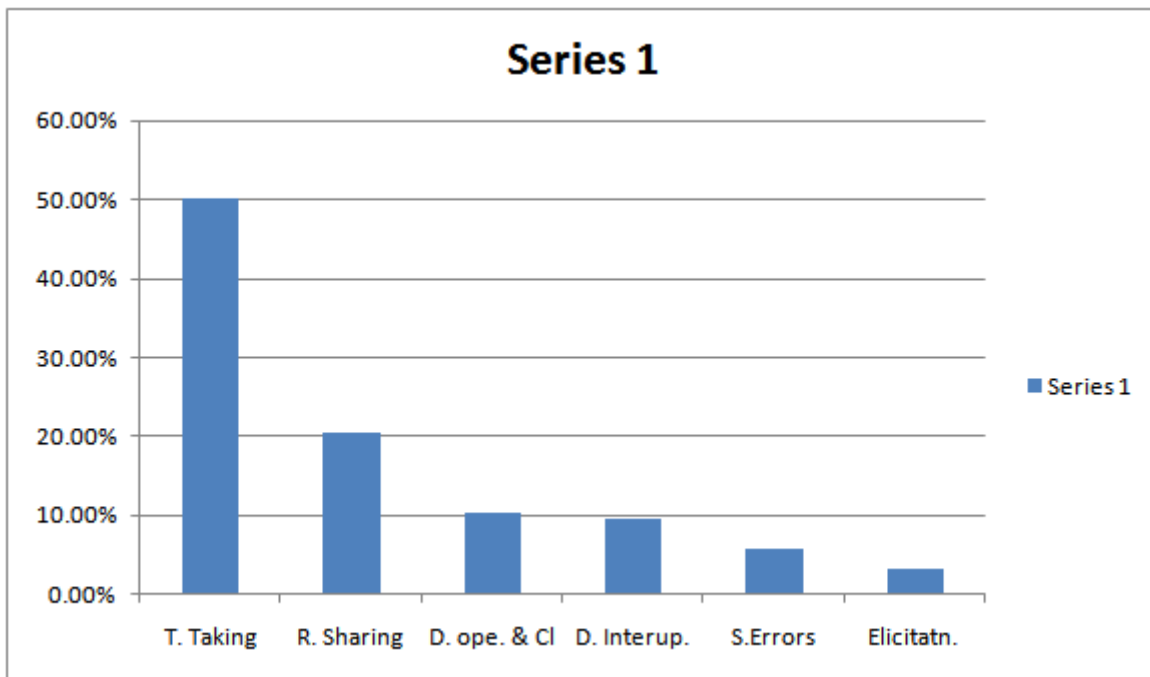| DiscursiveFeatures	Frequency	Percentage
Turn Taking	23	50.2%
Role sharing	10	20.6%
Discourse Opening and Closing	8	10.4%
Discourse Interruptions	5	9.5%
Speech Errors	3	5.9%
Elicitation in Talk	1	3.4%
Total	50	100%

Figure 1. A Chart Reflecting the Percentage of Discourse Features in the Text

political problem, Leadership problems, corruption, nepotism, gender inequality and power relations in the text. The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the discourses between men and women in the text in order to foreground the level of subjugation that some men are experiencing in the Nigerian society.

The result revealed that the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias in the discourses of the text are personality, occupation, age and political power and power dominance are quite replete in Nigeria the entire society. Findings also showed that; that the discursive features used in the play; discourse opening and closing, turn taking, discourse interruption, speech errors, role sharing, and elicitation in talk are of reasonable significance to the play.

7   CONCLUSION

The paper concludes by underscoring that effective use of language holds great panacea towards engendering mutual trust and peaceful co-existence. Also, though many scholars mirror the society from the lens of a society that is replete with the tendency of partrichal lopsidedness where women are the only one undergoing subjugation, the analysis of the drama text, "Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again" by Tracie ChimaUtoh, reveals that women are not the only gender that are being subjugated rather their male counter parts are undergoing one form of subjugation or another. This is evident the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias in the discourses of the text.T author was able to achieve this feet by the play carefully selected words which was used to convey the message of power dominance and in turn, satirical discusses and x-rays the ills of the Nigerian society.

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