

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF THE POTENTIALITY OF WOMEN IN SELECTED DIALOGUES FROM FLORA NWAPA'S *ONE IS ENOUGH*

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Abstract

A lot of actions are carried out when we use words in making sentences and utterances. It could be to give commands, instructions, and directions, make promise, or even to assume certain responsibilities in the society. Actions are overtly seen in spoken words and appear in silent expressions. The study however, examines illocutionary acts of potentiality of women in Flora Nwapa's *One Is Enough*. Previous studies of the novel focused on the literary perspective of the text. Hence, the linguistic approach of the present study becomes expedient. This study adopted Searle's speech act theory, focusing on illocutionary act in the analysis of dialogical sphere of the novel. The results of the finding portray women as emerging voices of freedom, authority, influence and independence, which are indicated by various illocutionary acts deployed through the voices of feminine gender in the novel. These illocutionary acts include the use of representative, directive, commissive and expressive. The findings further show that the representative speech act is mostly used by the female characters in the novel which shows their assertive commitment and their attitude to the societal demands on them and also indicates that the potentials in women cannot be caged rather can be exploited in the world created by Nwapa while no declarative speech act was seen. The study, therefore, concludes that the speech acts prevalent in the novel are as a result of thematic structure and roles of the characters to display the potentiality of women.

Keywords: Speech acts, illocutionary acts, the potentiality of women and One is Enough

Introduction

In everyday life as human, people always interact with one another in society and cannot live in isolation. There is the need for interaction, which implies that human beings cannot cohabit without meaningful intercommunication or healthy dialogue. Therefore, communication is very important in society at all times. It occurs in everyday aspect of life such as economy, culture, social and politics. It is commonly manifested in written, oral, and sign languages and specifically in literary texts. The adroitness infer to what is said is an essential feature of the creation and reception of coherent discourse, which would lead to a successful communication. Reaching such ability requires the knowledge of social and physical world and of the interlocutors as well as the finesse to interpret. Formulating this knowledge is what is called speech theory according to Sahar (2011, p. 1374). Speech act theory attempts to explain how interlocutors use language to accomplish intended actions and meaning. In other words, speech acts provides us with a means to interpret discourse above the surface meaning and to establish the function of what is said. Speech act refers to the use of language in context to perform an action. It involves the speaker and force of his speech and the effect it has on the hearer which determines what the speech has been able to achieve (Crystal, 1992, qtd in Benjamin, 2013 p. 54). From these speeches, one is able to identify inherent qualities or what interlocutors are cable of doing or developing into. These are their potentialities. Several works have been done by scholars in both spoken and written texts using speech act theory by Searle. Also a number of works have been done on Flora Nwapa's *One is Enough*, but none has investigated the potentiality of women using Searle 1969 illocutionary acts. It is against such background that this present study attempts to bring out the potentials inherent in the female characters of the novel, *One is Enough* using Searle's illocutionary acts. The study, therefore, intends:

1. To identify the illocutionary speech acts that shows women's potentiality in the selected dialogues.
2. To identify how these women put their potentials in use through their dialogues.

Review of Related Literature

There has been extensive research on *One is Enough* and also the use of speech acts in literary works. These studies vary in the use of theory, data, objectives and methods. Emmanuel (2018) investigated illocutionary acts in Ernest Samuel's Epistolary Novels "Dear Kelechi and its Sequel". The study used the four Grice's cooperative principles to analyze the data textually. Qualitative design was adopted for the study and selected dialogues from the novel formed the data. The finding shows that the writer used illocutionary effects in creating a new raised world to the receiver.

Tara, A. B., Syahanan, D., and Daulat, S. (2017) examined the use of illocutionary acts in the discourse of Indonesia's Comic Meme at social media and its advantage as reading materials for senior high school students. The design for the study is qualitative with descriptive and hermeneutical method. The data are from websites of Indonesia's Meme Comics. The results reveal that there are eight functions of expressive illocutionary acts and five utterance strategies in the meme discourse. The study concludes that meme discourse can increase the students' interest in reading and encourages students to think critically.

Mojgan Y. & Marges O. (2011) explored the sophisticated personalities of characters in the Anton Chekhov's "*The Seagull*" using speech act theory. The utterances in the dialogues from the novel formed the data for study and were analyzed using Searle's Illocutionary acts. The finding reveals the hidden intentions, motives of characters through the analysis of conversation. The study also concludes that there is relationship between speech acts and dramatic discourse.

Maina, O. (2018) examined *Breaking the Taboo of Marriage and Child Bearing through Nwapa's Commitment in "One is Enough"*. The study shows that both men and women have their own rights and need to live with modest admiration. It further posits that no nation can develop or make any positive progress without active participation of both men and women. Maina also claims that if the mothers are poor, ignorant and unmotivated, so will the nations.

Priya and Anyayarkan (2018) carried out a research on Igbo women's resilience and politics of survival in *One is Enough*. The work examined various efforts of different women characters, including Amaka to overcome the war threat and its aftermath. Priya also concludes that Nwapa recreates women as independent, assertive and resilient.

Sahar F. (2011, p.1374) also examined three short stories and analyzed it pragmatically. The finding reveals that the use of speech acts fluctuates both in quantity and type from one writer to another and from one theme to another.

Previous studies reveal that works have been done on this text but virtually all of them focused on the literary thematic approach. Other studies showed that Searle's illocutionary acts can be used to reveal hidden intentions and motives of characters through dialogue. The present study is different from the studies above because, it focuses on selected dialogues from One is Enough where women's potentiality are seen using Searle's illocutionary acts. These potentialities are to be numbered according to the speech acts.

Theoretical framework

Speech acts was pioneered by J. L. Austin as an outcome of his series of lectures and published posthumously in 1962 in a book titled, *How to Do Things with Words*. The theory was expanded by John Searle the student of Austin in 1969. Austin (1962, p. 69) maintains that individuals perform actions in their utterances, hence, the term “performative”. In other words, Searle (1969, p. 16) defines speech act as “the basic or minimal units of communication”. Mey (2001, p. 95) states that speech acts are verbal actions happening in the world, uttering a speech act, one does something with words and performs an activity that brings about a change in the existing states of affairs. Generally, actions performed through utterances are called ‘speech acts’.

Austin (1962, p. 113) divided speech acts into three basic categories; locution acts, illocution acts and perlocution acts. Searle (1969) on the other hand modified Austin’s triad of locution, illocution and perlocution and came up with four different acts interlocutors can perform in saying something (Malmkjaer, 2002, p. 490, qtd in Ezeifeka, 2018, p. 59). In locutionary act he came up with; utterance acts and proposition acts.

Classification of Searle’s Illocutionary Acts

Schiffrin (1994) quoted in Ezeifeka, (2018, p. 60) states that Searle sees illocutionary act as the core of speech act theory and the basic unit of linguistic behaviour. He claimed that to engage in illocutionary act is to engage in a rule-governed behaviour especially as different speech acts have appropriate conditions for them to be correctly performed. Illocution speech act is classified into the following basic categorizes: assertive/representatives, directives, commissives, expressive and declaratives (Mey, 1993, p. 131).

Assertive/Representative

These speech acts are assertion about a state of affairs in the world, they are also called assertive. Leech (1983, p. 128) states that they carry the values, true or false of the utterance. They should match the world in order to be true. Its function is to describe the processes, states or events in the world and for which the speaker is committed to the truth of what has just been said. For instance: “This is my book; I take responsibility for this action”. Representative Illocutionary act can be in the form of claim, description, conclusion, report, prediction or suggestion.

Directives

This speech act has an effort of persuading and urging the hearer to carry out a piece of instruction. It directs the hearer towards the goal of the speaker. The instruction may be in form of a verbal response or a physical action, such as requesting, commanding, advising, questioning,

pleading, demanding, and inviting as in: Don't fail to come, pick the book, please attend the meeting.

Commissives

This speech acts have the function of committing to some future action. Searle (1977, p. 35) calls it "unexceptionable". Commissives operate a change in the world by means of creating an obligation; however, this obligation is created in the speaker, not in the hearer as in the case of directives (Mey, 2001, p. 104). These involve challenging, promising, threatening, vowing offering, warning guaranteeing and betting.

Expressive

This speech act expresses the inner state of the speaker towards some state of affairs. The expression is essentially subjective and tells us nothing about the world as in: "excuse me when stepping on somebody's toes. It does not change anything, done is done, and both will have to live with the change in the world conditions that represents. This is called 'behavitives' by Austin. It makes use of performative verbs such as: apologizing, congratulating, thanking, appreciating, condoling, complaining, greeting, cursing and scolding (Ezeifeka, 2018 p. 75).

Declaratives

This speech of act changes the state of affairs in the world. It changes the reality in accordance with the proposition of the declaration. It is called verditives in Austin's classification. For instance, by giving of a verdict, estimate or appraisal, this speech act immediately changes the state of affairs in the world as soon as the utterance is uttered. It makes use of performative verbs such as; arresting, announcing, pronouncing etc.

Methodology

The data for this study was extracted and analyzed textually from Flora Nwapa's novel, *One is Enough*. Some sentences that contain dialogical situations were purposively selected and subjected to speech act analysis using Searle's taxonomy of speech act as theoretical framework. These utterances were grouped according to the potentials they represent. They were also put in tables so that their level of occurrences would be determined in order to know the ones that occurred more or less.

Data Analysis

This section analyzes some utterances from One is Enough using Searle's speech act theory in order to identify the types of speech acts in the novel and how the author used the theory in the utterances of the characters in the novel in bringing out the potentialities among the female characters.

Representatives**Speech act verb of “stating”**

Stating is a representative speech act verb that emphasizes the truth of the affairs as the speaker is committed to the fact of the proposition.

1. Go on and tell me, why you are yawning this early mornings? Did you sleep badly? ***I slept badly mother.*** (p.3)
2. ***So did I. I have been sleeping badly for the past six years*** (p.3).
3. ***Mother you have known my plight. It's not my fault.*** An...(p.3)
4. ***It's fate. Fate is playing trick on me. Fate is unkind to me***
5. ***No I have not seen them.***
6. You have to register your company in Lagos. ***Oh yes. I have already registered my company.***(p.39)
7. Are you with your papers? **Yes.**
8. That's very good. ***You are already in business***
9. I knew what I am saying. ***You didn't use me, rather I used you. I have no regret***
10. ***I have no regrets, the baby must be born***
11. ***I am not a teenager who has got into trouble.*** You don't have to do anything to make me respectable or anything like. (p.104)
12. The hold you have on my son will end today...***I have waited for six good years. I cannot wait again*** (13)

The above utterances are statements committing Amaka and Obiora's mother the female characters to the truth of the actions and demonstration of potentialities. In utterance (1) Amaka responded to Obiora's mother (her mother-in-law) on the series of questions she presented to her asking if she slept badly. In utterances (3) and (4) she says the truth about her situation stating that fate is unkind to her; while in utterance (5) she made it clearly to her husband, Obiora that she did not see his sons. Amaka in utterances (6) and (7) demonstrated the potentiality of independence through her response to Mike when he advised her to register her business. Amaka responded thus: "*Oh yes. I have already registered my business*" (p 39). Likewise, in utterance (11) she declared "*I am not a teenager who has got into trouble*" (p. 104). This in essence means that she is mature to take responsibility of her actions. There is also potentiality of influence in utterances (9) and (10) where Izu, for the influence Amaka the female character has on him declared; "*You did not use me, rather I used you. I have no regrets; the baby must be born*" (p. 104). Obira's mother in utterance (12) demonstrated potentiality of authority when she says to Amaka (her daughter-in-law), *The hold you have on my son will end today...I have waited for six*

good years. I cannot wait again" (p. 13). Therefore, utterances 6 and 7 show potentiality of independence, 9 and 10 show potentiality of influence and 12 shows potentiality of authority through the female characters of Amaka and Obiora's mother (Amaka's mother-in-law).

Speech act verb of “asserting”

This speech act verb means to state with confidence, assurance, or to state strongly the truth of a proposition. The speaker uses it to state something strongly true to the hearer. The data for speech act verb of **asserting** are:

13. Well, since you cannot answer me, I will tell you. *This is the sixth time I have visited you.* Did you hear me? *Yes, mother, I heard you* (p. 13)
14. I have no regrets. *The baby must be born. I am responsible* (p. 104).
15. Izu, "*I am thirty-two years old and divorced*" (p. 104).

The above utterances in the italics show Amaka asserting some propositions. For instance, in utterance (13) Amaka asserts the truth that she heard her mother-in-law clearly and in utterance (15) she states that she is thirty-two years old and divorced. That is demonstration of maturity which has potentiality of authority.

Izu on the other hand, in utterance (15) declares, "*I have no regrets. The baby must be born. I am responsible*" (p. 104). Izu being influenced by love he has for Amaka made such declaration.

Speech act verb of “denying”

The next representative speech act is **denying**. This means the speaker refusing to take responsibility of a proposition.

16. *I didn't say it was your son's fault* (p. 3)
17. Sis, please, **not yet** (p. 79).

The italic words in the utterance (16) and (17) show that Amaka is declining some propositions. She denied the fact that what her mother-in-law is saying is what she meant and also denied what Ayo, her sister said about her registering with their “cash madam club”.

Speech act verb of “reporting”

The verb reporting is the representative speech act verb that commits the speaker to the truth of expressed proposition. It is to give an account of something heard, seen or done to the hearer. Examples are:

18. My mother brought them in the morning. You were in your site (p. 25).
19. And what really bothers me is that he (Izu) wants me and the twins (127).
20. When I rid myself of Obiora, things started working for me (p. 127).

Utterance (18) contains Obioras report to Amaka, telling her that his mother brought his sons while Amaka was in her site. While in utterances (19) and (20) the speaker reports to her sister Ayo that Izu wants to marry her but she does not want husband anymore. She reports that since she broke up with Obiora things started working for her. That means that Amaka the female character prefers independence to being a wife. She shows the potentiality of independence.

Speech act verb of “complaining”

Complaining is the speaker’s display of disagreement on action taking by another person. It may either be a display of grievances melted on the speaker. This is a representative speech act verb.

21. “Ayo, *I don’t want to be a wife anymore, a mistress, yes, with a lover, yes of course, but not a wife.*”
22. “*As a wife, I am never free. I am a shadow of myself.*
23. *As a wife I am almost impotent. I am in prison, unable to advance in body and in soul. Something gets hold of me and destroys me*” (p. 127)

Here Amaka recounts her experiences about her former marriage that made her to view marriage as prison and bondage. The italics utterances are negative utterances that portray the speaker’s complaints and dislike about marriage. She desires to be independent. Potentiality of independence contains in utterances 21, 22 and 23 which reads thus:

“*Ayo, I don’t want to be a wife anymore, a mistress, yes, with a lover, yes of course, but not a wife. As a wife, I am never free. I am a shadow of myself. As a wife I am almost impotent. I am in prison, unable to advance in body and in soul. Something gets hold of me and destroys me*” (p. 127).

Speech act verb of “concluding”

Concluding is coming to believe something as a result of what we have seen or heard. The purpose is to bring something to an end based on world fit, so concluding is the representative speech act verb.

24. *No. I am through with husbands.*
25. *I said farewell with husbands the first day I came to Lagos* (she cries).
26. *Ayo, I don’t want to be a wife anymore,*
27. *a mistress, yes with a lover, yes of course, but not a wife.*

28. ***I don't want to go back my wifely days I don't want him. I don't want to be his wife***
 (p.127)

The utterances above contain Amaka's conclusion about marriage, the italic utterances are the examples of concluding propositions. The speaker tells her sister Ayo her conclusion about marriage. She decides to end up anything about marriage to be free, independent and fulfill her dreams. The above utterances contain in them the potentiality of independence.

Directive

Speech act verb of “asking”

This speech act verb of asking is telling somebody that the speaker wants the hearer to do something. The verb asking is one of the directive speech act verbs. The data is as follows:

1. Go on and tell me, ***why are you yawning this early morning? Didn't you have a good sleep?*** Yes mother, I had bad sleep. ***Don't you see how thin I am? Was I as thin as this when you married my son six years ago?*** (p.3)
2. **Have you seen them? Seen whom?** My sons, he said. No I have not seen them.
3. **Where are they?** My mother brought them here this morning. You were in your site ***Where are they now?*** (p.25)
4. I am not a teenager who has got into trouble. You don't have to do anything to make me respectable or anything like that. ***Do you know what it is for me to be pregnant?*** (p.104)

The utterances above have the purpose for the hearer to do something. In utterance (1), there is demonstration of authority by Obiora's mother who posed series of questions to Amaka thus: "***why are you yawning this early morning? Didn't you have a good sleep? Didn't see how thin I am? Was I as thin as this when you married my son?***" In utterances (2) the Amaka inquires about the children of Obiora, while in utterances (3) and (4) shows how Amaka asked Izu if he knows what it means for her to be pregnant.

Speech act verb of “suggesting”

Suggesting is to offer options to the hearer for consideration. The purpose is to put idea in the mind of the hearer to make choice out of many options. The data is:

5. Where are they now? ***My mother must have taken them away again.***
6. Adaobi told me that you are now in Lagos and wanted to do some contract jobs. Oh yes Amaka replied. ***You will have to register your company in Lagos***

In the italic utterances above, Obiora suggests to Amaka that his mother must have taken his children away. Mike also suggests that Amaka should register her company before starting up contract jobs.

Speech act verb of “ordering”

One of the directive speech act verbs is ordering. Ordering is giving instruction to the hearer at the speaker’s will to perform some actions, which is also a demonstration of authority by the speaker to the hearer.

7. So don’t complain for sleeping badly just for one night. *Now go on and say why you are here.* (p.3)
8. The fee is only five hundred naira.... **So pay up** (*Amaka opens her bag and gave her cheque of five hundred naira*). **Cross it** (*Ayo orders her*)

In utterance (7) above, Obiora’s mother orders Amaka to say why she came to see her. Ayo in utterance (8) orders Amaka to pay up the dues for cash madam club. When Amaka gave a cheque, she orders her to cross it. These two utterances express potentiality of authority.

Speech act verb of “commanding”

Commanding has close relation to ordering. In this speech act verb, the speaker forces his will on the hearer to do something. Commanding is one of the directive speech act verbs and also a demonstration of authority over someone.

9. So don’t complain of sleeping badly for just one night (p. 3).
10. Allow me to finish....
11. So just allow me.

The utterances above are the will of the speaker in which he wants to force on the hearer. In utterance (9), Obiora’s mother does not want Amaka to complain about sleeping badly. Also in utterances (10) and (11) show that Ayo too does not need Amaka to object over belonging to the “cash madam club”. Therefore, potentiality of authority is categorically demonstrated by the female characters, Ayo and Obiora’s mother.

Speech act verb of “questioning”

The next directive speech act verb is questioning; it is asking somebody about something to get information.

12. “***Did you hear me?***” her mother in law continued. Yes, mother I heard you. You said you had visited us six times since we were married six years ago. I can hear you very well mother. (p. 13)

I have waited for six years. I cannot wait for even one day.

(p.13)

13. I am happy for you. I am happy for you. “***Are you happy?***” he asked suspiciously. “Of course I am. (p.25)

14. “***Are you are not just pretending to be happy?***” I am happy and sad as well. I am happy because you have proof of your manhood. Sad because I cannot have a baby, and your proof is also the proof of my barenness. (p.25)

The above utterances in italic are questions the presented to Amaka by Obiora and his mother expecting Amaka to respond by saying something in order to get information.

Speech verb of “interrogating”

The verb interrogating is one of the directive speech act verbs. The speaker in this act of interrogating wants to find out something from the hearer either by force or influence through discussion.

15. ***And so my son should continue to suffer, should continue to suffer because of your ill-luck, because of your stubbornness, because of your stupidity, because of your...?*** (p.3)

16. I am not saying so. I am merely saying.... ***merely saying what?*** (She asks with a kind of contempt). All I am saying is that you should give me time. (p.3)

Obiora’s mother in the above utterances interrogates Amaka through interruption mood. As Amaka was trying to explain the situation of her barenness, the mother-in-law, continuously interrupts her through asking some questions which Amaka could not answer. She exerts her authority over Amaka through interrogation which is potentiality of authority.

Speech act verb of “urging”

Urging is one of the direct speech act verb. This speech act verb persuades the hearer to take an action. The data is:

17. What was I telling you? “Modesty will kill you. ***You have arrived and you are eligible to join our club.***”

In the utterance above, Ayo was persuading Amaka, trying to influence her to belong to their “cash madam club” because she is now rich and eligible.

Speech act verb of “requesting”

Requesting is one of the directive speech act verbs. The speaker in this speech act requests for a favour on his hearer.

18. Darling Amaka, I knew what I was doing. You did not use me, I rather used you. I have no regrets. The baby must be born. I am responsible. *All I ask is that you keep this secret until I sort things out.* (p.104)

Izu in the italic utterance above, Izu requests that Amaka should keep the affairs between them secret until he is ready for the marriage.

Speech act of “advising”

Advising has similarities with suggesting where by the speaker offers options to his hearer on things to do or avoid. Sometimes it may be a piece of encouragement to the hearer.

19. And what bothers me is that he (Izu) wants me and the twins. I don't want him' I don't want to be his wife. I think he is realising it, and wants to have the twins for a start.....
Don't behave that way. Why, Izu has not even told you he wants to marry you. (p.127)

Ayo in the above utterance advises Amaka not to worry about marrying Izu as he has not declared his intention in marrying her.

Commissive

Commissive speech act is an act that commits the speaker to do something in the future. The speech act of commissive include: promising, offering, vowing etc.

Speech act verb of “promising”

The verb promising is one of the commissive speech act verbs which commits the speaker do some future action. The data is:

1. Nothing has changed. *I shall continue to take care of you.* There is a time one is left with a choice (p. 104).

Izu commits himself to future action. Izu has committed himself in taking care of Amaka and her twins.

Expressive

This speech act expresses the psychological state of the speaker about the proposition he is projecting, such as: apologizing, congratulating, greeting, regretting, praising, appreciating etc.

Speech act verb of “apologizing”

To apologize is to feel sorry about action(s) as result of mistakes. It is one of the expressive speech act verbs that states the psychological state of the speaker.

1. It is my son's fault then, the mother said. "***I didn't say it is your son's fault.***"
2. And so my son should suffer.....because of your ill-luck. ***I am not saying so. I merely...*** (p.3)

Amaka in the above utterances apologize to mother-in-law that what she thought is not what she means.

Speech act verb of “regretting”

The verb regret is to feel sad about something you did or event that is beyond your control. This commits the speaker to rethink or apportion blame on himself or situation. Examples are:

3. I didn't say it is your son either. ***It is fate. Fate is playing tricks on me. Fate is unkind to me.*** (p.3)
4. I am happy because you have proof of you manhood..... ***sad because I cannot have a baby, and your proof is also the proof of my barenness.*** (25)

In the utterances above, Amaka expresses her feelings through regretting her childlessness. She apportions blame to her fate and feels sad about the circumstance.

Speech act verb of “praising”

Praise is one of the expressive speech act verb that expresses the approval of the speaker about something or somebody. Such as:

5. I have already registered my company, she said. ***That's good.*** Have you your registration papers with you? Yes. ***That's very good.*** (p.39)
6. ***Great!*** The women shouted and ***welcomed her*** to the club.(79)

The utterances above, shows Mike's approval of the action of Amaka. Amaka has registered her company and has all her papers. Mike praises her for this action. Again, the club members praised and welcomed Amaka to their club because of the demonstration of her wealth.

Speech verb of “fear”

The verb fear is expressive speech act. It is being afraid of something or somebody or feeling that something bad might happen in the future or will happen.

7. There is something in word that **does not suit me**. As a wife, *I am never free*. As a wife, I am a shadow of myself. As a wife I am almost important. I am in prison, **unable to advance** in body and in soul. Something *gets hold of me* and *destroys me.*(p.127)

The italic utterances above express Amaka's fear about marriage because of her past experience. She sees marriage as a bondage and prison.

Findings

In this study, four out of five of Searle's illocutionary speech acts are found. Representative and directive speech acts contain in them potentiality of authority, independence and influence of female characters in the novel. There is no instance of declarative speech acts. Directive speech acts are seen in the analysis where one expects another to show some level of commitment to a particular request, order or potentialities of independence, influence or authority. This is shown in the use of questions to elicit questions, commanding and ordering. There is also the use of rhetorical questions aimed at showing how concern a speaker is concerning a particular situation especially childlessness. The result also shows that every woman has potentials which can be expressed in diverse ways. Expressive speech acts are used to state and express the innate qualities in women especially the protagonist, Amaka. It was also discovered that there were no serious commitment to future actions by the speakers as shown by the frequency of commissives (1.8%).

Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Representative	28	50.91%
Directive	18	32.7%
Commissive	1	1.8%
Expressive	8	14.5%
Total	55	100%

Conclusion

Searle attempts to explain a wide range of possible speakers' intentions and desired actions of their utterances for a given situation. This was why this study adopts his speech act model. The results of the finding of this work reveal that representative speech act is prevalent in the utterance of the female characters in the novel which implies that the female characters in the

novel mostly used assertive utterances to prove that the potentials in women cannot be caged rather can be exploited in the world created by Nwapa. Representative speech act has the frequency of 28 utterances accounting for 59. 91% out of the total (55) utterances analyzed. This shows the greater demonstration of potentials of authority, independence and influence by the female characters in the novel. The next in rank is directive speech act which has frequency of 18 utterances making up 32% of the utterances in the selected dialogues.

This speech acts contains demonstration of potentialities by the female characters in the novel. Expressives have 14.5% while commissives constitute the least with 1.8%. The study therefore concludes that Searle's speech act taxonomy could be found in utterances in novel. These speech acts manifest greatly because of the thematic concern of the novel which has the tone of struggle to bring out women's potentialities. Again, that every woman has potentials which if properly harnessed can improve a nation.

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