



ABSTRACT

This study is a critical discourse analysis of the epithets used against the female gender within the family circle in Ugwulangwu (a community in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi, State Nigeria). The study employed the socio-cultural practice of Fairclough and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework to investigate the epithets used against the females within

GENDER DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE FAMILY CIRCLE: A CRITICAL ENQUIRY INTO THE EPITHETS AGAINST THE FEMALE GENDER IN UGWULANGWU COMMUNITY.

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Introduction:

Language has as many definitions as there are linguists. This is because language is complex and thus cannot adequately be captured with a single definition due to its diverse nature. To Sapir, (1921) “language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols” (p. 8). This definition captures the fact that language must be acquired or learnt since every human being has to learn or acquire language in the speech community that he or she is exposed to.

Hall sees language as “the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols” (1968, p. 158). Here, language is seen as an oral activity involving symbols which are sent through the air for hearers or listeners who receive and interpret the symbols to arrive at a meaning.



Chomsky, (1957) opines that “language is a set of (finite or infinite) sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements”. The definition above takes into cognizance the fact that language has structure, and that human brain is capable enough to extend or construct many sentences out of a limited number of symbols of any particular language.

Furthermore, Wardaugh, (1972) asserts that “language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication”. Bloch and Trager, (1942) define language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates” (p. 5). The two definitions above point out the fact that language is a system. Different sounds of a language are joined together to form words and words joined to form sentences. Because language is a system, it has a rule governing how sounds are joined to form words. For instance, M + A + P joins to form “MAP” in English language. It cannot be APM or PAM. All these are also conventional. There can also be a sentence like “I will be back soon” and not “back will soon I be” or “I soon will back be”.

Language is a tool with which humans express their thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas. It is also an intrinsic part of human life because no human community will survive without using one form of language or the other. In other words, speech communities exist and thrive because of language. Language helps

the family in Ugwulangwu community. The study discovered that within the family, there are more than thirty epithets which are used to shut down the females and make their presence inconsequential or unimportant. These discriminatory epithets are so much ingrained in the subconsciousness of the people such that they are seen as norm. Some of these epithets are coined by women themselves. They do this in order to ‘preserve the culture’ without knowing that they are being ‘used’ by the males.

Key words: gender, discrimination, family circle, critical enquiry, epithets.



societies to enact laws that order the activities of the citizenry.

Furthermore, it is clear that without language communication amongst humans would be impossible. The primary sources of language include:

- i. Word order
- ii. Word form and
- iii. Syntactic structure.

A language – verbal or non-verbal- fulfills the communicative needs of the speakers. Language is a social phenomenon. So, social factors like gender, class, education and wealth affect the way that language is used. Language does not exist outside the society. Language functions in social settings and expresses group identity. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000) “language does not also exist in itself but has a use for the overall behavior which is meaningful in a given culture ... language is one of the variables which define culture” (p. 8). People use language to show gender, identity, power, class, status and age. Addressing a person as, Mr., Mrs., Ms, Dr., Professor, aunt, uncle or even the person’s first or last name transcends diction and extends to social factors such as gender, class, power and age. Language choices are made bearing in mind social meanings like age, gender, situation, class, status, accommodation theory and politeness. Language is a property of the particular society that uses it. One of the features of language use is linguistic epithet. Epithet is a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or a thing. Critical discourse analysis studies the relationship between language and power and how language is used to maintain the power structure in the society. As a language use, critical discourse is characterized by three main dimensions which include the act of talking or writing, the communication of ideas or ideologies, and the social interaction (van Dijk 1997).

Furthermore, Fairclough (1995), asserts that “discourse is always simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief” (p. 55). From the moment in which language becomes discourse, those who express it cannot but connote it with the characteristics of their social identity, (the role they play in



society) or rather what they identify with. Discourse is therefore necessarily influenced by the network of social relations in which those who articulate it are immersed and can only express arguments that will be the result of their knowledge and ideologies. This paper has used the tools of CDA to uncover the epithets used against females in within the family in Ugwulangwu community of Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

Mbarachi (2010) studied the sexist use of language in English and Igbo, and discovered that sexist language against both men and women exists, and that language can be used to discriminate and relegate to the background of a particular gender in the society.

She asserts,

women in Nigeria have been overexploited and relegated to the lower ladder of the social categorization. Women subjugation is not derived from any nature inferiority but through language and is mostly traceable to religious credence. Both the bible, traditional religion and the Quran give superior value and position to men. Women are so indoctrinated by tradition that they (in most instances) have accepted the position of second fiddle. Sadly, institutional sexism has crippled women ambition and delimited their achievements. Women are stigmatized and precluded from vocational, political and social responsibilities.

Moreover, Ezeifeke (2016, p. 152) studied the Igbo idioms and discovered that Igbo idioms projected the male in a positive light while the female are negatively presented. She also asserts that women are generally presented as commodities which could be bought or sold.

Socialization relegates women to the kitchen, child bearing and domestic chores as their sole responsibilities. This reality is most present in rustic societies to which Ugwulangwu community belongs.

Moreover, Chukwuma (1990) said,

The female character in African fiction hitherto, is a facile lack-lustre human being, the quiet member of a household,



content only to bear children, unfulfilled if she does not, and handicapped if she bears only daughters. In the home, she is not part of the decision-making both as a daughter, wife and mother even when decisions affect her directly. Docility and complete subsumation of will is demanded and enacted from her. This traditional image of women as indeterminate human beings, dependent, gullible and voiceless, stuck especially, in the background of patrilineage which marked most African societies (p. 133).

Furthermore, verbal communication is one of the most powerful means through which sexism and gender discrimination are perpetrated and reproduced.

Methodology

This study was carried out using a qualitative approach involving the use of oral interviews. The study area for this research is Ugwulangwu, a community in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The inhabitants of the study area are mostly farmers and petty traders. All the people that were interviewed speak Ugwulangwu dialect of the Igbo language as their first language while some of them speak English and or pidgin English as their second language. Data was collected through oral interviews. The interactants were asked to recollect, mention, and explain epithetical sayings and other expressions that are used to address or describe women negatively. Also, the researcher, being a native of Ugwulangwu community used her intuitive knowledge to enhance and improve the quality of the research. The respondents' responses were gathered and analyzed within the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Data Presentation and Analysis

This study relies on the research methodology of critical discourse analysis. It combines the three dimensional analytical framework developed by Fairclough (1995) to study the epithets against women in Ugwulangwu and the triangular sociocognitive approach advanced by van Dijk (2008).



Macro Presentation and Data Analysis

Table 1: Family/Domestic Domain

S/N	Epithet.	Semantic Grammatical Translation.	and Contextual and Sociocultural Meaning.
1.	<i>Nma nwanyi bu di ye.</i>	A woman's beauty is her husband.	An unmarried woman is regarded as ugly and worthless.
2.	<i>Nwanyi nchuku echuku agbo nwamini.</i>	A woman that squats to urinate.	A woman is viewed as in capable of achieving anything since she squats to urinate.
3.	<i>Nwoke lūchaa oḡu nwanyi enwere edoro e.</i>	When a man finishes fighting, a woman will tell the story.	Women are incapable of standing up for their right/ women are talkative.
4.	<i>I zụ nwanyi ne sukulu bu itufha okpogo.</i>	Training a woman in school is a waste of money.	Spending on formal education of women is a useless venture.
5.	<i>Nna galụ.</i>	Father will marry.	Too ugly and not suitable for any man to marry.
6.	<i>Ogwu okporoko</i>	Stock-fish bone.	Slim/bony girl.
7.	<i>Ngwere.</i>	Lizard.	Short and slim girl.
8.	<i>Ogwu azụ.</i>	Fishbone.	Lanky girl.
9.	<i>Okporoko.</i>	Stock fish.	Slim/tiny girl.
10.	<i>Ekpa egburu</i>	Bag of fermented cassava.	Fat and smelly girl.
11.	<i>Onye nchoroi ma ge nyee ndu lee nne enya.</i>	If you want to know what your wife would be, look at her mother.	A mother's character is said to reflect in the daughter.
12.	<i>A nyaa nwoke.</i>	Turn man.	Stubborn.
13.	<i>Nwanyi bu ngwugwu.</i>	women are parcels.	Women are unpredictable.
14.	<i>ejo nwanyi bu ojo anu.</i>	A bad woman is bad meat.	Worthless, not good to be/associate with.



15.	<i>Onye nji nwanyi debe isi no ne nkiti.</i>	Whoever uses a woman as pillow has no support for his head or is wasting precious time.	Women are not dependable.
16.	<i>I richa eku mere nwanyi agbọ afho ọny.</i>	Licking the kitchen spoon made women not to grow bears.	Women are viewed as glutton.
17.	<i>Nwanyi ehụ nagba biribiri.</i>	Restless woman.	One who always demands for sex or sexually insatiable.
18.	<i>Ọkpa unu.</i>	Salt leg.	Promiscuous. Sleeps with any man.
19.	<i>Okwu umu nwanyi.</i>	Women's talk.	Senseless. Lacks wisdom.
20.	<i>Ritakwa n'ibụ ebia n'ụlọ ya.</i>	Remember you are a visitor in this house. (To a female child)	Females are regarded as mere visitors.
21.	<i>Ebiaa nwanyi n'akwa onwe ye.</i>	A female visitor cares for herself.	Women are not worthy to be served.

Table 2 Linage Perpetuation

S/N	Epithets.	Semantic and Grammatical Meaning.	Contextual and Sociocultural Meaning.
1.	<i>Nna galụ.</i>	Father will marry.	Too ugly and not suitable for any man to marry.
2.	<i>Adaeku.</i>	Female's name: first wealth.	A girl child is considered to "wealth" for her family.
3.	<i>Ọbiageri.</i>	Female's name: one that came to enjoy wealth.	Females are seen as enjoyment officers.
4.	<i>Adanna.</i>	Female's name: father's first daughter.	The father owns the girl child.
5.	<i>Adanma.</i>	Female's name: first beauty.	Queen of beauty.



6.	<i>Ijeoma.</i>	Female's name: good/blessed journey.	The journey is said to be blessed since the female child would bring income to the family through her bride-price.
7.	<i>Nwanyi a kwonu nkpa.</i>	Women cannot solve problem.	Unwise/ incapable of being of any help in problem solving.
8.	<i>E gwuje echu nwanyi emeeje ge o nyu nshj.</i>	When a toilet is being dug, women pretend they don't defecate.	Women are portrayed as lazy, proud and irresponsible.
9.	<i>Nwoke nyee muru sonso nwanyi gba eka nwa.</i>	A man whose wife gave birth to only female children is childless.	Female children are worthless.
10.	<i>Onye I bee nchoro ikwachi n'amu so nwanyi.</i>	A family that wants to go into extinction gives birth to only females	Female children do not grantee lineage perpetuation.
11.	<i>Ritakwa n'ibu ebia n'ulo ya.</i>	Remember you are a visitor in this house. (To a female child)	Females are regarded as mere visitors.
12.	<i>Nwanyi bu ikwu onye ozu.</i>	Women are another person's kin.	She does not belong to her family.

Table 3: Marriage/ Conjugal Right

S/N	Epithets.	Semantic and Grammatical Meaning.	Contextual and Sociocultural Meaning.
1.	<i>Nwanyi enwiy enu nkwy.</i>	A woman does not climb palm tree.	It's a taboo for a woman to climb palm tree.
2.	<i>Uru nwanyi mbara bu ne agodo.</i>	A woman is useful only in bed.	A woman is seen as a sex object that satisfies the man's sexual needs.



3.	<i>E kee nwanyi uzo nambu nwoke apara ukwu e.</i>	When a woman is divided into two, a man will choose her waist.	The waist is the only useful part of the woman. (it's the tool for sexual satisfaction).
4.	<i>Nwanyi cheyaa onye muru ajude onye luru?</i>	When a girl out grows who gave birth, the question would become who is the husband?	Female children are expected to get married at a certain age.
5.	<i>Onye aturu ilu kwara e, ego eji lya mama e fhuru ofha.</i>	One who does not understand a proverb has wasted the bride-price paid on the mother.	Women are blamed for lack of their children's understanding of proverbs/worldview of the people.
6.	<i>orieku.</i>	One who enjoys husband's wealth.	Women are incapable of acquiring or accumulating wealth.
7.	<i>Odozi eku.</i>	One who organizes husband's wealth.	Women are perceived as home managers.
8.	<i>Nwanyi bu ukwu nku.</i>	Women are bundle of firewood.	Common commodity which has endless list from which men can choose from.
9.	<i>Ezi nwanyi di ukpo.</i>	A good woman is scarce.	Women are perceived as being generally bad. Hence, good ones are scarce.
10.	<i>Nwanyi akwonu nkpa.</i>	Women cannot solve problem.	Women are seen as generally weak in incapable of providing any support for the family.
11.	<i>erinu ifhe nwanyi eri.</i>	One cannot eat from a woman.	Selfish and stingy. Not generous.
12.	<i>Ritakwa n'ibu ebia n'ulo ya.</i>	Remember you are a visitor in this house. (To a female child)	Females are regarded as mere visitors.
13.	<i>Nwanyi bu ikwu onye ozo.</i>	Women are another person's kin.	She does not belong to her family.



14.	<i>Nwoke nyee mụrụ sọnsọ nwanyi gba eka nwa.</i>	A man whose wife gave birth to only female children is childless.	Female children are worthless.
15.	<i>Ọnọdụ nwanyi bụ ne usekwụ.</i>	A woman's place or position is the kitchen.	A woman has no say or right except in kitchen affairs.
16.	<i>Nwanyi a mụụ nwa enwenụ oche n'ụlọ di ye.</i>	A barren/childless woman has no seat in her matrimonial home.	A childless wife cannot participate in family discussion.
17.	<i>Nwanyi ọbụ kwanụ nwa.</i>	A female is not a child.	Worthless.

Micro Analysis and Discussion of Data

The text (epithet) and socio-cognitive meaning of the epithets in each of the tables are discussed. The first table contains the epithets used within the family to keep the females in 'their place.' These are discussed below. *Nma nwanyi bụ di ye*. This is used to express the view/fact that no matter how beautiful a woman is; she is useless without a husband. In other words, an unmarried woman is not to be reckoned with as she is deemed worse than ugly. Data two in the table refers to the position a woman takes while urinating as an evidence of her incapability of achieving greatness since she cannot stand up to pass ordinary urine. In data three, women are perceived as talkative. They have no ability to fight but can narrate the event when men might have finished fighting. Data four sees nothing good in female gender and thus concludes that spending money on the formal education of a female child is a waste of resources since she will eventually leave the family and its name and take up the husband's name. *Nna galụ* in data 5 is a derogatory epithet used to refer to a female child who is deemed to be too ugly or stubborn such that no man would ask for her hand in marriage. It also refers to a female of marriageable age who is yet to be married or has rejected many suitors. The physical appearance of the female also comes under attack within the family as some epithets are employed in derogatory attack to her physical appearance. In items 6-10, a woman is referred to as stock-fish



bone, lizard, fish-bone, stock fish and bag of fermented cassava. These are used in reference to the stature which could be slim, lanky, short and tiny, fat and smelly and bony. All these derogatory epithets have no equivalent for males. A girl's character is said to be predetermined by her mother's character in data 11. Again, both female and male children grow under the same mother, one wonders why, only the female child's character is said to be predetermined by the mother's character and not the male's. This means that a female child is largely influenced by only the mother and not the father. Meanwhile, it takes the two parents to raise a child be it male or female. 'A nyaa nwoke' is used to describe a female who is considered to be strong headed or behave as a man. This is so because certain traits of character are expected of the male and not the female. For instance, it is a taboo for a female to climb palm tree, any female found doing that is tagged 'a nyaa nwoke' which means she has crossed her boundary. Item 13 refers to the female as a parcel whose content is unknown until after marriage. Here, females are seen as unpredictable and unreliable. They are seen as pretenders because their character towards their husbands change after marriage. This conclusion is without recourse to the man's behavior towards the woman.

'Ejọ nwanyi bụ ejọ anụ' in item fourteen presents a 'bad' woman as an ordinary bad meat. This is used to show that women are generally seen as worthless. Moreover, terming the woman 'bad meat' does not imply the inherent badness. A female is seen as 'bad meat' if she refuses to accept and abide by the status quo. An instance is an incident that took place in 1989. A particular woman was tired of her husband's physical and verbal abuses and she decided to retaliate. Her retaliation brought down the wrath of the villagers. After hearing from both parties, the women decided that their fellow woman was guilty for standing against the husband's abuse. Their verdict was that the woman should go on two months suspension by leaving her matrimonial home to her maternal home. Her rejection of the verdict forced the women to untie their wrappers, used it to form a robe which they used to physically buddle the woman and carry her by force to her maternal home. On their way back, the women were chanting in unison, 'anyi pata njọ palaje, anyi nyee isi vulaje. Anyi waje.' Translated: 'we have taken evil away, we used our



heads to carry it away. now we are back in peace.’ So woman as bad meat is worthless and must be discarded by all means. The female’s character comes under attack as item 15 asserts that whoever uses a woman as pillow has nothing under his head. This presents females as not being dependable, unreliable and untrust worthy. Item 16 states that females are gluttons as ‘iricha eku’ would not allow them to grow beard. Moreover, the females are only interested in the here and now-concerned only in what they would gain now.

The sexual character of the female gender is brought to view in items 17 and 18 where ‘nwanyi ehụ biri and ọkpa unu are used to refer to the female as one who always demand for sex or one who is sexually promiscuous. These epithets have no equivalent for male. Data 19 sees the female gender as unserious fellows whose talk should not be regarded because they are generally senseless and lack wisdom. In items 20 and 21, female children are regarded as visitors in the family before they even get married. After marriage, they are seen as worthless visitors (when they visitor their parents) who no one should bother to entertain. Hence, they are told that ‘ebiaa nwanyi n’akwa onwee’ which means that they should find a way of entertaining themselves since women are not worthy to be entertained.

Table 2: Linage Perpetuation:

Data one ‘nna galụ’ under lineage perpetuation goes beyond the cognitive meaning and effect in table one above. Beyond being too ugly for any man to ask for the hand in marriage, the female here is kept deliberately in the family to give birth to children who would take over or perpetuate the family name in cases where the father has no male child to carry on the family name. in other words, ‘nna galụ ensures the continuation of the family by giving birth to male children without a husband who would claim ownership of her children. In data 2, a first female child is referred to as first wealth. She is wealth in the sense that the father (family) sees beyond the present into the future when the child would be of marriageable age and thus bring wealth to the family by way of bride-price. Again, sometimes, the female child is given in marriage few days after her birth. This is done between the father and the family of the man.



This is called (I gbee mee n'ite udu) betrothal and the girl has no right to reject the person so slatted by her father. Data 3 is used to assert that females know only how to enjoy and not how to struggle for wealth acquisition. They have only come to enjoy the wealth acquired by men. Adnna, Adanma and Ijeoma are all female names in items 4-6 above. These names depict the female as father's first daughter, first beauty and good journey respectively. A female is considered a good journey because she is expected to yield income to the family in form of bride-price. She is Adanma when she is beautiful and thus capable of attracting suitors on time and Adanna when she is the first female child of the couple. However, if subsequent pregnancies result in female children, the story changes as the father and his family will begin to treat the woman and her female children as if they are nothing or a bunch of idiots. In item 7, a woman is said to be incapable of solving a problem. Cognitively, this means that a woman is so base in knowledge and wisdom that she has nothing to offer to her world. It also connotes the fact that women cannot help their husbands solve any financial problem as they lack the wherewithal of wealth acquisition. Again, if they cannot solve ordinary every day problem, it is impossible for them to maintain/ensure the continuation of the family. Item 8 is another epithet that present the woman as proud and irresponsible. She is so arrogant that she cannot participate in community work or developmental projects. Hence, it is assumed that she cannot ensure the continuation of the family.

Data 9 presents the man whose wife gave birth to only female children as childless. This is because family name cannot be perpetrated by female children. Each female child would get married and set the father's name aside in favour of the husband's name. This is also true of item 10 where the family that wants to go into extinction is said to give birth to only females. Data 11 and 12 depict female children as guests in their father's house. Neither the siblings nor the parents accept them as part of the family since they are just there until they get married and leave the family for the men of the house. In fact, a female child is regarded as belonging to another kindred other than her immediate or extended family in data 12. Hence, she is oftentimes treated as an out-cast by her



own family since she is viewed as a 'kin' to another family (husband's family).

Table 3: Marriage and Conjugal Right:

There are certain privileges men enjoy which females are denied simply because of their gender. These privileges may or may not have any substantial benefit so to say but women are shut out of it just to show them that they do not belong. Data 1 in the table above is an instance. It is considered an abomination for a woman to climb a palm tree. And any girl or woman that attempts it is tagged and discriminated against simply because she climbed a palm tree. Moreover, there is no special benefit to men for climbing the palm tree except that it adds to their ego. Any man/boy who is incapable of climbing a palm tree is tagged 'female'.

In data 2, a female is seen as a sexual tool. Her only usefulness is in bed. A woman who is not capable of satisfying the husband sexually is worthless as there is no other use a man has of a woman. This means that the female is not regarded as a companion, soul mate or friend to the husband rather, she is a tool for his sexual satisfaction. Data 3 asserts that if it is literarily possible to divide a woman into two, a man will choose her waist. This epithet corroborates two above. The sexual organ of a woman is contained in her waist and since she is an object of sexual satisfaction, the man would not care less if she is divided into two as long as he is given the waist. Here, the female is conditioned to see herself as a tool for satisfying the husband's sexual urges. Her failure in that regard causes eternal psychological and emotional trauma.

In data 4 four, a female is seen as seasonal items. Hence, the epithet 'nwanyi cheyaa onye mụrụ ajude, onye n'alụ e? This means that a female who is not married at a certain age is in trouble with her family and the society at large as everybody would look at as an out-cast who is incapable of securing a husband for herself. Her family would also see her as a great disappointment for not given them the opportunity to collect bride-price. This also implies that a female has no right for celibacy whereas a man may decide not to marry. For instance, one girl in the late 1990s (a catholic) decided to become a reverend sister and all the villagers pounced on the mother for raising an evil child who had refused



to submit to a man's authority by refusing to get married. In fact, her maternal uncles and aunts had to capture her and keep her in custody for some days trying to convince her on the need to get married.

In Igbo land generally, proverbs constitute the wisdom of the people. The philosophy, worldview and cultural perception of the society is preserved and communicated through oral tradition in form of idioms and proverbs. No wonder Achebe (1958) asserts that 'proverbs is palm oil with which words are eaten.' This is also true of Ugwulangwu people. Proverbs are so relevant such that an epithet is coined to beret a person who does not understand proverbs. Thus, data 5 in table 3 above regards a person who is too ignorant as to understand a proverb as having wasted the money used in marrying his/her mother. Here, the mother is seen as an unprofitable business since she gave birth to children who could not understand proverbs. One begins to wonder whether it is the woman's fault that the children especially male children could not understand proverbs. The father is left out. He is not to be blamed.

Data 6 and 7 are titles for married women. 'Ori ekụ' contextually means one who enjoys husband's wealth. Cognitively, this puts the woman in a conner. She cannot acquire but she can enjoy. This is a way of denying the efforts of women in maintain the equilibrium at home. In spite of the fact that many women are the bread winners in their families, they are still regarded as 'ori ekụ.' No respect and no regard to their contributions in the family. Moreover, 'odozi ekụ' is a synonym that relegates and belittles women's efforts too. This is because those women who suffer through thick and thin, under sun and rain to feed and maintain their families including the husband are still seen as someone who organizes or manages the husband's wealth or resources. Cognitively, this implies that the women are only good at managing the home and any other thing out-side that is beyond them and or not acceptable to the man.

In data 8, women are equated to a buddle of fire wood. Here, are thought to be too numerous unlike the men who are limited in number. Thus, the men have more than enough variety to choose from. Again, because women are numerous, a man can have as many wives as he chooses while a woman must stick with one husband no matter how many wives he decides to take. Data 9 asserts that a good woman is



scarce. Women are seen as inherently evil; hence 'ezi nwanyi d'uko' it is difficult to get a good woman. In data 10, a woman is said to be incapable of solving any problem. They are seen as physical weak and financially worthless and thus cannot render any help to their partners. Again, the epithet in data 11 connotes stinginess. This means that women are like children who are stingy, selfish and unwilling to share with others what they have.

Data 12 and 13 depict female children as guests in their father's house. Neither the siblings nor the parents accept them as part of the family since they are just there until they get married and leave the family for the men of the house. In fact, a female child is regarded as belonging to another kindred other than her immediate or extended family in data 13. Hence, she is oftentimes treated as an out-cast by her own family since she is viewed as a 'kin' to another family (husband's family). Moreover, these epithets help in disinheriting females from their parents' properties since they are regarded as not belonging to the family in the first place.

Data 14 asserts that a woman whose wife gave birth to only female children is childless. A woman is another man's kin, she cannot inherit or maintain the father's name throughout her life time because she is bound to get married and take on the husband's name. Therefore, whoever gives birth to only females are seen as not having a child since there will be no one left to carry on the family name. however, despite the fact that female children are thus disadvantaged by their families, they are not also recognized or given any form inheritance in their husbands' families. Hence, data 15 states that a woman's position is in the kitchen. This implies that she has no right or say in anything concerning the family or her welfare. She is to be seen and not to be heard except for matters pertaining to the kitchen. Data 16 shows that barrenness is blamed only on the woman as a childless woman is said not to have seat in her husband's family. This means that she is just perching and would be discarded at will. She cannot also participate in family discussion. She is seen as the one responsible for her own inability to conceive without recourse to her husband's health conditions or virility.



Data 17 is a kind of rhetorical question, is a female a child? This cognitively means that a female child is worthless and not to be reckoned with.

Conclusion

There is gender discrimination within the family in Ugwulangwu community and epithets are the linguistic tools used to perpetrate the discrimination. These discriminatory gender bias epithets work to make women disappear in mental representation as they seen as useless since they cannot guarantee lineage perpetuation of their families. Hence, the females are regarded as visitors both in their parents' and husbands' families.

Recommendation

It is recommended that more studies be carried out on the epithets against the females within the family in Ugwulangwu using a different linguistic tool. Another study should be on a comparative study of the epithets used on both the female and male gender within the family. The study should be on both the negative and the positive epithets. This, when done would create a balance and reveal in clearer terms the margin of the discrimination.

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