

**Jiang Chunsheng**

*Beijing Wuzi University*

*Beijing, China*

### **Buchi Emecheta's Identity Reconstruction in *Head Above Water***

Buchi Emecheta, as a diasporic Nigerian writer, had won a well-known reputation because of her literature works, including one autobiography *Head Above Water* published in 1986 as one of Heinemann's African writers Series. Just like other African writers with the characteristics of diaspora at that time, Emecheta also experienced the confusion of identity. This paper will focus on her autobiography *Head Above Water* to explore the process of her identity reconstruction from three aspects: Identity confusion – female image under the gaze of the other; identity pursuit – from attachment to independence; identity reconstruction – the establishment of female subjectivity. Her identity reconstruction is not only reflected in the literature works, but also beyond the written works. As a visiting professor of Calabar University, Emecheta gave speeches on many occasions. She spoke for black women both in and out of her works throughout her life, which helped subvert the male-dominated African literary tradition in some degree and reconstructing the subjective status of African women.