

## Gendered Voices and Ideological Communications: A Case from the Film Industry

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**Abstract** Gender is a social construct that finds expression in cultural and ideological communicative practices. This research focuses on gendered voices and ideological communications, drawing insights from the film industry in Nigeria. The study adopts the triangulation of critical discourse analysis, polyphony, and construction grammar to appraise the instances of gendered voices in Tunde Kelani's *Narrow Path*, in order to tease out the underlying ideologies in the emotion-driven communicative contexts. Two opposing ideologies, namely, the patriarchalist and womanist dominate the interactions of the characters. While the former was characterized by the macho, parental, institutional, and communal voices, the latter was orchestrated by the solidaristic and institutional voices. The patriarchalist ideals were both concretized through the same-gender and other-gender personae, the womanist ideology was basically enacted through same-gender persona. These were established through gendered constructions propelled by: presupposition, assertion, topic, and focus. High context society like the Yoruba should provide equal space for both genders to express their thoughts and partake in building a gender-unbiased society.

**Keywords:** Ideological triggered expressions, Patriarchalist and womanist, Same-gender and other gender, Information packaging constructions, Nigerian film industry

### 1. Introduction

Voices are veritable media for (re)creating stances and identities. These are most often underlined by the ideals (ideologies) that permeate the environment, society, or organization from which they are expressed. Notably, language is the conveyor of voices as voices also embody myriad thoughts that are products of cultural practices or influences of extralinguistic social realities. It is on this premise that it is safe to construe gendered voices as ideologically triggered expressions that project the gender realities of a people. Holmes (2006) coincidentally assented to these voices in her work titled *Gendered talk at Work* in her perspective of the phenomenon- gender has an ever-present influence in interaction with its tendency to slide into words with and without concealment. Tunde Kelani's *Narrow Path* (2006), which forms our point of analytical reference, is replete with indices of gendered talk as the movie recreated the story of marital practices in the Yoruba tradition in the Western part of Nigeria, where the virginity of women is prioritized as

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Received: June 2022

Revised: August 2022

Accepted: August 2022

Published: September 2022

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part of the insignias of marital sanctity and honor. Since men's virginity does not count, the polarization bred different gendered voices throughout the movie. Despite this polarized representation of men and women in that represented society, no deliberate attention has been invested into these gender concerns in the literature.

While movies are naturally designed to recreate realities in people's environment, they can be acknowledged as the substantial windows of such gendered representations. It is thus further instructive to add that gendered voices may not necessarily be constructed by man for men or woman for women or other genders as the case may be. In the real sense, it is any construction laden with gender projective content. This paper focuses on gendered voices and cultural ideologies in Tunde Kelani's *Narrow Path* to crystalize the ideologies that project gender in the movie and the voices through which they were enacted.

## 1.1. Conceptual Clarification

### 1.1.1. Gender, Power, and Discourse

The three separate but interwoven concepts, gender, power, and discourse, have resounding impacts on this study; hence, conceptualizing them will lend a perspective to its reading. Discourse covers both spoken and written language (literary and non-literary). Fairclough (1989) describes discourse as the entire process of interaction, though he further adds that a text is just a segment from the whole [language in use]. Also, discourse to some linguists may be referred to as the interpretation of talk in a context. From a particular vantage point, discourse is thus concisely described as both a social and political practice ingrained in social relations between people (Wodak, 2001), which sustains and reproduces the *status quo* (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999) and serves as a means of representing the world (Fairclough, 2003) and constructing of identities. Discourse, often, thus, serves a definite goal given certain ideologies that underlie it. Scholars are quick to note that every discourse is ideologically driven, considering that language choices and usage hardly play neutral roles but are always socially charged to reflect social experiences and realities. Often, they affix with an individual's socio-cognitive frame and a group, serving a specific end, which is to construct ideologies (Odeunmi, 2016). Discourse, could therefore be said to be closely bound up with power. According to van Dijk (2001), ideology as the pivot of this scholarship bears on the knowledge of the social structures and beliefs shared by in-group members. Further, van Dijk (2001) declares ideology as a kind of social cognition shared by social groups. At the same time, he presents discourse as the channel through which ideologies are produced, reproduced, constructed, and challenged. The preceding thus presupposes and heightens the fact that strong ties exist between ideology and power. Power relationships, thus, get articulated through ideological discourses.

Usually, gendered discourse is an intellectual space where power articulations are overtly and covertly implicated. Much concern in gender research has been on the issue of power asymmetries. To substantiate this view, Oloruntoba-Oju (2009) perceives gender relations as power relations. Thus, this, in Oloruntoba-Oju's opinion, bears on the frequent evocation of genders in the conscious or unconscious negotiation of psychological, socio-economic, and political space by the sexes and their protagonists. In parallel, men and women in gendered culture are ranked and placed along differential dimensions of space, which reveals the difference in the structure of male and female power, particularly regarding what these sexes can access economically and in their engagement in social activities (Hussein, 2005). A conceptual exploration of the term gender thus becomes appropriate here for clarity.

Gender as a feature of human sociality is a socially constructed identity often used to mark the distinctions between males and females (Adegbite, 2009). Similarly, Tsai (2009) defines gender as a socio-cultural and ideological representation of 'others' tied to sexual differences. Hence, gender creates the pedestal for the masculinity/femininity discourse with their social functions as distinct from sexual traits. Although frequently and closely associated with the phenomenon of "gender" is the term, "sex". Meanwhile, there are various remarkable distinctions between these pairs. While sex is described as biological, gender is social. Physical characteristics and genetic properties define sex, whereas gender is produced and re-produced by society. Further, sex remains unchanged, but gender changes over time and across cultures. Likewise, sex is an individual attribute, but gender is a social and relational quality.

In this light, Omotoso (2016) advances that the social recognition of gender is complex culturally and historically.

## 1.2. Language, Culture, and Gendered Ideology

According to Odebunmi (2008), culture is defined as the way of life of a group of people- the behaviors, beliefs, values, and ideologies they share. Such aspects of human life as codes of manners, dressing, religion, ritual norms, behavior, belief systems, and language are contained in culture. It is the way humans live, behave and act. Culture is, therefore, life, while language, in Hall's description, is the evidence of that living in form and function. This thus exhibits how language is drawn upon to convey, construct and project distinct cultural characteristics. Further, culture significantly influences the thought process, language, and human behavior. Society structures and configures people's attitudes, emotions, and behavior (Neculaesei, 2015). This correspondingly bears on the case of the assigned or assumed societal roles premised on gender. Emphatically, cultural, political, and religious discourses, among others, spelled out the relationship of both men and women and ensconced male domination into the structure of social organization and institution at all levels of leadership and in all prominent roles (Allanana, 2013; Neculaesei, 2015). On this premise, individuals from early years have learned and understood different linguistic practices culturally associated with gender (Neculaesei, 2015). Such expectations regarding how males and females should behave in their society are notable distinctions between people and embedded in patriarchy (Adegbite, 2009; Hussein, 2005; Odebunmi, 2010). The Nigerian cultures and, typically, the Yoruba society are inherently patriarchally structured as a trail of the traditional African community. The patriarchal cultural ideology is male-favorable but disfavoured to the women folks (Odebunmi, 2016). Allanana (2013), as a consequence, describes patriarchy as unbalanced and oppressive to women.

Relatively, in contemporary times, the pursuit of equal value and opportunity with the male, along with absolute freedom from the burdensome patriarchal ideology, has stirred diverse movements. In other words, gender balancing/gender equity has kindled many controversies rooted in the general notion of male domination, which sprung the concept of feminism that accommodates gender equality irrespective of sex differences (Umukoro & Okwuowulu, 2010). For Shaka (1999), feminism denotes efforts at establishing gender equality in society, while Umukoro and Okwuowulu (2010), who share the same view, describe it as any attempt by the female gender to liberate itself from male chauvinism and patriarchy. It is essential to state that different cultural norms and values influence feminist concepts. This underscores the tip previously raised about gender as a culturally relative concept. Significantly, the feminist movement operates varying but intertwining ideologies; all the same, the ultimate goal has always been generally targeted toward the social-economic needs of women.

Although, the feminist movement has primarily accounted for western perspectives of equality and inclusiveness of the sexes. Notwithstanding the cultural disparity, African women, like other women in the different parts of the globe, concede to this feminist struggle but with their own branch of feminism suitable for African society. Consequently, as evident in literature, there are womanism, motherism, and feminism (African and radical). Suffice to note here that this study will, however, not dwell on the controversial discursive frames of feminism but instead focus on its global perception as a pluralistic women's movement dedicated to the liberation of women from oppressive patriarchal institutions.

## 1.3. Existing Studies on Gender Construct in Nigerian Film Culture

Gender issues abound in the scholarship of Nigerian films across disciplines: theatrical, film, and performance (Amonyeyeze & Agbo, 2022; Ezeajugh & Anijah, 2017; Okafor, 2017; Shaka & Uchendu, 2012), media and communication (Aromona, 2016; Elegbe, 2017; Ibbi, 2017) literary (Aromona, 2016) and linguistics (Akinnameji, 2016; Nwaneyi, 2020; Oloruntoba-Oju, 2009; Osoba & Oluwasanmi, 2016). These scholars have widely studied gender in the following areas: unequal perceptions, roles, relevance, or rewards that society assigns to the two sex categories, particularly the female or women group, among others. Specific to gender-based research in linguistics and language studies in Nigerian movies, impressive attempts have also been put forward in scholarship, as previously mentioned, on how the difference between men and women manifests in their language use. Still, the scope of language and gender is methodologically diverse and theoretically distinct, encompassing approaches around

conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology, linguistic anthropology, and variationist sociolinguistics, among others.

Oloruntoba-Oju (2009), in his examination of gendered language, acknowledges that gender is the guiding principle of most Yoruba and Nollywood films. Following this research perspective, he examines some key linguistic elements and other utterances that mark gender performativity in Yoruba and Nollywood films. Leaning on J. L. Austin's speech acts and Jane Butler's theory of gender performative, he submits that regardless of the gender neutrality in the Yoruba language, users of language consciously construct gender and power in the Nigerian context, as made evident in the sampled films through the process of citation and de-citation.

Akinmaeji (2016), from a critical discourse analytical purview, pays attention to the lexical and sentential analysis of the feminist ideology of two Nollywood movies: "Arugba" and "Maami". The study, which adopted Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis, provides clues to how linguistic items are used to embody feminist ideology in the movies. The study argues that despite the demeaning value in modern Nigerian society, women of virtue still exist. The findings show that the lexical indices present a woman as a necessary companion and one who deserves society's care, while the mood system highlights a woman's strengths, determination, decisiveness, and responsibilities. The study, however, affirms the patriarchal nature of society, especially regarding lowering the female gender; still, the study holds the view that women can contest this assigned role given to them by society. She concludes by strongly advocating that movie producers assign responsible roles to females and that women should equally rise to this task as an agent of transformation in the Nigerian entity. While this study relates to the present study because they adopt a critical discourse analytical approach using distinct models and consider data from the same movie-producer-Tunde Kelani, they differ from it in theoretical perspectives and in the selected movies. Akinmaeji's (2016) data are sourced from "Maami and Arugba" drawing insight from Norman Fairclough's Discourse Socio-Cultural approach to critical discourse. In contrast, the current study is focused on "Narrow Path" with insights from a blend of three theories: van Dijk's (2015) model of critical discourse, polyphony (Roulet, 1996), and construction grammar (Hilpert, 2014).

Gbadegesin (2018) concerns the discourse intonation features that strikingly mark out the females' "voices from males" and their socio-cultural implications. The findings show that the intonation of the males and the females in the study complies with the second language users' pattern, such as Nigerian English. The study, though, aligns with the claims of previous scholars (Pan, 2011) regarding the factors that structure the features of female language as inclusive of the socio-cultural factors in addition to the influences of physiology and psychology but beyond that also acknowledges that the females utilize various intonation patterns premised on different discourse situations. By the same token, the author notes a remarkable difference in the use of rising and falling tunes of the males and the females across some sentence usages, namely: incomplete statement, statement question, exclamation, and question tag. Gbadegesin (2018) concludes that females use more falling intonation patterns than their male counterparts because there are prominent females who speak with a lack of fear or anxiety. The study thus identified three different statuses of the females in the film that discourse intonation choices were influenced: the submerged women, the emerging women, and the emerged group of females. Aside from the sampled data-"Mr & Mrs" which sets it apart from the current study, it also differs from the present study in the strict focus on phonological features.

Quite differently, Sanni (2019) attempts a sociolinguistic exploration of gendered discourse in Femi Odugbemi's Nigerian Television Series, *Battleground*. Through the lens of conversational analysis, the study focuses on two essential parts: the analysis of the amount of talk and the research of turn-taking. She finds women constituting a higher rate as their words and sentences made up to 69.2% and 61.2% of the total in all eight episodes, respectively, while men's words only made 30.8% and 38.8%, respectively. Notably, she adds that women are sometimes more talkative than men despite their lean turns. She discovers that the analysis of turn-taking concerning gender in the *Battleground* mainly centers on the number of turns and their distribution. The author further reveals that from all the turns in the eight episodes sampled, the males take 52.3% while the females 47.7%. The study shows that men are predisposed to take more turns conversing with women. The study reiterates that Nigerian users



of English are sexist, and the society is still patriarchal regarding the distribution of turns in conversations in the *Battleground*. Following this, she adds that language users should be mindful of sexism while gender discourse should be targeted at promoting gender equity. The difference between the current study and Sanni (2019) is in terms of its orientation: the former is a discourse analytic study, and the latter is a sociolinguistic study.

It is clear from the review of the gender-based Nigerian literature on movies that a clear-cut-study founded on the application of the triad of van Dijk's (2015) model of critical discourse, polyphony (Roulet, 1996) and construction grammar in unveiling gender ideologies is yet to be given attention. Thus, the present research affixes to previous works on gendered discourse, in particular, to complement scholarship in this dimension.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Polyphony, and Information Packaging Constructions

Technically, the paper relies on three fundamental theories – van Dijk's (2015) model of critical discourse analysis to drive the appraisal of the gendered discourses and their ideological underpinnings; polyphony (Roulet, 1996), the concept that enables our identification of the different voices that establish the aim of the paper – demystifying the ideologies that typify gender and culture in the proposed movie; and construction grammar (Hilpert, 2014), which tease out the linguistic information and their semantic import concerning the culture-driven gendered discourses and trailing ideologies. CDA deals intimately with how social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2015). This replicates what many African high culture societies divulge in their everyday conversation, which is also apparently projected in their movies as we have in *Narrow Path*, which practically grafts the grossly gendered scenes that trigger the curiosity for this study. It becomes more pressing because the social power abuse and inequality demonstrated were evidently questioned in the movie. Interestingly, the underlying ideologies that empower this inequality that is socially instituted are culture related and therefore need that critical discourse appraisal that offers the precise discourse structures that enable the entrenchment of power, social dominance, and gendered asymmetry in the movie. Hence, a blend of the microstructure enmeshes language use, discourse, and verbal interaction; and the macrostructure encompassing power, dominance, and inequality are taken to hold the promising latitude for interpreting these ideologies that gendered cultures are anchored.

Voice, the keystone for the essentiality of polyphony, is integral to unmasking the influencing sources of the specific ideologies and their symbolic engenderers. According to Roulet (1996), two scholarly efforts amplify the current understanding of the engagement of polyphony. These works are linked to Russian Mikhail Bakhtin and French Oswald Ducrot. The latter's positioning of polyphony involves dialogism defined in four references:

- a. The interplay between socio-ideological languages in discourse and society
- b. The relatedness of discourses that conflate variegated dialogical threads which is framed in contemporary terms as intertextuality
- c. The fact that monological written texts react to existing or preceding texts and
- d. The crux that the discourses of other persons occupy a central place in other speakers' utterances

The above dovetailing relationship among perceptions of interactants constitutes the hub of polyphony – the art of intertwining voices. Different voices, therefore, come together in discourse to forge out what Roulet (1996) calls “multi-voiced discourse”. The aggregation and disaggregation of these multi-voices orchestrate the typological dimensions to which societal issues are examined, as it offers in the case of gender. Ducrot's (1984) description of polyphony situates the concept within the giving of utterances rather than in discourses mainly conceived by Bakhtin. Ducrot (1984) distinguishes three entities in a general polyphonic realization in his extended version of the concept. According to him, there is the *speaking subject* concerned with the physical agency of the utterance; *the speaker* referring to the discourse being and author of the illocutionary act; and *the enunciator* which involves the discourse

being corresponding to certain previously unexpressed views in an interaction (Roulet 1996). As Ducrot (1984) tags them pragmatically, issues such as irony, negation, negative polarity, discourse markers, and presupposition have been engaged through the concept of polyphony. One synergizing fact about the two perspectives is that polyphony concerning the current paper would help interpret the constituting voices of gender, culture, and the ideals informing them.

Construction grammar selected to cater to the structural aspect of the study in the course of discussion is a theory of linguistic knowledge linked with form and meaning. Out of this linguistic design, some constructions are ingrained in pragmatics called information packaging constructions. According to Hilpert (2014), information structure constructions are occasionally referred to as information packaging constructions; hence, they assemble meanings and link new meanings to old meanings rather than conveying meanings themselves. This act of meaning relation is achieved through presuppositions and assertions, activation, topic, and focus. The heart of these resources provides the inferential drawings and implicatures made from the discourses that foreground gender explicitly and implicitly.

### 3. Methodology

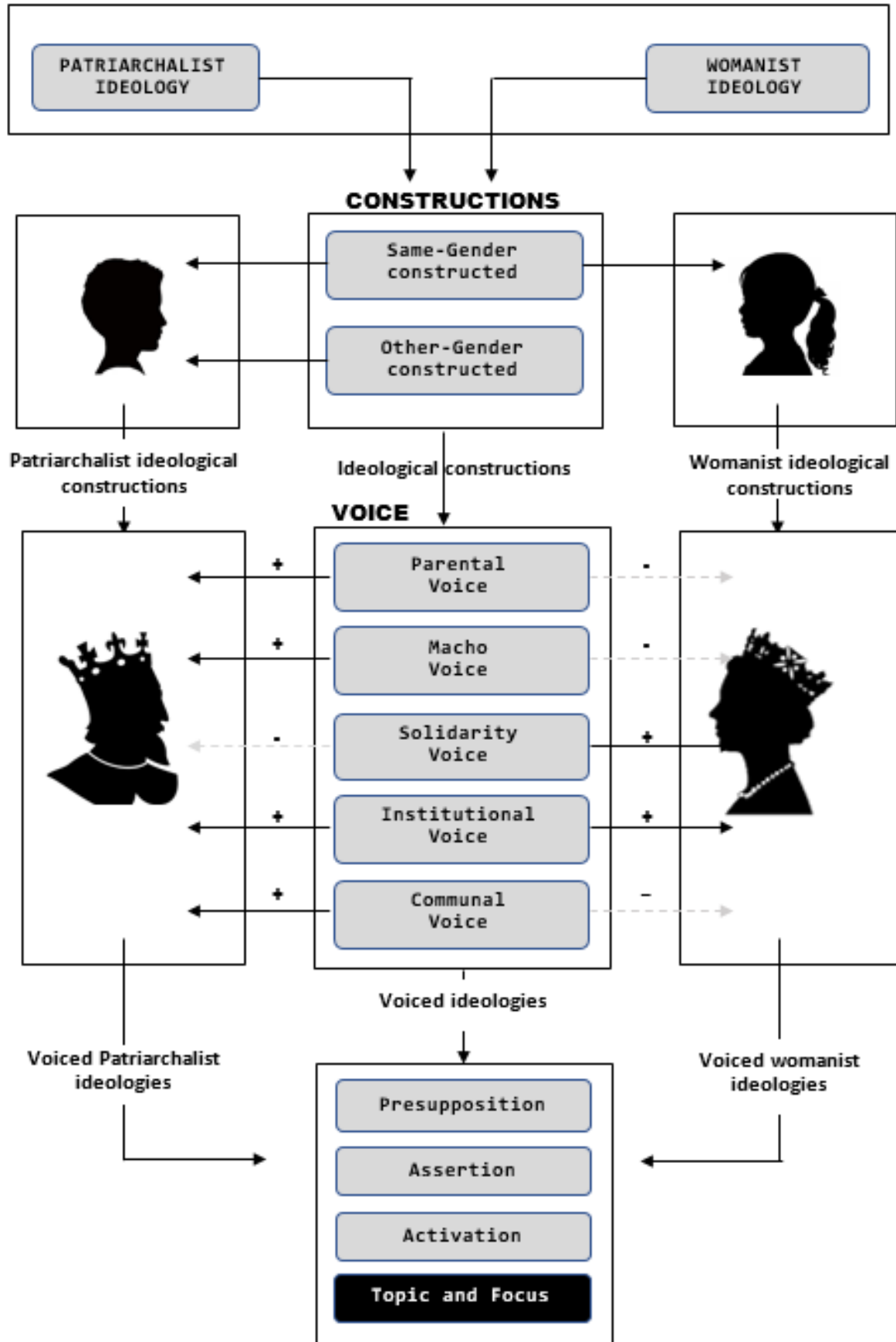
The sampled excerpts used for this study were collected from subtitles in Tunde Kelani's *Narrow Path*. Tunde Kelani is a notable Nigerian filmmaker. The movie-*Narrow Path* selected for this study, significantly engaged gender issues in a manner that divulged the African experiences. The movie, *Narrow Path* produced in 2006, narrated the psychological ordeal of Awero, a female character whose dignity (virginity) was shattered by a case of assault before her wedding. Through a close viewing and driven by its focus and specific objectives, the study adopted the purposive sampling technique to sort and identify in the *Narrow Path* the scenes/subtitles that demonstrated the gendered thematic concerns in their situated voices. To complement this design, the top-down analytical approach was selected to account for the interpretation of the texts from its thematic foci down to the constituting structural features using mainly the triangulation of van Dijk's (2015) critical discourse analysis, Roulet's (1996) and Hilpert's (2014) construction grammar.

### 4. Results

Two ideologies profoundly dominate the gender and cultural ideals presented in the language used in *Narrow Path* by Tunde Kelani – the patriarchalist and womanist ideologies, respectively. These are cautiously stirred and stamped by certain voices. On the patriarchalist slant, four voices are instrumental to its construction. These are the parental voice, macho voice, the institutional voice, and the communal voice. On the other plane, the womanist ideology was underlined by two main voices: institutional and solidarist. These are first presented in Figure 1 below. This is followed by discussion and exemplification with comprehensive data from the movie.

#### 4.1. The Patriarchalist Ideology; Forms and Underlying Voices

Patriarchalist ideology, as evident above, is the asymmetric social condition that ascribes more power to the male gender in a discourse society. As an ideology variously referred to as the patriarchal ideology or patriarchalism, discourses within this scholarly ambiance conceive the patriarchalist ideals as ones that promote male superiority and also establish it as the natural order of things where women are constantly given second fiddle roles both in public and private spheres (Sultana, 2010). In *Narrow Path*, the patriarchalist ideology is co-constructed in the same-gender and other-gender strata. Ensuing from the discourses, the culturally male dominant ideals are garnered within parental, macho, institutional, and communal voices. These will be distinctly presented in the following sections.



**Figure 1**  
Analytical Framework: Gendered Voices and Ideological Communications

#### 4.2. The Same-Gender Constructed Patriarchalist Ideology

*Narrow Path* presents the same-gender-constructed patriarchalist ideals in the male-to-male communicative context. That informs the natural belief of male dominance among men in society. This ideology is amplified through the macho, parental, institutional, and communal voices. The macho voice evokes the culturally unmarked attributes of strength demonstration by men; the parental voice depicts the guidance and epistemic dominance in interaction, while the institutional voice is entrenched in civic duty/obligation. The communal voice, however, resonates with the communal belief that runs through the whole community that men are above board in the scheme of things and should not be challenged even in the face of sheer oppression. Some instances below validate these occurrences in the movie.

Interaction 1:

**Odejimi:** Ohhhhhhhh! **This is what they say about women**, how could my mother **forget** the clothe? I even asked her this morning and she said...

**Odejimi's friend:** I asked her too this evening too just before Awero was brought to Orita. She said she was going to send your sister to bring them here **immediately**

Interaction 2:

**Contextual background:** Awero's father weeps over the shame the daughter brought on him by her defilement

**Lawuyi:** That is enough Jibosa, **be a man**.

**Elder:** No Lawuyi, please leave him, let him cry, man must cry **sometimes**. Tears are like soap to a man's heart. They wash away our pains.

**Jibosa's friend:** Then we should tell Jibosa to get up and do what should be done and not watch him cry **like a woman**.

Interaction 3:

**Chief 1:** You want Kabiyesi to speak to you?

**Edu. Officer:** Yes, please, at least, even if he has to repeat what others have said, I don't mind. He should at least say something.

**Elder 2:** What you have just said is big, **young woman**, much bigger than your mouth. How can you just open your?

**Elder 3:** Patience, Sopitan, **you know she is a woman**, she is young and she does not understand anything.

Interactions 1 to 3 are concretized in different conversation contexts to divulge the patriarchalist ideology in variegated voices. In interaction 1, for instance, the contextual background that presents the same-gender patriarchalist ideology reveals Odejimi, a man preparing to take in a wife and his friend. Having been frustrated by the worrisome delay caused by his mother's inability to send him the attire billed for the wedding ceremony, Odejimi angrily registers his displeasure over the disappointment through different gender packaging constructions to establish the ideology of perfectionist men. This he creates through the active construction "this is what they say about women" to trigger the presupposition that forges the communal voice stereotyping women as weak and disappointing and, at the same time, the gender that does not keep to time. His frustration is phonocized by the elongated "ohhhhhh!" to express his emotional state at that moment. This shows clearly that it is a known fact among people in that society that women don't keep to time and are, therefore, not reliable in the scheme of things. Hence, by inference, the man is invoked as the possessor of the ability that women lack – to deliver on pressing assignments. His friends' comments also validate "what they say about women" in referencing the fact that the Odejimi's mother promised to send the clothes through his "sister," which



also strengthens the generic proposition of Odejimi. It is also imperative to note that the pronominal “they” is used in the indefinite sense to drive home the communal voice to which the speaker finds the epistemic reliance to make his categorical and ideological proposition.

Similarly, interaction 2 satisfies the same-gender constructed patriarchalist ideology anchored on the macho, communal and parental voices as represented in figure 1 above. After the revelation about his daughter’s defilement before marriage is made public on her wedding night, the father, Jibosa, breaks into tears, and he is seen to be consoled by his allies – Lawuyi and an Elder. Their ensuing conversations further entrenched the cultural nuances engendered the society's patriarchalist ideology and the epistemic interpretations accompanying a crying “man”. In it, the gender packaging construction underlined by the imperative construction “... be a man” suggests strongly that the action of crying is exclusively a woman's feature and thus, to be a man is to bottle up emotions. That was the depiction of the macho voice that considers crying as a weakness on the part of a man.

Conversely, the parental voice introduces a different and instead modified form of the same ideology that constrains Lawuyi’s warning of the disgraceful bride to be a man. The Elder elucidates Jibosa’s action while cautioning Lawuyi is that “man must cry sometimes”. This presupposes the adverbial “sometimes” that must not cry at all times but is only allowed occasionally as it is believed to medically palliate the sorrowful heart. Deploying this advising act is an evocation of the parental voice to show compassion for the man while also maintaining the macho ideals that crying is not a habitual act of man. Stressing the crux of this form of patriarchalist ideology, Jibosa’s friend again confirmed this gendered position more glaringly through the prepositional construction “like a woman” in describing his friend’s action and urged other interactants that they “should tell Jibosa to get up and do what should be done and not watch him cry like a woman.” Again, this unveils the type of society presented in Kelani’s *Narrow Path*. In this society, patriarchalism is dominant and overly finds expression in their daily conversations as evidently co-constructed by the characters in the scene in interaction 2.

The scene of a female education officer seeking permission from the king and his subjects to establish government schools in interaction 3 clearly demonstrates that the royal chambers' patriarchal ideals are endorsed and projected. In fact, it is more oppressive to deifying the royal head in that the woman was practically shut down from addressing the king directly. Constrained by the macho, communal, and parental voices, the same-gender-constructed patriarchalist ideology restricts the freedom of expression and to whom the woman can directly address in the royal palace. While curiously pressing for the king’s final verdict on the discourse at hand, the education officer was vehemently criticized for high, what is described as high demand. This is contained in the gender packaging construction in the proposition of Elder 2 “What you have just said is big, young woman, much bigger than your mouth. How can you just open your?” While this would have been said to be tied to age with the use of the adjectival “young”, it obviously transcends this because the woman in question was not so young after all. Still, the cultural restrictions on the female gender were only being divulged in the Elder’s comment. This corroborates Elder 3’s parental voice of pacification, defense, and demonstration of epistemic gradient, which defensively qualifies the woman's act as being sponsored by ignorance “Patience, Sopitan, you know she is a woman, she is young and she does not understand anything.” From Elder 3’s proposition, the gendered inequality is expressed in the structural repetition that emphasizes why she acted ignorantly by seeking the king’s direct opinion to them. That “she is a woman”, “she is young” and that “she does not understand anything” all typify the asymmetric grounds under which women in the society presented in *Narrow Path* reel. The first construction, “she is a woman”, evokes the assertion that presupposes that she is not a man and that being a woman is not enough. However, according to their presentation, it is instrumental to the display of ignorance, her young age, and her absence of knowledge of the people's cultural practices. Women are grossly restricted and subjugated. Their voices cannot be directly aired but can only be reported. It only portends the danger such kingship holds for a generation of women who will lose their voices to oppression that is gender sponsored.

### 4.3. Other-Gender Constructed Patriarchalist Ideology

Other-gender constructed patriarchalist ideology involves the female gender’s acceptance of the status quo of male dominance. Here, *Narrow Path* reveals in the characters' discourses where women are seen expressing the patriarchalist ideology that subjugates them from making their voices heard in society

concerning crucial issues. This is also constructed for the male gender by the female through the macho and institutional voices. Interactions 4 and 5 are practical of the other-gender patriarchalist ideological mechanics.

Interaction 4:

**Edu. Officer:** Me, a party, I thought nobody likes me in this village. Nobody speaks with me except you and mama Lape.

**Mama:** That was before what you did at Sagbe market. It was the only talk at the oil palm pit today. How you turned the Government officials to toothless dogs! Ah! Abike, If I tell you that no one in this village has seen **a woman talk to a man the way you did, everybody is proud of you.**

Interaction 5:

**Odejimi:** As I woke up and started wearing my wedding clothes, I said to myself, Odejimi, from tomorrow morning, your own wife not your mother, nor another man's wife, your own wife will again begin to feed you from the smoke of her kitchen.

**Odejime's sister:** Look, Boda Odejimi, you have to take this like a man, yes, something of this nature has never happened in Agbede village but it has happened in several other places over so many years, and the world has not ended because of that.

**Odejimi:** Yes, but why should this thing happened to me, why this abomination happen in my own name, in my father's house

The patriarchalist ideology is also shown in the utterances made by women in the novel, leaving its construction to be open to other (that is, female) gender. As evident in interactions 4 and 5, the female gender in the society projected by Tunde Kelani in *Narrow Path* is quite aware of the inequality that pervades the society and thus, to a certain subconscious extent, has resigned to its prevalence as a normative act. In interaction 4, while commending the Education Officer for her brave act of challenging the sanitation officers, mama used a gender-packing construction "Abike, if I tell you that no one in this village has seen a woman talk to a man the way you did...". This shows the level of patriarchalist operations in the village in that no one challenges men because they are viewed as infallible in their views and actions and thus cannot be corrected by any woman. So seeing the education officer take that bold step in defense of the poor market woman was strange and anti-normative.

In interaction 5, Odejimi, who had just received marital heartbreak, was sorrowful and was being consoled by the sister, and the ensuing conversation both implicitly and explicitly stamped the patriarchalist ideology as a shared reality between both genders. Two insignias depicted these ideals in the interaction. First, it is revealed through the macho voice, Odejimi could be seen linking his regrets principally to the fact that the incident happened in his father's house, as conveyed in the proposition, "why did this abomination happen in my own name, in my father's house?" This position concretizes that even the woman's plight that ruins his reputation was more humiliating because it happened in his father's house. On the one hand, that "father" paradigmatic choice is a strong index of the patriarchalist construct, in that marital failures are also perceived to be reducing the ego of the man, especially in his father's house, as depicted by Odejimi.

On the other hand, the sister's speech action, which validates the other-gender construction of this ideology, establishes the shared epistemic admittance to male superiority and special features of a man's act that are exuded through the macho voice. In the gender packaging construction, "Look, boda Odejimi, you have to take this like a man," the sister affirms and also endorses through this proposition that men and women take things differently and that issues like disappointments are better handled in the "manly" way which the speech act of the sister already aligns with. There is an underlying communal voice that everybody knows how to act in the face of sorrow. It is traceable to many Nigerian families where men are trained tougher than women because they are believed to be weaker vessels. *Narrow Path* tries to register this shared cultural ideology among the Yoruba ethnic group.

#### 4.4. The Womanist Ideology; Forms and Underlying Voices

Borne out of an African-American movement masterminded by Alice Walker, the womanist ideology defends and promotes the rights, privileges, and roles of Black women in a grossly asymmetric and racially gendered society. It is intended to prompt attention that had evaded the Black woman's ordeals and peculiarities which were obviously downplayed in the feminists' ideals (Sotunsa, 2009; Tally, 1984). The term is associated with bravery and solidarity vigor that chart the course of deprived and underprivileged women. Precisely, it is the contending forces of the patriarchalism ideology.

Replicated in the discourse that characterizes culture and gender construction in *Narrow Path*, the womanist ideology is manifestly instantiated in the actions of some of the female casts who showed the resilience and advocacy spirits embedded in womanism. Although the same-gender is constructed, it is constrained by solidarity and institutional voices. While the solidarity voice plays out in the context of corruption and justice, the institutional voice is pertinent to the context of labor and civic responsibility. Instances are clearly advanced in the following interactions.

Interaction 6:

**Crowd:** Ejoor!

**Senior Task Officer:** I say pack everything, pack everything.

**Education Officer:** Let's see the palm wine

**Senior Taskforce Officer:** And who said that?

**Edu. Officer:** I did, I said, let us see the palmwine, the stinking palmwine you want to seize.

**Senior Task force Officer:** Who are you? Who are you to stop **government workers** from doing their job?

**Edu. Officer:** I'm a government worker like yourself, Department of Education, Ibadan, Level 5

**Senior Task officer:** And so what? What if you're level 50? IS THAT why?, Is that why you, a woman?

**Edu officer:** Yes, I'm a woman, have I said I'm a man or do I look like a goat with two heads?

**Senior Task Force Officer:** Look here, Mrs Level five, you can't stop us! We are taking this woman with her stinking kegs of palm wine to Ibadan! She is trying to poison the people. Even without looking, I can count at least 40 dead flies inside that keg.

**Edu Officer:** Then, get the kegs of palm wine, let's us all see, Let's count the dead flies in it. **That's how government workers should work**, let the people what you do and why you do it.

**Junior Task Force Officer:** This woman is stubborn!

**Other task officers:** Yes!

**Senior Task Officer:** we shall see, we'll meet in Ibadan.

**Crowd:** Ole!!!

Interaction 6 typifies the womanist ideology as the Education Officer challenges the *status quo* of male dominance and oppression. Verged in the solidarity and institutional voices, the woman challenges the senior task officer because of her epistemic gradient powered by her status as a government worker. It is instructive to establish that the crowd representing the people was at first ignorant of the task officers' manipulations until the solidarity voice of the Education Officer was raised in defense of the market woman. Although it is a social context marked by institutional roles, the patriarchalist indices and ideals are still maintained. It could be seen in the pliant nature of the woman and the market crowd begging the officers "ejoor" obviously when no evidence was provided by the task officers of the allegation

leveled against the woman's palm wine. But as the woman challenged them, it became a clash between the womanist ideology and the patriarchalist long-existing ideals. That informs the interrogative construction, "Who are you? Who are you to stop **government workers** from doing their job? It was more astonishing when the Education Officer responded with the proposition, "I'm a government worker like yourself, Department of Education, Ibadan, Level 5." Her response did not satisfy the task officers. The dissatisfaction stems from the gendered construction "And so what? What if you're level 50? IS THAT why? Is that why you, **a woman**? That the speaker, as a woman, challenged the task officers was appalling to them as there had never been an occasion prior to that event by way of inference in that village when a woman challenged them. By drawing focus on the "woman", the Education Officer knew she had to braze up to the stereotypical relegation of women in society by affirming, "**Yes, I'm a woman**, have I said I'm a man or **do I look like a goat with two heads**? Adding the sarcastic interrogative that references "goat with two heads" the woman is stressing the equality cognitive frame that she is human as any other "gender". Her further engagement of the senior task officer opened the insight of the crowd to the illegality of their action thereby stirring the courageous "Ole" chants as against the initial plea, "Ejoor". The task officers consequently tagged her as a stubborn woman because she broke the patriarchal norm that empowered their atrocities. Hence, it became a vista for womanism – the advocacy for equality and justice in a patriarchal society.

Interaction 7:

**Edu. Officer:** Me, a party, I thought nobody likes me in this village. Nobody speaks with me except you and mama Lape.

**Mama:** That was before what you did at Sagbe market. It was the only talk at the oil palm pit today. How you turned the Government officials to toothless dogs! Ah! Abike, If I tell you that **no one in this village has seen a woman talk to a man the way you did**, everybody is proud of you. Even the men. Our men hate government officials o! THEY HATE THEM. And they are always afraid of them. **That you a woman**, can make them look stupid. I'm sure when next you come up with the government school talk, the elders will treat you like a Queen. Let me show you something.

**Village women:** (Singing and dancing to cheer Abike for the feat regarding how she challenged the corrupt task officers).

The womanist ideology is also enacted in interaction 7. This interaction presents the Education Officer and her host, called mama, discussing the incidence at the market, especially the feat of the Education Officer challenging the task officers. The Education Officer was informing mama of the dislike the villagers had for her before the encounter with the task officer. A scene shows the hostile reception with which the women greeted her because she came asking for direction. Her dressing, confidence, and gait presented her to the villagers as an arrogant, untrained, and uncultured individual. To them, humility and cultural values are customarily ingrained in absolute reverence and submission to man's authority even in the face of apparent oppression. So the emergence of the Education Officer sets the boundaries for power and role delineation. Mama emphasized it when she stated, "that you are a woman can make them look stupid". This statement establishes the way a woman is placed in society. The woman is not expected to correct or gainsay the man's position. Such astute patriarchalism finds opposition in womanism, whose symbol in the movie is the Education Officer.

## 5. Discussion

This study has intensively substantiated the discourse of gender and ideology by establishing the integrality of voices in constructing gendered talks in movies. Using Tunde Kelani's *Narrow Path* as an example, gendered voices have been determined by cultural and social inflections as revealed through the deployment of critical discourse analysis, polyphony and construction grammar. It was revealed that the patriarchalist and the womanist ideologies principally control the actions depicted in the movies. Extending these findings, it was further established that the patriarchalist ideology could be same-gender and other-gender constructed while the same-gender largely constructs the womanist ideology. In their distinct manifestations, the two clashing ideologies are vented in the communicative



contexts, which see the patriarchalist ideals being expressed in the macho, parental, institutional, and communal voices, whereas the womanist ideals are enacted through the institutional, solidarist, and communal voices. These gendered ideologies and voices in the example considered admittedly rely on the varying emotional experiences of both genders in their communicative encounters informed by the realities of their immediate society. This phenomenon activates the phenomenon of emotioncy (Pishghadam et al. 2015). The integrality of this notion is further bolstered by the fact that most of the gendered communicative contexts are expressions of individuals who went through different levels of genderized emotional trauma or the other. This relativity in emotional experience and expression coincides with the delineation of various kinds and types of emotioncy that people display by virtue of their encounters (whether evolved or involved) with the issues of life (for emotioncy types and kinds, see Pishghadam et al., 2019).

Our findings could also be stressed that the antidote to patriarchalism is womanism. These are powered by gender packaging construction propelled by presupposition, assertion, topic, and focus. While, on the one hand, patriarchalism is found to be strengthened by cultural and traditional beliefs that repel civility in gender issues, on the other hand, womanism encourages civilization. Consequently, it sponsors equality and solidarity in support of marginalized African women.

It is herein stressed as a call for further investigation that the data set deployed in the present study is limited given its attention on only a specific movie-*Narrow Path* by Tunde Kelani; hence, future studies can therefore take a cue from this by covering more population in order to have more expansive results. Again, it will also be interesting to compare how filmmakers in Africa, especially in Nigeria, with other filmmakers in other continents, particularly in the west, where feminism is infixed.

### Disclosure Statement

The authors claim no conflict of interest.

### Funding

The research did not receive any specific grants from funding agencies.

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