

## **TikTok and Igbo Female Images in Nigeria: Feminist Vocabularies for Social Consciousness**

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### **Abstract**

TikTok as a social media platform discusses popular culture subjects. It is a device intended for entertainment, commodification, affective paradigms and digital activism. The resurgence of disillusionment characterized by Post Covid19 issues, unemployment, quest for fame/money and gender-based violence in Nigeria between 2021-2022, has resulted to multimedia display promoting female consciousness and domination devoid of Igbo traditional cultural decorum. Despite varied criticisms of TikTok's influence on audiences' psyche (Jiang Qiaolei, 2019), I argue that feminist vocabularies employed by most content creators of Igbo origin in Nigeria are very effectual and mostly non-indigenized in patterns of expression, an argument fit for cultural criticism in the wake of hybridism. This is achieved through data assembled from TikTok app with snapshots of content creators that display a significant support for "sisterhood" targeted towards female energy and liberation. The algorithmic analysis of themes is achieved through conceived data mining, locative investigation and thick mapping of linked ideological perspectives. The selected images, video/audio and texts are laced with feminist consciousness—an assertive female tool for digital affect and activism (Sampson et al, 2018). Relevant interpretational approaches are discussed to provide a holistic background of feminist ideologies inherent in the selected audio-visual clips.

### **Digital Spaces: Towards a New Approach to Narratives in Nigeria**

Nigeria's cultural and social spaces are evolving a disparate identity. In the wake of globalization, we find the mentality of the Nigerian people oscillating between Western and African oriented approaches to social realism. This vacillation assumes a communicative pattern that considers expression from the perspective of linguistic turn—a shift which has occurred in a large narrative space, overtly exhibited for obvious reasons of historical importance. This fact, notwithstanding, has unveiled a critical attention that is directed towards communicative art—an emphasis targeted towards survival and liberation in some hostile socio-economic realities. We are not surprised that Nigerians are trapped in a complex cultural world of languages, ideologies and experiences. This explains the emerging behavioural trends among Nigerians who regurgitate discernable differences in cultural productions between generations of youths in matters relating to gender, sex, marriage, relationship, education, roles, human rights and violence. No doubt, the contemporary cultural productions are accentuated by personal conviction combined with socio-political and ethnic impositions within the Nigerian traditional settings. This begins an interesting discussion on social media and social realism with specific mental portrayals for both the male and female genders.

Clearly, as technology unfolds, Nigerians' imaginative and critical dimensions are sharpened to engage logical and conceptual enquiries that expose realistic approaches within their immediate settings. These enquiries which could be at variance with Nigerian cultural molds are pegged on visual interactions that affect the emotions and senses of the audience—in fact, their outstanding peculiarities should not be judged in a vacuum or misconstrued because they are conscious productions for social criticism. Ultimately, such efforts are aimed at education and re-education to influence human actions.

In the enterprise of Nigerians of Igbo descent, especially females as active participants in the social and digital spaces, one perceives an ideological feminist stance that stemmed out of different grouses against a mentality of power structure in which men are dominant. It is apparent that the female active participants are motivated by patterned cultural polarities of the male and female genders within the Igbo socio-cultural contexts. Critiquing the image of females on digital spaces who have drawn attention to the derogatory and marginal status of the female gender, offers an interesting discussion in the contemporary historical repertoire of the Igbo tribe. This underlying contemporary tradition has heightened the polemics on feminists' concerns which breed cultural *discordianism*—a pattern of thought that encourages ideological discord and confusion to subdue patriarchal mentality. The above argument is hinged on some female digital space users who are “passionately opposed to the forces of subjugation, objectification and betrayal of the female gender in postcolonial” Igbo world (Ogwude 2013:5). These individuals are no doubt the embodiment of feminists' attempt to dramatize female resistance against all patriarchal jurisdiction. The plurality of this consciousness is gaining massive attention and speed in the digital world with young females emerging as strong symbolic voices in the resistance struggle. The reality is that the challenges of females have been homogenized into two categories—castration and unequal relationships (Nzegwu,1996). It is this view of reality that is acknowledged in “sisterhood”—a term that carries the weight of female experiences through collective support and confrontation that offer both psychological and emotional shield. This apparent model of female solidarity stems from the bond of shared inequality, subjugation, discrimination and gender-based violence. The central issue is the identification of common interest—a mode of collective ideology based on common struggle.

Currently, Female digital activism has been in the news. This is due to the attention drawn to it in the wake of Covid 19 lockdown—a phase which has ushered in the feminist “Rethinking Myth” via social media. No doubt, “the impact of COVID-19 has been immensely profound across the global economy, businesses were shut down, markets and supply chains disrupted and millions of people were left idle without jobs” (Chiegboka and Udemba, 2023:145). Significantly, the emergence of coronavirus disease has exposed people to social media for information and entertainment—a leeway to counselling after a long-term lowering of enjoyment spurred by lack of active social activities. An aspect which has been contemplated upon is the spread of false information intentionally displayed to mislead people. But, this dangerous trend does not nullify the necessary roles that social media plays in providing accurate information or knowledge. Of course, these are challenges to mental health and the processes of imparting knowledge. Despite the general awareness of the audience's expectation of this dangerous trend, it has been observed that social media and digital platforms have become an integral part of life—they are connective mediums that people cannot do without. Further observation has stressed the usefulness of social media which dispels boredom, but cautions that excessive use poses an increased risk to mental health (Abbas et al. 2021). The above view mirrors an intent that locates psychologically and emotionally harmful self-professed narratives within digital spaces—a need to critically interrogate the issue of popular culture topics as trends in the wake of social struggles.

### **Rethinking Igbo Cultural Ideology of Female Expressiveness on Digital Spaces**

Culture is a manner or pattern of living that reflects the values and attitudes of a social group within a given cultural context. From ethnographic perspective and evidence with structural influences, one can perceive culture as an aggregate indoctrination that forces the mind to pattern ideas and behaviour according to the dictates of a social group. This is what Richard

Lewis (2006) referred to as “collective programming of the mind” (17). Notably, for David Mikailu (2013) “culture is what defines a particular group” (280). To Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo, it embodies the application of the patterns of life of African peoples—their expressions, mental activity, philosophy of life, artifact and apparel (Azodo 2009:190). In fact, the process of mind control or cultural programming is assumed to take place at both the conscious and unconscious levels. Apart from predominantly imposed constraints, culture cannot be said to be static—it is affected by physical, emotional, psychological and social changes. Culture is time-bound—a characteristic which reveals its dynamic nature or trend. In essence, it has a complex interweaving of positive and negative patterns that could be challenged and queried over time.

Like other cultures, the Igbo culture demonstrates the ancient principles, myth, behaviour, norms, customs, rituals or traditional beliefs of the original inhabitants of the southeastern Nigeria. The above definition is what is chiefly referred to as “*omenala ndi Igbo*—the Igbo culture” (Nwauwa & Anyanwu, 2019). On the basis of history—the details out of which ideological narratives are formed, one can prove the validity of this position that the Igbo people are an ethnic group in Nigeria chiefly found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. There are also significant number of Igbo people in Delta, Rivers and Edo states whose identities have been compromised based on the idea of mobility—a displacement of domain in othered spaces. The above knowledge stems from a mode of classification traced to family roots and names that are of Igbo origin with full-fledged narrative validity.

To bring critical attention to the psyche of the Igbo people in gendered perspective, one must understand that patriarchy and patrimony provide the basis on which the Igbo culture thrives. This further interrogates the Igbo cultural ideology that restrains females’ lives—rights, marriage, gender equality, expression, roles, behaviour and choices. All these are age-old ideological patterns that have predominantly wrapped the female gender in silence over the years. Furthermore, prior ideology that puts females in a tightly gendered frame cloned as the “other”—inferiorized, enslaved, marginalized and manipulated beings are now constantly challenged by contemporary circumstances which reflect immediate occurrences. Currently, new interpretations are anticipated by Igbo females in contemporary behaviour in which religion, tradition and patriarchy have no full grasp. To them, this is an amazing freshness which brings insight to psychological balance that females have been denied over the years.

Digital activism has recently become a widely accepted concept by female public commentators and scholars all over the world. It has spiralled in both developed and developing countries to reverberate behaviours and social tendencies that constitute a huge threat. To a large extent, utterances via digital mediums have exposed an upsurge of culturally displaced-person mentality which has constituted a huge threat to certain Igbo cultural security. By utterances via digital mediums, we are faced with new ideological views. Closely examined, “it is abundantly clear that the goal of communication is to convey intents and meaning to the addressee employing the instrument of communication which is language (Dozie & Ojilere 2019:70)”. Ultimately, there are internal personal views which contradict the Igbo cultural mentality. These dissent views are wrapped in the feminist house with occidental mentality—a pattern with domesticated strands in Nigeria. So, in spite of the established Igbo cultural facts that a female is limited in choice of expression, digital platforms have become a model for exposing the sources of unhappiness for Igbo females in Nigeria. This trend has become a contemporary and effective pattern of tackling diverse gender issues with primitive accumulation. To Igbo females on digital space like Tik Tok, “the condition for the freedom of one is the condition for the freedom of all” (Udenta 1993:127). Looking closely at various

digital spaces, one sees the unanimous outcry of Igbo females' desire to lift themselves above "gender stereotypes entrenched in traditional social structures mapped out by men" for their advantage (Nwahunanya, 2013:1). Consequently, the feminist mentality visible in their expressions smells more of radicality—a panacea for female liberation through radical orientation wrapped in radical feminism. There are also other influences of other African feminist ideologies in their expressions such as Snail-Sense, Nego-feminism, Womanism, Motherism, Stiwanism and violent feminism. The use of the proclaimed radicality is solely for feminist scholarship—an attempt to reorder and enlarge Igbo feminist discourse. No doubt, digital expressions have proven the rising boldness of females against subjugation and patriarchy through a radical approach—a total deviation from the standard subtle and vulnerable females. The extreme poles of approaches could appear as "a consensus that resolve to reprocess, reorder and rearrange the gender stereotypes that are entrenched by patriarchy" (Umar & Egbunu 2018:201). This perception as displayed on TikTok offers some evidences of change in the pattern of thought by Igbo females—an alternative that triggers other females to act in the open. Their feminist mind standout in the digital world, dispelling the assumptions that they are vulnerable, silent and myopic.

### **Feminist Vocabularies and Sexuality: TikTok as an Alternative Tradition and Space for Igbo Female Digital Activism**

*TikTok* is a social media platform for sharing short video clips. It could be referred to as a short video hosted on *TikTok* which is viewed online by different people in different cultural contexts. The act of uploading a short video clip on any given subject of discussion for online viewers is simply referred to as *TikToking*. In essence, yearning to explore and watch videos on TikTok as an online platform is to TikTok. The journey of TikTok starts once you download TikTok on your mobile phone with so much enthusiasm. This connects to your forethought which embraces human innovativeness with endless interpretations of discursive models. Suddenly, you are exposed to an 'anecdote'—a short account of an incident with a swift power of affect often humorous, interesting or emotionally disturbing. At the right down side of the anecdote, there are signs in form of shapes that convey directives to users which only make sense when they click on them. The *round shape* indicates the owner of the anecdote, the *heart shape* requests a user to express the emotion of love towards it, the slightly *roundish shape* with three dots in the middle allows users to comment on the uploaded vignette as well as view other users' comments, the *square-like shape* with two pointed triangles below enables users to add videos to their favourites, the arrow-like shape directs you to share within a new circle for critical attention that shapes consciousness. The top of the vignette also has visible short words such as LIVE, EXPLORE, FOLLOWING, FOR YOU. These words clearly communicate the intention of usage. With just a click, users simply understand the framework of usage—the perception that informs and influences our consciousness with symbolic images that are individually or collectively shared. One fundamental implication of using TikTok as a social media platform centers on its chaotic nature which freely exposes users to varied experiences of life that could interest, irritate or bore you—hence, the attempt to search for creation that grabs your interest or intention. This awareness enables us to discern the ideological bearings of different individuals either from creative/aesthetic perspectives or for social criticism.

TikTok and TikToking are wrapped in *neologism*—a pattern of expression and digital tradition marked by either a recurrent view of reality or distorted view of reality. Notably, TikToking which mostly thrives on oral or verbal expressions employs video, image or text via the internet to expose comicality on different topics for social consciousness or advertising target. This

pattern of comicality in expression is pivotal in the recent internet lifestyle. Significantly, TikTok explores prevailing vernacular culture within a given social context such as fashion, art, entertainment, jokes, music, films, sports, domestic and public lifestyles—commonly perceived as popular culture subjects or themes that are trending. From the perspective of this research, TikTok is explored as a tool for female sexual orientation (sexuality) and digital activism within the Nigerian social space. In fact, the popularity and constant sharing of influential video clips uploaded by different female TikTokers of Igbo background have encouraged female interest in Information and Communications Technology—a feminist movement that has spurred scholarly debate on various gender specific issues that draw critical attention to freedom of speech as a form of liberation from cultural hegemony. The contemporary Nigerian society is aware of the social and economic importance of TikTok. This awareness is perhaps perceived as a visible phenomenon for female digital activism against any form of physical, mental, social and cultural subjugation.

No doubt, the year 2020 was characterized by Covid 19 lockdown which ushered in a form of solitude due to lack of social participation which drastically affected mental health and human relationships. This period has also exposed TikTok as new form of visual entertainment which is easily accessed and convenient for users. In 2021, videos of young females who employed certain taboo expressions that bordered on sexuality layered with jokes and serious bodily movements metamorphosed into trends contrary to Igbo cultural decorum of female behaviour. The major concern here is that the vulnerable members of the society are exposed to video clips that display sexual mentality expressed in vulgarism. Their ability to understand the metaphoric implications of certain coined expressions and slang despite the supposedly acquired ethical values raises great concern. These children freely make jokes with words like “Kpekus” and “Toto” without any form of fear or restraint. This is due to the fact that they spend a great deal of time on the app creating contents with adults and watching jokes to combat boredom. The major issue here is that the Generation Z, the generation of people born in the late 1990s and mid-2010s, precisely, youngest adults have continued to produce content with heightened tone and serious unethical narratives in order to engage their followers and increase publicity. To them, this is a creative pattern that is highly engaging. The content creators discuss topics such as sex work, sex in marriage, female sexual rights, relationships issues, mental health, patriarchal oppression, female body etc. in video clips of about 15-60 seconds, though some might be longer. Specifically, different social media platform users share some of these video clips as a form of enlightenment bursting with hilarious joke. Due to the sheer volume of these TikTok videos that are full of hilarity and female consciousness on sexuality, the Gen Zs have opportunities to interact, explore and enjoy the videos, while the content creators have continued with their viewers’ subject of interest.

Special mention must be made of Tiktok’s Algorithm which encourages followers to maintain their viewing preferences. Hence, a stream of view cherished by a user is always recommended on the his or her For You Page (FYP). Algorithm is a unique way of keeping social platform users glued to interest and attractions. It must also be reiterated that users’ interaction with the content on the app is paramount. The most obvious aspect is that Tiktok videos are shared across other platforms thus increasing the viral modes of followers—a subtle support for the trending culture of vulgarism.



### **Scope and Methodology of the Study**

This research analyzes five (5) selected video clips of Igbo female active TikTokers. These TikTokers are selected from different Igbo states in Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Owerri to create a geographical spread which buttresses the fact that the use of vulgarism is similar despite differences in location and distance. The attention given to the Igbo cultural contexts is a form of thick mapping—a digital cultural mapping that interprets contemporary practices through narrative and participatory modes. This research uses TikTok as a location-based technology to gather data and insights on radical vernacular culture among Igbo female TikTokers. This study also employs data mining process in discovering feminist patterns of expression, inspiration, relationships and insights from TikTok. This is achieved through the use of algorithmic analysis of themes, random data collection, exploratory data analysis, speech model building and evaluation. Data mining aids in extracting knowledge that informs the findings, predictions and decisions of this study. It is basically used in analyzing the behaviour and patterns of speech of the selected TikTokers as feminist trends woven around sexuality and liberation. Notably, uniformity in language use devoid of ethical considerations and behavioural patterns have necessitated this research and the choice of these TikTokers. TikTok algorithm ranking signals such as video information, user interactions and account settings are the main factors that have influenced this research. The study also adopts feminist and psychological perspectives in interpretation. In a work of this nature, the extreme poles of approaches and interpretation are employed in explicating the selected video clips of female TikTokers of Igbo origin listed below: @freshbillion0, @sweetat\_tube, @donia\_nalita (Ojiugo ana awala eze), @Amah\_chisomtv/@sozikchoppers39, @cc\_nnamchi101.

### **Feminist Jargons and Igbo Female TikTokers**

Every Feminist Igbo TikToker has a specific commitment as a female—firstly to discuss issues about being a female, secondly to interpret reality from a female perspective. Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (1987:5) observes that “the biological identity of a female counts and is real. She further explains that female biology is an important and necessary aspect of her that should not be used to limit her”. Therefore, a number of reasons make a consideration of female biology relevant for a feminist Igbo TikToker in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

1. She has been enslaved through her body for ages
2. Her psyche has been deeply manipulated via cultural norms
3. Her biology has submerged her in stereotypic notions about the female attributes: vulnerability, inferiority, passivity, docility, compliancy and instability (Mary Ellman.1968. *Thinking About Women*)

Significantly, “the concept of language is multifaceted and ideologically motivated; the lexical choices and other extra linguistic variables in social interactions often reflect an ideology whether gender or other social discourse” (Uwem & Ekpe 2018:57). Similarly, they assert that “language extensively communicates the social perception of the male and female which could be in favour of either gender” (Ibid). Generally, the discourse on the Nigerian word, kpekus as a vulgar word for female genitals has generated many questions begging for answers. A review of video clip displayed on the FYP of @freshbillion0 aligns with people’s perception of language as a vehicle for social integration. In the clip, the content creator through phone conversation asked:



@freshbillion0

Female Speaker: “Hello, hello, hello, Ekene!

Ekene: Hello!

Female Speaker: I just dey hear Kpekus everywhere! Kpekus everywhere!  
What is the meaning of Kpekus?

Ekene: Go ask Google

Female Speaker: Simple something, you no know!

The above conversation is not different from social reality—the genuine concern for orientation and exposure of word meanings in relation to femalehood and power. In recent times, Kpekus is sexualized not to denigrate the female the gender. It is perceived as a vehicle for celebrating female power and feminist value—self-worth. Again, “Ekene” is an Igbo female or male-given name which manifests to a large extent the crystallization of ideology that stems from constant usage within a given cultural group—hence the question “What is Kpekus?” The implication is that the evaluation of gender issues is assessed through norms and language in the relationship between male and female.

As rightly assessed in this research, video clips of female TikTokers discuss female sexuality through the radical lens of “feminism” using “Kpekus and Toto” as technical terminologies unique in exploring the female subject. From the above specialized words, I have coined the concepts of “Kpekusism” and “Totoism” to consciously interpret the multi-dimensionality of female consciousness in relation to sexual activity and other social impositions of patriarchal mentality. In essence, “Kpekusism” and “Totoism” are concepts that heighten female discourse and mentality on sexuality. These concepts are important in exploring sexuality studies among the Generation Z within the Igbo cultural contexts. To explicate my concepts in relation to feminist ideological postulations, the terminologies are derived from terms visibly used in the female discourse within the Nigerian cultural contexts. The terms, “Kpekusism” and “Totoism” are derived from two components –*Kpekus* and –*ism*, –*Toto* and –*ism*. An interpretation of the words *kpekus* and *Toto* gives a metaphoric uniqueness centering on femalehood and the need for affirmative sexual activeness for a better mental health. According to Urban Dictionary (2011) *Kpekus* is an Urhobo-Nigerian slang for the female genitalia which originated from Delta state—a gender specific metaphoric mapping for an Urhobo word for *Mussels*—the fresh water bivalve shellfish (urbandictionary.com). The *Toto* is another pigeon word with a cross-domain mapping used for the target domain as in the case of *Kpekus*. The –*ism* aligns with the social movement and behaviour that project the feminist ideologies and narratives of the selected Igbo female TikTokers. Therefore, “Kpekusism” and “Totoism” locate female

sexuality through behaviours and expression of feelings that could be physical, erotic, psychological, emotional, social and biological.

Notably, the discussions by female TikTokers on sexuality create gender consciousness—a deep sensitivity to physiology, sexual identity, gender roles and relationships not censored by social, moral and religious perspectives to ensure healthy sexuality. Surprisingly, their use of vulgar language and jargon have found an appealing audience and ready acceptance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. Their approaches show individual innovations with inadequacy such as excessive use of vulgarism and disclosure of personal information which cannot be ignored due to a large number of TikTok users with varying age brackets. Thus, the need to know and understand the motivations behind their language use and action becomes a top priority for this research. The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze critically the use of vulgarism as a feminist metaphor of power for social consciousness in media discourse.

Notably, Bell (1991) seems to have given TikTokers enough impetus to launch affect notions on media discourse by stating that “media language carries a persuasive force within a given cultural context. The fact remains that the impulses of personal experiences link to the collective consciousness of a society” (Debo Adejumo, 1987). In essence, one must take cognizance of certain beliefs, prescribed social roles, group norms, values and relationships in a social setting—a form of cultural antecedent that projects a collective psychic repertoire of images.

As a TikTok user, it does matter to note that ‘foregrounding and backgrounding’ are very significant in understanding the contexts of videos on your “For You Page (FYP)”. The importance of foregrounding and backgrounding in this research is perceived in the presentation of vernacular feminist glossary expressed through different TikTokers’ personal perspectives—the use of jargons to delve into deep conversation about female in opposition to male sexuality. TikTok videos embody significant weight and implications for negotiation of meanings in the attributes revolving around the female body. The feminist glossary in the context of this work is mainly foregrounded to entrench a pattern that gives clarifications on Igbo female behaviour. The implication is that only people who understand the Igbo language could interpret the negotiation of meanings in relation to sexual power configurations. We should note that the ideology expressed in all the selected videos centers on the concepts of “Kpekusism” and “Totoism”—a radical mentality geared towards achieving freedom of sexual expression for females.

A significant aspect of the selected Igbo female Tiktokers is hinged on their rhetorical technique—the use of Igbo lexical resources to celebrate female liberty of expression. For instance, the content creator @ sweetat\_tube in her video has projected a representation of her personal desire and value on female sexuality using the Igbo language as a medium. References to her words “Ikpu” evokes a sensual feeling in her viewers. Her tone and body language display her seriousness over her man’s inherent perception of women becoming docile in sexual matters—hence her assertiveness in evoking a feeling of disdain over men’s invasion and disruption of female sexual desires. In her video, she asserts:





“My brother, I can’t pretend! I will tell you how to handle my “Ikpu” (Kpekus). You can’t tell me how to handle my “Ikpu” (Kpekus). I will not like you to decide for me! That’s why I’m a bad girl!

We see in the content creator’s video, a representation of female desire that many may not share with other people in reality. For the purpose of gender consciousness, she has resorted to Tiktok as a medium for communicative process—a socialization platform where she can share her values and expose certain oppressive experiences against her sexuality. No doubt, her tone smells of self-assertiveness—a radical decision to reject patriarchal domination of her body. Though her action of speaking out is radical, her narrative promotes gender equity in collective sexual activities. In fact, her expressiveness reinforces the theme of female resistance and liberation. Her video also educates female viewers to gear towards achieving self-consciousness, self-realization and liberation from the process of Oedipalization—a pattern of castration which removes the power of sexuality from a female thus making her feel inferior and less in control of her body. Significantly, Sigmund Freud’s idea of castration helps one to understand the content creator’s assertive quest—a position that has removed her sexual rights (Eagleton 134). Her assertiveness may also have been driven by male dominance, an action that has fueled her thematic focus on Tiktok. Note that she elucidates a radical western feminist tendency in challenging pleasantries in male dominance.

Additionally, @donia\_nalita (Ojiugo ana awala eze) dramatizes a subtle revolution in the female quest for complimentary. Her video is analogous to @sweetat\_tube—a new breed of Igbo females in search of equality and rightful acceptance in sexual cultures. However, female consciousness in her video is laced with subtlety on the concept of “Kpekusism and Totoism”. Her choice of vocabulary is replete with both metaphoric images and vulgar words to improve cordial relationship between male and female, especially married people as she indicated in her video. In Igbo language, she uses such words like: “Mgbadike” (Penis), “Ike” (buttocks), “Ikpu” (Kpekus), “Ila Otu” or “Ipia Oku” (to have sex) etc. In her video, her identified pattern of expression is mostly used as a business strategy to market products like pills, lubricants and tightening creams that would enhance the sexual lives of couples or partners. Therefore, the implied use of words encourages politeness strategies in social interaction revolving around sexuality discourse. The fact remains that her linguistic tokens in sexual interactions could be face-threatening on listeners of different age brackets which is also capable of creating distortions in personality formation and self-perception. A more comprehensive analysis of her video does not play down on her effort in using euphemistic strategies as a form of linguistic politeness. The use of certain words like “Odogwu” (my Man/ Lover) and “Mgbedike” (Penis) are examples of such efforts. But one thing is clear, her use of euphemistic strategies is combined with lexical process that constitutes a taboo in discourse. These linguistic usages are mostly improper and unfit for public interactions. An interpretation of her narrative as captured

below gives a broader view of her attempt to use politeness and face management strategies in projecting her intentions. The texts below are translated version of her opening narrative:



“If I move to the left twisting my buttocks(Ike) without being noticed  
 If I move to the right twisting my buttocks (Ike) without being noticed  
 I simply move straight to where my man (Odogwu) is busy pressing his phone—  
 I position myself to encounter his penis (Mgbedike) and everything happens!  
 There is a total shutdown!”

The quest for equity and freedom of expression has been the goal of African feminists. From the above comments of the content creator, one sees a pattern of mentality wrapped around Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo’s “Snail Sense Feminism”—a pattern of thought which encourages her to adopt discretion and diplomacy in her sexual request. From her narrative, we see her zeal to lure her partner to action. In line with the Igbo cultural ethics, women should adopt a subtle way of approaching their partners in matters relating to sexual drive. In fact, one can concur that her approach is culture-based and culture-centered. Significantly, the imitation of the lifestyle of snails makes her tolerant and accommodating. Again the content creator, @donia\_nalita (Ojiugo ana awala eze) in her long narrative also suggests complementarity, negotiation and collaboration—a Nego-feminist perspective that evokes dynamism and shifts in process within the framework of sexual activity. This ideology is influenced by Obioma Nnemeka’s African model of feminism known as “Nego-Feminism”— the need to create a balance for understanding in the face of female struggle against psychological oppression arising from spousal relationships. To Obioma Nnaemeka, female struggle should be addressed through feminism and negotiation. The multi-dimensionality in @donia\_nalita’s narrative is wrapped on the ever-shifting experiences in male-female relationship. She is dialogic unlike @ sweetat\_tube who is combatant in narrative.

The impact of feminism and gender consciousness has made @Amah\_chisomtv/ @sozikchoppers39 visible on social media. This impact has encouraged gender identity rights and sexual orientation—hence the need to highlight female relevance in servicing men’s sexual needs. Her “Kpekus mentality” makes her feel psychologically lifted—a pattern of thought that helps her negotiate for survival in her patriarchal setting. Notably, the content creator’s diction cannot be accepted innocently without eliciting gendered meanings. This brings her audience to interpret her use of very sensitive language in relation to male and female. In addition to her

adopting “Kpekusism” as a strategy, she has adopted a feminist idiolect—a superiorised positivity that helps her in manipulating reality. Her pattern of speech features striking exotic imagery to heighten sexual effect and elevate her style. A look at her language reveals particularized images of men struggling with sexual strength and fertility issues, hence the use of the expression “Nwoke na Ive/Ife” (Man and struggles). The use of Igbo expressions associated with sexual functions such as “ira otu”, “ira nwa”, “inyu”, “amu mmiri” suggests a vocation of herself as she emphasizes the fact that once any man buys her luxury herbs, she would offer herself for sex:

“I zuo mu ogwu a, I will deliver to your door step!

Mu ara gi otu ! Ejighi m ujo biri n’obodo aa!

Mu pia gi otu mu ga pia gi, I ga ma n’ejigh m ujo biri n’obodo aa!



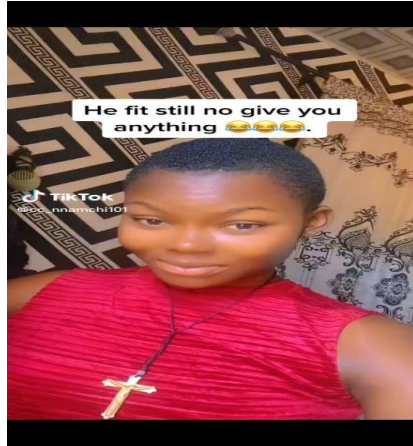
Though her language is similar to others who explore the same thematic content, there is a kind of re-invention that shows her superiority of assertion and demand for sexual rights using Owerri accent. One thing is clear, she is de-masculinizing sex by assertively feminizing her self-worth through advertisement of sexual products termed *luxury herbs* (Nwoke na Ife/Ive). According to her:

“The luxury herbs are not for poor men! If you don’t have money, you can’t have sex with me! Your license is the luxury herbs (Nwoke na Ife/Ive)!

@Amah\_chisomtv/ @sozikchoppers39’s language is her means of ordering her sexual life—a means of manipulating men to patronize her products in reality. One semantic implication visible in her narrative is that it adopts a male-norm inferiorization that creatively manipulates motivation.

Behind every language use, there is a motivational factor—a deliberate effort to display thematic and stylistic intentions taken from personal experiences. No doubt, the indigenous condition of male deceit has spurred the young content creator @cc\_nnamchi101 to adopt subtle self-assertiveness—a feminist ideal that has been brought about by men’s oppressive deceit of the female gender. @cc\_nnamchi101’s video gears towards social consciousness and activism—the need for females to understand patriarchal antics that manipulate them into sexual activities. From the perspective of Freudian Superego, her superego does not approve men’s idealizing attitude towards her and other females (Eagleton,136). Her superego activism is directed to a generic term for men in Igbo language “OBI” whose conscious, unconscious and externalized display of deceit repress female sense of worth—a form of inferiority wrapped in the belief that females are dependent on men for survival or happiness. The reality here is that the sole function of the superego is to induce guilt and repress female freedom. This leads to extreme anxiety in the female gender. The use of code-mixing and code-switching adds aesthetic flavour to her narrative. The young female TikToker consciously alternates between English and the Igbo language in her spoken narrative. We evidently perceive a change in the

dialect of expression in most of the TikTokers. The above point is clearly brought out by these comments:



@cc\_nnamchi101

“If a man choro ira gi for free without any stress:  
 If a man wants to have sex with you for free without any stress, you know the first thing he will do? He will make a promise to you to weaken your emotion! This antic will spur you to open up for him to explore you! The last one that promised to buy me a phone didn’t know that I have a very expensive phone! He expected me to have sex with him with just a mere promise! O mere m expect ka m ra ya! He kept waiting and waiting eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeh! Umunwoke!Umunwoke! I didn’t beg him for a phone! Obi! Obi!Obi! Hei Chineke! Umunwoke!”



@ogeviktv has employed TikTok as a medium for female activism and social consciousness. Her perception of gender insensitivity in sexual relations among married couples gears toward “sisterhood” as a feminist strategy to end sexism and oppression—a unique movement to shun male denigration of the female gender in sexual activities. Through re-orientation, the content creator educates the male gender on certain barriers that militate against healthy sexual lifestyles. Her narrative is a form of emotional support to the female gender—a pattern of thought that encourages them to be self-reliant and emotionally strong in matters related to *Kpekus* and their sexual gratification. This is an affection borne out of common feelings and experiences—a unique female solidarity motivated by the dominance approach. The dominance approach here does not take Lakoff’s (1975) perception of language use and women’s inferior position in a given cultural context. In this context, the dominance approach adopts linguistic usage to heighten female importance in sexuality studies.



## Conclusion

No doubt, ideology reveals a gap which significantly exists among individuals within a given context. Although the selected audio-visual clips of the selected female TikTokers have confronted the challenges of participatory culture of anxiety among females of Igbo origin through media education, there seems to be a discernable contemporary pattern of speech devoid of Igbo decorum—hence, the consistent application of vulgar concepts such as *kpekus*, *toto*, *amu*, *otu* and others in the discussion of feminist modes of social consciousness and patterns of liberation gives an alluring impression capable of drawing the audiences' attention. The implication is that the audiences, especially the GEN Z are groups of individuals who seek for unconventional modes of expression that evoke surprise and humour. The reason is not farfetched due to the mental stress imposed on young expressive minds during the Covid—19 lockdowns; thus making TikTok an escape route for neurotic consequences of redundancy spurred by lack of activities and prolonged isolation.

Notably, the female TikTokers' choice of aesthetic narrative voice and choices are replete with questions of sexual alienation and liberation—an exposition made explicit for the audience's independent choices. Within the context of social consciousness, the selected audio-visual clips have received consistent posting and reposting within social media spaces, thus encouraging the audience not to lose touch of their imagination—the need to respond to audio-visual stimuli intended for entertainment, digital humour and social consciousness. The consistent reposting of these humour-vulgarized audio-visual clips has been a notable pattern in the contemporary media discourse. To heighten our sense of intellectualism, we must understand that a consistent reposting of such vulgar audio-visual clips strikes a balance between audiences' sense of humour and the TikTokers' aim for social consciousness—thus, a dual purpose resurfaces with imbedded personal meanings. Within the ambits of the selected female TikTokers, there is a discernable feminist enlightenment geared towards female assertion, sisterhood, liberation, protection and inclusion devoid of repressed psychic—a form of female energy devoid of inferiority complex. In this study, the aspiration of the TikTokers is spurred by the need for self-improvement through acquisition of media knowledge closely tied up with new demands for female active participation in different spheres of life—a pattern that shuns voicelessness and docility in the face of media awareness.

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