REGULATED WOMEN AND MANIPULATIVE LANGUAGE USE IN AFRICAN PROVERBS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE.

Chris Uchenna Agbedo, Harriet Chinyere Obiora, & Ndubuisi Ogbonna Ahamefula
Department of Linguistics, Igbo & Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Abstract
This paper analyses African proverbs but with particular focus on Igbo proverbs as a discourse form. It investigates dominance relations using the discourse form of proverbs. Generally, legends, folktales, proverbs, literature etc provide major modes of entrenching order, control and dominance in the culture of a people. It analyzes the dynamics of Igbo proverbs in communication to determine women's position in the Igbo society. In other words, what role(s) do the Igbo proverbs play in the distribution of social goods vis-à-vis status, solidarity, power and dominance? Samples of Igbo proverbs were randomly collected from individuals and published literature texts. This variety of proverbs relating to women deals with marriage/family/male-female relationships. The theoretical framework derives from critical discourse (CDA) approach to establish dominance relations in the Igbo proverbs as well as in the practical use of the proverbs in social discourses. It can be established that there are elements of oppression and male dominance in some Igbo proverbs that relate to women. Such proverbs tend to violate the rights of women and trample upon the dignity of women; they are indicators of discrimination against women in the Igbo culture. Findings from this study can go a long way in making useful contributions towards the elusive quest for gender balance in the society. The paper underscores the pernicious effects of the oppression of women through proverbs and the struggle for gender balance. It therefore recommends a change in the way the society views women to check the undue regulation of women and free the female populace from predetermined manipulation fostered through language use, especially proverbs.

1. Introductions

The debate is no longer on whether or not African women are oppressed; nor is it on whether or not there is gender imbalance in the African cultural milieu. There is a consensus on the pervasiveness of these problems in Africa. However, female autonomy, solidarity and empowerment currently occupy special place in gender and development discourse in Africa. The cry of

feminists in Africa today, for the most part, concerns how the crises of women's empowerment can be resolved, since there is the strong conviction that the resolution of the problem will lead to a form of development in the society (Balogun, 2006, p. 118). Uchem (2001, p. 14) cites Snyder (1995) who observes that there is now a widespread agreement that women are excluded from access to and control of national and international resources. She further observes that critical look at the real situation globally portends a pervasive and persistent discrimination against women.

The ideologies of many Euro-American feminists on the marginalization of women and the inequality in the distribution of power and national resources need to be reconsidered by African women. A few African scholars acknowledge that women are not altogether crushed under the weight of male power. However, the obvious is the case as gender inequality stares us in the face and bestrides the social and cultural terrain with impunity. The role of culture in shaping people's perception of and attitude to the world around them should not be overlooked, Dolphene (1991). Uchem (2001) suggests that discrimination against women is sometimes institutionalized by cultures that permit them

> Discrimination is evident ' from birth' when girls are less valued than boys; within the family' , when girls are taught the inferior and stereotyped roles considered more appropriate for girls and women; Discrimination against girls and women is so profoundly entrenched in the home and workplace, … that its elimination will require the transformation of the societal structures that tolerate it. (Uchem, 2001, p. 15)

In Igbo culture and in most African cultures, the socio-economic roles of men and women are clearly defined. The man, for instance, is the traditionally accepted head and mouth piece of

the family. The woman on the other hand, plays a complementary role since she was originally created as " helper" to man. No matter the level of education and sophistication of a woman, her behavior with regard to her daily routine of life is guided mainly by the standards and principles traditionally laid down by the ancestors and passed on through the generations. Uchem (2001) observes that leadership roles in most Igbo families are determined not by personal endowment but by sex always favouring the men. Hence, despite global changes and socio economic transformations women are still restricted to and also expected to perform complementing roles such as cooking, and serving during social or family events. Some roles are better bequeathed to the men by certain cultural practices especially in communicative or speech events. In Igbo culture for example, kola nut breaking is a highly ritualized affair and is considered men's function.

The practice however, varies from one part of Igbo land to another. Women do not perform the kola nut breaking which is full of oratory spiced with proverbs. They can be seen in such communicative events but not heard. Umeodinka (2010) asserts that in kola nut breaking speech event the kola nut is not presented to the women neither is she allowed to talk to the kola nut. He further notes that " customarily, in a gathering of women, they normally seek out any man, even if a child, to break the kola nut for them (Umeodinka, 2010:10). Women do not participate in masquerade practices and they also do not climb palm trees.

Language structure and constructions as exemplified in African proverbs tend to show the way African cultures see women. They see women as an object of toil or storm, objects of pleasure and slaves, while the men look on and relax especially at home. The Igbo culture tends to show that the higher the number of wives you have, the higher the number of children that will help

you in farming; this in most cases translates to greater wealth and recognition in the society. Furthermore, the man can be recognized for the Ezeeji title.

Our focus will be limited to Igbo proverbs as source of our data for analysis. We intend to investigate how the Igbo proverbs tell us the world view of Africans as far as women are concerned. Do they give us an understanding or over view on how the different cultures portray their women. Is there the issue of dominance in the proverbs? What value do the proverbs give to women in African societies? How do these African proverbs show dominance and power dominance by the male folk over the women folk? How frequently used are the proverbs that talk about women? Are they more frequently used than the ones that talk about women controlling men? Do we have the ones that talk about men controlling women? How have the proverbs and the use of the proverbs shaped the views of men about women. Again how does it influence the way women see their fellow women and even their actions. How does the Igbo maxim that women are to be seen and not heard play out in the nature of Igbo proverb constructions and the actual use of these proverbs in communicative events. Achebe (1962) gives us the popular saying that proverbs are the oil with which the Igbo man eats words. Nwadike (2009) notes that an Igbo man's reputation as a good a speaker or as a successful oral artist, to a large extent, depends on his ability to use *ilu* 'proverb'. Yet the Igbo culture places a restriction on women. Women are not allowed to use proverbs when addressing men. Agbedo (2010) asserts that in Nsukka speech community women are not allowed to speak in proverbs in the presence of men. If the women must speak in proverbs they are required to take permission by way of quoting the men.

The foregoing underscores the oppression of women fostered in Africa, in fact globally, through cultural vehicles such as proverbs. Though the use of proverbs may differ from society to society, what is common to proverbs everywhere is that they touch on a wide array of human concerns and activities. Proverbs are highly regarded in the thinking and communication process of Africans as a whole. Generally, the social functions of proverbs in African cultures have been well documented in folk lore scholarship. However, little attention has been directed to the relationship between proverbs and the oppression of women, and more specifically, to how proverbs function as a discourse in which females are portrayed based on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions. This negative orientation continues to frustrate the current efforts towards gender-sensitization and the attendant empowerment of women in the continent.

This paper provides textual analysis and evidence of Igbo proverbs that demean women. The next section presents a review of the few relevant works on the subject, while section 3 is on the theoretical framework. Section 4 presents the Igbo proverbs that are analysed in section 5, while section 6 summarizes and concludes the work.

2.0 Literature Review

The term *proverb* has been explained in various ways by different authors. Nevertheless, the explanations all seem to revolve around the idea of proverbs as distilled wisdom or conventionalized prejudice, in addition to being instrument used to discredit men, or also being used by men to dominate women.

Yitah, (2006, p. 237) states that African proverbs in have been viewed as sacred texts that must remain unchanged. Hence, whatever prejudice that is contained in the proverbs has to be held

sacrosanct. Penfield (1983) comes to a similar conclusion in his observation that proverbs encourage the maintenance of traditional norms and values by pointing out to individuals in a sarcastic manner that they have strayed. In an African society like the Igbo society, proverbs are prevalent and prestigious forms of speech where the men folk assert their superiority through the manipulative use of the proverbs (Finnegan, 1970). These observations do actually converge within the context of Igbo proverbs in Nwoga's (1975) categorization of Igbo proverbs into (1) 'illuminating usages' involving the use proverbs to reinforce message and (2) "corrective usage" that comments on behavior with intent to correct. The also converge in Nwadike's (2009) explanation of the four sources of Igbo proverbs as (1) a hand-down-from time immemorial/distilled wisdom of the ancestors (Obiefuna, 1975); (2) crisp, mature and witty observations made by the sane and the insane; (3) Social contract, social change and acculturation; and (4) Igbo praise news.

Although some works on African proverbs seem to provide evidence that men within the African context do not oppress women, such proverbs do not generally outweigh the proverbs that connote male dominance. For example, Ogunwale (1998) questions the existence of the proverbial oppression of women by men within the Yoruba culture. He argues that judging from the meaning potentials and interpretations of some masculine metaphors in Yoruba proverbs, it is the female folk who actually occupy an advantaged position. This conclusion harmonizes with Chinweizu's (1990) argument that the anatomical composition of women empowers her to dominate, control, and have full authority over her womb, the kitchen and the cradle, as well as to use to her own advancement the psychological immaturity of the man as well as his tendency to be deranged by his own excited penis.

Chinweizu's characterization of especially the men can is elaborated in Ogunwale's examples of Yoruba proverbs that attribute negative characteristics to the male folk like disgracefulness, disobedience, indolence and absurdity. However, in spite of the convergence of the arguments of both authors and Ogunwale's examples of Yoruba proverbs that disparage men, there still exist elements of discrimination against women in some Yoruba proverbs as exemplified in the following:

(1) *Bi obirin oba dan ile ọkọ meji wo kole moyi eyi tọ ni.*

If a woman has not tried two husbands she will not appreciate the one she has.

(2) *Gbogbo ẹkọ ti obirin ba ka ile idana lo pin si.*

A woman's education ends up in the kitchen.

These examples are in line with Balogun's (2005) conclusion that proverbs have served as a major avenue for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination among the Africans, by which he means the exercise of male dominance.

It is in the light of this discrimination that there has arisen the desire for 'women empowerment' which, according to

Evierhoma (2002, p. 2), involves the act of arousing female consciousness to be more alive to the societal biases that have stereotyped and denied them of their dignity and womanhood. In the opinion of Bruce (2004, p. 5), women empowerment transcends the gender dimensions of inequality. He argues that women empowerment should focus on the abilities, capabilities as well as survival instinct needed to counteract the effect of the disparities in wider opportunities and choices critical to the total objective of human development.

An example of a disagreement with the existing discriminatory use of proverbs is Uchem's (2001, p. 58-59) attempt to uncover women's subordination through misogynist Igbo proverbs. Uchem acuses Madu (1992) of a sexist analysis of Igbo proverbs that disregards the angle of social justice and fairplay. She considers Madu's analysis of Igbo proverbs as exclusively male centered, debasing the woman's personal identity and autonomy in relation to marriage partners, and generally desecrating women's unique role in procreation. An example is Madu's (1992:58) analyses of the Igbo proverb:

(3) *Otu nne na-amụ, mana ọ bụghị otu Chi na-eke*

The same mother begets but not the same *Chi,* destiny creates

According to Madu, the above proverb signifies par excellence the weakness of woman. Hence, even with her greatest weapon - womb (birth) – she is incapable of determining the 'proper nature' of her offspring. Her role in the entire economy of creation is only contributive. As woman represents humanity here, it is contingency that is implied. The proverb also signifies that everyone is different from everyone else. Charisms and destinies are meted out by *Chi*. In the above analysis the worth of women are debased despite their role in procreation. Uchem's conclusion is that Madu's view can only be a projection of chauvinistic tendencies. In fact, in some cultures women cannot even use proverbs when talking to men; if they must do it, then they have to use it as if they are quoting the men: 'As our elders say…' (Agbedo, 2010).

Finally, to the best of the authors' knowledge, some of the few works on Igbo proverbs do not use the CDA approach in

analyzing Igbo proverbs. This necessitates the choice of CDA for this paper to see whether it can illuminate how some Igbo proverbs are used to manipulate women, to present them as weak, as incapable of anything else other than to bear children and only. How African proverbs manipulatively dominate women and show male dominance and the subjugation of women.

The proverbs used in this study are collected from individuals, as well as Igbo published literature text of Ogbalu (1965).

3. Theoretical Frame Work

The frame work used in this paper is 'critical' discourse analysis' (CDA). Although there are many directions in the study and critique of social inequality, the way we approach these questions and dimensions is by focusing on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance in African proverbs about women. Dominance is defined here as the exercise of social power by elites, institution or groups, that result in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethic, racial and gender inequality.

This reproduction process may involve such different ' modes' of discourse power relations as the more or less direct or overt support, enactment, representation, legitimation, denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance. The use of critical discourse analysis is to establish the structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk in African proverbs.

Critical discourse analysis deals with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it. CDA is the discourse analysis approach that adopts the critical stand. According to Gee (2011):

> Their goal is not just to describe how language works or even to offer deep

> explanations, though they do want to do this. They also want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world. They want to apply their work to the world in some fashion. (p. 9):

Gee (p.68) further notes that CDA goes beyond description to handle social practices, not just in terms of social relationships, but also, in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power. Again the author also observes that the critical analyst is swayed by his interest or passion for intervening in some problems in the world. This kind of posture makes researchers take a stand when doing CDA.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk. Fairclough (1989) defines CDA as a method of multi-disciplinary analysis throughout the humanities and social science. He he developed a three dimensional frame work for studying discourse, where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another as follows: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events. He combines micro, meso and macro-level interpretation. At the micro level, the analyst considers the text's syntax, metaphoric structure and certain rhetorical devices. The meso-level involved studying the text's production and consumption focusing on how power relations are enacted. At the macro-level the analyst is concerned with inter textual understanding of the broad, societal currents that

are affecting the text being studied. Wodak (1989) summarizes the main tenets of CDA as follows:

- CDA addresses social problems.
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- Discourse does ideological work.
- Discourse is historical.
- The link between text and society is mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- Discourse is a form of social action.

One crucial presupposition of adequate critical discourse analysis is understanding the nature of social power and dominance. For example, Rudyk relies on Fairclaugh's (2001, p. 27) classification to differentiate between economic, state and ideological power. While economic power deals with the relationship between social classes in the process of economic production, state power is exercised by the government, army, police and various social institutions, ideological power considerably complements the first two, being exercised in discourse and defined as the power to project one's practices as universal and common sense.

Power involves control, namely by (members of) one group over (those of) other groups. Such control may pertain to action and cognition: that is a powerful group may limit the freedom of actions of others, but also influence their minds. The elementary recourse to force to directly control action (as in police violence against demonstrators, or male violence against women) is enacted by persuasion manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interest.

Critical discourse analysis is interested in power abuse that is in breaches of laws, rules and principles of democracy, equality and justice by those who wield power. Dominance is used to distinguish power from legitimate and acceptable forms of power. Many forms of dominance become to be so persistent that they seem natural until they begin to be challenged, as in the cases of male dominance over women, white over black, rich over poor. If the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own force we use the term *hegemony* (Gramsci, 1971; Hall et al, 1977). One major function of dominant discourse is precisely to manufacture such consensus acceptance and legitimacy of dominance (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Such dominance might become so persistent that they seem natural until they begin to be challenged, as is the case for male dominance over women, white over black, rich over poor.

Power and dominance are usually organized and *institutionalized.* The social, political and cultural organizations of dominance also imply a hierarchy of power. Some members of the dominant groups and organizations have special roles in planning, decision making and control of the relations and processes of the enactment of power. These (small) groups will be called the power elites (Domhoff, 1978; Mills, 1956) whose symbolic power is measured by the extent of their discursive and communicative scope and resources (Bourdien, 1982).

4. Data for Analysis

1. *Nwaanyị na-dịghị anụrụ di ya okwu, ịtalị ka e ji ezi ya ihe.*

Interpretation: A woman that is disobedient to her husband must be taught obedience with the cane.

2. *Nwaanyị leda di ya, ike akpọọ ya nkụ*.

Interpretation: When a woman despises her husband, she loses favour from him, and then suffers.

3. *Na' nzukọ, ọ ka mma inu okwu nwatakịrị nwoke karịa ịnụ okwu nwaanyị.*

Interpretation: In a meeting, it is preferable to heed the words of a little boy than that of a woman.

4. *Nwaanyị sie nri ọjọọ, ọ sị a ọ bụ nke gụrụ ya* .

Interpretation: When a women does something bad, she will forge an excuse to defend herself.

5. *Nwaanyị kaa nka ọ dị ka o nweghi ego e ji lụa ya.*

Interpretation: When a woman' s strength fades, it appears she has never been useful to her husband.

6. *Nkụ agadi Nwaanyị kpatara mgbe ọ bụ agbọghọ, ya ka ọ ga-anya mgbe o mere agadi.*

Interpretation: What an old woman sowed when she was young is what she reaps when she is at old age.

7. *Nwaanyị bịa mbụ, ọ zaba ogucha. Mgbe ọ nọrọ ugboro abụa ọ zaba odolikpokpo:*

Interpretation: The honour of a woman only last for a short time when she is newly married and thereafter she loses her appeal.

8. *Ewezuga ụmụnwaanyị, okwu nile ga-abụ ilu ka e ji ekwu ya.*

Interpretation: Aside woman, all words will be said in proverbs.

9. *Nwanyi na-enwu n'ike, ma ọ dịghị enwu n'anya.*

Interpretation: A woman may be good in bed but not in character.

10. *A naghị etinye olili anya na nwata nwanyi.*

Interpretation: You do not put hope in a girl-child.

5. Analysis of the proverbs

1. *Nwaanyị na-adịghị anụrụ di ya okwu, ịtalị ka e ji ezi ya ihe.*

Interpretation: A woman that is disobedient to her husband must be taught obedience with cane.

The above proverb is common in Igbo society. It is sexist because it is commonly used by the male folk to denigrate the person and dignity of women. It is used by the male persons to show a chauvinistic importance of men over women. It portrays lordship and servitude for the women. A married woman, just like every other human being, is bound to make a mistake in the course of her matrimonial life. In a circumstance like this, it behooves the typical loving husband to correct her with love and a sense of respect for her womanhood. It will be self-defeating to employ the idea of correcting one wrong act with another wrong act. That is to say that teaching a woman obedience with an act of violence, whether it be ruthless or not, is in itself an encouragement of obduracy and audacity. The female person is not encouraged by the idea that an act of disobedience from her should be corrected with the violence of the cane.

2. *Nwaanyị leda di ya, ike akpọọ ya nkụ.*

Interpretation: When a woman despises her husband, she loses favour from him, and then suffers.

This proverb that is contemptuous of the woman and feminity, generally, links a woman's success directly to the mercy

of the husband. The implication of this statement goes to becloud the minds of women in our society with the perverted indoctrination that womanhood, wifehood and successes attached to them do derive directly from the grace of the husband.

3. *Na□nzukọ, ọ ka mma ịnụ okwu nwatakịrị nwoke karịa ịnụ okwu nwaanyị.*

Interpretation: In a meeting, it is preferable to heed the words of a little boy than that of a woman.

This proverb that is commonly used by men in Igbo society, especially with a sense of sagacity. The implication of the proverb is the assumption that women cannot exercise their mental powers to reason or advise wisely. It is a sarcastic and ridicule underestimation of womanhood. To say that the woman has no idea to offer as advice, to the point that the little boy's words supersedes the words of any woman, her age, status and wealth of experiences notwithstanding, is itself an irrationality.

4. *Nwaanyị sie nri ọjọọ, ọ sị na ọ bụ nke gụrụ ya*.

Interpretation: When a woman does something bad, she will forge an excuse to defend herself.

The proverb is often used in Igbo society to scold only the women folk as though only they are fallible. Everyone is capable of doing wrongs and making mistakes. And by the intrinsic subtlety of human nature, everyone tends to establish some escapist defense to protect or exculpate himself/herself from blame. This is not peculiar to woman alone. It is therefore a sheer aberration to ascribe this to women only, because such an ascription runs her down and disparages her personality. Therefore, it is a socio-linguistic abuse.

5. *Nwaanyị kaa nka ọ dị ka o nweghi ego e ji lụa ya.*

Interpretation: When a woman's strength fades, it appears she was never useful to her husband.

The proverb implies that a woman's usefulness is singularly equivalent to her beauty. The inference therefore is that the beauty of a woman may be exploited by her husband to keep her usefulness on the high side. She could be viewed as a machine that is abandoned when its strengths fails it. The proverb implies a lack of strength, advantages or usefulness in women when they start aging. Ordinarily, the woman should be important to her husband even when her strength begins to fail her. And to see it conversely as portrayed by this proverb is quite offensive and disapproving.

6. *Nkụ agadi Nwaanyị kpatara mgbe ọ bụ agbọghọ, ya ka ọ ga-anya mgbe o mere agadi.*

Interpretation: What an old woman sowed when she was young is what she reaps when she is at old age.

This proverb is often used in Igbo society to point especially to the reaping of the wrong that one has sown in the past. However, the use of women for the proverb strengthens the impression that women are more vulnerable to making mistakes and as such are more subject to

the natural law of 'what you sow is what you reap'. This law is not applicable to women alone, for every human being reaps at certain times in his or her later life, whatever he or she has sown in the past. There is therefore no reason to consign women alone to the gloomy interpretation of this proverb.

7. *Nwaanyị bịa mbụ, ọ zaba ogucha;mgbe ọ nọrọ ugboro abụa ọ zaba odolikpokpo.* Interpretation: The

honour of a woman only last for a short time when she is newly married and thereafter she loses her appeal.

This proverb is entirely wrong in all of its underlying ideas. The truth is that the honour of a woman should continue throughout her married life. The proverb is offensive to the human person of the married woman. It renders the woman only admirable and respected when the joy of her marriage is still fresh upon her husband's mind. Going by this proverb, if the man honours the wife only when she is newly married, he, by this act, portrays himself to be insincere and unloving. This proverb encourages men to be polygamous by their recognizing only the beauty of the newly married woman. Hence, the male folk uses the fading of her beauty over time to justify the desire for, and eventual marriage of another, fresher and more beautiful woman. This imposes on the woman the condition of struggling to remain as fresh and beautiful as when she got married so as to avoid being abandoned to a lonely, gloomy, dreary and hopeless psychological condition.

8. *E wezuga ụmụnwaanyị, okwu niile ga-abụ ilu ka e ji ekwu ya.*

Interpretation: Aside woman, all words will be said in proverbs.

The proverbs espouses the condition that it is the presence of women when speeches are made that necessitates the non-use of proverbs all the time. In other words, the fact that they cannot understand proverbs forces the speaker to use simple words. The implication is a belittling and categorization of women as human beings whose mental capacity is too low to understand the deep meanings of proverbs. On the contrary, women, like every mature male, are able to appreciate, demystify and decipher proverbs, no

matter how knotty such proverbs are. The other side to this proverb, which is actually not to the advantage of the men, is that men would prefer using convoluted proverbs to confuse issues which women would demand should be addressed in all simplicity. It is this demand for clarity on the part of the women that the men would like to denigrate and castigate by classifying it as being inferior minded.

9. *Nwaanyi na-enwu n'ike, ma ọ dịghị enwu n'anya.*

Interpretation: A woman may be good in bed but not in character.

The proverb categorizes the skills of the woman to be more connected to her sexuality than to her character development. A man is not to mistake how good a woman may be in bed with how good she is in character. To use this abusive statement for women renders them as promiscuous, lewd and flirtatious. This perspective however, overlooks the fact that it is men who sexually examine one woman after another that are actually promiscuous. The proverb casts aspersion on the sacredness and chastity of female sexuality as it sees the woman's strength in her sexual performance and not in her entire development.

10. *A naghị etinye olile anya na nwata nwanyi.*

Interpretation: You do not put your hope on a girl-child.

The root of this proverb is old. It derives from the common opinion hitherto held by Igbo men that the female-child is usually married off to another man and another family. It is therefore of no use to train her or let her inherit anything from her parents, because the husband and family that married a trained woman would cart away the benefits she ought to have brought to her family if she were to remain with her family like a man. Hence, since she contributes

nothing meaningful to her family, a wise father should not spend his resources training her or thinking of setting aside any form of inheritance for her. Through this proverb the rights of women are trampled upon and they are looked down on as inferior members of our society that should not educated or trained but only be married off to bear children.

5.0 Summary of the Findings and Conclusion

This paper remains a guide to further researchers in this domain. The fourteen proverbs examined in this study have amply illustrated the position of the woman in Igbo culture. The analysis of the proverb reveals the extent to which the male folk manipulate dominate the women folk through the use of proverbs. The theoretical and methodological perspectives of CDA shows discourse structures in terms of properties of social interaction between men and women and the relation of power and dominance in Igbo society. The identified social problem of power relations and the dominance of the women by the men through the use of proverbs is not peculiar to the Igbo society but could also be established in other African societies.

The notion of proverbs as distilled wisdom of a society is used by the men to give force to their prejudices towards the women and to also justify their manipulation of women. Though not all African women are oppressed and not all proverbs demean women, many Igbo proverbs clearly point to the psychological oppression of women by men in Igbo society. The insensitivity of the men to the psychological effect of these proverbs on the women is confirmed by the fact that the male users of these proverbs consider them witty rather than offensive. Hence, the idea of a 'distilled wisdom' actually puts the men in a certain state of

psychological obtuseness. Finally, we need to educated our men on their psychological state and the need to cultivate good complementary gender relations for the progress of our society.

References

Achebe, C. (1962). *Things fall apart*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Agbedo, et al (2008). Communicative character of manipulations in President Yaradua's budget speech: A critical discourse analysis perspective. *International Journal of Communication,* 9.

Agbedo, C.U. (2010). Lecture notes in LIN 517 Sociolinguistics, Department of Linguistics, Igbo and other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Agbedo, C.U. (2011). Fuel subsidy removal and the mind control game in Nigeria: A critical discourse analysis perspective. Paper Presented at 24th Annual conference of the Linguistics Association of Nigeria (LAN) Bayero, University Kano.

Balogun, T (2005). " A Semantic Enquiry into Yoruba Proverbs" Nordic. *Journal of African Studies,* 1(1), 103 - 113.

Balogun, T. (2006). " Crises of women empowerment in Nigeria: the male contribution" . *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1(1), 42-52.

Bourdien, P. (1983)." *Ceque parler vent dire (what speaking means)"*. Paris: Fayard.

Bruce, A (2004). Essentialising Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment. In S. O. Akinboye (Ed), *Paradox of gender*

equality in Nigeria politics. Lagos, Concept Publications Ltd.

Chinweizu (1970). *Anatomy of female power: A masculinity dissection of matriarchy*. Lagos: Pero Press.

Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999*). Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Fairclough, N.C. (1994)." *Language and power"*. London: Longman.

Finnegan, R. (1994). *Proverbs in Africa"* . In Wolfgangmuder and Alan Dundes, eds. P.I.

Gramsci, A (1971). *Selections from the prison note books.*" New York; International Publishers.

Gee, J.P. (2011). *An introduction to discourse analysis. Theory and method*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Hall, S., Lumley, B., Mclennan, G. (1977). Gramsci on Ideology. A. Gramsci (Ed.) *Politics and ideology*, pp. 45-76. London: Hurchinson

Herman, E.S & Chomsky, N (1958) *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media.* New York: Pantle on Books.

Kiesling, S.F. (1997). Power and language on me. In J. Scally & U. Hannameinhoff (Eds.), *Language and Masculinity.* Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers.

Madu, R.O. (1992) .*Principal elements of traditional Igbo life in African symbols, proverbs and myths.* New York: Lang Publishing.

Nwadike, I.U. (2009). *The Igbo Proverbs.* Nsukka: Paschal Communication.

Nwoga, D. N. (1975). Apprasial of Igbo Proverbs and Idoms. In F.C Ogbalu & E.N Emenajo, (Eds.), *Igbo language and culture*. Oxford University Press.

Obiefuna, A.K. (1975). " *Some aspects of traditional moral heritage*" . *Lucena* (July-Dec) 1.1

Ogbalu F.C. (1965). *Ilu Igbo* Onitsha: University Publishing Company.

Ogunwale, J.A (1998). " The Derogative of masculinity in Yoruba proverbs" . *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 7(1), 103-113.

Oyewunmi, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an Africa sense of western gender discourses.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Penfield, J. (1983). *Communicating with Quotes the Igbo Case*. London: Greenwood Press

Rudyk, I. (2007). Power relations president Bush's state of the union speech. In Agbedo et al (Eds.) (2008). *Communicative Character of Manipulations in President Yar' dua' s 2009 Budget Speech: A Critical Discourse Analysis perspective.*

Uchem, R. N. (2001*). Overcoming women's subordination. An Igbo African culture and christian perspective: Envisioning an inclusive theology with reference to women.* Parkland: Dissertation.com

Umeodinka, A.U. (2010). " Ethnography of Communication: A case of breaking of kola nut in Umuchu town meeting" A paper presented at 23rd Annual Conference of Linguistics Association of Nigeria (CLAN) held at the University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, November 29-December 3.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1989). *Language , power and access.* In C.R. Coldas (Ed.), *Studies in critical discourse analysis*. London: Routeledge press.

Wodak, R. (Ed.) (1989*). Language, power and ideology*. Amsterdam: Benjamins Press.

Yita, H. (2006). Throwing Stones in Jest. Kasena Women' s " Power Bial Revolt" . *Oral Tradition*, 21(2), 234-243.