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Discursive Construction of Identity in Postcolonial Literature:
The Case of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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Dedication

We dedicate this work to our parents

who are the source of giving and endless support,

who sacrificed all their lives to make us win and

who are with us in every pleasure and pain.

To our brothers and sisters, all our family, and

to our friends.

NAJAH AND SAFA

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Abstract

This research examines the rhetorical techniques employed in the novel *Americanah* to explore how identity was shaped in the postcolonial period. It highlights the relationship between race, gender, and nationality in creating and developing a postcolonial identity, examining how the characters interact with each other across various geographical, cultural, and social circumstances. The discourse analytical method is adopted to explore the rhetorical construction of identity and to provide a representation of the characters' experiences of migration, cultural hybridity, and the legacy of colonialism, which shape the discursive construction of postcolonial identity. Adichie uses code-switching, dialect, and metaphor to convey the complexities of postcolonial identity. The main result of this dissertation revealing postcolonial identity through narration and language in *Americanah* is that Ifemelu represents Afropolitanism, navigating cultural dynamics in Nigeria and the US. She reflects on race, immigration, and belonging in a globalised society on her blog, which shapes her evolving identity. It investigates language use, power relations, and social contexts.

Keywords: Identity, Postcolonial literature, *Americanah*, Discursive Construction, Discourse

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Postcolonial literature is considered a dynamic meeting point for history, culture, and narrative, as it profoundly analyses the remaining effects of colonialism and imperialism. In this context, individuals struggle with forming an identity, as they are trapped between the influence of the colonial legacy and their cultural background. In addition, this type of literature examines the forces of power after colonial rule by focusing primarily on the complexities surrounding identity formation. It also addresses the themes of belonging, displacement, and resistance, encouraging colonized peoples to strive for independence. Through various narratives, postcolonial literature provides a platform for neglected opinions to reclaim their history and defeat narratives. Controlling and envisioning an alternative future, thus positioning him as an indispensable force through literary discourse.

The importance of identity and discourse analysis lies in their fundamental role in revealing postcolonial literature's complex meanings and power dynamics. Identity, which acts as a central element, includes the multidirectional processes through which the individual navigates his sense of self amid the colonial legacy and cultural background. On the other hand, rhetorical analysis provides a framework for examining the rhetorical and narrative linguistic techniques used in forming and negotiating these identities. Through careful analysis of the use of language and the social context within literary works, rhetorical analysis reveals ideologies that influence identity and provides insight into how language reflects social norms, inequality and hierarchies. Thus, shared views of identity and discourse analysis enrich our understanding of postcolonial

literature and highlight the complexities of identity formation and its depiction in social and cultural contexts in a broader context.

Americanah, by the Nigerian writer Chimiminda Ngozi, is an influential central point in our thesis, as it embodies the subtle differences of identity in the postcolonial era. The novel *Americanah* talks about the story of Ifelemu, a young Nigerian woman who moves to live in the United States of America to obtain a high level of education, leaving behind her homeland and her beloved, Obinze. Based on the American and Nigerian background, the author wrote her novel brilliantly, dealing with immigration, race, and cultural integration in America. The novel provides a deep insight into immigrants' difficulties and identity formation in a global context. The novel does not stop at describing personal challenges and triumphs only but also works as a mirror through it to explore profound social and political themes. Therefore, it is a compelling case study for discovering identity within a postcolonial framework.

2. Statement of the Problem

Postcolonial literature plays a fundamental role in understanding the complexities of identity. However, there is still a gap in understanding the interrelationship between identity and discourse, especially in the diaspora and cultural mixing. This dissertation examines identity construction in postcolonial literature with a focus on the *Americanah* narrative through analysis of language, language dynamics, and social contexts. Through discourse analysis, this study reveals how identities develop and sheds light on the intertwined relationship between language and culture in shaping identities within postcolonial narratives.

3. Research Questions

The current research asks the following questions:

1. How is postcolonial identity constructed discursively in "*Americanah*"?
2. What linguistic and narrative strategies does the author employ to represent postcolonial identities?
3. How does *Americanah* represent identities within the postcolonial context?

4. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research are formulated as follows:

1. Characters' migration experiences, cultural hybridity, and the legacy of colonialism. Shape the discursive construction of postcolonial identity in *Americanah*.
2. Adichie utilises code-switching, dialect, and metaphor to convey the complexities of postcolonial identity.
3. The negotiation of postcolonial identities in *Americanah* reflects the issues of racism, globalisation, and diaspora.

5. Research Objectives

Through this study, we aim to examine in depth the rhetorical techniques used in the novel *Americanah* explores how identity is formed in the postcolonial period. It also highlights the depth of the relationship between race, gender, and nationality in creating and developing a postcolonial identity and examines how the characters interact within the novel across various geographical, cultural, and social circumstances.

6. Research Methodology

This dissertation adopts discourse analysis as the primary analytical approach. It discovers the rhetorical construction of identity in postcolonial literature, focusing on the novel *Americanah* as a corpus. This research examines the use of language, power relations, and social contexts within the narrative through the analysis of discourse construction, rhetorical strategies, and the linguistic differences present in the text.

7. Research Significance

This study is important within the scholarly discourse surrounding postcolonial literature, identity formation, migration studies, and cultural representation. By scrutinising the discursive construction of postcolonial identity in *Americanah*, the study advances academic understanding, offers insights that inform social policies, fosters intercultural dialogue, and refines literary analysis.

8. Research Structure

This dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter is entitled Theoretical and Historical Framework of Postcolonial Nigerian Identity. It furnishes an overview of key theoretical concepts and scholarly debates concerning the discursive construction of postcolonial identity and postcolonial Nigerian literature. The Second chapter is the Analysis of *Americana*. It is entitled Discursive Construction of Identity in *Americana*. It takes us through a detailed analysis of postcolonial identity discursively.

CHAPTER ONE

Discursive Postcolonial Identity: Theoretical Background

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Introduction

This chapter embarks on a journey through the theoretical landscape of postcolonial identity. It starts by defining vital concepts and reviewing their historical origins and contexts shaping identity. It explores theoretical perspectives from scholars like Bhabha, Said, and Foucault, illuminating key concepts. Further, Discourse analysis unveils the mechanisms through which identities are constructed. It includes language's role in power dynamics and oppression. Various strategies, from linguistic hybridity to performative acts, are examined to analyse postcolonial identities. This chapter extends to review postcolonial Nigerian literature and its peculiarities and themes.

1.1 Defining Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism essentially tackles the repercussions of colonialism on cultures and societies. It explores the influence of European power and its dominance over third-world cultures (Young, 2009) and, conversely, how these cultures react to and resist such dominance. According to Eagleton (1998), Postcolonialism typically unfolds in three stages. Firstly, there is the initial acknowledgement of the social, psychological, and cultural disparities inherent in being colonised. Subsequently, there emerges a struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political independence. It endeavours to reclaim distinct ethnic and cultural identities while striving for political autonomy. Finally, there is an increasing recognition of the complexities arising from cultural intermingling, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics resulting from the historical legacy of colonialism.

Postcolonialism's main goal is scrutinising colonial discourse and reinterpreting history from the perspective of the colonised. Influential figures such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha,

and Gayatri Spivak built milestones. In his seminal work "Orientalism" (1978), Edward Said elucidates that Postcolonialism deconstructs and challenges Western representations of the 'Orient', which is constructed as a subordinate and exotic 'other'.

In "The Location of Culture" (1994), Homi Bhabha emphasises the spaces of cultural hybridity. It negotiates its emergence in the interstices of colonial encounters. Correspondingly, 'third space' entails that identities and cultures are continuously negotiated and transformed. This process takes place through imitation, hybridisation and contradiction. Some writers have highlighted stereotypical analysis that intentionally marginalises the views of particular groups of people, including Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who also discussed the power of the voice of these oppressed people in her 1988 book *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Not only did he criticise the controlling authority, but he also worked to highlight the role of the voice of the group that was marginalised due to the colonial legacy.

1.2 Postcolonial Identity

The concept of identity is expansive and, like many terms, enshrouded in ambiguity, a complexity that has piqued the interest of researchers and scholars across various disciplines. Locke (1975) contributes a psychological dimension to the understanding of identity with his assertion: "The self, identity, is that conscious, thinking entity, embodying any conceivable image. It is manifested within it, whether spiritual or material, simple or complex. It may manifest as the self's inclination to disclose its essence through interaction with others and to juxtapose itself against them, as articulated by Edward Said." (p.12). He suggests that this identity crisis emerges particularly in societies undergoing the dynamics of modernity, marking the initial stage of the challenging or invigorating process of self-definition.

This suggests that the crisis did not arise until the West grappled with its own identity, and various factors within it could precipitate an identity crisis. This crisis stems from the rejection of certain intellectual, ideological, or cultural elements in the formation of identity, posing a threat to the emergence of a cohesive identity. Following the end of direct colonial rule, the postcolonial individual, referred to by Fanon (1961/2001) as the 'postcolonial man,' found themselves entangled in a whirlwind of existential and identity dilemmas. It was as though they sought to rediscover themselves in the wake of the bitter historical experience of colonialism. Venturing into a cultural wilderness, they embarked on a quest to unearth their pre-colonial features, endeavouring to reconnect with their identity. Countries that had endured settler colonialism experienced profound cultural clashes in the years following their independence.

1.2.1 Historical Context and Origins

Colonial powers vigorously pursued overseas campaigns, extending their conquests beyond their homelands under the guise of what they perceived as a civilised mission to civilise people they deemed primitive. Lahti (2016) asserted that these people could not attain full humanity, thus justifying their subjugation. Claiming a divine mandate to uplift a stagnant, backward world, they offered no substantiation for their assertions.

Consequently, Western colonies were exploited under the pretext of this purportedly 'noble' mission. These colonised regions were treated as mere possessions of the colonising nations, subjected to egregious acts of piracy, including looting, plundering, and cultural erasure. This exploitation extended beyond mere economic gain, encompassing the erosion of identity and cultural ties. Consequently, consciousness began to emerge among intellectuals from Third World countries, many of whom had either migrated or been exiled. This consciousness rejected assimilation into mainstream discourses and sought inclusion in a field of study that would

enable a nuanced understanding of their aspirations while challenging Western-centric narratives. This field became known as 'postcolonial studies' (Cooper, 2009).

1.2.2 Bhabha's Concept of Identity

Traditionally, identity has been perceived as stable and resistant to change and transformation, with the notion deeply ingrained that one's identity is pure and unchanging, deserving of preservation. However, postcolonial studies challenge this perception, revealing that pure identity has been elusive since the dawn of human civilisation. Instead, what truly exists is a hybrid identity shaped by the intricate blending and conflicts experienced by diverse cultures throughout history.

Homi Bhabha, an Indian thinker, contributes significantly to this discourse by redefining the notion of culture. He distinguishes between two forms of knowledge – the manifest and the latent. Influenced by Said's ideas, which diverge in certain aspects, Bhabha (1990) views colonialism as a process of constructing 'colonial subjects,' drawing from Lacan's concept of the mirror image. He sees both the coloniser and the colonised as mirroring each other, challenging Said's dualistic framework of master and slave, coloniser and colonised, European and other.

Bhabha proposes instead the concept of 'hybrid identity,' rejecting clear-cut dualities. Ania Lombra regards Bhabha's exploration of hybridity as his most influential contribution. In postcolonial studies, Bhabha presents a controversial viewpoint, suggesting that colonial relationships do not produce clear winners or losers. Instead, they give rise to distorted identities due to the complex interplay between cultures. Bhabha argues that this interaction leads to a fusion of cultural norms, reinforcing colonial power dynamics while simultaneously posing a threat to the stability of the coloniser's identity, which is inherently unstable (Degani, 2004).

1.2.3 Said's Concept of Identity

According to Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2009), Edward Said is recognised as a proponent of hybridity, emphasising all identities, along with the cultures they encompass, are mutually influenced, a characteristic that remains evident. Language, religion, and race have historically been employed to subjugate others based on differences in identity. However, in reality, the notion of a so-called pure identity is merely a political construct fabricated to serve imperialist interests and objectives. Despite initial efforts to uphold the concept of pristine identity, hybridity has begun to manifest in modern societies, asserting itself as a means for harmonious coexistence among individuals and communities.

1.2.4 Foucault's Concept of Identity

The significant influence of Paul Michel Foucault, the French philosopher and respected historian of thought systems, is felt across a wide range of disciplines, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. He was also acknowledged as a discerning social critic. Foucault rejected the notion of an inherent identity, contending that individuals lack a fixed identity within themselves. Instead, he argued that identity is a presentation to others, susceptible to alteration or transformation depending on various circumstances. He viewed identity as a transient and adaptable construct, seeing it as a mechanism for subjugation and a tool for exerting power over individuals (Lydia, 2007).

Foucault (1982) underscores that social and cultural identities shape the norms and values embedded within a given society. Furthermore, Foucault rejected traditional notions of individuals inherently possessing power, replacing it with the idea of power as a technique or action in which people actively engage. Consequently, power is enacted but not inherently possessed. Foucault defined techniques of the self as the method through which individuals insert

themselves into discourse. He described how individuals form their identities, including several practices such as self-reflection, self-expression, and self-discipline, which appear in media such as autobiography, memoirs, Blogs, etc.

1.4 Discursive Construction of Identity

According to Wodak (2009), identity construction is a complex process affected by many factors. When it comes to defining and forming individual and societal identities, language plays a critical role. This section examines the dynamic process of identity construction, emphasizing the vital role that language plays in this sophisticated operation. This research uses discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and linguistics as theoretical frameworks to examine how language is used to build, negotiate, and reflect identities in different social and cultural settings.

1.4.1 Language and Power Dynamics

According to Tenzer and Pudenko (2017), language shapes power dynamics within multinational teams. Various linguistic elements, encompassing proficiency levels, structures, and policies, influence the utilisation of power sources within a team. Language proficiency can magnify an individual's influence by facilitating the assertion of expert authority, whereas limited proficiency may diminish their impact. Language is a precursor to power differentials and a moderator alongside other power factors such as hierarchical position and expertise. Understanding the interplay between language and power dynamics is essential for effectively managing communication and collaboration within multinational teams.

1.4.2 Power dynamics

It entails the interactions and relationships within a group or team involving the distribution and application of power sources. Within teamwork, these dynamics shape how

individuals exert influence, make decisions, and allocate tasks within the team. Power sources may encompass formal authority rooted in hierarchy, expertise, language proficiency, and other factors influencing individuals' capacity to sway others. Grasping power dynamics is crucial for team outcomes, as it significantly impacts collaboration, decision-making, and overall effectiveness within the team (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017).

1.4.3 Language as a Tool of Oppression

According to Fanon (1986), throughout history, language has served dual roles as a weapon of oppression and a means of resistance. Those in positions of authority have frequently exploited language to subjugate and marginalise specific communities, asserting their linguistic superiority and compelling others to conform. This manipulation of language constructs another and reinforces dominance over diverse populations, as it becomes a tool for ideological control, humiliation, and colonisation. Conversely, marginalised groups have harnessed language as a tool of defiance. Through the preservation of their native languages and cultures, resistance against acculturation, and the reclaiming of linguistic heritage, these communities have asserted their identity and autonomy. In this context, language becomes a vehicle for cultural preservation and a method of challenging efforts to erase their heritage.

In summary, the intricate power dynamics inherent in language use have perpetuated systems of oppression, while linguistic resistance emerges as a means of reclaiming agency and contesting prevailing narratives. The historical context of language as both an instrument of oppression and a tool of resistance underscores its pivotal role in shaping social structures and identities.

1.4.4 Language and Identity Formation

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) reported that when navigating identities in social circumstances, people primarily transmit their feelings and self-perception through language. He found that people engage in language practices from an early age that reflect and shape their identities, which are shaped by socioeconomic class, culture, gender, and ethnicity. Further, he pointed out that according to linguistic anthropologists, language reflects preexisting identities and actively enhances them via audacious actions.

Eckert and McConnell-Jennett (2003) reported that sociolinguistic studies have demonstrated the relationship between certain social identities and group connections and linguistic components such as dialect, accent, and vocabulary. They established that variations in advertising or lexical preferences, for example, can indicate affiliation with specific geographic, ethnic, or social communities, contributing to identity formation in various linguistic circumstances.

Furthermore, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) explained that people use language as a locus of identity to express and confirm who they are in various circumstances. He commented that this performative quality may be seen in phenomena such as code-switching, in which users move between different language varieties or use different communication styles on social media platforms depending on the audience, context, and goal. In professional settings, people use language to establish complex identities that reflect their many social positions and connections, traverse complex social systems, and manage power dynamics.

1.4.5 Language and Identity Representation

According to Hall (1997), people handle complex social systems in their daily lives, engaging power dynamics and creating identities that reflect their many social affiliations and positions. Beyond simple social interactions, language becomes essential to self-expression and representation. It significantly impacts how identities are shaped in larger contexts, including the media, literature, and public discourse. Hall (1997) also stressed that discourse analysis reveals how linguistic decisions and persuasive techniques contribute to constructing specific identities and ideologies within tense frameworks.

Likewise, Spivak (1988) considered that literature serves as a forum for examining and interrogating identity, as writers use words to analyse and challenge conventional wisdom and representations. Spivak (1988) argued that multiple perspectives on identity are presented in literary works, inspiring readers to participate in critical analysis. Addressing complex subjectivity, agency, and belonging issues in various historical and cultural contexts.

Language plays a critical role in shaping, negotiating, and portraying identities through discourse, serving as both a reflective mirror and an active agent in the process. Through socio-cultural, political, and historical factors, people engage in complex identity expression and enactment processes, whether in casual conversations or in more expansive discursive domains like media and literature. Understanding the role language plays in forming identities helps us better understand how identities are dynamic and flexible and how power relations support how they are depicted and negotiated in various social environments.

1.5 Discursive Analysis Strategies

Discursive analysis employs diverse methods to dissect and comprehend the intricacies of language usage within social settings. Three important methods are Linguistic Hybridity, Symbolic Representation, and Performative Acts. Each approach provides a distinctive perspective for comprehending the subtleties of communication and meaning-constructing processes in discourse.

1.5.1 Linguistic Hybridity

The term "linguistic hybridity" refers to the situation in which different linguistic elements from different languages or dialects combine in a single statement or written work. This method is especially useful in environments marked by cultural diversity, globalisation, and linguistic interaction. It emphasises how language is constantly changing and how linguistic frameworks can have flexible boundaries (Hennemann & Meisnitzer, 2022).

1. Cultural Syncretism: The process by which different cultural aspects converge and evolve over time is known as cultural syncretism, and linguistic hybridity frequently reflects this phenomenon. To negotiate their hybrid identities and cultural connections, people in multicultural communities, for example, may combine languages or engage in code-switching during conversations (Hall, 2018).

2. Borrowing and Code-Switching: Linguistic hybridity is demonstrated by the integration of terms or phrases from one language into another through borrowing, as well as by speakers' switching between dialects or languages during a discourse. These actions have important social and identity-related implications that go beyond simple language events (Papen, 2021)

3. Creative Expression: Individuals can experiment with language and create novel forms of communication by using linguistic hybridity as a medium for creative expression. Hybrid linguistic structures can evoke a wide range of cultural associations and convey complex meanings in literature, music, and other artistic mediums (Pennycook, 2010).

4. Power Dynamics: Linguistic hybridity may indicate societal power structures. For instance, the degree of acceptance or stigma associated with hybrid linguistic forms may vary depending on the frequency of a particular language or dialect. A thorough comprehension of linguistic hybridity requires an examination of the larger sociopolitical contexts (Foucault, 1982).

1.5.2 Symbolic Representation

Using symbols, signs, or representations to convey meaning within discourse is known as symbolic representation. These symbols can include gestures, visual imagery, cultural artefacts, and language devices like metaphors and analogies. Significant influence is exerted by symbolic representation in shaping attitudes (Stuart Hall, 1997)

1. Metaphorical Language: Metaphors are a prime example of symbolic representation, which is the process of communicating abstract concepts through concrete imagery. Metaphors help us understand complex ideas by drawing comparisons between known and unknown domains. For instance, comparing time to "money" or "a river" generates different meanings and consequences. Ideologies and social constructs (Kövecses, 2010).

2. Visual Semiotics: Symbolic meaning in visual representations extends beyond language. Images, colours, and symbols are deliberately used in domains like political propaganda, advertising, and other visual communication to elicit specific feelings, associations, and

responses. Thus, mastery of visual semiotics is essential to understanding contemporary discourse (Hall, 1978).

3. Cultural Symbols: Cultural symbols and customs have a close relationship with symbolic representation. Within specific cultural frameworks, objects, rituals, and gestures have symbolic meanings that shape social norms and collective identities. Take the significance of the American flag or the religious symbolism found in traditional rituals (Taylor, 1991).

4. Ideological Constructs: Symbolic representation is often employed as a means of supporting or challenging dominant ideologies. Symbols are used in political speeches, media representations, and marketing campaigns to advance particular viewpoints and objectives. By examining these symbols, communication's underlying power dynamics and ideological disputes become clear (Dijk, 2012)

1.5.3 Speech Act

Speech acts, in which language is used to both enact and describe, are inextricably linked to performative acts. The use of phrases like "I declare," "I promise," or "I pronounce you..." convey intentions, but they also carry social obligations. These performative declarations have the power to create new realities or maintain existing norms. (Austin et al., 1975). Performative acts are defined as spoken or unspoken expressions that actively drive social change and go beyond merely describing the world as it is. This idea, which was first put forth by philosopher J.L. Austin (1962) and developed by Judith Butler (1993), emphasises the performative power of language in influencing social constructions as well as personal identities.

2. Identity Construction: The formation and expression of identities depend heavily on language. People negotiate and assert their identities in social contexts through performative acts. This phenomenon is exemplified (Holliday, 2010)

3. Ritual and Ceremony: Performing arts play a vital part in formalised forms of interaction within communities. Performative speech that upholds shared values, beliefs, and social bonds is often included in ceremonial speeches, religious ceremonies, and public exhibitions. These customs not only represent cultural traditions and collective identities but also express them. (Handelman, 1998)

4. Subversion and Resistance: Performative actions can also be used as a platform for dissent, challenging social norms and established power structures. Performative language is often used in demonstrations, artistic endeavours, and daily acts of defiance to question dominant narratives and assert alternative perspectives. By reimagining and reenacting social realities, people and communities can resist prevailing influences and envision alternative futures through the creation of alternative narratives (Tarrow, 2011)

In summary, the approaches offered by linguistic hybridity, symbolic representation, and performative actions are noteworthy when examining the complex elements of discourse. Through an examination of language hybridisation, symbolic encoding, and performative enactment in social contexts, analysts can uncover cultural significance, hidden power dynamics, and transformative possibilities inherent in communication. These approaches provide analytical frameworks for comprehending the complexities of language use and how it affects the formation of identities and societies.

1.6 Postcolonial Nigerian Literature

Nigerian literature is the body of literary works written by writers of Nigerian origin, regardless of language. These Nigerian literary works are characterised by specific features that make them a Nigerian literary work. An example of this, as previously mentioned, is that the writer is Nigerian and that the narrative events convey Nigerian experiences related to Nigeria (Jibril, 2020).

From it, it can be said that Nigerian literature conveys postcolonial events and its consequences, delves into the complexities of cultural identity, and analyses the social and political manifestations taking place in Nigeria after independence. Nigerian authors such as Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and others have contributed significantly to this work, each offering a different perspective on the colonial legacy and its impact on Nigerian society (Ogene et al., 2023).

The colonial period is the period during which one powerful country controls another territory, usually far from its borders, for economic, political, or social reasons. This occupation is in order to exploit the resources of this region for the benefit of the colonial power that works to establish colonies by force and to oppress the people of this region. This period is characterised by the imposition of the culture, religion, and customs of the colonial state and its systems of governance on the local population. The United Kingdom is one of the most prominent countries that imposed its control over many countries, especially in Africa and Asia.

In discussing Nigerian history, the first term that comes to mind is Postcolonialism. Nigeria encountered conflicts and troubles of colonialism's impression for many years under the domination of Great Britain. The events that occurred in the postcolonial era have been adapted by many writers in their works. Most of the colonial experiences demonstrated in Nigerian

literary works, as well as the postcolonial era in Nigeria's history, began in 1960 after gaining independence from Great Britain. After a seemingly unending number of years, Nigeria's dream of gaining independence and becoming free is realised. This period is distinguished by happiness and the spirit of freedom. Literary writers in this period reflected the society and events that happened post-independence. The works focused on the pains and aftermath of colonialism and the excesses of military government.

This epoch of colonisation was characterised by several key events and developments. The British colonial rule began during the fifteenth century in Nigeria through the slave trade and lasted until the nineteenth century (Alme, 2016). The British authorities then changed their attention to the "legitimate trade" of palm oil in the 1820s and 1830s. This resulted in the foundation of trade links and treaties with diverse Nigerian groups (Harvard Divinity School, 2023).

Also, in the 1880s, British rivalry with other European colonial powers led to the shaping of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria. These two regions were eventually combined in 1914 under the administration of Frederick Lugard (Harvard Divinity School, 2023; Britannica, 2019; Falola, 2019).

In addition, British colonisation adopted a system of indirect rule, working through existing traditional authorities and power structures to control the diverse Nigerian population. This resulted in more divisions and tensions among different ethnic and regional factions (Alme, 2016; Udo et al., 2019). The colonial period witnessed the spread of Western education and the spread of the Christian religion and was characterised by the emergence of some means of transportation and communication. It was also during this period that a nationalist movement emerged alongside a Nigerian middle class working together (Alme, 2016; Udo and Falola,

2019). Starting in the 1940s and 1950s, political activities demanding the independence of Nigeria emerged, which happened in 1960 (Udo et al., 2019).

In essence, the colonial period in Nigeria was a complex and transformative era that shaped the country's political, economic, and social landscape, laying the foundation for the rise of postcolonial Nigerian literature.

1.6.1 Colonialism Impact on Literature

Colonialism has had a profound influence on literature, particularly in regions colonised by European powers. In the context of African literature, colonialism influenced the themes, styles, and narratives of literary works in several ways. Here are some key points that detail the impact of colonialism on literature.

One significant aspect of this impact is the suppression of Indigenous Cultures, wherein colonial powers imposed their languages, religions, and cultural norms on African populations, leading to the impression and marginalisation of indigenous languages and traditions. African writers have often reflected the results of cultural subjugation and the attempts to reclaim, preserve, and celebrate indigenous cultures in their works (Gikandi, S., 2000).

Furthermore, the distortion of African History and Narratives by colonialism frequently suppressed African history and narratives, offering a biased portrayal of Africa and its inhabitants. African writers sought to reclaim and rewrite their history, providing alternative perspectives and questioning colonial depictions of Africa (Gikandi, S., 2000).

Moreover, Language as a Tool of Resistance addresses how language became a powerful instrument of resistance against colonial rule and cultural imperialism. African writers employed

colonial languages to undermine and challenge the colonial discourse, emphasising their own identities and viewpoints through literature (Gikandi, S., 2000).

Exploration of Identity: African literature, influenced by colonialism, has long delved into inquiries surrounding identity, encompassing both personal and societal dimensions. The authors explore themes of cultural inheritance, blended identities, and the complexities of navigating multiple cultural affiliations, reflecting the search for an authentic African identity amidst a tapestry of various cultural influences (Gikandi, S., 2000). Additionally, the Quest for Independence witnessed increased movements across Africa in the mid-20th century. Literature transformed into a stage for conveying nationalistic emotions and the longing for self-determination. Writers played a crucial role in inspiring and mobilising people towards achieving independence from colonial domination (Gikandi, S., 2000).

Postcolonial Realities demonstrate that literature in the postcolonial era continues to reflect the legacies of colonialism, introducing themes of cultural endurance, historical injustices, and the complexities of navigating a postcolonial society. Writers engage with the enduring effects of colonialism on African societies, depicting the ongoing battles and triumphs in the aftermath of colonial domination (Gikandi, S., 2000). The impact of colonialism on literature in Nigeria and Africa at large is a rich and complex subject that continues to shape literary expression, cultural identity, and historical narratives in the region.

1.6.2 The Emergence of Postcolonial Nigerian Literature

The appearance of postcolonial Nigerian literature took centre stage after colonialism in the country's literary landscape, echoing the profound sociopolitical and cultural shifts that led to Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule. Several elements contributed to the emergence

of postcolonial Nigerian literature. One main factor is decolonisation and the Quest for Identity, which explores the accomplishment of independence in 1960, offering a renewed sense of national identity and the need to redefine Nigerian culture and narratives in a postcolonial context (James, 2010; Guthrie, 2011). Writers also attempted to challenge colonial stereotypes, reclaim Indigenous histories, and articulate the complexities of navigating a postcolonial reality (James, 2010; Guthrie, 2011). In addition, linguistic and Cultural Hybridity was introduced as the employment of the English language, addressed during the colonial era, became a means for Nigerian authors to express their unique cultural viewpoints and experiences (Guthrie, 2011).

1.6.3 Themes of Postcolonial Nigerian Literature

In an attempt to explore various themes of postcolonial Nigerian literature that reflect the country's historical and cultural context, identity emerges as the most controversial issue in the postcolonial era and literature. It can be regarded as the most important due to the crisis that exists in all postcolonial communities. Given the circumstances of the postcolonial era and the problematic conditions faced by newly freed nations and countries in their search for and formation of self-identity, the crisis floated to the surface. The issue of identity is not a clear and fixed concept as its phenomena. Regarding this, Stuart (1993) gives the following explanation: "Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis when something assumed fixed, coherent, and stable is displaced, imagined, or experienced as a crisis and becomes the experience of doubt and uncertainty." (p, 393). In World War II, the act of decolonisation and liberation of nations under colonial rule provoked a noteworthy move in the direction of recreating social and individual identities. The period was also marked by the structure of decolonisation in all levels of life, culture, economy, arts, etc., demanding the regain of their identity lost to the powers of colonisation.

1.6.3.1 identity

The topic of identity is one of the most prominent topics in Nigerian literature, as it speaks in depth about the complex and sometimes contradictory processes in the emergence of identity after the end of colonial control. Nigerian writers have often highlighted the multiple facets of identity and the complexities surrounding its formation. Postcolonial Nigerian writers have reclaimed the use of marginalised narratives, evidence of their quest to reclaim the voice and experiences of marginalised communities, including ethnic minorities and women, who were oppressed during colonial domination (Al-Salem & Sanef, 2020).

Novels and other literature provide a platform that confronts traditional images of colonialism and affirms Nigerian identity (Abdulqadir & Dizayi, 2015). Secondly, the resistance and decolonisation of the mind reflect the contribution of Nigerian writers to a process of decolonising the mind, rejecting the imposition of colonial ideologies and affirming their own cultural and political autonomy (Abdulqadir & amp; Dizayi, 2015). The literature depicts the conflicts for self-determination and the quest to define a distinct Nigerian identity in the face of colonial legacies (Abdulqadir, S., & amp; Dizayi, H., 2015). Also, intergenerational dynamics and diasporic identities are employed by postcolonial Nigerian literature, delving into the experiences of younger generations navigating the complexities of identity, often balanced between the traditions of their ancestors and the impacts of the modern, globalised world (Alsalim et al., 2020). Additionally, the literature studies the experiences of Nigerians in the diaspora, who encounter struggles of preserving a sense of cultural identity while adjusting to new environments (Abdulqadir et al., 2015).

1.6.3.2 Cultural Hybridity

Cultural hybridity is another central theme in postcolonial Nigerian literature, centred on the mixing of Indigenous traditions with colonial legacies. The authors navigate the complexities of cultural interactions, linguistic variation, and the fusion of traditional and modern components in Nigerian society. This theme focuses on the dynamic nature of culture and the suppression of Nigerian heritage in the face of colonialism (Alsalim & Sanif, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has undertaken a thorough investigation into the domains of Postcolonialism, identity formation, and discursive analysis as they relate to academic discourse. By delving into the consequences of colonialism, the nuances of postcolonial identity, and the intricate dynamics of language usage, we have shed light on the complex interplay among power dynamics, cultural influences, and modes of representation. Through a synthesis of perspectives acquired from seminal texts and theoretical paradigms, we have underscored the importance of comprehending postcolonial discourse for unpacking contemporary global complexities. Ultimately, this chapter emphasised the critical roles played by language, power relations, and cultural integration in shaping individual identities and societal frameworks, thus providing valuable insights for scholarly inquiry and fostering critical discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

Discursive Construction of Identity in *Americana*

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Introduction

In this chapter, we highlight the viewpoint of writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on the formation of postcolonial identity. The focus of the research through this study was on the way in which the writer in the postcolonial environment reveals identities through storytelling techniques and language. Our goal is to uncover the complex journey of identity formation in today's globalised society by exploring detailed conversations about race, ethnicity, and migration. By reading *Americana*, we can better comprehend how language and storytelling impact the experiences of characters moving between Nigeria and the United States, offering a thorough examination of postcolonial identities in modern times.

2.1 Afropolitanism and Identity

In *Americana*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie delves deeply into themes of identity, migration, and cultural dynamics, focusing on the main character, Ifemelu. Ifemelu represents the idea of Afropolitanism, which was created by Taiye Selassie (2005) to explain the flexible cultural identities of Africans transitioning between their home continent and the diaspora.

2.1.1 Ifemelu's Afropolitan Identity

Ifemelu's experiences living in Nigeria and the US had a significant impact on her sense of self. In Nigeria, she fully engages with her native culture, language, and customs. Nevertheless, upon relocating to America, she is faced with a starkly contrasting cultural environment. Adichie illustrates this dual cultural identity through Ifemelu's self-reflective thoughts: "She had never perceived herself as a black individual until she arrived in America" (Adichie, 2013, p. 94). This quote encapsulates Ifemelu's realisation of her racial identity, which is intertwined with her

American experiences. It highlights the transformative impact of migration on her self-perception.

Ifemelu's experience of cultural differences between Nigeria and the United States is a core theme in *Americanah*. In her experiences, Adichie delves into the complexities of cultural adjustment and the difficulties of integration: "She was mastering the art of shifting mentally from one country to another; she was mastering the skill of blending in" (Adichie, 2013, p. 177). This quote demonstrates Ifemelu's ability to adapt as she gains knowledge on how to move between Nigerian and American cultures. It shows how her identity is constantly changing and the challenges of blending into a new culture.

Blogging plays a crucial role in showcasing identity. Ifemelu uses her blog to share her views on race, identity, and fitting in. In her blog posts, she discusses the experiences of African immigrants in America, providing insight into her own identity journey by engaging in dialogue: "Dear Non-American Black, when you decide to move to America, you are seen as black. Cease the disagreement. Cease identifying me as Jamaican or Ghanaian. America is indifferent. 209). This extract from Ifemelu's blog reflects her candid and stimulating insights on race and identity.

It shows how she is involved in understanding the complexities of racial classification in the United States and the influence of immigration on one's identity.

Ifemelu's interactions with different characters in the book offer a glimpse into her changing identity and cultural encounters, revealing how relationships can be a place for cultural exploration. Her romantic entanglements, especially with Obinze and Curt, emphasise the merging of race, culture, and intimacy: "Ifemelu experienced a sudden constriction, feeling as though something was encroaching on her, and she averted her gaze from him" (Adichie, 2013,

p. 298). This quote reflects Ifemelu's inner conflict as she grapples with the complexities of interracial relations. It emphasises the challenges of navigating cultural differences in the context of romantic love.

2.1.2 Cultural Duality

Reflections on race and belonging Throughout the novel, Ifemelu reflects on her experiences as a black African woman in America, offering poignant insights into the intersection of race, gender, and nationality: "She had always disliked the phrase 'Do I know you?'... It was said in America with the eager open-mouthed wonder of people who believed that, because they knew your name, you must also be known to them" (Adichie, 2013, p. 86). This quote highlights her sense of otherness and the challenges of belonging in a society characterised by racial hierarchies.

Ifemelu's Journey into *Americanah* offers a compelling exploration of Africanness, encapsulating the complexities of cultural identity, migration, and belonging. By utilising her encounters, connections, and introspections, Ifemelu successfully makes her way through the intricacies of cultural dualism, providing a deep understanding of the human journey of immigration and adjustment. *Americanah* serves as proof of the diverse range of African diaspora identities and the ongoing search for a sense of belonging in a world that is interconnected. Ifemelu communicates her ideas and experiences about race, culture, and identity in Nigeria and the US through her blog.

Through her posts, the reader discovers complexities, given that she is an African immigrant to America. She discusses sensitive topics such as racist attacks, and her connection to

language is evident in the writing style that combines the fluidity of Nigerian Pidgin English with American English, reflecting her hybrid identity.

Through her blog, Ifemelu critically examines the cultural differences between the two countries and highlights the nuances of language as a sign of identity as she moves between Nigerian expressions and English colloquial language. This demonstrates her ability to adapt to multiple linguistic contexts. Thus, Ifemelu's blog became a means of self-discovery, allowing her to assert her voice in places where her identity as an African immigrant has been misunderstood or marginalised.

"Sometimes I wish we had British accents here. At least it's English. The way they say 'vahze' instead of 'vays,' 'rarrther' instead of 'rahther,' reminds you that they conquered your country, even if their businesses failed here long before the present government. In any case, they took away your very language and replaced it with theirs. What is that if not an erasure of identity?"(Adichie, 2013, p. 52).

The quote from Ifemelu's blog post illustrates her adeptness at switching between languages and cultures. Ifemelu's relationships with the different characters in the novel shape her identity and influence her understanding of belonging in both Nigeria and America, such as her romantic relationship with Obinze in Nigeria and Curt in America, in addition to her exposure to different points of view. This movement between races and diversity of cultures had Ifemelu struggling with questions of authenticity and self-acceptance.

"Curt had a different kind of laugh, dry and knowing. It sounded, Ifemelu thought, as though he had finished reading something witty and ironic. His accent was faintly Southern, not

from Atlanta or New Orleans but somewhere in between, and he said 'y'all' in a self-conscious way, as though he knew he was not supposed to but couldn't help it." (Adichie, p.227)

In this quote, Ifemelu notes Kurt's accent and use of the word "yakum" as she recognises the linguistic markers of identity. Kurt's accent, which is described as "mild southern", demonstrates his regional background and cultural upbringing, which contrasts with Ifemelu's experiences as a Nigerian immigrant. The difference in language and communication styles between them also highlights the complexities of their relationship and illustrates the role of language in shaping interpersonal dynamics.

Moreover, the friendships she formed with individuals from diverse backgrounds were a valuable opportunity for cultural exchange. For example, her relationship with her Nigerian friend Ranyendo gives her a connection to the Nigerian homeland and a sense of belonging to it, while her friendships with some of her American acquaintances, such as Shan and Blaine, provide her with a clearer understanding of American culture and ethnic relations. All of these relationships, with their preconceptions and challenges, contributed to the development of her sense of her Afropolitan identity.

2.1.3 Reflections on Race and Belonging

The novel presents Ifemelu's experience with the issue of race and belonging in both Nigeria and America as a black woman moving among whites in America, which exposed her to racism and discrimination. This is what pushed her to confront the complexities of racial identity, and this is what she expressed in her publications. This indicates her keen awareness of the social and cultural dynamics that shaped her sense of self.

After returning to Nigeria following years of living in America, Ifemelu found herself confronting theories within Nigerian society. Her views shed light on the intersections between race, class, and identity in Nigerian society, challenging traditional notions of belonging and acceptance. Through these lenses, Ifemelu grapples with the ultimate corporatism of identity within globalisation."It was strange, the way she loved America and loved Nigeria too. It was like loving two men who were at war with each other in her heart. One never won; the other never lost."(Adichie, 2013, p.475)

In general, through her blog posts, Ifemelu appears as a complex and dynamic personality who is constantly evolving, responding to the life experiences she undergoes, thus forming a hybrid identity that manifests in the language in which she records her reflections. "She felt American. She also felt not quite American. She did not know what she was. But she knew what she was not. And she knew that it was easier to feel 'not quite' when you were in America, with its demands for choices, with its cult of self-invention, the pressure to be someone else, or something else."(Adichie, p.227). This quote illustrates Ifemelu's internal struggle with her identity as she navigates life in America. It also highlights the tension between feeling American and feeling separate from that identity.

"As Ifemelu spoke now, she realised how much her accent had softened over the years, how much the inflexion had become American, and she felt a pang of loss. She missed the way her tongue had rolled the words in Nigeria, the musicality of it, the sense of home. But here, in America, she had learned to speak differently, to blend in, to avoid the questions about where she was from."(Adichie,p.213).

This excerpt shows how Ifemelu's language reflects her evolving identity. Adichie uses language to demonstrate how Ifemelu's dialect has changed over time due to her living in

America. The shift in her discourse highlights the cultural adaptation and assimilation that Ifemelu experiences while indicating a sense of loss of her Nigerian roots.

In her blog, the protagonist says: "Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So, what if you weren't 'black' in your country? You're in America now."(Adichie,p.392). This excerpt reflects Ifemelu's frank assessment of race and identity in America. Her use of language, particularly her direct address of "Dear Non-American Black," challenges traditional notions of racial identity. It is clear that Ifemelu faces the constraints of racial profiling and asserts her right to define her own identity on her own terms, regardless of regional or cultural differences.

2.2 Language and Identity

Language is essential to the process of creating identity in the book *Americana*, as Ifemelu's journey between her Nigerian heritage and her experiences in the diaspora demonstrates. Ifemelu's verbal skills increase remarkably, which is indicative of her flexibility. Ifemelu was raised in Nigerian culture and felt a strong sense of belonging from her interactions with friends and relatives there, which demonstrated her initial affinity for Nigerian English.

Her language also reflects her connection to her homeland, as seen when she recalls her childhood days in Lagos: "She said 'Good morning' in English and 'Kedu?' in Igbo, as she always did, and the thought that soon she would have to relearn the Igbo greetings of her childhood made her suddenly afraid, as though a train had stopped abruptly in the middle of a journey."(Adichie, p,8)

After moving to the United States, Ifemelu discovers she is surrounded by American English in her daily life. In order to navigate different social and professional situations, she practices code-switching by smoothly transitioning between Nigerian English and American English based on the setting. This switching of codes shows her diverse identity and attempts to adjust to her new environment. In her blog post discussing "The Non-American Black," Ifemelu struggles with her linguistic choices, feeling uncertain as she combines Americanisms and Nigerianisms, influenced by her background as an English major, making her feel foreign to herself.

Through Ifemelu's linguistic journey, her sense of self becomes intricately intertwined with her language use. While Nigerian English exemplifies her heritage and cultural origins, American English displays her adjustment and integration into the unfamiliar environment. Ultimately, Ifemelu's capacity to switch between codes showcases her adaptability in manoeuvring through different cultural environments, underscoring the interconnectedness of language and identity in *Americanah*.

At the beginning of the novel, Ifemelu's usage of the term 'in surplus,' a characteristic of Nigerian English, highlights her linguistic roots and cultural heritage. Her familiarity with Nigerian English is apparent through her conversations and internal reflections. For example, her contemplation about relearning Igbo greetings upon returning to Nigeria after living in America: "She said 'Good morning' in English and 'Kedu?' in Igbo, as she always did, and the thought that soon she would have to relearn the Igbo greetings of her childhood made her suddenly afraid, as though a train had stopped abruptly in the middle of a journey" (Adichie, 2013, p. 43).

Ifemelu undergoes a change in her language skills in the book *Americanah* as she becomes more and more integrated into American society and learns to understand its linguistic quirks.

She understands the significance of understanding word meanings and the subtleties of tone and dialect. She initially takes on a pseudo-accent when she immigrates to America in an effort to fit in, but she ultimately rejects this façade and embraces her true linguistic heritage as an essential component of who she is.

Ifemelu's linguistic journey also involves acquiring knowledge of cultural differences in language use and interpreting social signs and expressions. She comes to understand that language involves more than just words; it also involves an understanding of social norms and behaviours.

The turning point in Ifemelu's linguistic journey occurs on a sunlit day in July, the same day she meets Blaine. She realises the artificiality of her accent despite its convincing nature. She had meticulously perfected it by observing friends and newscasters, mastering the blurring of the 't', the creamy roll of the 'r', sentences starting with 'so', and the sliding response of "oh really." However, she becomes acutely aware that this accent is a conscious act, requiring effort and willpower. She recognises that in moments of panic or fear, she would struggle to maintain these American sounds.

The further she wrote, the less confident she felt about her thoughts, as her blog's language mixed American and Nigerian influences, organised with the perspective of an English major, felt unfamiliar to her. Two hundred and fifteen. This quote explains that Ifemelu's writing combines "American and Nigerian tendencies," showcasing the integration of linguistic components from both cultures. This combination showcases Ifemelu's mixed identity, influenced by her time in Nigeria and the United States. Her language mirrors her dual cultural heritage, blending her Nigerian roots with her encounters in the United States.: "But lately she had been unable to shake the feeling that her real life was a dream from which she might wake at

any moment. Her life in America was foreign, of another place. She finds herself turning to America as a way to explain herself to herself because "The more she wrote, the less sure she was about what she wanted to say, the language of her blog, a stew of Americanisms and Nigerianisms, structured by the sensibility of an English major, seemed foreign to her" (Adichie, 2013, p. 215). This quotation characterises Ifemelu's writing as a mixture of "American and Nigerian characteristics," showing how linguistic elements from both cultures are combined. This combination exemplifies Ifemelu's dual identity, which was influenced by her time in both Nigeria and America. The way she speaks shows how her bicultural background and the blending of her Nigerian heritage with her life in the United States influence her.

Ifemelu's identity becomes intertwined with her language usage, showing her linguistic growth: Nigerian English embodies her cultural roots and ties to her homeland, while American English showcases her adjustment to a different setting. Ifemelu's thoughts on her identity revolve around this dual nature. "But lately she had been unable to shake the feeling that her real life was a dream from which she might wake at any moment. Her life in America was foreign, of another place. She found herself turning to America as a way to explain herself to herself because Lagos produced in her a constant feeling of estrangement" (Adichie, 2013, p.264)." Lagos produced in her a constant feeling of estrangement" (Adichie, 2013, p. 264). This excerpt focuses on Ifemelu's inner conflict regarding being true to herself and defining her identity, primarily through language. The character comes to understand that genuine belonging does not stem from imitating others' language but from accepting one's own linguistic roots. The protagonist in the book feels a profound disconnect from the American lifestyle, which seems strange and unfamiliar to her. She looks to America solely for self-understanding, comparing it to the ongoing sense of alienation she feels in Lagos.

Overall, Adichie's portrayal of Ifemelu's linguistic experience in *Americanah* emphasises the close link between language and identity. The novel shows how language is used to navigate cultural settings and shape one's sense of self through Ifemelu's experiences in code-switching and adaptation.

2.2.1 Ifemelu's Connection to Nigerian English

Ifemelu started her language exploration in her homeland, Nigeria, with her utilisation of Nigerian English showcasing her cultural heritage and feelings of connection. Adichie shows Ifemelu's knowledge of Nigerian English by portraying her interactions with her family and friends. When Ifemelu says hello to her aunt, her Nigerian English is noticeable: "She said 'Good morning' in English and 'Kedu?' in Igbo, as she always did..." (Adichie, 2013, p. 43).

Ifemelu started her linguistic journey in Nigeria by using Nigerian English to express her cultural background and sense of belonging. Adichie demonstrates Ifemelu's understanding of Nigerian English through how she communicates with her family and friends. Ifemelu's Nigerian English becomes obvious when she greets her aunt.

2.2.2 Code-Switching in America

Ifemelu encountered a new linguistic context upon arriving in the US, where the dominant dialect was American English. She used code-switching, adapting her language to different social and professional settings to get around in this new environment. Adichie depicts this transformation as a means to survive and acclimate to the unfamiliar surroundings. For example, Ifemelu's blog shows her mix of American and Nigerian language, influenced by her studies in English.: "The language of her blog, a stew of Americanisms and Nigerianisms, structured by the sensibility of an English major, seemed foreign to her" (Adichie, 2013, p. 215). This quote

demonstrates Ifemelu's ability to use different languages and the challenges of navigating various linguistic and cultural influences in America.

2.2.3 The Complexity of Linguistic Identity

"In America, you don't get to decide what race you are. It's decided for you."(Adichie, p.,391) This quote from *Americanah* illustrates how language shapes racial identity in America, suggesting that upon immigration, individuals gradually relinquish control of their racial identity, which is determined by linguistic markers such as dialect. It also critiques the arbitrary nature of racial discrimination and emphasises the controlling influence of cultural norms in America.

In Adichie's novel *Americanah*, five characters exhibit distinct linguistic behaviours as they immigrate to America and Britain. Ifemelu is fascinated by the differences in English language usage she encounters in these settings, particularly at the level of vocabulary and meaning. Despite the shared elements of the English language in both countries, she struggles to fully grasp the subtleties of expression during conversations as she strives to internalise the implied meanings of words and the subtle differences in intonation and stress.

On the other hand, characters like Uju and Ojiugo hold different perspectives from Ifemelu. They feel ashamed of their linguistic roots. For example, Ojo tolerates the mispronunciation of her name and begins to introduce herself in a mispronounced way. They argue against speaking their mother tongue, Igbo, at home in front of their children, advocating for the formation of a new identity for their children through complete assimilation into foreign linguistic standards. This, they believe, will lead to their children's full integration into American and British social circles, thus gaining social and material benefits. Consequently, Ojo, Nicholas, and Ojiugo resort to changing their dialects in specific social contexts while maintaining their

mother tongue in other situations. "Dike, put it back," Aunty Uju said, with the nasal, sliding accent she adopted when speaking to white Americans in the presence of white Americans. Correspondingly, this passage illustrates the characters' adaptation of their linguistic identity in different social settings, reflecting the complexities of navigating cultural norms and expectations. Within earshot of white Americans. "Pooh-reet-back." With this accent emerged a new persona, apologetic and self-abasing" (Adichie, 2013, p. 109).

On the contrary, Aisha, a Senegalese hairdresser who immigrated to America, is another character in the novel who exemplifies the conflict between language and identity. Her language exhibits distinct linguistic features because her mother tongue (L1) is not English but French and Wolof. Here are some examples of this linguistic conflict:

- i. "What kind of braids you want?" (Ibid, p. 12)
- ii. "Why you don't have relaxer?" (Ibid, p. 12)
- iii. "But how you comb it? Hard to comb" (ibid, p. 12)

In the first quote, the word "do" is omitted from the sentence, which would have read "What kind of braids do you want?". In the second quote, the verb "have" is incorrectly used to mean "use," and the positions of the words "you" and "don't" can be interchanged.

In the third quote, there is another omission of the word "do." If arranged correctly, the third quote would read, "But how do you comb it?" and "It is difficult to comb it." Therefore, their use of language exhibits a grammatical structure that differs from the grammatical conventions of American English. Despite this linguistic background, Aisha displays customer service behaviour that Ifemelu considers un-African. This observation illustrates a unique pattern of linguistic behaviour among immigrants in this context.

The novel's narrative depicts intentional neglect of the language and cultural values of the characters' indigenous communities in their transmission from one generation to another. This neglect, as emphasised by Ogunsi, leads to the danger of language extinction. Because language serves as a vital means of individual and group identity, and immigrants often face pressure to adopt new linguistic cultures for self-fulfilment, many of them are at risk of losing their original linguistic and cultural identity.

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Utilising critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the book *Americanah* provides understanding on how language influences power dynamics, especially in conversations, storytelling, and forms of communication. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie skillfully utilises language in the novel to convey the complexities of power imbalances and different social connections.

One example of language-constructing power dynamics is evident in Ifemelu's experiences with racism and daily microaggressions at work and school. Adichie vividly portrays the impact of these discourses on Ifemelu's identity and self-perception. Adichie writes: "She had discovered, in America, race. The minute she landed, she had understood that she was an African-American. "When did this happen? It happened every time she was stared at on the street, or questioned at the airport customs desk, or treated condescendingly by a clerk in a shop."(Adichie, p.165). This quote shows how Ifemelu's racial identity in American society is shaped by language, both spoken and unspoken.

The ongoing prejudice and examination she encounters influence how she sees herself and her role on a worldwide scale. Additionally, Adichie explores the hidden origins of microaggressions that uphold unequal power dynamics. Ifemelu's encounters with microaggressions

showcase the widespread racism in America and how it affects daily interactions. An example is when Ifemelu was questioned during a job interview. Ifemelu was asked: "Can you Tell us something about your origins?"(Adichie,2013, p.193) This apparently harmless question reveals underlying assumptions about Ifemelu's identity and sense of belonging, perpetuating stereotypes based on her ethnic heritage. Adichie writes: "The question was framed in such a way that she wondered if they expected her to talk about ancestors. Or if they had simply been intrigued by the word origins, thinking it made them sound intellectual."(ibid, p.193). Adichie shows how language is used to uphold power structures and sustain systemic injustices, especially in relation to race and identity, using these illustrations.

Adichie's examination of storytelling in *Americanah* highlights the importance of narratives in confronting social issues and maintaining power disparities. Ifemelu uses her blog as a powerful tool to analyse and question commonly accepted stories regarding race and identity. In her online writings, Ifemelu reveals structural disparities and biases experienced by black individuals, presenting different viewpoints that challenge prevailing beliefs.

Adichie uses Ifemelu's blog to highlight social injustices and push for change through alternative perspectives that question the current societal norms. For example, the comment made by Ifemelu, "Racism should never have happened and so you don't get a cookie for reducing it,"(Adichie, p.431) exemplifies her refusal to settle for mediocrity and demands sincere actions to combat racism instead of just praising superficial gestures. Moreover, the novel vividly illustrates the social contradictions between blacks and whites, even in their physical descriptions.

Even though whites may look alike, the language used to talk about them is usually seen as more complimentary and appropriate in society. Words such as "skinny" and "thin" are

frequently used to describe white individuals, while terms like "light-skinned" and "thin," which can have negative implications, are often used to describe black individuals.

Adichie uses these examples to illustrate how stories can uphold and continue unequal power dynamics in society, especially regarding race and identity. Adichie encourages readers to question and challenge prevailing stories, urging them to think critically about societal conventions and push for meaningful transformation.

2.3.1 The Use of Figurative Language

Adichie employs similes as a technique to highlight the difficulties associated with cultural identification and belonging. Through practical comparison, she highlights the ways in which individuals navigate the intersections of race, culture, and language. For example, Ifemelu describes the experience of "code-switching" between Nigerian and American English: "It was like walking a tightrope, balancing between the familiarity of home and the expectations of a new world, like a bird navigating between two distinct landscapes, never fully settling in either."(ibid, p.93).

This simile compares Ifemelu's experience of code-switching to a bird moving between two different natures, ultimately never fully belonging to either. It also demonstrates the complexity and difficulty of moving between languages and cultural contexts. Further, "When she spoke to Americans, she changed the rhythm of her accent, softened the vowels, clipped the ends of her words, and her English assumed the flat, stretched-out sounds of American English."(Ibid, p.19). Adichie likens the way the protagonist's English sounds to the flat, extended sounds of American English. The simile emphasises the extent to which she changed her speech to suit Americans to communicate with them effectively.

Additionally, Adichie uses symbolism to emphasise the way race interacts with certain aspects of identity, such as gender and class. Symbolic images increase the beauty of the narrative and provoke the reader's thinking about the profound effects of ethnicity in shaping individuals' sense of belonging. As an example, Ifemelu reflects on the symbolism of her natural hair: "Relaxing her hair was like being in prison. The decision to keep her hair natural was a form of protest, and it felt wonderful."(Ibid, p190). The author uses the process of letting the protagonist's hair down as a symbol of imprisonment. This comparison indicates that changing her hair to fit the norms of the society in which she currently lives appears restrictive and oppressive as if she were confined within the prison walls. It highlights the idea that societal pressures restrict individual freedom and affect identity.

In her novel *Americanah*, Chimamanda Adichie skillfully used figurative language to clarify the concepts of race and belonging, enhancing the story with rich, moving symbolic imagery. Through metaphor, simile, and symbolism, Adichie expresses the complexity of racial identity and cultural adaptation, encouraging readers to engage deeply with the characters' experiences.

The writer Adichie addressed themes of identity, immigration, and cultural blending in the novel *Americanah*. It delved into the precise influence of language and its role in the formation of identity. Ifemelu's experiences with language served as a lens through which Adichie explored the subtlest differences in cultural adaptation and the fluidity of linguistic identity. This is exemplified by Ifemelu's blog posts and personal interactions, in which Adichie explains how language functions as a symbol of identity and belonging, shedding light on the way individuals interact with their linguistic identities amidst cultural diversity.

Americanah portrays the African diaspora experience truthfully, especially the challenges African immigrants faced when assimilating into Western societies. Adichie emphasises Ifemelu's experiences with racism and intolerance in the US, as well as her struggles to fit in and feel accepted when she returned to her native Nigeria. Adichie uses Ifemelu's perspectives on race and belonging to explore the relationships between race, class, and nationality.

Americanah is situated within a broad context of globalisation that clearly impacts cultural exchange and hybridisation. Adichie's depiction of Afropolitanism reflects the interconnectedness of cultures under the influence of globalisation, carefully illustrating the ways in which individuals with multiple identities and affiliations navigate across different geographical and cultural regions.

"In America, Ifemelu became black. She was not black when she lived in Nigeria. In Nigeria, she was not black because everyone else around her was black. She had not thought of herself as black and all that came with it until she arrived in America. Even though she had read about it, studied it, and thought she understood it. In America, her green passport made her Nigerian. For the first time, she felt black."(Adichie, p.174)

The change in Ifemelu's identity from not delving into the concept of being 'black' in Nigeria to feeling clearly 'black' in America indicates the impact of globalisation on the development of individual experiences and the formation of identities. All of this is clear evidence of how global cultural interactions influence individuals' perceptions of themselves and others, especially in the context of race and identity.

Overall, *Americanah* is an engaging exploration of identity, migration, and cultural dynamics, offering deep insight into the complexities of the African immigrant diaspora experience, as individuals strive to belong in a rapidly changing world.

To sum up, the novel *Americanah* provides valuable material for critical analysis of discourse, as it demonstrates the ways in which language can maintain or counter-power inequalities in society. Through Ifemelu's blog, discussions, and interviews, Adichie demonstrates the potential for language to change norms and perspectives in society. By questioning dominant narratives and offering alternative perspectives, Ifemelu takes charge and disrupts entrenched power dynamics, pushing readers to think critically about their own perspectives regarding race, identity, and power.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Americanah* presents a profound investigation into the construction of postcolonial identity through discursive tools, illuminating the intricate relationship among language, narrative, and identity within a postcolonial framework. Through the journeys of the protagonist Ifemelu and other characters, Adichie employs diverse linguistic and narrative techniques to portray postcolonial identities.

To begin with, in *Americanah* postcolonial identity emerges through the characters' interactions, dialogues, and internal contemplations. Adichie skillfully illustrates the complexities of negotiating postcolonial identities in Nigeria and the United States, emphasising how language becomes a medium for conveying cultural heritage, adaptation, and resistance.

Additionally, the author utilises a variety of linguistic and narrative techniques to portray postcolonial identities. These encompass code-switching, linguistic fusion, and the interplay of

diverse linguistic forms to mirror the intricate essence of postcolonial identity. Through Ifemelu's blog, conversations, and experiences, Adichie illustrates the complexities of linguistic adaptation and negotiation in forming both individual and shared identities.

Finally, *Americanah* presents postcolonial identities by questioning prevailing narratives and presenting alternative viewpoints. Adichie critically examines matters of race, ethnicity, migration, and belonging, urging readers to interrogate established power structures and societal conventions. Through characters navigating their postcolonial identities in various manners, Adichie underscores the fluidity and intricacy of identity development in an interconnected world.

General conclusion

This dissertation aimed to underscore the construction of identity in postcolonial literature, emphasising the *Americana* narrative through the analysis of language, language dynamics, and social contexts. This study explores how identities develop and sheds light, through discourse analysis, on the intertwined relationship between language and culture in constructing identities within postcolonial narratives.

The research framework was structured into two chapters. The first chapter addressed the theoretical and historical framework of postcolonial Nigerian identity by providing an overview of key theoretical concepts and scholarly debates on the discursive construction of postcolonial identity and Nigerian literature. In the second chapter, the researcher provided an analysis of *Americanah*, focusing on the representation and discursive construction of postcolonial identity in the novel.

The research questions and hypotheses help to guide this research. Three questions were asked to address the research aims: How is postcolonial identity constructed discursively in *Americanah*? What linguistic and narrative strategies does the author employ to represent postcolonial identities? How does *Americanah* represent identities within the postcolonial

context? It was hypothesised that Adichie utilises code-switching, dialect, and metaphor to convey the complexities of postcolonial identity. Furthermore, the negotiation of postcolonial identities in *Americanah* reflects the issues of racism, globalisation, and diaspora, she explores the experiences of migration, cultural hybridity, and colonial legacy shape the discursive construction of postcolonial identity in *Americanah*. The main aims of this study are analysing *Americana* techniques that explores identity construction, and racial, gender, and national relationship complexities.

The dissertation uses discourse analysis as the main analytical approach, focusing on the rhetorical construction of identity in postcolonial literature with characters of *Americanah* as the corpus. It investigates language use, power relations, and social contexts within the narrative, analysing discourse construction, rhetorical techniques, and linguistic differences in the text. This study has a significant contribution to the academic discourse on postcolonial literature, identity shaping, migration studies, and cultural representation. Analysing the discursive construction of postcolonial identity in *Americanah* advances academic understanding, offers insights into social policies, fosters intercultural dialogue, and enhances literary analysis.

In the end, *Americanah* offers a thorough examination of how discursive techniques are used to establish postcolonial identity, shedding light on the complex interplay between language, narrative, and identity inside a postcolonial framework. Adichie illustrates postcolonial identities using a variety of linguistic and narrative devices in the travels of her main character, Ifemelu, and other characters. The results revealed the following:

First of all, in *Americanah* postcolonial identity is shown via the conversations, exchanges, and introspective thoughts among the characters. Adichie emphasises how language becomes a

means for expressing cultural history, adaptation, and resistance as she deftly shows the difficulties of negotiating postcolonial identities in Nigeria and the US.

The author also employs a range of narrative and linguistic devices to depict postcolonial identities. These include linguistic fusion, code-switching, and the interaction of several language forms to reflect the complex nature of postcolonial identity. Adichie highlights the difficulties of language adaptation and negotiation in building both individual and collective identities through Ifemelu's blog, talks, and experiences.

Americanah challenges dominant narratives and offers counterarguments in order to present postcolonial identities. Adichie challenges readers to consider prevailing power structures and social norms as she addresses issues of race, ethnicity, migration, and belonging. Adichie emphasises the complexity and fluidity of identity development in a networked society through characters navigating their postcolonial identities in a variety of ways.

In conclusion, *Americanah* offers a compelling examination of how postcolonial identity is formed, highlighting the difficulties in navigating identity in a postcolonial setting through the use of language and storytelling techniques. Through an in-depth depiction of persons and their experiences, the book challenges readers to consider the complexities of postcolonial identities and the processes involved in their construction and management.

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الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث التقنيات البلاغية التي تم توظيفها في رواية أمريكانا التي كتبتها تشيماماندا نغوزي أديتشي لاستكشاف كيفية تشكيل الهوية في فترة ما بعد الاستعمار. يسلط الضوء على العلاقة بين العرق والجنس والجنسية لخلق وتطوير هوية ما بعد الاستعمار، كما يدرس الطريقة التي تتفاعل بها الشخصيات مع بعضها البعض داخل الرواية عبر مختلف الظروف الجغرافية والثقافية والاجتماعية. تقدم هذه الدراسة تمثيلاً للمؤلف الذي يعكس تجارب الشخصيات في الهجرة والتهجين الثقافي وإرث الاستعمار، وتشكل البناء الخطابى للهوية ما بعد الاستعمارية في أمريكانا. تستخدم أديتشي تبديل الرموز واللهجة والاستعارة لنقل تعقيدات هوية ما بعد الاستعمار، ويعكس التفاوت على هويات ما بعد الاستعمار في أمريكانا قضايا العنصرية والعولمة والشتات. ومن هذا المنطلق، تم اعتماد منهج تحليل الخطاب في هذا البحث لاستكشاف البناء الخطابى للهوية في أدب ما بعد الاستعمار، مع التركيز على رواية أمريكانا كمجموعة أدبية. والنتيجة الرئيسية لهذه الأطروحة هي الكشف عن هوية ما بعد الاستعمار من خلال السرد واللغة في رواية "أمريكانا". تتأمل في العرق والهجرة والانتماء في مجتمع معولم على مدونتها التي أدت إلى تشكيل هويتها المتطورة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية، أدب ما بعد الاستعمار، أمريكانا، البناء الخطابى.