

Interrogative Questions as Device for the Representation of Power in Selected Texts of Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo

by

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Abstract

This paper investigates how interrogative clauses are used to perform various functions within the society and how they are used to exhibit power within different human structures. A critical survey of interrogative clauses presents them as instruments that project power among different groups within human processes. Critical Discourse Analysis complemented with Speech Acts constitutes the theoretical framework for the study. The data for this study were culled out from selected texts of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo namely: *The Last of the Strong Ones*, *Fractures and Fragments*, *Echoes in the Mind* and *Children of the Eagle*. A total number of thirty- eight interrogative clauses were selected from these texts to show the different uses to which interrogative clauses are put as well as to observe how clauses are used to demonstrate the interplay of power. These were subjected to content analysis with a view to bringing out the inherent power relations within the interrogative clauses. The data revealed that interrogative clauses go beyond the scope of seeking for information. Different interrogative clauses as shown in the data were used to show the interplay of power and various illocutionary forces among different classes of people. These range from surprise, amazement, indignation, anger, emotion, wishes, threat, sarcasm, social ills, and many others. It also revealed that dominant personalities that wielded power intentionally exercised such over the seemingly powerless class among various people in the society. The significance of this is seen in the fact that language is used to perform various functions within the social system. The knowledge of this would help language users to see beyond the linguistic items and concentrate on areas where there are power relations and possibly abuse of power within the clause system in order to correct the abuse embedded within human processes so as to enhance equality and fairness for a better society.

Introduction

Language is a multifaceted phenomenon in terms of usage. This is so because human language changes and reacts to different situations and circumstances. As circumstances change, language also changes. This supports Edward Sapir's view cited by Kilgour (1999) that "language is not only a vehicle for the expression of thoughts, perceptions, sentiments, and values characteristic of a community; it also represents a fundamental expression of social identity." Sapir said "the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiar potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language." In essence language represents the means by which humans project their thought to express various occasions they find themselves. Through language, human beings construct and enact different processes within the society. Language provides the means of uniting or dividing people, expressing feelings, ideas and so on. In addition, it can be used to indicate status, position and power. In essence, language is a potent weapon of building different ideological structures within any known society.

Power

Power is seen as an ability possessed by particular person(s) which is used to control, direct, actions and behaviour of other people or entities. It is also a means by which an entity projects and tries to cause changes which may happen "through different forms of constraints on human actions" Wikipedia (2009). Writing on the innateness of power to the being of humans, Bertrand Russell notes that "of the infinite interests of (wo) man, the chief are the desires for power and glory" (1938:11). Max Weber (1954) considers power in terms of some advantages to be enjoyed by the wielder of it; hence, he considers it as ability (1954:23). This ability, according to Weber, propels individuals to actualize their personal will in a group act that is social as well as communal. This shows that there is acquiescence and conformity on the part of the powerless, or the dominated. For without the consent of the characters that are powerless, the powerful ones may not enjoy domination. The French theorist Michel Foucault (1980) also pays much attention on the socially dominated in *Knowledge and Power* where he reveals the structures of power and social control. To Foucault, in every society, power manifests as a "network" and as a 'dense web in the apparatuses and institutions'. The feminist, Marilyn French (1985), declares that power cannot be everlastingly guaranteed and it is the refusal to allow power circulates that leads sometimes to its abuse. French asserts that:

Power is a process, a dynamic interaction. To have power really means to have entry to a network of relationships in which one can influence, persuade, threaten or cajole others to do what one wants or needs them to do...One does not possess power. It granted to the dominators by hosts of other people, and that grant is not unretractable ... (French, 1985: 509).

In addition to the above understanding of power as a network of relationships, we can distinguish between primary power which is a form of coercion that involves the direct and personal use of force, and secondary power which involves a situation whereby the third party exercises delegated power to invoke threats of force or social constraints on others.

There are different ways by which power may be held. This may be through delegated authority, social class that involves material wealth, ascribed power, expertise which involves the possession of particular ability or skills, knowledge, money, force which can be in form of violence, military might, coercion, social influence of traditions, domination/submission in relationships and others (Wikipedia, 2009).

Interrogative Clauses

These are clauses that ask questions in different forms. The ultimate goal of an interrogative clause is to seek for information from the hearer, to clarify some doubts or to get a confirmation or a denial of a particular fact where there is any. This can take various forms through the application of the different types of question form we have as are outlined below:

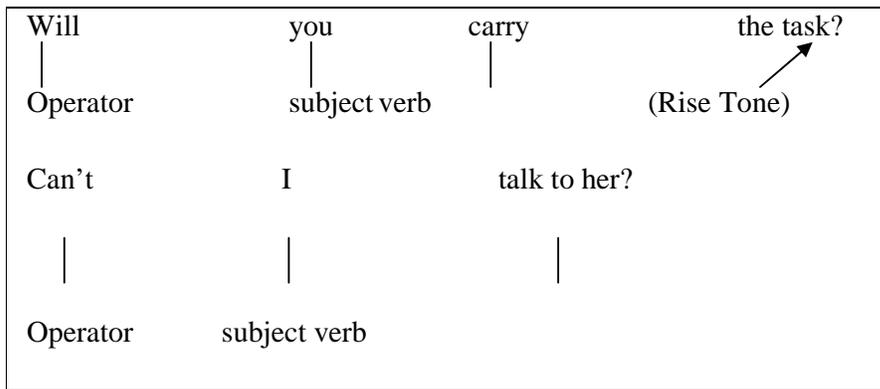
1. Yes/no question
2. Why question
3. Tag question
4. Exclamatory
5. Rhetorical question

Yes/no question: - This is type that only demands an acceptance, confirmation or a denial of the proposed fact from the hearer. Thus, a simple yes or no is required from the addressee. Such do not need any details whatsoever. Examples of these are given below:

- i. Is he your brother?
- ii. Have you any pen?
- iii. Was she at the meeting?

In constructing this type of interrogative clause, the operator comes before the subject while the whole clause has a rising terminal pitch.

Inter-relation of operator and subject verb in yes/no question.



When an auxiliary is absent in the verb phrase, and then the verb 'do' can be introduced before it can function as a question. It can also be used as an operator. Examples of these are shown below:

- (i) John has come → Has John come?
- (ii) She dresses well → Does she dress well?
- (iii) They were coming → were they coming?

WH-question: - These are clauses that ask questions using any of the interrogative words like who, whom, whose, what, when, where, how and why.

These interrogative words are also referred to as wh-elements. To have them in question forms; the interrogative words usually come first in the clause. Also, the clause structure that contains the interrogative word is always the lead clause or phrase in the sentence structure, examples are provided below:

1. Which one of these are you picking?
2. Why are you not coming with me?

Wh-questions, unlike the yes/no type require detailed information on the question posed by the speaker. The answer expected here will require specific and more detail information about a particular thing, person, place, time, and many others. Also, the tone for the wh-question usually falls. In clauses one and two above, the answers can be as we have below:

- i. I am picking the green bag
- ii. Because I have an assignment

Tag questions: - The basic of the questions is the use of operator and pronoun, which may or may not consist of a negative particle. Tag questions make declarations, which may be true or otherwise. The speaker's view is sought for, to confirm or de-affirm the statement made. The speaker makes some assumptions which may be true to him but he wants the hearer to further clarify. He, therefore, seeks for the hearer's opinion, as we have in the following examples:

She dances well, doesn't she?
He doesn't wear his uniform, does he?
The guests have eaten rice, haven't they?

When a falling tone is used for the tag question, it indicates that such statement only needs a confirmation from the hearer since the speaker is sure of the fact of the statement. When the tag question has a rising tone, it shows that speaker is not quite convinced of the statement, and he needs the comment of the hearer on the state of the fact.

Exclamatory question: - This particular type of interrogative clause has the form of an exclamatory clause. The speaker in this regard, holds a very strong and positive attachment to a particular thing and calls the attention of the hearer to his conviction so that the hearer can confirm or agree with him.

The normal order of operator + subject is achieved but question mark is absent, instead an exclamatory mark is used, as shown in the examples below:

Haven't you heard!
Wasn't it a wonderful experience!
How on earth!

Rhetorical question: - This is a form of interrogative clause that exhibits the characteristics of a strong and powerful statement. The statement can be negative or positive. The intonational pattern is usually a rising one. Examples are presented below:

Can she claim innocence to that?
Is my husband going to blame me?

Critical Discourse Analysis

The basic aim of CDA is to expose various options available to the reader. It does this by asking questions, focusing on problems and by conducting a critical analysis on some of the questions and problems on ground. At the end of such critical analysis, general inferences could then be drawn. CDA looks at language in relation to the practices in the society. Thus, it spreads its tentacles to areas such as politics, gender, institutions, media, and so on as these relate to power and ideology within the social strata in which they operate. In other words, there is no study on CDA that will not feature three major concepts, namely: the concept of power, the concept of history and the concept of ideology.

CDA is seen as a potent weapon in fighting the social disorders in the society. It offers pragmatic results to social issues and problems. CDA does not look at a problem at its face value but it uses its searchlight on some likely unpronounced factors that might have elicited or contributed to the problem. Thus, factors such as culture, society, power and ideology are considered. CDA, in essence, is of the view that there is no way by which we can ostracize discourse actions or activities from the society that produces them. Various things within the society, like the policies, events, settings and orders directly or indirectly affect the discourses that take place within those structures. CDA is based on making choices and making specific selection, which is based on the type of social disorder one is examining.

CDA is not holistically and inherently a research-oriented method of enquiring a particular discipline but it has an interdisciplinary approach to the problems within the social milieu. Thus, it does not give a 'ready-made' how-to-do it approach to social analysis, but it emphasizes that, for each study, a thorough theoretical analysis of a social issue must be made in order to select which discourse and which social structures will be analyzed and worked upon. As a matter of fact, CDA questions motifs, challenges information, processes, ideas and so on. Such are not taken at their face value; omission of information is not allowed. While facts are distinguished from opinions, different reasons for different reactions are adduced and assessed.

CDA seeks to reveal how language is used and abused in the exercise of power and the suppression of human rights (Wardhaugh 2001:14). In the words of Locke (2004:2), "CDA must be seen as a political intervention with its own socially transformative agenda". In this regard, it is pertinent to know that CDA does not examine utterances in isolation but they are examined based on the context, social and cultural. Since it is a critical analysis, it involves a critical and careful survey of the material, which in any case must be done in a systematic way in order to have an achievable goal.

The whole essence of CDA can be summarized using the words of Wardhaugh (2001:14):

This work, (CDA) (emphasis mine) focuses on how language is used to exercise and preserve power and privilege in society, how it buttresses social institutions, and how even those who suffer as a consequence fail to realize how many things that appear to be 'natural' and 'normal' are not at all so. They are not so because it is power relations in society that determine who gets to say what and who gets to write what.

In the same vein, Wodak (1995:204) notes that the purpose of CDA is to analyze 'opaque as well as transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control manifested in language. She adds that:

CDA studies real and often extended instances of social interaction, which takes (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its views of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship and the practices analyzed (Wodak, 1996:173).

Speech Acts

The theory of speech acts is a reaction against the philosophy of language which specifies that any sentence which cannot be verified by empirical analysis is not meaningful. Austin's view is posthumously published in his seminal publication, titled 'How to do things with words'. In this selected work, he posits that expressions by any speaker do more than specifying truthfulness of the falsity of expression. Meaning is achieved based on many factors both linguistic and extra linguistics. There are some expressions that have more meanings than merely showing whether they are true or false. Austin opines that different utterances are used to perform different functions in communication. This simply means that an act of saying something shows an act of doing something. Austin sees utterances that users make as capable of showing relationships between different users and capable of performing different communicative functions. To him, utterances do not only communicate information, they can stand as verbal actions since actions have actually taken place (Austin, 1962).

Austin distinguishes between the speech acts verbs that involve activity and the speech acts that only state since they describe events. He refers to the first as the performatives, while the second category is called the constative. He however categorizes illocutionary acts into five classes which are: verdictives (acts that give a verdict or a finding) exercitives (acts that give exercise or show power and influence), commissives (acts that give promise or show intention) behabitives (acts that express attitude), and expositives.

Searle (1969) draws his line of argument as an improvement on Austin in the way he categorizes the illocutionary since he is of the view that there are overlapping in this categorization and at the same time, there are some pragmatic acts that Austin categorization does not takes care of. With a little modification on Austin's categorization, Searle categorizes illocutionary acts into five. These are representatives (acts that show different situations through claim, affirm, assertion, etc); commissive (acts that shows the hearer commitment to do certain things); expressives (acts that show the speakers attitude or the speaker's psychological feelings to a particular thing); directives (acts that make the hearer to do something); declaratives (acts that change a particular status, situation or condition).

According to Huddleston (1976:130), "the illocutionary force of an utterance depends on a variety of contextual factors, such as the beliefs, assumption, intentions of speakers and their relative social statuses, which will not always be expressed in the grammatical structure of the sentence uttered. In other words, a sentence or an utterance for example which has imperative structure can be used in an appropriate social context to give a command or an instruction, express a wish and perform myriad of other functions. Mey (2001:95) captures the meaning of speech acts better when he states that:

Speech acts are verbal actions happening in the world. Uttering a speech act, I do something with my words. I perform an activity that at best intentionally brings about a change in the existing affairs.

Authorship's Background

It is germane to introduce the writer of the selected text Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo (AAE) to the reader before practical analyses of the selected texts are undertaken. This is because there is no way by which a writer can be dissociated from her world and environment. This is true of Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo because a cursory look at her numerous works reveal her underlying ideological motifs and concerns. This dimension is deemed crucial to the full understanding of the writer's preoccupations. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo is a veteran and prolific writer. Her writings cover areas such as adventure, folktales, history, health, religion, and others. She also writes for all categories of people, both young and old and also writes on every conceivable topic, though she still has some definite passions which run through some of her writings. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo has presented herself especially as it concerns her life, background and career world on the pages of the selected texts especially in *Children of The Eagle* (COTE). This makes it extremely difficult for the reader to draw a line of demarcation between her world and the fictional world. AAE is a lecturer who has reached the highest cadre of her career though without much struggle. This is sarcastically presented in different narrations in the selected texts in the discussion on books, publications and promotions. Against this backdrop too, one tends to understand different references to tyrannical lecturers, racial discrimination against foreign student and a host of other processes that depict the interplay of power.

Having considered the theoretical issues underpinning this work in the preceding sections, the concern of the subsequent sections will be on the activities of CDA and Speech analysis at investigating how power is embedded and constructed in the society using the means of interrogative clauses. This will show to a large extent, how interrogative clauses serve as tools for the projection and enacting of different forms of power within the society as discussed below:

Interrogative Questions as a Device for the Representation of Power in Selected Texts of Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo

While the speakers in the declarative clauses assume the roles of providing information and performing some other illocutionary acts, different question types as evident in the texts are used not only to elicit responses but also to show different types of communicative processes among discourse participants. The act of questioning is a strong indication of class and power in the society. This can be seen in the various ways by which the powerful exercise power over the powerless. The table below illustrates how interrogative clauses are used to perform various illocutionary acts among different groups of people to indicate power.

S/N	Utterances	Illocutionary acts	Relationships
1	<p>“Engine number? Chasis number? Show them to me? He barked. Fire extinguisher? Where are your caution signs? Arthur assisted by the driver, patiently pointed all these to him.</p> <p>You smuggled in this car through the border, didn't you? He accused”. (FOF₁₀₄)</p>	<p>interrogation</p> <p>accusation</p>	<p>Policeman versus motorist</p>
2 3	<p>“See, your brake light is not showing on this side. Can you see it? ...It was working when I checked it yesterday.</p> <p>Arthur expresses surprise “What could have happened?” “You are asking me? You see what I mean?”The policeman is triumphant”. (FOF₁₀₅)</p> <p>“Show me your highway code. My what...?” (FOF₁₀₆)</p>	<p>confirmation</p> <p>surprise</p> <p>amazement</p>	
4	<p>“What do I do now? Is he as bad as that? Is he the only one? Why didn't they go for the girls who have appetite for this kind of game? So tell me what do I do?” (FOF₂₆)</p> <p>What do I do now?</p>	<p>confusion</p> <p>surprise</p>	<p>lecturer versus student</p>

5	<p>“This small yam for twenty naira?” She had cried, with a sneer. Madam, this yam na him you dey call small?” He had replied, smiling. Please tell me how much you want for the yam. I want ten of them. I don’t have time to argue”. He was surprised that she should be so irritable.</p> <p>“Haba, Madam,” “he has said .making a joke out of the matter. Abi na quarrel? “Who’s quarrelling with you? Just because I want to buy yam from you?”... “Why you big people no want spend money? You want make I dash you dey yam? Who are you talking to? You stupid, miserable man? I don’t have time ...you ... (EITM₁₂₉)</p>	Power	seller versus buyer
6	How many of you will stand up for the Lord? (FOF ₉₈)	subtle request	pastor versus members
7	<p>Can we be of help to you? Asked one of them who looked the oldest among them...</p> <p>“You are sure you don’t need help?</p> <p>Are you sure those bolts are tight enough?” (FOF₇₈)</p>	<p>offer</p> <p>clarification</p> <p>questioning</p>	thieves versus citizen

Although the speaker (a policeman) in utterance 1 engages in his normal activity, his duty is to interrogate and conduct checks of the vehicles documents and other things. He takes an undue advantage of his normal official activity to exercise power over the motorist. Usually, relationship within the cultural setting of the discourse is given a great value. But the policeman does not respect this because he does not show relationship exchange which could be in form of compliments or greetings.

The motorist here is at the mercy of the policemen, because of the undue influence and power he exercises and exhibits. The policeman in utterance 1 dominates the discourse piece. He directs five enquiries at the motorist at a time and gives the motorist no chance to respond to any of the questions one at a time. Thus, the policeman takes a dominating grip of the discourse and leaves the motorist in a confused state as to which of the questions to respond to first. This serves as a good way of throwing any unwary motorist off his balance. Even in performing his routing through various questions, the policeman is said to be barking. It is also found out that, instead of asking questions in the fifth question like clause directed at the motorist, the policeman accuses the motorist of having smuggled in his car.

In conducting all these activities, the policeman performs different illocutionary acts which strongly tend towards a deliberate exercise of power. The last interrogation in utterance 1 shows the continuation of the dominant grip the policeman holds and exercises on the motorist. The police officer in this car points the attention of the motorist to the brake light of the car which has stopped working. The motorist claims that the brake light is still working the last time he checked it to which he utters the question we have above in order to show his surprise. Unfortunately, the policeman takes him up on this and expresses his satisfaction on the fact that he is able to pick an offence against the man since he seems to have scaled through the first set of checks conducted on his car and particulars.

The motorist's encounter with another police officer is presented in utterance. The police officer asks Arthur, the motorist to present his highway code. This sounds so strange to the man that he asks: "My what?" to show his amazement. His response infuriates the officer to the extent that the policeman takes offence and even resorts to abusive language. This shows the level of aggression and the type of power that is exercised by some policemen at checkpoints.

Through the exchanges we have above, the writer wittingly shows the nature of the police force that is prevalent in the cultural setting of the text. Among these are: inability to show politeness, using different devices to extort money from the motorists, insensitivity to the plights of the motorists, and the use of abusive language.

The same grip of power is revealed in utterance 4. The lecturer in this case is determined to sleep with Adesua, who is one of his students. The lecturer represents the power holder. He has threatened the girl that if she refuses him, he will make sure that she fails the courses he teaches continuously. The above conversation shows the desperation of the girl, as she uses questions to show her confused state of mind and her unwillingness to concede to the wish of the tyrannical lecturer.

Also, utterance 5 shows a case of the dominant (a rich woman) who uses wh- questions to show her status as the powerful when she engages in discourse with a yam seller. As the yam seller is trying to appeal to the sense of humour of the prospective buyer, the woman distances herself from the man, and appears too serious minded for such jokes and humour. Status is brought to the fore here. The woman considers the social gap between her and the yam seller and takes offence at his sense of humour because she feels that the yam seller has out-stepped his boundary by attempting to engage in a conversation with her as it is presented in utterance 5 above. Status is also signified through the medium of exchange. While the woman uses Standard English to speak, the yam seller speaks in Pidgin English to show that he belongs to the lower status in the society.

Utterance 6 shows another instance of how questions are used as a form of power. This is a religious setting. The participants are the pastor and the members of his congregation. The pastor uses rhetorical questions to appeal to the worshipper's emotion, by appealing to their sense of commitment. This could be said to be a form of coercion. The leader uses this in bringing the laity to an involuntary compliance, which is an exhibition of power. People attend church in order to identify with God and show their unalloyed faith in Him. By asking the question in utterance above, the pastor tries to box them to a corner since nobody may want to answer in a non-affirmative way, because such stand the chance of being labelled an outcast, a devil's agent or be seen in a negative way. Examples like this make the writer to comment that: "His captive audience listened with undivided attention" (EITM₈₆).

Two groups of participants are recognized in utterance 7. First, there is a lecturer who has a flat tyre on her way home from work and is trying to change it. Second, there are some boys who offer to assist the woman but have the intention of stealing from her. From their interactions, it is discovered that interrogative clauses do not only serve as a tool to elicit information, they also serve as an instrument to show expression of offer. The speech above expresses discursal offer in interrogative form. There is no request here. Thus, the offer is turned down with a simple "No thanks", by the supposedly beneficiary. The insistence of the agents involved in the unsolicited offer is an indication of the fact that they have an undeclared intention. A searchlight into their action shows two things; one, they assume that in performing the act of changing a flat tyre they are superior to the woman who is bent on changing the punctured tyre herself; two, they want to use the opportunity to distract the attention of the woman and steal from her.

Many of the clauses structured in question form do not strictly conform to the traditional definition of an interrogative clause, which is said to make a request. These clauses are structured in question form in order to perform a lot of roles, some of which are to show surprise, amazement, indignation, anger, emotion, wishes, threat, sarcasm, social ills, and many others.

The use of wh-question in the representation of power.

S/N	Wh-Question	Illocutionary acts
8	Who are you talking to?(EITM ₂₉)	Challenge
9	What do you mean?	Challenge
10	Why do you grudge me my share of food?(FOF ₁₇)	Challenge
11	What are you embarrassed about anyway?	Perplexity

Table 2

The wh-element is an important item in the structure of a wh-question since it functions as the theme and also serves as the element requesting the information from the hearer. In wh-questions, the speakers express their sincere inquisitiveness about particular things they are not clear about. For instance in utterances 8, 9, and 11 above, the speakers are making enquiries on the reasons for particular actions by the hearers. Beyond these pieces of information that are sought by the hearers is the interplay of power embedded within the clause. For example, utterance 8 shows the status of the speaker as a rich woman who is addressing a yam seller. She uses the above question in response to the statement made by the yam seller to put a class boundary between the two of them. In the same vein, utterance 9 in one context shows that the question indicates anger rather than seek information; the hearer thinks the speaker is questioning her professional authority. The same question indicates surprise in another context. Also, utterance 10 indicates an aggression put in form of a question by a seemingly dominated person who is caught in the web of racism. Since she is discriminated against by a white woman, she decries the situation by asking the white woman the question above, in order to demand her right.

From the above, it could be seen that inasmuch as wh-question seeks information and clarification, as shown on the surface level with the examples above, power is entrenched within the clause system. As can be seen in the table above, wh-questions usually possess two major themes. The words that suggest the theme in the clauses above consist of the wh- item, which usually occupies the first position, as well as the subject of the questions: “you” in the above situations.

The use of rhetorical questions in the representation of power

Rhetorical questions

S/N	Rhetorical	Statement	Illocutionary acts
12	What could I do?(COTE ₇₁)	I could do nothing.	helplessness
13	How can I forget? (COTE ₃₁)	I cannot forget.	Stating
14	Do I have a choice?	I do not have a choice.	powerlessness
15	“What will I tell my husband? ...” (EITM ₁₈).	I don’t know what to tell my husband	desperation
16	Why don’t they go for the girls that have appetite for this kind of game? (FOF ₂₆)	They should go for the girls that have appetite for this kind of game.	desperation

Table 3

Rhetorical questions are very common in the selected texts. They are posed for various purposes. They could be meant to show the speaker’s state of mind, amazement, anger, expression of the state of the society (sarcasm) and so on. Generally, such questions do not demand answers, because the answers may be glaring. Sometimes, the answers to such questions may even be the one that could be provided by the speakers. Some of the rhetorical questions are equivalent to statements with the removal of the q-element as shown in the table above. In which case, rhetorical questions show the reactions of the dominated to the dominant as can be seen above whereby various dominated participants are expressing their helplessness, powerlessness and desperation through the utterances above.

The Use of Direct Questions in the Representation of Power

The table below illustrates the illocutionary acts performed by various participants using the direct questions.

S/N	Question	Illocutionary acts
17	Aziagba, how are your children?	Greeting
18	Who is that laughing?	Enquiry
19	Was it a spirit that laughed?	Threat
20	“What were you laughing at?” (LOTSO ₁₀₇)	Anger
21	“Obiatsu, where were you yesterday when Oluada visited your home?” (LOTSO ₁₂)	Questioning

Table 4

It is very rare to see instances of women using direct question in *Last of The Strong One* as opposed to *Children of The Eagle*. But where it is used it has a status symbol attached to it. For instance, utterance 17 shows the relationship between an elderly woman and a younger one. A mother uses the question form as we have it in utterances 18 - 20 to show her relational control over her daughter. This is evident that direct questions can be used to show power relation, that is, the relationship between the powerful and the less powerful which can be from a mother to the daughter or from an adult to a younger one as presented above. In utterance 21, Onyekozuru is assuming to be speaking on behalf of Oluada and thus using the power and status of Oluada in her speech. The instances from the selected texts where the tone of the questions used by men are soften are seen in cases of glaring mockery, showing of contempt and being scornful to another person, women in most cases.

The Use of Declarative Questions in the Representation of Power

The table below presents utterances of declarative questions as used in the selected texts. Examples of these are found in the texts under consideration.

S/N	Question	Illocutionary acts
22	Perhaps you have given me someone else's order? (FOF ₁₆)	clarification
23	You are the man whose organ disappeared? (EITM ₃₉)	clarification
24	Daughter you are a nurse ...? (EITM ₁₈)	clarification/emphasis

Table 5

These questions share the characteristics of declarative sentences. The major difference between a declarative sentence and a declarative question is the presence of the question element. The major duty of the declarative question is to emphasize a known fact. Also, they can be used to clarify a point, to establish the truthfulness or otherwise of a particular fact. They are mainly used by the dominant like the policeman to the accused as we have in utterances 22-24 above. Such examples show the speaker's attempt at validating the truthfulness or otherwise of any proposition.

The Use of Yes/No Questions in the Representation of Power

S/N	Yes/No question	Response
25	Are Obot and her children not coming to eat with us?	They ate earlier
26	Can we be of help to you? Asked one of them who looked the oldest away	Onoma relaxed "No thanks" ... I have almost finished".
27	"You're sure you don't need help? Are you sure those bolts are tight enough?" (FOF ₇₈)	Don't worry, "she told the young man. "I have done this before thanks for your concern anyway"
28	Is it by force?	-
29	Are you alone?	Yes, I am

Table 6

Although, there are examples of yes/no question type that give the normal response of yes/no to the question, there are many instances in the selected texts where yes/no structures do not receive a yes or a no answer. Sometimes, questions that normally should have a yes/no response fail to have this. For instance, in utterance 25 above Amara decides to give a sentence response instead of a word-response because she knows that a simple yes/no might not satisfy the curiosity of Ogonna, who asks the question. Since she may want to know why the children are not coming, if the answer is in the negative. The speech function in utterance 26 expresses discourser offer in the interrogative form. There is no request here, thus, the offer is turned down with a simple 'no thanks,' by the beneficiary.

The insistence of the agents involved in the unsolicited offer is an indication of a fact that the agents have undeclared intention. A search light into their action as boys show that they assume they are superior in performing the acts of changing a flat tyre than the woman who is bent on changing it. But the beneficiary here maintains her dominant/powerful position as she insists on changing the flat tyre to a spared one, thus turning down their offer in the responses given in utterances 26 and 27 above.

In utterance 28, it could be seen that the yes/no question structure fails to supply any response, because the speaker is only showing her state of mind in a question form when she says “is it by force?”. She is not actually asking any question, she is only trying to show her disapproval and annoyance at the man because of his seemingly overbearing at her and to show her disapproval of the man’s love advances, there is no response from the man to this question. In utterance 39, although the question uses a yes/no form with a view to getting either a yes or a no answer but the respondent decides to supply a simple sentence.

The Use of Tag Questions in the Representation of Power

S/N	Tag question	Mood tag	Illocutionary acts
30	They hate men	Don’t they? (FOF ₁₁₂)	stating
31	You smuggled in this car	Didn’t you? (FOF ₁₀₄)	Clarifying
32	You can tell me	Can’t you? (EITM ₅₈)	Stating
33	We didn’t come around?	Didn’t we?	Affirmation

Table 7

The propositions expressed in the form of interrogation above are more closely related to declaratives than to interrogatives. The speakers above are not ready to be committed to the validity of their various propositions. So they have chosen the mood tag to show their non-commitment to their earlier assertions. The flow of the information earlier given is impeded as a result of the mood tags that are attached. Thus, the interrogative structure is made possible as a result of the mood tags. The mood is contained in the declarative structure of subject–finite order and not finite subject order as we have above

One Word Question

Some of these are words picked from the initial sentences of some speakers. They are picked out of many words within the sentences for specific purposes, which can be for emphasis, to clear doubt, to show the hearer’s state of mind or his/her perspective towards what is being discussed. This perspective can be that of surprise, distaste, resentment, anger, sympathy, and many others. Examples of these are presented below:

S/N	One word question	Illocutionary act
34	Junkyard? (EITM ₂₄)	Resentment
35	Robbed? (FOF ₅₁)	Surprise
36	Really? (COTE ₁₆₉)	Surprise
37	Abara? (LOTSO ₁₀₀)	Affirmation

Table 8

In utterance 34 Lovina picks the above word from her friend's sentence, to show her resentment and disapproval of the action of Folake, who refers to her abode as "junkyard". The examples we have above are usually follow up to some preceding statements or questions.

Conclusion

Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo has demonstrated through the use of interrogative clauses in the selected texts that power is embedded within the society and it manifests itself at different levels. People wield power and exercise power at every little opportunity. AAE exposes various areas where hidden power is exercised. As 'harmless' and important interrogative clauses may seem, they are mainly used to show power. She therefore emphasizes that the instrument of domination and power relation within the society is language and it is always manipulatively used to uphold every form of conventional inequality within human interactions. This study therefore shows that human speeches are motivated and conditioned by many things one of which is power as examined in this paper. The paper has also exposed the different areas where power relation is in place with the aim of calling for the appropriate usage of language that depicts fair treatment of another.

Apart from the above, it is the suggestion of this paper that specialists in language and power should try to throw more light on areas where language is manipulatively used to enforce domination and polarity within the society; this can be made public through the use of mass media like radio and television, newspapers and other forms. Also, various human rights organisations can look more critically on how to provide litigation to the 'underdogs' in the society. Though Nigerian laws allow for freedom of speech, such laws must be empowered to litigate anybody who exercises his or her rights of speech with the aim of dominating and controlling the other. It is when all these are put in place that a linguistically friendly society that places a high value on interpersonal communication can be built. This will however go a long way in gingering development of our society.

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