

# SEXUALITY AND POWER DYNAMICS: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONAL PATTERN

**Nwode, Goodluck Chigbo, PhD**

Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria  
[goodluck.nwode@ebsu.edu.ng](mailto:goodluck.nwode@ebsu.edu.ng)

&

**Justina C. Anyadiiegwu PhD**

Department of English Language and Literature  
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State  
[anyadiiegwu.justina@nocen.edu.ng](mailto:anyadiiegwu.justina@nocen.edu.ng)

## **Abstract**

Teacher-student interactional pattern is largely characterised by unhealthy sexuality and power dynamics. With discourse analysis, this study analyses the kind of sexuality and the extent of power dynamics that characterise the pattern of interaction between teachers and students across nations' colleges and tertiary institutions. It reveals that illegitimate sexual intercourse and relationships between teachers and students arise from the exercise of power on students by most of the teachers involved in the acts. Upon teachers' power influence, students get compelled into sexual intercourse and sometimes sexual relationships with them. The predominant sexuality teachers and students engage in is heterosexuality. The power dynamics involved in their interaction allows for sexual extortion and suzerainty relationship between teachers and students. The relationship and the discourse between them are less interactive and largely authoritative, exploitative and monopolistic. The study concludes that the asymmetric and rigid power-enveloped interactional pattern of teacher-student relationships paves way for teachers to incessantly breach the rights of students over time. It recommends that symmetrical and loose power interactional pattern should be instituted and unhealthy sexuality and power dynamics should be outlawed. The study is grounded by two theories of integration, with which discourse analysis is integrated with other fields and approaches, as in integrating linguistics with education.

**Keywords:** Sexuality, Power dynamics, Discourse analysis, Teachers, Students, Interactional pattern, Relationship

## **Introduction**

Power dynamics manifests in human sexual relationships, as in other human activities. Thus, it manifests in teacher-student interaction pattern and sexual relationships. This study sets out to explore sexuality and power dynamics in teacher-student interactional pattern, using discourse analysis approach. The application of discourse analysis is imperative here because of the place of language in exploring sexuality and power dynamics in teacher-student interactions as well as sexual relationships. Van Dijk (1997), Schäffner (1997 & 2010), Gee (2014) and Ahmed (2017), among others, affirm the invaluable place of (critical) discourse analysis in social relationships and matters of social practices, power, equity, ownership and distribution of social goods and so on. According to Seidel (1985, p. 45), discourse of any kind is political, because it serves as a site of struggle, a 'semantic space in which meanings are produced and/or challenged.' In the same vein, this study challenges the semantic space in which meanings of the power-characterised interaction between teachers and students are produced.

Power is said to be one of the contested terms subjected to strategic contestation and debates (Gallie, 1956; Connolly 1993; Ahmed, 2017). Such other concepts include 'authority', 'politics', 'political', 'legitimacy',

'control', 'domination', 'manipulation' and 'struggle', among others. As Wilson (2012, p. 27) observes, considering the connection between 'political' and other associate terms, almost all discourses could be considered political, 'because all of these concepts associated with 'political' may be employed in any form of discourse. Chilton (2004), van Dijk (1997) and Wilson (2012), among others, are of the view that the semantic ambiguity of political discourse borders on the semantic senses of these concepts associated with the term 'political', which include power. Among others, Chilton and Schäffner (2002) have noted that conflict between different genders is considered political. By different genders, they imply socio-culturally constructed gender differences, which differ from natural sexual differences. Conversely, sex is not culturally and socially constructed. This assertion is rejected and argued otherwise by some scholars (Butler, 1988; Butler, 1990). But a larger number of scholars and other persons affirm sex to be natural, not cultural and/or social (Acholonu, 1995; Robert, 2016; Ogbonnaya & Besong, 2018; Besong, 2019).

Leaning on Seidel's (1985, p. 45) view, this study advances an argument that a discourse of sexuality and power dynamics in teacher-student interactional pattern is political for the same reason noted above. One reason for this assertion is the fact that gender-based conflict obtains between teachers and students in the course of their interaction. Also, it is an indisputable fact that their interaction is characterised by some socio-cultural and educational issues. This fact is one proof that their teacher-student interactional pattern in terms of sexuality and power dynamics is political. The foregoing assertion is sustained by Orwell's (1946, p. 2) argument that 'all issues are political issues.' In the same vein, it is given credence by Dallmayr (1984, p. 1), who avers that 'there is hardly any topic which cannot somehow be brought within the purview of political analysis.' However, besides being political, it teacher-student interaction is also apolitical. The non-political aspects and dispositions of teachers and students in the course of their interaction are apolitical. These include classroom and sexual interactions.

### **Situating Discourse Analysis in Teacher-Student Interactional Pattern**

Until the early 1990's, when Fairclough, Kress, van Dijk, van Leeuwen and Wodak had a two-day combined intellectual scholarship at a symposium in Amsterdam, discussing specific theories and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), disparate group of scholars did so separately (Rogers et al., 2005; van Dijk, 1993). As Rogers et al. (2005, 366) note, 'education researchers turned to discourse analysis as a way to make sense of the ways in which people make meaning in educational contexts.' Before the 1990's, linguistic analysis in education research grew out of works in: sociolinguistics, such as Gumperz (1982), Labov (1972), Sinclair & Coulthard (1976); linguistic anthropology, as in Silverstein & Urban (1996); and ethnography of communication, such as Gumperz and Hymes (1964), and Hymes (1972). For instance, Sinclair and Coulthard (1976) introduced an elaborate framework for coding teachers' and students' discourse acts in classroom conversation. They had the intention of providing an extensive structural model of organisational discourse in classroom interactions.

Also, the work of Cazden (1988 & 2001) grew out of such descriptive analyses of classroom conversation. As some linguists of that time preoccupied themselves with describing the classroom micro-interactions between teachers and students, their contemporaries in sociology and cultural studies (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977; Bourdieu, 1979 & 1984; Oakes, 1986) also concerned themselves with looking at and holding on to classrooms and schools to theorise the ways in which social structures are reproduced through educational institutions. Leaning on critical social theory, these studies sought to look at the ways in which macro-structures play out in the interactions, rituals and traditions of the classroom (Rogers et al., 2005). With the exception of Bernstein (1971), cultural theorists seldom turn to a close analytical study of discourse structures. In the same vein, linguistic anthropologists and conversation analysts seldom turn to social theory or attempt to connect their micro-level analyses with broader social forces. Given the foregoing, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) evolved as an attempt to merge or harmonise social theory and discourse analysis in to describe, interpret and explain the ways in which discourse constructs get constructed and represented by the social world (Rogers et al., 2005).

Consequently, educational researchers have increasingly turned to CDA since the 1990's with the intent of using CDA as a reasonable approach to finding and proffering answers to questions about the relationships between language and society (Rogers et al., 2005). Given the fact that all kinds of Discourse Analysis are tied to linguistics, it is quite clear that discourse analysis aptly situates in education. Applied Linguistics is the branch of linguistics taking the lead in the application of linguistic knowledge, approaches, theories and modalities to education as well as educational research. Injustice and oppression in various social contexts are some of the major factors that pushed scholars of various fields to engage with critical theory, with a view to making efforts to locate the multiple ways in which power and domination are achieved (Kinchloe & McLaren, 2003). Power, in its dynamism, exhibits domination. Those who exercise power are influenced by it so that they often tend to dominate and/or even oppress the opponents in the realm of power and other individuals under them. This is what manifests in the conventional interaction between teachers and students. Teachers and students in sexual relationships traverse the conventional relationship to an unconventional one, which takes different dimension and pattern from the normal (conventional) one.

The concern of this paper makes the application of discourse analysis imperative, since teacher-student relational pattern is characterised by dynamic power, even as the corpus situates in education. Discourse analysis is one of those tools Andrus (2013, p. 4976) considers 'tools for theorising persuasion, authority, asymmetrical power relationship, and political activity.' Although the interaction between the teacher and the student in and outside the classroom is not political proper, the former retains conventionalised and institutionalised authority over the latter. By this reality, the former (teacher) un/consciously exerts power over the latter (student) to command obedience. Obviously, the relationship between teachers and students is usually asymmetrical. The power base of their relationship is also asymmetrical. The reality that their relationship is asymmetrical makes it obvious that their interactional pattern is characterised by asymmetrical power dynamism. Also, discourse analysis is imperative in discussing and/or analysing teacher-student sexual interaction because persuasion is one tool used extensively by the teacher for both normal teaching and sexual exercises. First, the teacher draws from the tradition of the school environment to persuade the female student to believe and remain socialised with suzerain sexuality, in which sexuality is gender-streamed. That is sexuality is moved from sex in natural consideration to gender in socio-cultural consideration.

Grounded by gender streaming, patriarchy and sexual orientation and practices of the school environment, the teacher teaches the female student to develop and maintain asymmetrical power relation between herself and her male colleague, and male teacher too. Thus, the female student gets socialised by the teacher to consider the unbalanced power between her and the male student, and/or the male teacher as a normal tradition. On the other side, the male student gets socialised likewise on the same gender-streamed sexuality, for which he remains at advantage over his female colleague both in and outside the school environment. Instead of de-emphasising asymmetrical (unbalanced) power parameter in male-female relations, the teacher holds on to the tradition of gender-based sexuality of inequality. Conversely, just as Ahmed (2017, p. 96) notes, 'a critical perspective drives the linguistic tradition', discourse analysis is imperative in discussing sexuality and power dynamics in teacher-student interactional pattern. This is because bringing discourse analysis to the discussion allows and calls for a critical perspective that would drive as well as bring to place the linguistic tradition of de-emphasising gender streaming, gender stereotype against women and men alike, discrimination, gender-based classroom split or separation of students, gender inequality, and male preponderance power dynamics. With a critical discourse analysis of the relational pattern between teachers and students, a new linguistic tradition of speech act and discourse on sex, sexuality and gender, and male and female differences and rights would be installed in the education system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded by van Leeuwen's (2005) Integrationist Approach (IA) to discourse analysis and Ozumba's (2012 & 2014) philosophical theory of Integrative Humanism (IH). IA borrows from different

methods and disciplines in the course of doing textual and content analysis of any corpus (van Leeuwen, 2005; Ahmed, 2017, pp. 93-7). According to Ahmed (2017, p. 97), the integrationist model presumes that it is possible for a theoretical framework to be broad enough to reverberate across socio-cultural and political landscapes, and sufficiently allow for diversity in various socio-cultural contexts. This theoretical model (Integrationist Approach) is affirmed to be problem-oriented in that it demonstrates that no single discipline or approach can satisfactorily and independently address a particular problem (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 8; Ahmed, 2017, p. 94). Rather, disciplines and approaches are existentially interdependent and so can work well and address problems better when they are integrated. With integrative approach, involving the integration of linguistics (particularly discourse analysis), education, communication, social relations and philosophy (particularly critical thinking and logical reasoning) in pedagogic context would yield integrative inter- and -multidisciplinary approaches of solving some salient issues in these fields. As Chilton (2004 & 2007) and Wodak and Meyers (2016) have argued, no discipline-specific approach is still capable of providing answers to the complex phenomena, such as power and politics, education, science, communication, and discourse, etc.

Also, as Chilton (2004) and Ahmed (2017) demonstrate, ideological and hegemonic struggles are discursively constructed. This implies that ideological hegemony as well as relational hegemony (as in between teachers and students), which usually get constructed discursively, can be deconstructed and reconstructed discursively too. That is the central advocacy of this study. That deconstruction and reconstruction for meaningful integration rather than hegemony is the base of the relevance and suitability of the integrationist approach and integrative humanism adopted for this study. It is the reality of the foregoing that had informed Ozumba's philosophical theory of Integrative Humanism (IH) (Ozumba, 2012; 2014). IH is Prof. Godfrey Okechukwu Ozumba's coinage, used to describe the attitude of perceiving or considering reality as having both physical and spiritual dimensions. Given the two-side consideration, Ozumba describes IH as a ratio-empirico-centric approach to doing philosophy (Ozumba, 2014, p.487). In the context of this study, that implies a two-side doing of discourse analysis, whereby one side of the analysis concerns students and the other side concerns teachers. It also implies an interdisciplinary approach involving linguistics and any other fields. So, in our context, the focus is not on physical and spiritual dimensions of phenomena, but the interrelatedness and/or interdependence of phenomena on one another and each other.

Drawing insights from the interconnectivity of electric wires to the motherboard, Ozumba argues that humans and things are connected to one source, the Supreme Being and Creator of all that exists (Ozumba, 2014, p.487). Following the reality of the natural or existential connectivity between and among things, Ozumba thinks that humans 'can always build bridges of harmony among things through proper and deep philosophical reasoning' (Ozumba, 2014, p.487). Insights from Ozumba's IH make it obvious that both learners and teachers are interdependent beings of nature, who also depend on and tap from each other in teaching and learning process. However, as a formalised context of interdependence, teachers take advantage of the power hierarchy characterising the relationship between them and students to monopolise the relationship and exploit students. Subjected to and manipulated by power dynamics, monopoly and exploitation characterise the relational pattern between teachers and students. These are extended to the sexual relationship between these two parties— teachers and students. In the course of the monopolistic and exploitative sexual relationship between teachers and students, language is used technically, strictly and loosely in both formal and informal contexts.

Also, following integrationist or integrative approach, two of Chilton's (2004) three theoretical principles a cognitive approach to political discourse analysis are considered relevant here and thus adopted. His linguistic theory is grounded by Grice's co-operative principle, Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, and Chomsky's generative linguistics. Chilton leans on them to formulate three principles for a cognitive approach to political discourse analysis. His first principle is that language and political behaviour can be thought of as being based on the cognitive endowments of the human mind rather than as mere 'social

practices' (Ahmed, 2017, p. 97). The second principle states that language and social behaviour are closely intertwined; probably in natural mechanisms or innately developing mechanisms of the mind, and probably because of evolutionary adaptation (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 97-8). Subscribing to Chilton's (2004) first principle, we argue that language and power have intrinsic cognitive elements connecting to human mind, from where the social practices, involving them, begin at the linguistic deep structure before getting to realisation at the surface structure. Next, drawing from the second principle, we argue that although both language and behaviour have existential and phenomenological connectivity and share some functional similarities, they are yet distinct. For example, the innateness of language far outweighs that of behaviour, while behaviour is susceptible to psychological and socio-cultural factors, unlike language.

Concisely, the central gist here, to hit the nail on the head, is that language is the gamut of human and animal activities and remains the mechanism of all forms of behaviour, including social and political behaviours, which both have and are characterised by elements of power. And, as usual of power, the power characterising them is dynamic. It should be noted that just as we are leaving out the third principle here, so we are leaving out some elements or features of these two principles. Just as Ahmed (2017, p. 98) rightly observes, Chilton's approach, which is grounded in linguistics, could be a suitable model in the conception of an integrationist model of analysis of any kind. Thus, Chilton's linguistic approach is a suitable theoretical backing to this work, as it suitably explains and theoretically justifies the subject matter of our study on the discursive analysis of sexuality and power dynamics in teacher-student interactional pattern. Essentially, Chilton's theory upholds integration, as it seeks to linguistically, intellectually and theoretically cross-fertilise linguistic theories (generative, functionalist/critical, and cognitive linguistics) with rhetoric and critical theory. It is to that end that this study reflects on Chilton's theory in the course of discussing Leeuwen's (2005) Integrationist Approach (IA) and Ozumba's (2012 & 2014) Integrative Humanism, as theories that theoretically ground it.

This study asserts that the speeches of teachers engaged in sexual relationship with students are both political and apolitical. Language is used in both good and bad lights. Their discursive pattern moves from parity to suzerainty when power traits come in-between or are made manifest. To that end, this study leans on Fairclough's (1997) stressed imperative of integrating discursive events of persuasive political speech, requiring detailed rhetorical and critical discourse analyses, to aver that teacher-student's interactional pattern should be integrative. The interaction between teachers and students should be made critical and liberal so as to allow for critical reflection and analysis of the teacher's rhetoric's by the student and even vice versa. It is at that point that the rhetoric's would be well examined before being internalised in the student's mental cognition or faculty, where integration or mixture takes place. It is with critical reflection and analysis that the student can scrutinise the teacher's rhetoric's and taught out knowledge. With these tools, the student can also resist the excesses of the power of the teacher.

By being integrative, the in and outside classroom discourse and interactional relationship between teachers and students become one in which there is a mutual interdependence for teaching-learning, symmetrical communication and interaction, equitable male-female sexuality, and non-exploitive sexual relationships. Rejecting strict separation, Fairclough (1997, p. 47) admonishes that 'orientation to the specificity of the [or a] discursive event' does not only include 'orientation to how it reworks the social resource of the existing order of discourse, but also the concerns of stylistic, pragmatic and rhetorical analysis.' Obviously, these three concerns involve discursive analysis respectively. Without any sentiment, they are integral parts of the whole thrust of Applied Linguistics, on one hand, and Sociolinguistics, on the other.

### **Language, Power Dynamics and Teacher-Student Interactional Pattern**

Previous studies have examined the relationship between language and politics from different approaches, such as from social cognitive (van Dijk, 1997 & 2005), critical social (Fairclough, 2015), cognitive linguistics (Chilton, 2004), discourse-historical (Wodak, 2012; Wodak et al., 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2016), and argumentation (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). Among Nigerian scholars of this circle are

Ademilokun and Taiwo (2013), Ajilore (2014), Adegoju and Oyeboade (2015) and Chilwa and Odeunmi (2016). Integrative discourse analysis within the purview of applied linguistics is the approach chosen by this current study, to examine the relationship between language and power in the interactional pattern of the sexuality and interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. The study's scope, nature and adopted theoretical approach/model informed the choice of the approach adopted and employed herein. The dire need for pluralised, diversified or multidisciplinary approaches is the rationale behind engaging with integrative discourse analysis.

As noted under the theoretical framework above, a discipline or one specific approach cannot go the extent to which integrated approaches combined as one, derived from diverse fields, would go (Wodak & Meyers, 2016; Wodak, 2012; Chilton, 2004 & 2007). And, Chilton (2004) and Ahmed (2017) rightly inform that ideological and hegemonic struggles are discursively constructed. To that, this study avers that the deconstruction of these struggles and others is possible; just the same way they are constructed. That is, discourse analysis, involving the efficient and technical use of language, is a viable means for deconstructing and reconstructing ideological and hegemonic struggles and as well getting rid of the anomalies caused by ideological and hegemonic struggles. The teacher, who is usually on the advantage side, is the power monopolist in teacher-student relationship. The teacher is the initiator, actor/performer, executor and even sometimes the maker of the power dynamism in the interactional and discursive contexts of teacher-student sexual relationships. As Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 3) rightly observe, 'language gains power by the use powerful people make of it.' Their view captures the way language is used and how it gains power in teacher-student interaction and relationships, sexual (with sexual actions) or asexual (without sexual actions), political (with power dispositions) or apolitical (without power dispositions) and otherwise.

Obviously, language use in teacher-student interaction and relationship gains power from the teacher. This is because the teacher is the powerful party in the two-party relationship and interaction between teachers and students. It is an indisputable fact that the teacher is the one who exclusively exercises power and makes language gain power in the school setting. This reality is evident in the way the teacher uses language with the student and the unreserved extent to which the teacher exercises power over the student. In other words, in the context of our study, teachers are the powerful people, who make language gain such power talked about by Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 3). The implication of the foregoing in the context of this study is the use of dynamic power-based or power-influenced language in discourse and interaction with the student by the teacher. According to Chilton (2004, p. 5), the 'power behind language can produce the effects of authority, legitimacy, consensus, and so forth that are recognized as being intrinsic to politics.' Part of what majorly manifests in teacher-student sexual, corporate and classroom relationships is the power behind language. The coercive and unhealthy elements of the interaction between teachers and students are manifestations of the effects of the power behind the language that they use in communication. By being characterised by elements of power, this study argues that both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of politics characterise the relational pattern of the sexuality and interpersonal relationship between teachers and students. Besides being guided by formal, standardised and conventionalised values, norms and principles (laws), the school, as an organisation, is also characterised as well as guided by workplace politics. The power inequality, which characterises the relationship as well as interactional pattern of teacher-student sexuality, is legitimised by the opaque nature of language.

With discourse analysis, social critique uncovers the opaque nature of language (Ahmed, 2017, p. 97), through which we realise the wrongs from the teacher to the student in and outside the classroom. Edelman (1985, p. 390) and Ahmed (2017, p. 1) agree that patterns of meaning and relations or interactions are evoked by language use, as in the case of teacher-student relational pattern. Edelman (1985, p. 390) has pointed out that although coercion and intimidation are mechanisms for averting or overcoming 'resistance in all political systems,' it is imperative to 'evoke legitimate meanings favourable to actions that threaten or reassure people, so as to encourage them to be supportive or to remain quiescent.' The foregoing

implicitly tells of what has to reasonably obtain in teacher-student interactions in relation to sexuality and power. Most times, teachers employ coercion and intimidation to avert resistance from students. This is more severe when it comes to sexuality and power. They get students, more especially female students, into sexual intercourse and relationships that they would ordinarily not get engaged in borne not for coercion and intimidation. In their classroom and outside-classroom relations or interactions, most teachers exercise (absolute) power over students, even up to the point of trampling on students' rights. Yet, the students barely get justice, if they seek redress from and within the school. Just as an autocratic teacher would often shun a student for asking a seeming tough question, shout at a student to sit down only for asking a question, harass a student for just no course or rejecting his/her covert sexual advances, and so on, so also the same teacher would do same or worse to a student in sexual affairs with him or her. Most often than not, the sexual relationship between teachers and students is ridden with excess dispositions of teacher's privileged power over the student.

There are several goals of teacher-student interaction in classroom, power and sexual relations. Exchange of knowledge (teaching-learning) along with its accompaniments is the primary goal of teacher-student interaction. Next, another goal is turn-taking discourse in and outside classroom interactions. This goal could be regarded as 'talk, let me talk; I talk, I let you talk.' One other goal is to attain better practices of various kinds in various ways of life, towards a meaningful interaction of sharing a lot of what life offers intellectually, physically, socially, economically, politically and otherwise. The interaction also has the goal of creating reasonable level of understanding of self, others, life, things (phenomena), the universe and the Supreme Being as well as the other spirit beings of the invisible world. And, it is also intended to create room for socialisation, social integration, managing and surmounting differences, and negotiating meaningful and co-operative relationships. Our foregoing goals of teacher-student interaction in classroom, power and sexual relations have been given credence somewhat by Royster's (1996, p. 38) words. He informs that the goals of telling the stories of decolonised peoples from their own perspective rather the otherwise is not 'You talk, I talk,' but 'the goal is better practices so that we can exchange perspectives, negotiate meaning, and create understanding with the intent of being in a good position to cooperate, when, like now, cooperation is absolutely necessary' (Royster, 1996, p. 38).

For more meaningful and symmetrical interaction and relationship between teachers and students, it is imperative for the prime goal to be better practices rather than the otherwise. That is, ideal teacher-student interactional pattern and diverse relationships should have the prime goal of better practices for exchange of perspectives, negotiation of meaning and creation of understanding, towards attaining mutual co-operation, as Royster (1996, p. 38) notes. More so, it is observed that the aim of discourse analysis, a linguistic corpus, is to step beyond merely proffering 'details that facilitate communication and persuasion' (Andrus, 2013, p. 4976) to 'developing a critical consciousness of how linguistic and rhetorical strategy contributes to domination and abuse of power' (Ahmed, 2017, p. 3). Teacher-student's mutual interactions in and outside the classroom, inclusive of sexual relationship, are characterised by ideological, manipulative and normative language use. These senses of language use are based on both general and specific purposes of language use. Their pedagogic or classroom, sexual, political, social and conventional interaction and relationships are experienced and expressed through language. And, these involve the three senses of language use, based on general and specific purposes of language use.

### **Sexuality, Power and Language in Teacher-Student Interaction**

For several decades now, there has been hot debate over issues concerning sexual orientation and sexual pleasure, with contested legislations made by different countries and societies according to their respective sexual ethics (Olorunoba-Oju, 2010; Besong, 2019; Besong & Robert, 2020). Sexual desire refers to the situation in which an individual nurtures sexual thoughts/feelings for another individual, or gets automatically aroused by hormonal and libidinal force to have carnal knowledge of the other person or an object in order to satisfy his/her sexual urge/drive, which began from physical sight of the person or the object in question to emotional thoughts about them. Olorunoba-Oju (2010, p. 3) is of the view that desire

is generally perceived as something biological or psychological, personal and individual, which pertains to ‘a natural feeling that is driven by libidinal force, creating a tension that is ultimately resolved in the form of sexual pleasure.’

Talking about the nature or extent of emotional disposition of sexual desire, Oloruntoba-Oju (2010, p. 3) says most often than not, the desiring object does not appreciate just how much this ‘personal’ feeling is manipulated or conditioned by the culture of the society in which the person lives. In this context of sexuality and power dynamic in teacher-student interaction, students are the objects of sexuality and power. That is, they are sexual objects to teachers, who desire sexual pleasure from them, most times, at all cost. Then, when or if their spotted sex-object students refuse to obey their sexual demand, rooted in several phases of power, the teachers resort to using language and power to torment and punish them. Unjust punishments, as acts of torment to such students, include deliberate failure, influencing undeserving carryover or repeated year, masterminding an unjust suspension or expulsion, indictment, false accusations, public and/or private harassments, humiliation, and so on (see Aper and Iorhemen, 2015; Dibia & Robert, 2017; Robert, 2017)

Sex is a concept that addresses the sexuality of an individual based on the person’s biological features. Sex, through which sexuality and sexual relationship is derived, is a social construct that is aimed at capturing the physiological differences in human beings (Okafor, 2018, p. 002). On one hand, these differences account for reproductive functions. On the other hand, they are made responsible for socio-culturally and politically divided and institutionalised functions or roles assigned to males and females on the basis of gender, a social construct derived from sex– natural phenomenon. Hence, on one hand, sex is a biological construct, which nature endows on an individual. On the other hand, gender is a social construct (Idyorough, 2005; Robert, 2016; Ogonnaya & Besong, 2018; Besong, 2021). It is noted that the philosophy of sexuality concerns sexual concepts, propositions, practices, beliefs, ontological and epistemological matters surrounding sexual activities. It is a conceptual and normative study that questions and clarifies the ethics of sexual life such as: the fundamental notions of sexual desires and activities; the value of sexual activities and sex pleasure; the legal, social, political and other issues regarding sex; in what circumstances is it morally permissible to engage in sexual activity; the good life through sexuality; what types of sex are permissible; and with whom is the pleasure of sex allowed (Besong, 2019, p. 68; Besong & Robert, 2020).

As Okafor (2018, p. 002) notes, a person is either male or female based on the types of gamete they release in the process of sexual intercourse for conception to take place. This statement talks about the maleness or femaleness of a person from genetics or biological perspective, which is thus natural. Beyond that, sex, as a concept, is contextualised pragmatically to extend to gender and the divided roles assigned to males and females on distinct phases. In the words of Okafor (2018, p. 002), ‘based on the meaning of sex, sexuality further expands the implication of being male or female in the biological concept of it.’ This statement implies that being male or female could also be socially, genetically, scientifically and technologically influenced and constructed. Just as Niedda (2020, p. 2) affirms, such is the argument advanced and defended by Judith Butler and her other fellow queer scholars. Butler argues that sex, gender and sexuality are all culturally constructed normative frameworks, and being so, the individual uses their body in the performance of identifying with or against these norms (Butler, 1988, pp. 519-531; Butler, 1990). Although this study does not concern itself with critiquing Butler’s arguments per se, it rejects Butler’s view that sex, a well-established natural phenomenon or a biological construct, is also a ‘culturally constructed normative framework’. Sex is not; but gender and sexuality are all culturally constructed normative frameworks (Robert, 2016; Ogonnaya & Besong, 2018; Besong, 2021).

Furthermore, Amanze (2015, p. 3) informs that sexuality is the reproductive mechanism and basic biological drive existing in all human and animal species, which can encompass sexual intercourse and sexual contact in all forms. He goes on to describe sexuality as the condition of having a sexual nature of being either male or female and of experiencing sexual desire (Amanze, 2015, p. 3). On his part, Okafor (2018, p. 002) rightly notes that sexuality is experienced and expressed in thought fantasies, beliefs,



attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. To that, this work adds that experiencing and expressing sexuality in whatever way or kind involves language use as well as discourse. According to Okafor (2018, p. 002), 'while sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.' To this study, some are experienced; some others are expressed; some of them are both experienced and expressed; and in a few contexts, others are neither experienced nor expressed. Again, sexuality is noted to be influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, religious and spiritual factors (Okafor, 2018, p. 002). This statement portends existential, phenomenological and situational integration of these elements, for which the interaction is (and ought to be) integrative. The interaction between teachers and students take four of these seven dimensions: biological, psychological, social and political, with social and political dimensions taking precedence. These four dimensions characterise the interactional pattern of teachers and students in terms of their sexuality.

Besides being a means of communication in political discourse as well as all other discourses, language is also an instrument of symbolic power with which individuals pursue, showcase and realise their interests (Bourdieu, 1991). All discourses, realities, activities and communication involve language use; for without it, none of these and so on can be undertaken or known. This assertion has also been expressed similarly by Uche, (1994), Emeka-Nwobia (2007) and Dibia & Robert (2014), who unanimously agree that humans and animals have their context-specific language or speech form distinctly inherent to them, which they use for all they do, and the extent to which they can do and go in whatever they do depends on language. Teachers in sexual relationships with students continuously and uncontrollably exert some unreserved or unrestrained power over their students, both as their learners and lovers or sexual partners. It is important to note that such power-characterised sexual relationships between teachers and students are not the exclusive preserve of male teachers alone. Thinking that it is a male thing or practice alone is sex or gender stereotypical, or a simple act of justifying the illegitimate love affairs of female teachers with their students.

Without sentiment, the practice involves both male and female teachers and students. The difference, however, is that it is more common among male than female teachers. Female teachers most often than not make their own intentions and practices hidden as much as they could, unlike their male fellows. For example, much more female than male students have been and are being defiled by male teachers. Many young ladies narrate how their male teachers coerced them into sexual intercourse with them, which sometimes metamorphose into sexual relationships other than sexual intercourse interaction. Some of the teachers begin the act with requesting or ordering some female students to go and help them cook, do several domestic chores or take home one item or the other to their houses for them. Although some female teachers do follow the same processes and get their targeted students in bed, they differ in the approach and ways they do so with students. They rather resort to using persuasion, lobby, body language/communication, offering alms and presents, cajole and non-violent relational patterns and interpersonal relations and communication (Aper and Iorhemen, 2015; Dibia & Robert, 2017; Robert, 2017). It is observed that many teachers (particularly lecturers) prevail on students for money, sex and/or gifts in order to give them unmerited exams grades. Some of them get to do this through the course/class representative(s) and close students (Robert, 2017; Dibia & Robert, 2017).

Essentially, this paper condemns illegitimate sexual relationship between teachers and students; both teachers' and students' sexual advances and overtures; teachers' incessant exercise of power over students only because they are students; the practices of not giving room for suitable discursive avenues between teachers and students; some teachers' acts of deifying themselves; gender stereotype and streaming in and outside school environments; gender division and role assignment in school settings and even beyond; prejudiced gender orientation, socialisation and sensitisation, among other trends that show and sustain unfavourable practices in teacher-student interactional pattern and relationships in terms of sexuality and power dynamics. It reminds all and sundry of the implications of inequality, discrimination and marginalisation in and outside the school environment (see CODESRIA, 1991; Enoch, 2011; Robert, 2016;

Besong, 2017; Dibie, 2017; Chimakonam, 2018; Besong, 2021). In terms of sexuality in specific, the paper reminds the audience of the statutory proclamation of equal sexual rights between women and men, as regard sexual and reproductive matters. It also reminds its audience of: equal respect for the integrity of every human person; the reality that sex requires mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for both males and females in sexual relationships and/or affairs; the imperative of maintaining acceptable, healthy, virtuous, moral, legalised and conventionalised sexual behaviour; and the consequences of sexual coercion, violence, discrimination, exclusion, abuses and violations in school environment and other settings.

## Conclusion

Power dynamics, which characterises sexuality at the society level in general, characterises teacher-student interactional pattern. The power base of the interaction allows for unequal interactional pattern and relationships between teachers and students, inclusive of their sexual interactions and relationships. Also, it allows for and causes injustice, maltreatment, marginalisation, interpersonal conflict, gender conflict, immorality, corrupt practices, and many other vices from teachers to students in particular, and in a few cases from students to teachers too. In fact, such practices form the overall pattern of the interaction as well as relationship between teachers and students. When and where interaction between teachers and students is asymmetrical, half-haphazard, denigrating to students, more political than apolitical, sexual rather than asexual, and of suzerainty rather than parity relationship, the interactional pattern follows suit. The interaction is wholesomely exclusive and disintegrated rather than inclusive and integrative. Teachers' mischievous acts against students constitute injustice against just students and incessantly abuse their rights in various regards. Given the ugly situation, it is quite clear that there currently exists a vast gap between teachers and students in their varied phases of interaction and relationship in and outside the classroom. This paper calls for individual and corporate actions, ideals and moral considerations that would sustainably breach the age-long in and outside classroom gap between teachers and students across the globe, especially in developing nations.

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