

WOMEN’S QUEST: A STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN ROSECOLETTE EWURUM’S *SEDULOUS*

By

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Abstract

Eventful and fulfilled lives of women remain a plausible advantage to sustainable development of a society. Education and empowerment of women determine the level of progress sustainability. This study explores the language use in women’s ordinate quest for self-actualization and accomplishment in Ewurum’s *Sedulous*. As the saying goes “train a woman and you train the whole nation”. This study utilizes J.L Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1999) Speech Acts Theories to analyze language use for Education and empowerment. Fifty excerpts from the study text constitute the data for analysis. The five categories of Austin’s performatives; verdictives, exercitives, behabitives, commissives and expositives as well as Searle’s classifications reveals the women’s plight due to circumstances beyond their control to ensure self-actualization. Appropriate linguistic expressions yield positive results in women’s ordinate pursuit. It is recommended that women should be empowered through Education to maximize their endowed potentials for sustainable development.

Key Words: Women, Quest, Language, Education and Empowerment.

Introduction

In everyday discourse, there are means of getting the things we want. Language use has great influence towards achieving the set goals. Language is evidently a means of communication. Communication maintains and animates life. Language performs the social and expressive functions that allow us do things like; thinking, boasting, insulting, apologizing and promising that convey to others how we feel about them.

We use language to persuade others to our convictions and urge them towards actions crafting text that demonstrate the logic and appeal to those convictions (Fasold and Linton, 2012,p. 109). “Words can be used to achieve various ends; language is at the heart of all things human (O’Grady, Archibald and Katamba, 2011, p. 1). Language is a machine for expression of ideas and a fundamental architecture towards fruition of thoughts. It is deployed for all communicative intents. Women in an attempt to support development placatively drive their ambition to accomplishment through language.

Women with little or nothing are always eager to contribute their own quota for the growth of homes and the society at large. With the burning desire to have a sense of self-worth and add value to life, women seek empowerment through education. Educated women likely are the pillars in their various families despite men’s domination which is socially constructed. The subordination of women can be seen as culturally constructed characteristics, qualities, behaviours and roles which the society ascribes to them by gender. In many patriarchal societies especially Nigeria and other contemporary African societies, gender attributes of men and women are used to define their roles and responsibilities in relation to their economic contributions and expectations.

Gender is culturally based unlike sex which is biological. Ekpo (2006, p. 6) cited in Osuji is saying that “the two factors work in tandem with other, what has made this inhibition very effective is the patriarchal nature of our family and marriage systems”. In African society, women are treated as weaker and inactive sex. Antrobus (2002) opines that oppression is a common phenomenon to mankind but women suffer most from oppression by reason of their gender and from several cultural inhibitions emanating from gender discriminations in patriarchal societies. For this, the author of the study text writes under the “confinement of love, marriage, family life, education, women empowerment and self-worth for wives to successfully husband their spouses”. Most men reluctantly empower their wives while women relentlessly pursue their goals to have equal rights for social and economic justice. It is against this backdrop that this paper explores language use through the five categories of Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1999) performatives to actualize education and empowerment as illustrated in Ewurum’s Sedulous.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- i. explore language use as a means of achieving various ends in human endeavors
- ii. assess the performatives speech acts deployed by women in their quest for education and empowerment
- iii. examine the linguistic tokens that reflect a typical women's ordinate search for education and empowerment
- iv. highlight the performative categories that depicts education and empowerment.

Context

Ewurum's *Sedulous* is a drama from the feministic point of view. The play revolves around two women Uche and Eunice who perceive education as a key to success for living a fulfilled life which goes contrary to their husband's wish in quest for education. Their ordinate ambition for education is to be empowered in order to add more value to their lives, improve their statuses and make substantial contributions to sustain family development. Uche and Eunice eventually succeeded in their educational pursuit and are drastically empowered to the benefit of their husbands; Obinna and chief Emenike. The data for analysis are generated from the language use in the study text that yields positive outcomes from the women's quest.

Conceptual Clarification

Language

Among ways by which human beings interact is via the veritable utility of language. Language is a tool for human communication. The ability to communicate in a language is intrinsic in man. Language is the key to the heart of the people (Nwadike, 2008, p. 13). Okoro and Okereke (2016, p. 119) explain that:

Language is so important to man that anyone without a capacity for language use is at best in a partial existence. It is the instrument of acculturation in the sense that it is through the use of language that man identifies with his group, identifies himself, explores his

environment, records events, expresses his thoughts, feelings and needs. Language is also the index of man's humanity and the instrument of his development and growth.

However, expression of thoughts depends greatly on language use which can encourage or discourage, make or mar, build or destroy ideas. It is pertinent to note that language is a symbolic activity which is governed by syntactic, semantic and regulative rules. This is not far from the reason Mey (2006, p. 196) cautions that:

When discussing the metapragmatic conditions of language use, we should remind ourselves that they reflect not simply the world as it is, biologically or ontologically, but rather the world as we have made it and have learnt to see it. However, in discussing our societal state of mind, human meanings as expressed in language, we cannot avoid reflecting also on the words embodying those meanings. Talking about the metapragmatic constraints that tell us how to use and how not to use the words that go with our world and minds naturally leads us to a reflection on the words themselves and on the ways we use them.

Meanwhile, communication is one unique characteristic of language that is certain with bounds of social interaction and the degree of human creative ability. Human creativity is all about education. Since education is acquired through language, both therefore are inseparably interdependent.

Education

Education is the process of teaching, training and learning of new ideas, concepts and skills. Education can also be defined as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and morals for development which makes an individual to function effectively in the society. It is the key to improve the standard of living of both men and women in the society in order to live a meaningful life. Education is a socially transforming process that gives people knowledge, skills, perspectives and values through which they can participate and contribute to their own well-being and that of the

community and nation (Ilesanmi, 2016, p. 150). Everyone has the right to education and the right to education is a fundamental human right recognized by Nigeria. In the contemporary African society, women are no more in subservient situation nor do they clamor for liberation rather they are occupied and engaged in various leadership positions in politics, religion, education etc. Good leadership is a function of education, self-examination, experience, training and struggles (Oladipo, 2007). Therefore, education empowers both men and women but laudable development rests hugely on women empowerment.

Women Empowerment

Empowerment is the capacitating of individuals to function in an indisputable direction to achieve aims and be fulfilled. The direction can be political, social, economical, religious, psychological, educational and so on. However, it may be seen, empowerment leads to transformation of both individual and society at large for sustainable development. For any societal development to be sustained, women empowerment is crucial. Women empowerment is the creation of enabling environment for women to work, have rights in making decisions, choices and contributing towards the benefit of all. Women empowerment is defined as “increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal right to women and to make them confident enough to claim their rights” (Team Work, 2015). Furthermore, they aver that women empowerment entails that women are able to:

- freely live their lives with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity
- have complete control of their lives, both within and outside of their home and work place
- make their own choices and decisions
- have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities
- have equal rights for social and economic justice
- determine financial and economic choices
- get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias
- get safe and comfortable working environment and
- have the right to get their voices heard.

Also, Team Work (2015) refers women empowerment as “strengthening the social, economic and educational powers of women”. In agreement with the above assertion, this study assumes that women empowerment is the enhancement of women to fully maximize their potentials to their own benefit and equally contribute towards the sustainable development of the society. Women empowerment implies that women should have more autonomy and be able to make decisions on issues that shape their lives in the household, community and society (Fasokun, 2014). Going by the study text, it can be deduced that both Uche and Eunice are financially impoverished, dependent and educationally backward. Hence, their quest for educational advancement in order to be empowered. This study assumes that women empowerment can also be perceived as:

- giving women the freedom to be part of decision making in families and in the society.
- Permitting them to own and control productive resources
- allowing them earn money
- viably being independent financially
- giving them credit facilities
- making them participate fully at all levels of government.

The United Nations (2011) states that “empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability and improve the quality of life for women, families and communities”. This implies that sustainable development may not accelerate if women are not empowered.

Theoretical Framework

This paper utilizes J.L Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1999) **Speech Acts theories**. Both scholars are of the view that utterances are not just used rather utterances have some functional values and perform actions. In performing actions, utterances are known as ‘speech acts’ that make things happen. J.L Austin divides all statements into two: ‘constatives and performatives’. Constative utterances are descriptive utterances which are concerned with real world events or happenings that can be experienced or imagined and they can be examined for truth validity. In other words, they can be true or false. On the other hand, performatives have no truth validity

but can be felicitous or infelicitous. Performative utterances are utterances that in addition to saying something, are doing something when certain real world conditions are met. These conditions are called felicity conditions and they are necessary conditions for performative utterances to be successful. But when these conditions are not met, such performative utterances are infelicitous or unsuccessful. For performative utterances to be successful, Austin listed the following conditions thus; first, there must be a conventional procedure for saying the utterance or doing the action and the procedure must specify who must say or do what and in what circumstances. Second, all participants must properly execute the procedure to its completion. Finally, all involved must bear the necessary thoughts, feelings and intentions. In furtherance, Austin divides performative utterances into five categories:

1. **Verdictives** – this involves the giving of verdict, praise, estimate or grade. For example, ‘we find him worthy of the act’.
2. **Exercitives**- this implies the exercise of authority, power, rights or influence to appoint, order, compel or warning e.g. ‘I pronounce you king and queen’.
3. **Commissives**- this has to do with promising, undertaking and commitment to do something for example announcing an intention or commitment to do something e.g.’ I hereby confer on you the chief executive of the company’.
4. **Behabitives**- this typifies such matters as blessing, cursing, congratulating, apologizing, challenging, pleading. for example ‘I bless the name of the Lord’.
5. **Expositives**- this refers to the way of making one’s utterances or contributions fit into a discussion, an argument or exposition e.g. ‘I suppose’, ‘I doubt’, ‘I believe’.

However, Searle(1999) claims that Austin’s categories of performatives are overlap and suggests another set of five classifications as thus:

- i. **Representatives:** this stands to describe situations or represent the state of affairs such as claims, assertions and suggestions that can depict true or false.
- ii. **Directives:** making the addressee to do something or carry out an action.

- iii. **Commissives:** committing one (a speaker) to an action such as to-vow, pledge, threat and promise.
- iv. **Expressive:** this depicts the speaker's psychological state or expression of attitude e.g. thanksgiving, greetings, condolence, pleading.
- v. **Declaratives:** this deals with change of state e.g. marrying, mistrials, baptism and ordination.

Consequently, other scholars criticize Searle's attention on individual speech acts against the complexity of acts like deduction, explanation, argument, marrying and betting. Having pointed out the theoretical categories of performative utterances, the analysis of data is drawn from the excerpts in Ewurum's *Sedulous* that depicts the performative utterances.

Data Analysis

The data for analysis portrays language of education and empowerment which are categorized under various performative utterances. The following 50 excerpts will be used for the analysis. **Expressives:** This is expressing the feelings of the speaker.

Excerpt 1. Uche: With what certificate? Far be it from me that I should belittle my beloved husband, your brother, whom you refused to give further education after SSCE (p.6)

Uche asks her sister in law (Adamma) question on what certificate her brother is using to work as a banker the way she claims. The expressive is that Uche is aware of her husband's level in the banking sector which her sister in law pretends not to be aware of and also explains that she can never reduce her husband's status in spite of Adamma's refusal to train her brother Obinna further after SSCE.

Excerpt 2. Uche: No my dear, not my Obinna. Obinna has never caused me pains. He has rather sacrificed so much for me. I wish I could help him some day. I wish I could advance in education, secure a good job and help him solve his relation's problem. (p. 8)

Here, Uche expresses to her friend, Uzoh, that Obinna, her husband, has never inflicted any pain on her but has made so much sacrifice for her. She wishes she could be of help to Obinna in taking care of his extended family problems after improving in education. The expressive bears the feelings of

sympathy from the speaker to her husband who despite minimal income is saddled with many responsibilities. It also depicts the zeal for improvement and language of education and empowerment.

Excerpt 3. Uche: (Lapses into silence briefly, stands up, paces a few steps and stops) I don't really know. I'm... I'm not really sure, but I intend going to see one of my maternal uncles, who was very fond of my mother those days. After my parents' death, he and his wife sent for me to go to Ibadan to study my dream course, Medicine. (p.10)

Uche is nursing the idea of leaving her husband to join her maternal uncle at Ibadan in order to actualize her dream by being educated.

Excerpt 4. Uche: Yes, I sat for it again and still passed. I refused to listen to them because I was simply in a state of lassitude. I married Obinna because we loved each other and I needed a home. But now, I'm simply fed up. You see, I've come to realize that pettiness endangers potentials because it causes boredom and drains life of enthusiasm, wonderment, risk and even expansion. The only cure for my boredom now is my going back in pursuit of learning and knowledge. Before my mother gave up the ghost, she said to me "Please Uchem, (Eyes misting, blows her nostrils) make sure you study Medicine as you had dreamt". (p. 10)

Uche in this excerpt expresses her desire to further her education so as to maximize her potentials, be free from uneventful life and also accomplish her late mother's request. By this feelings, Uche decides to go out and acquire education.

Excerpt 5. Uzoh: I understand how you feel. (Takes Uche's right hand) An unrealized ambition also hunts and disquietens one. It makes one restless. Just last night, you were the centre of my discussion with my husband. I told him that you won several awards in our Alma mater as the best student in academics. I commend your courage. I am willing to support you in any way I can. You are still young and intelligent. (p.10)

Uzoh, Uche's friend expresses her feelings towards Uche for unrealized ambition and encourages her to move on with her plans as she (Uzoh) will show solidarity.

Excerpt 6. Uche: (Holds one hand while Uzoh holds the other one) I feel very happy now in spite of my situation and circumstance. The mere thought of probably starting school again excites me,(p.11)

Uche not minding her predicaments expresses happiness for at least going to begin her academic pursuit.

Excerpt 7. Uche: (Soliloquizes while pacing around.) He called the supper, a Judas' dinner and this quaker oat and fried plantains will constitute a real Judas breakfast. Thanks to Uzoh. (Praying) God, don't let my courage desert me. I have to leave today or never. My God, I'm not going into prostitution. I'm only going out to further my education and help him. I'm bored with an uneventful life. Help me God to accomplish my heart's desire at the end. Protect my marriage.(p.20)

In this excerpt, Uche expresses her true intention for leaving her marital home temporarily and also asking God to make her accomplish her good desire to enable her aid Obinna her husband and keep her marriage intact. This depicts women's quest and indeed language of education and empowerment.

Excerpt 8. Benson: "knowledge refreshes the mind, recreates the spirit, motivates the body, creates the enthusiasm and desire to live an exciting and full day in spite of routine and boredom" (23).The above excerpt expresses Uche's love for knowledge and education which makes her agree with the quote of John C. Tormey.

Excerpt 9. Uche: (Interrupts her) So, why didn't you and uncle fulfill that promise afterwards; rather, you encouraged a girl of sixteen to marry? My late mother wouldn't have let that happen to any of your children (P.24).

Uche expresses disappointment that her uncle's wife could not fulfill the promise made to her late mother who if alive would have kept to the promise.

Excerpt 10. Uche: (Jumps up, clapping) Aunty, are you sure? Oh my God! (Embraces Mercy) If it is true, I shall never forget you. Even if my place is no longer there, I shall sit for JAMB again and go back to school. It has not really been easy for us. Obinna in all sincerity has been very nice to me. He made the sacrifice that no other man but he could make. He married a girl of sixteen at the unripe age of eighteen to give me, his rejected love, a home. Everybody was dreading me like a leper except him. He planned to

send me back to school when he made some savings but extended family problems wouldn't let him. Life for me was uneventful. I left him to see if you can help train me so that I can assist him in shouldering those responsibilities. If you and uncle can train me, I promise to repay every kobo spent on me. We can sign an agreement. (P.25)

Uche is really happy with the good news from her uncle's wife about her education which she has been longing for. The expressive here reflects in her feelings of excitement on going back to school, reciprocating Obinna's love by assisting him in shouldering family responsibilities and expression of unfailing promise to repay every dime spent on her education.

Excerpt 11. Obiechina: At their own detriment, mama? Even those who cannot eat two good square meals should train your children for you people. Mama, look at yourself properly. How much is your cream alone? The money for your cream and powder for one month can feed two families in this village. Yet, you are not contented. (P.72)

Obiechina Adamma's son expresses disappointment over his mother's inconsiderate attitude to the sister in-law and her self-centered life.

Excerpt 12. Adamma: (Throws an object at Obiechina) God will punish you for insulting your mother. (P. 72)

Adamma expresses anger over her son for not supporting her in her selfish life style.

Excerpt 13. Obiechina: How did God displease you and papa? In what ways did He offend you two? He blessed you with five boys when others are begging for just one and your show of appreciation to God is leaving these children to be useless. (P. 73)

Obiechina by his utterances blame his mother for not caring for the children God blessed her with and allowing them to be worthless because of her greed and personal interest instead of training her God given children to improve their future.

Excerpt 14. Eunice: Yes chief, twenty-eight years ago when you married me, you promised my poor parents that you would send me to school but you've never fulfilled that promise. Chief, please permit me to go to school once again (P.31).

Eunice's utterance depicts her feelings of unfulfilled promise by chief, her husband who turns down the promise of sending Eunice to school after marriage.

Excerpt 15. Eunice: Chief, you know too well that I don't mean that kind of death. See, chief if I go to school, I will accomplish self actualization if I achieve nothing else (31).

The above excerpt xrays yearning for education. Eunice linguistic choices express her zeal to accomplish self actualization.

Excerpt 16. Eunice: Practically nothing, but freedom and fulfillment. Chief, you don't let me touch money or go out. I am in a prison of some sort. Everything we use here is bought by your secretary. (P.32)
Here, Eunice expresses her feelings and trust that education will grant her freedom and fulfillment and with that, she will no longer be in prison.

Excerpt 17. Eunice: Come this way son. You see, I have been pleading with your dad to permit me to start schooling. You all have grown up. I don't have anything to occupy my leisure any longer but your daddy bluntly refused. He feels that if I'm empowered, I shall start challenging him. But far from that. I want this gaping hiatus, this lacuna filled (becomes lachrymose) (p.32).

Eunice at this point communicates to her son her longing to advance in education which marriage denies her. Her desire of filling a gap is in line with what is recognized as fundamental human right in Nigeria and that is education which everyone has a right to.

Excerpt 18. Eunice: Well, let's keep our fingers crossed. Even if I don't work, I could still have accomplished my dream; at least, answer a graduate. I speak fine, yes, but beyond that, I feel empty. Do you know how I feel when we attend meetings and they introduce some women as lawyers, doctors, lecturers and even graduate teachers. Odi, marriage has crippled me so much (P.33).

In this excerpt, Eunice expresses the degree of emptiness she feels how for not being a graduate despite other achievements in life. Her feelings here, imply that she has not actualized her dreams and therefore opts for education.

Excerpt 19. Odinaka: Mum, but you have us and dad. (P.33)

Excerpt 20. Eunice: I thank God, but I'm not fulfilled. (P.33)

Eunice's response to her son's statement proves that she actually believes that life without education is incomplete and unfulfilled irrespective of other achievements hence her quest for education.

Excerpt 21. Obinna: She was my wife. I know her. When her mind is made up, she finds it difficult to rescind her decisions. Moreover, of what use will I be to her and our unborn baby. God! How I hate myself. Of what use is an incapable man? Odinaka, when she qualifies as a doctor, what would she want to do with my poor self? (P. 47)

Uche's husband, Obinna, expresses the feelings of not being equal match to his wife Uche who absconds her matrimonial home in quest for education in order to have an eventful and fulfilled life afterwards. Expressive here is seen in Obinna's feeling of guilt and self hatred.

Excerpt 22. Chief Emenike: Well, I feel this is a big challenge to me. I have been dreaming of being a lawyer all my life but I kept on feeling that age is my handicap.(P.51)

Chief, having known that his wife is now a graduate seems to realize that his emotions about being too old to go school is baseless, rather he now feels it is a challenge for him to seek admission in higher institution and become a man of his dream as a lawyer.

Excerpt 23. Chief Emenike: (Staring at her) Yes, tell me your benefits you miserable daughter of a low life.(P.76)

Chief's anger rests on the assumption that his wife has come to run down the company instead of improving on what he has done already. The expressive here depicts his mistrust.

Excerpt 24. Chief Emenike: You! (pointing at her) you (waving his hands to God.) who said that empowering one's wife and letting her work in the same company is good?(P.67)

By this utterance, chief feels that since his wife has been educated and empowered that she will undo him or rather stand to disrespect him. The rhetorical interrogative is loaded with Chief's misgiving about his wife's empowerment and place in his business.

Exercitives/Declarative : This means the exercise of authority, power or influence to order, compel or appoint.

Excerpt 25. Odinaka: see, mummy, many tertiary institutions have their satellite campuses all over the states now. They organize evening, weekend programmes and all that. Since Dad does not stay at home often, you can start the programme and before he finds out, you've graduated. We're no longer kids, mum. We can give you every backing you need. It's high time you stood on your feet. (P.33)

In this excerpt, Eunice's son exercises his power as a full grown man that can issue authority and support his mother despite his father's recalcitrant and intimidating attitude towards the wife. The exercitive carries influence against the father's compliance to the mother's demand.

Excerpt 26. Chief Emenike: She has a good paper qualification? (P.49)

Excerpt 27. Eunice: Sorry to surprise you, chief, I am no more an affluent illiterate but a first degree holder in Business administration with a second class upper honors. (P.50)

Eunice eventually actualized her dreams by going out of her husband's way to actualize her ambition so as to live an eventful life.

Excerpt 28. Chief Emenike: Thief, whose certificate did you steal Eunice? You will kill me one day! (P.50)

In this excerpt, Chief Emenike is surprised to see that his wife who he does not permit to go to school has graduated without his knowledge and is poised to work. The declarative here is the educational qualification for empowerment which proves Eunice's accomplishment of so long quest.

Excerpt 29. Eunice: No, chief, you are wrong. When you didn't grant me the permission to start schooling, I planned with my sons and started. All the time I told you I was going to visit your daughter Vivian, I was actually going to take my exams in Uniboko's main campus. And now, chief, here is the proof. (She produces her original certificate). I have disproved you. Age is no barrier to academic pursuit (P.50).

Chief Emenike's wife Eunice, now proves that against all odds, her quest for education comes to fruition hence she declares boldly to the husband that "age is no barrier to academic pursuit".

Excerpt 30. Eunice: No, Mr. Chief, my husband. You dare not. (P.67)

Eunice now stands bold to exercise her authority as the deputy director of the company by saying no to Chief's order.

Excerpt 31. Chief Emenike: You challenge and ridicule me? (P.67)

Excerpt 32. Eunice: Chief, I got the federal Government Contract Millennium Development Projects which you people have not been able to do. I signed the contract yesterday and here (Beating the back of her diary.) is it. (P.68)

Here, Eunice proves that indeed her education in business administration and empowerment is for real by securing the contract others couldn't secure in the past years. The exercise here is reflected in her authority in securing the contract.

Excerpt 33. Eunice: No, Chief! Since my presence in your company is nauseating, I think I can now go and register one in my name and execute this (flings the paper). (P.68)

Eunice who is educated and empowered now declares her intention of registering another company in her name because she cannot tolerate Chief's insults any longer despite her beneficial input to the company.

Excerpt 34. Eunice: At least to recover all the money you waste on small, small girls, Chief. At least, recover all the money you spend on the mistresses you keep here and there. (P.68)

Authoritatively, Eunice speaks to Chief on the ground that she is in charge to control the company's income, expenses and other affairs.

Excerpt 35. Chief Emenike: Mind your tongue Eunice (P.68)

Chief in his own way tried to exercise his power as a man.

Excerpt 36. Eunice: You thought I didn't know you bought a house for Milly at no. 5 koma street (P.68)

Excerpt 37. Chief Emenike: (sweating) Eunice, if you don't mind your tongue this marriage will be over (P.68)

The above excerpts have depicted show of power by the couple.

Excerpt 38. Eunice: Chief, you need me in this your miserable office for this your miserable company to move on. In fact, I think I should buy off this miserable company and resuscitate it so that you can pay off the banks that will soon be after you. (p.70)

Truly, Eunice exercise her power over Chief as she proves that she has really succeeded in her quest for education which Chief bluntly denied her

and also has been empowered to take decisions without seeking permission from Chief again.

Expositives: This involves making one's contributions or utterances fit into a discussion, an argument or exposition.

Excerpt 39. Chief Emenike: It is never good to underestimate any woman. God! Who would have believed that Eunice could have the backbone to embark upon such project without even asking for my help? So, Eunice, tell me, how did you sponsor the programme? (P.50)

Chief's argument over his wife's educational attainment is an eye opener to him/others that no one should underestimate any woman because once a woman is set for a quest. She brings to motion everything within her reach and can never give up until the quest is actualized.

Excerpt 40. Eunice: (Smiling) Well chief, I saved from our house-keeping money and Odinaka, God bless his soul, helped me a lot financially. (P.51)
Eunice makes it clear to her husband how she strives to make her ambition a reality despite his blunt refusal.

Excerpt 41. George: But now you have seen that age is no real barrier to academic pursuit. You can still enroll for evening law as long as you have sound credits in your G.C.E. (P.51)

By these utterances, George exposes the possibilities of chief actualizing his professional dream through education.

Excerpt 42. Obiechina: You think we don't know your trick with Papa? Go on and punish us. Our age mates are graduates but we roam the village waiting for a relation that will train us while our parents are still alive and healthy. (P.72)

Here, Obiechina courageously put it to his mother that they are aware of their ploy to rip-off their educational right from them and shift the blame to the innocent relations.

Commissives : This implies committing oneself to do something.

Excerpt 43. Mercy: you won't understand, my daughter. I visited your mother in the hospital before she breathed her last. She begged me to ensure that you studied your dream course, medicine and I... (P.24).

By this, Mercy assures Uche's mother that she would see to the actualization of her daughter's dream.

Excerpt 44. Chief Emenike: Yes, yes, I will start. I have my papers. Bufo, give Eunice the appointment letter. Eunice, in addition, I have permitted you this day to continue with your education to any level you want to reach. (P.51)

In this excerpt, chief is committed and ready to champion the sponsorship of her education to any level and equally enroll himself to be educated as the wife.

Excerpt 45. Eunice: Even to Ph.D, chief? (P.51)

Excerpt 46. Chief Emenike: Even to professorship, whatever. (P.51)

From the excerpts above, it can be deduced that Eunice's quest/language use for education has become a motivation and key to higher level.

Behabitives: This involves such matters as blessing, cursing, congratulating and pleading.

Excerpt 47. Mercy: Uchem, nothing has really spoilt. We decided last night to send for you. I actually deferred your last admission after you refused to come when we sent for you initially. Somto told us about your success in JAMB a second time. I've kept in touch with the professor who is the dean of that faculty and deferred the admission. I even visited him last month and after much explanations and persuasions he agreed to admit you but warned that after this year, that chance won't stand any longer. I also paid the acceptance fee. (P.25)

In this excerpt, Mercy pleads with Uche to make her understand that they are still trying to keep to the promise they made and the extent they have gone in committing the school so as to secure her admission.

Excerpt 48. Chief Emenike: No my sweet, sweet wife (Holds her). It hasn't come to that yet (P.68)

Chief who has been exercising authority over his wife Eunice is now on the pleading side.

Excerpt 49. Obiechina: No, mama, God will not punish me but all the pretenders in this village who think the best thing for them is to tie their money securely around their waists and depend on other extended relations they are even better than for survival. (P.72)

Obiechina reprimands his mother Adamma whose pretentious life deprives them from giving her children formal education but relies on others to take up her obligation.

Excerpt 50. Adamma: (Cursing) The evil child that enters the mother's womb from the backyard path. (P.72)

Adamma curses her son for not supporting her deceitful manner of living.

Conclusion

This study explores language as a social and expressive means of achieving goals. The investigation observes that in women's ambitions, language performs different functions which vary in terms of context, position or social class. Linguistic expressions have great influence in controlling issues. From the study text, language use in women's quest for education and empowerment as seen in Ewurum's *Sedulous* is embedded in Austin and Searle's performative categories. The study concludes that expressives are the predominant linguistic elements in women's quest actualization. Eunice explains to chief that age is no barrier to academic pursuit (P.50). Her language use portrays women as daring and determined. From the study too, it is discovered that women's educational accomplishment has a role to play in sustainable development else a lopsided scale that is detrimental to societal well-being will be established. Women can also contribute to business as well as medical development in societies. Chief Emenike would also have been a victim of cardio-vascular accident but for Eunice's prompt intervention. Uche as a successful medical doctor saved the lives of the victim's of share's crash. The female's linguistic choices depict education as the panacea of human and societal development and empowerment.

Recommendations

Women's Education should be of great significance and concern to all and sundry because education is an enabling tool that provides greater opportunities towards self-reliance and sustainable development in the family and society at large. Consequently, since education is a fundamental human right, women should not be denied that, rather be empowered through it as well, to fully maximize their endowed potentials for the well-being of all and sustainable development in the society.

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