

RACISM IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S AMERICANAH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Bamigbola, Esther Olayinka^{1*}

Ihejirika, Mary Ijeoma²

^{1, 2}Adekunle Ajasin University, Àkùngbá-Àkókó, Ondo State, Nigeria

* Corresponding author: bamigbolayinka@yahoo.com

Citation: Bamigbola, E.O. & Ihejirika, M.I. (2021). Racism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah: A critical discourse analysis. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 156-174

ABSTRACT

Since the slavery and colonial eras, racism and ethnic issues, power and class relations between individuals, entities, communities and dominance have been the major issues in the world. Racism enacts superiority of a race over another, and this act affects people not only on interpersonal level but also through the broader structures of society most notably in the system of education, justice, media, policing, immigration and employment as well as through hate activities and government policies. This study portrays how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is able to manipulate her choice of words in describing the stigma that a society has attached to individuals because of their colour. Fairclough and Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approaches guided the analyses. CDA is an indispensable tool for the analysis of any discourse that portrays social practices. The study concludes that discrimination is not only done by mainstream or the in-group members of a society but the out-group members also engage in this act of disassociation which is caused by the migration of people from one country to the other either for better opportunities or for educational purposes as portrayed in the novel.

Keywords: racism, ethnicity, language use, social practice, discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

Racism is defined by Merriam Webster dictionary (2008) as: "A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race." From this definition, it is evident that racism enacts superiority of a race over another, and this act affects people not only on

interpersonal level but also through the broader structures of society most notably in the system of education, justice, media, policing, immigration and employment as well as through hate activities and government policies. Since the slavery and colonial eras, racism and ethnic issues, power and class relations between individuals, entities and communities have been major issues in the world.

The concept of racism comes from anthropological ideas which have long been refuted. They were mostly advanced in the late 19th and early 20th century in Western Europe, and stated that humans could be divided into racial groups based on physical and behavioural characteristics linked to ethnicity, nationality, and related notions like shared language, CRER (2020). These concepts were affected by colonialism and imperialism, and the tendency to show that non-white groups were low-grade in order to rationalize the actions of Western nations. Thus, racism is strongly related to skin colour while ethnicity often do occur among people of the same colour or race.

From a historical perspective, racism is based on two basic assumptions, namely that a relationship exists between physical features and moral qualities, and that mankind can be classified into superior and inferior stocks, Puzzo (1964). Based on this view, a clear distinction was made between racism and ethnocentrism.

Following incidents of antisemitism of 1960 in several parts of the world, the United Nations extended the scope of racism to include distinction based on descent, nationality and ethnicity, Lewis (2006). The world body canvassed for protection from all forms of racial discrimination and also took definite steps to criminalize such practices as apartheid, hate crime and the like. Despite the efforts of the United Nations Organization to eliminate racial discrimination, the social evils of racism are still being confronted today in different parts of the world.

Racism is an important social issue that is being studied from such perspectives as legal, social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities. Since language is a code system used for human communication, it can be utilized as a potent tool for tackling social issues such as racism. This explains why literary writers generally tend to metaphorically portray social practices within the society via language. Specifically, discourse analysis seeks to reveal the meaning of race and the actions of racists through careful study of the ways in which these factors of human society are described and discussed in various written and oral works, Van Dijk (1992a).

One of such written texts where the problem of racism is exhibited and dissected is

“Americanah” authored by Chimamanda (2013). Americanah is a narrative of love and race about a young man and woman who face a number of tough choices and difficulties bordering on societal problems in the countries they adventured to for sustenance. Obinze and Ifemelu fall in love as adolescents in a secondary school in Lagos, Nigeria. Ifemelu - beautiful and self-assured - leaves for America to study, she endures several harrowing years of new destitution before graduating from college. She therefore starts a blog entitled Raceteeth or Various Observation about American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a non-American Black. Obinze, the quiet and thoughtful son of a professor, had hoped to join her but post 9/11 America will not let him and he had unsavoury life encounters in London where he takes up illegal jobs.

Racism is portrayed in the novel as a critical issue that raises a great question in America and Europe which constitute the physical context of the novel. Racism depicts how people are configured, classified and segregated because of their colour, which leads to disparity where some members of the society are referred to as the “in-group members” while the other party are called the “out-group members”. This stigma restrains the antagonized within the society, either from having equal rights or some necessary societal value as it is clearly seen in the novel through Obama, “Ifemelu” as a character, and it takes courage to survive within this society.

The aim of this study is to explore, through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel, Americanah, presents the experiences of the Blacks through the avenue of language. The objectives of the study, among others, are to investigate and describe how language is used in the text to represent racism, demonstrate how CDA can be useful in enlightening readers by helping them read between the lines, discern, manipulate discourse and differentiate between informative and manipulative racial utterances in texts.

According to Van Dijk (1985: 70), CDA empowers the detection and exposition of ethnic prejudice defined by as “a predominantly negative social attitude about ethnic minority groups and their members”. It does not limit itself to analysing the close formal properties of the text, rather, it contextualises a text in its wider social, economic, historical, cognitive and political context. In order to do so, this study focuses on the implicit linguistic strategies used in the discourse to influence its recipients.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of CDA has been traced to the 1940s when the Frankfurt School developed its critical theory, but it was only in the 1970s that its current focus on language and

discourse was unfolded (Fowler et al, 1979 and Schiffrin et al, 2000: 352). The purpose of CDA is to understand, uncover, and resist social inequality.

According to Van Dijk (1995), "CDA studies how discourse analysis positions itself in social relationship relating to discourse which are related to power, dominance, and social inequality." In other words, there is a particular emphasis on the importance of discourse when dominance is at stake. Fairclough (1995) on the other hand, considers CDA as the study that is centred on social and cultural events, the discursive practices which produced them, the dialectical relationship between them in relations of power and ideology.

Janks (1997: 329) sees CDA as a critical language theory that concerns itself with the use of language as a form of expositing on social practice. Hucklin (1995), while clarifying the function of CDA in a modern society, defines it as "A highly context sensitive, democratic approach which takes an ethical stance on social issues with the aim of improving society." From Fairclough and Hucklin's definitions, CDA is a means to caution readers to be observant of guising and indoctrinating ideologies meant to manipulate them.

Since CDA is a complex and multi-disciplinary domain of study, it is imperative to select CDA models to use as analytic tools in relevance to the type of social issue to be discussed. Thus, the models of Fairclough and Van Dijk have been selected for this study because their principles are most applicable to social issues inclusive of racism.

Fairclough (1989) developed a CDA model of ten questions, and these questions are categorised into three sub-groups, namely: vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures. The questions are itemized below.

1. What experiential value do words have? Are there words which are ideological contested? Is there rewording or over wording? What ideologically significant meanings (synonymy, hyponymy, antonym) are there between words?
2. What relational values do words have? Are there euphemistic expressions?
3. What expressive values do words have?
4. What metaphors are used?
5. What experiential values do grammatical features have?
6. What relational values do grammatical features have? What modes (declarative, grammatical questions, imperative) are used?
7. What expressive values do grammatical features have? Are there important features of expressive modality?

8. How are simple sentences linked together? What logical connectors are used? Are there complex sentences characterised by coordinators or subordinators?
9. What interactional conventions are used? Are there ways in which one participant controls the turns of others?
10. What larger scale structure does the text have?

Van Dijk's perspective is similar to that of Fairclough, but with certain differences which include the use of face-saving disclaimers in the reproduction of racism in discourse. Such disclaimers include apparent denial, apparent conclusion, apparent ignorance, apparent excuses, reversal (blaming the victims) and transfer, (Van Dijk, 2000).

Linguistic tools identified in Fairclough and Van Dijk's CDA theories that are applied to study the selected text, on the social malaise of racism, include:

- 1 Vocabulary: lexical choices (descriptions of synonym, antonym, and hyponym). The use of vocabulary in any discourse shows the relational values that words have especially focusing on the choice of words used by a speaker or writer in any discourse; and it is used to create social relationship between participants or characters as we have in the chosen text.
- 2 Metaphors (euphemistic expressions)
- 3 Nominalisation (negative or positive sentence)
- 4 Grammar agency (active and passive sentence)
- 5 Pronouns
- 6 Sentence (simple and complex sentence and how they are linked)
- 7 Modality: The concept of modality is an important one for both relational and expressive values in grammar. It has to do with speaker or writer's authority, and there are two dimensions to modality, depending on what direction authority is oriented. First, if it is a matter of authority of one participant in relation to others, it is called relational modality and the second one is a matter of speaker or writer's authority with respect to the truth or probability of a representation of reality which is called expressive modality, Fairclough (1989: 126).
- 8 Coherence: This refers to the way text makes sense to the readers and writers through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories, while cohesion holds text together, and there are various cohesive devices that signal coherence like reference (personal, comparative, demonstratives), ellipsis, (normal ellipsis, verbal, clausal, conjunction (additives, adversatives).
- 9 Coordinators (logical connectors): Logical connector tends to show ideological

assumption held by some groups or characters.

- 10 Quote: This study is based on Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk's (1989, 1992b, 1993, 2000 and 2002) works. The study applies tenets of Fairclough's model, relying on the ten questions that he developed to critically analyse any discourse, and this is done in conjunction with Van Dijk's observation during a study on the reproduction of racism on text and talk. Selected chapters of Ngozi Adichie's "Americanah" will be analysed in this study. The entire novel is subdivided into seven parts, with a total number of fifty-five chapters and five hundred and thirty-nine pages. Fifteen chapters that present issues directly related to racism and immigration were selected for the analysis.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis examines the selected novel, focusing on how the writer made use of vocabulary, grammar and quotes to portray racism in the novel. The summary of the subsequent textual analysis constitutes the findings.

Ngozi Adichie's novel – Americanah - comprises a total of fifty-five chapters and five hundred and thirty-nine pages. The entire novel was subdivided into seven parts. Fifteen chapters which contained issues relevant to the study were analysed. These comprised of two chapters each from parts one, three and four, seven from part two, and one each from parts five and seven.

ANALYSIS

Below is the textual analysis of the selected portions in the novel based on Fairclough and Van Dijk's CDA principles on racism.

Vocabulary

In the novel, we see a perfect description of how blacks and whites in the society are presented and differentiated even in physical appearance.

Use of synonyms

Even when related or similar words are used to describe their appearance, the terminologies used to describe the whites seem better and more acceptable in the society. For instance, while "lean" and "thin" are used for the white, "light-skinned" and "slim", which seem offensive, are used for the black. Examples are cited below:

- (1)the few black locals she had seen were so light-skinned and lankhaired....(p.13)

(2) all of them white and lean, in short, flimsy clothes...(p.13)

(3) You thin with big breast... Uju: please, I'm not thin. I'm slim.

Use of antonyms

Words opposite in meaning are also carefully selected for description of the whites in contrast with the blacks as seen in the examples below:

(4) On the platform, all of them white and lean, in short, flimsy clothes (p.13)

(5) The platform was crowded with black people, many of them fat, in short flimsy clothes. (p.15)

This is a racist view, which generally describes many blacks as shapeless, therefore unfit.

Use of hyponyms

The word "black" is used to refer to all kinds of black people and not just Africans. Anyone who is not white as it is clearly seen in the title of a section in the novel "To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: In America, You are "Black Baby" and "Travelling While Black" (pp. 255 and 379). This shows that in America, colour is used as identity. This categorisation shows that whether you are from Kenya, Ghana, Jamaica, India, or anywhere aside America, you are nothing but "black".

Use of over-wording

Some words and phrases are repeatedly used in the novel. These include "Black", "Hispanic" and "white Americans" and "America". The repeated use of these words indicate strong ideological struggle as revealed in the following examples.

(6) Nobody wants black babies in this country, and I don't mean biracial, I mean black, even the black families don't want them (p.15)

(7) Hispanic means the frequent companions of American blacks in poverty ranking, Hispanic means a slight step above American blacks in the American race ladder, Hispanic means the chocolate-skinned woman from Peru, Hispanic means the indigenous people of Mexico. Hispanic means the biracial-looking folks from the Dominican Republic. Hispanic means the paler folks from Puerto Rico...you are race called Hispanic. (p.126)

(8) With nasal, sliding accent she put on when she spoke to white Americans in the presence of white Americans in the hearing of white Americans (p. 130)

(9) To get a postgraduate degree in America to work in America to live in America (p. 269)

- (1) Metaphor
- (2) There are several metaphorical expressions that make reference to certain ideologies and may influence the opinion of the readers. Examples are:
 - (10) Good luck as you pursue the unnamed life change but please come back to the blog sphere soon...
- (3) (p. 15)
- (11) I write an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those
- (4) Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black” (p. 6)
- (12) ... would be called lost He went to America and got lost ... (p.138)
- (13) “A Michelle Obama Shout-out-plus Hair as Race metaphor”
- (14)Hair. Ever notice makeover shows on TV, how that black woman has natural hair (coarse, coily, kinky or curly) in the ugly ‘before’ picture, and in the pretty pretty. ‘after’ picture, somebody’s taken a hot place of... (p. 342)
- (15) An American Negro (p. 361)
- (16)only a Magic Negro can win an American Election (p. 386)
- (17) ...standing by in hordes outside schools shouting “Ape”...
- (18) You knew, like race is a brew breast served mild, tempered with other liquids, otherwise white folks can’t swallow it. (p. 386)
- (19) It is about the shade of your skin and the shape of your nose and the kink of your hair. (p. 387)
- (20) If a random black guy commits crime today, Barack Obama could be stopped and questioned for fitting the profile
- (21) When they say urban it means black and poor and possibly dangerous potentially exciting (p. 402)
- (22) Send him back to the African jungle (p. 404)
- (23) How can a monkey be a president? (p. 404)
- (24) ... agencies don’t say they can’t use white models to advertise glamorous products because they are considered “aspirational”
- (25) Sometimes they “culture” when they mean race. They say film is “mainstream” when they mean white folks like it or made it (p. 402).

From the above descriptions, it is evident that phrase and words like “life change”, “lost”, “Hair”, “America Negro”, “Magic Negro”, “raceteenth” “Ape”, “a brew breast served mild”, “shade of your skin”, “shape of your nose” “profile”, and “urban”, are ideological stance used by the whites to describe the blacks, their predicaments of being Black and problems associated with these phrases and such metaphorical expressions are racist stance because they show relational values that exist between whites and

blacks, and “mainstream” is used to depict the whites, who are in power and in control. Monkey, Jungle, White House, etc., on the other hand describe Africans and compare them to monkeys that live in a jungle, hence it would be impossible for animals to stay in the ‘white house’ which of course is not a black house. The meaning in context of the above statement reveals the way Africans were maltreated while in the US.

Euphemistic Expressions

In a bid to make expressions and words less negative, euphemism is used.

(26) I write a lifestyleblog (p.14)

(27) So, I’m a rich white guy from Potomac, but I’m not nearly as much of an asshole as I’m supposed to be (p. 225)

From the above expressions, lifestyleblog is pleasantly used by Ifemelu to protect, decline and avoid unnecessary argument about her blog “Raceteeth or Various Observation about American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes)” and asshole by Blain simply is racist.

From all the illustrated and described examples of vocabulary, it is clearly seen that what it does is to show the relational values that words have and its implicit and explicit meaning such words contain in relation to the participants or preferably characters as seen in the text, as it is geared to depict real life societal issues.

Grammar

The grammatical features are meant to conceptualise the experiential values of grammatical words to manipulate one’s point of view. It also has to do with how language code happenings or relationships in the world, the people or animals or things involved in those happenings and their manners of occurrences, circumstances either temporal or spatial. Fairclough (1989).

Pronoun

Pronouns are used to assert or enact ideological stance either of the writer or speaker, listeners or characters as we have in the text.

(28) Is this how you pronounce your name now? It is what they call me (p.126)

(29) I have told you what they told me. You are in a country that is not your own, you do what you have to do if you want to succeed (p. 142)

- (30) All of us look alike to White people (p.143)
- (31) We Nigerians get around. We have to. There are too many of us and not enough space (p. 207)
- (32) They complained about black magazines. . . (p. 247)
- (33) "To many Fellow Non-American Blacks in America, You are Black, Baby". (p. 255)
- (34) You must not back when a black person nods at you in a heavily White area (p.255)
- (35) When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person (p.255)
- (36) . . . you are the real racist (p. 257)

From the above examples, pronouns "I"," You"," Us"," We" and "They" are all ideological stance. The writer takes her own stand "I" as a Black, taking side with the Blacks. "You" emphatically refers to all Blacks in the American society, who are victims of racism due to their colour, "we" includes the writer here, also referring to the Blacks, and this shows that the writer is also speaking from the view of the Blacks and she is associating herself with them, especially with their experience and a contrasting pronoun; a third person pronoun categorises the Whites - the in- group members - as racists. From this categorisation and use of pronouns, it is evident enough that not only the Whites are racists but also the Blacks, because they also side-line the whites with their own use of grammar and the awkward relationship that exists between these groups.

Active and passive sentences

An active sentence is when a verb is in the active voice; when the person or thing denoted by the subject does or performs an action, while a passive sentence is said to be in the passive voice when the person or thing suffers an action.

- (37) Nobody wants black babies... (p. 15)
- (38) Race is class
- (39) . . . white is always on top. . . (p. 216)
- (40) If you're white, you are all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black , get back (p. 216)
- (41) Jewish is white but also some rings below white . . . (p. 216)

These active voice sentences show that racism still exists even though it is generally believed to have ended by Obama coming to power but the fact remains that it is an everyday issue in the American society that can never be scraped, also the active sentences explain it in details.

For passive sentence, we have “I write an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black” (p. 6). This sentence with the use of “by” illustrates that this action is in the passive form though the “I” still signifies the non-America Black.

Negative and Positive sentences

A positive sentence tends to portray issues the way they really are in the real life situation, while a negative sentence distinguishes what is not the real case from what is the real case in reality since it expresses an experiential value.

Negative sentences

- (42) The only reason you wish race was not an issue is because you wish it was not
- (43) I did not think of myself as black and I only became Black when I came to America (p. 335)
- (44) And it was not that curt pretended that being black and being white were the same in America he knew they were not. (p. 336)
- (45) Don't say it is not really race, it is class. Oh it's not race it's gender, oh it's not race it's the cookie monster (p. 373)
- (46) I didn't know this would happen even in my grand baby's lifetime (p. 373)
- (47) I can't believe it... (p. 373)
- (1) Positive sentences
- (48) Obama's victory was also their personal victory (p. 18)
- (49) Obama will end racism in America (p. 34)
- (50) . . . I only became Black when I came to America (p. 335)
- (51) . . . but racism is about the power of a group
- (52) And in America it's white folks who have that power (p. 376)
- (53) Race is society. (p. 387)
- (54) Race is phenotype (p. 387)
- (55) Race matters because of racism (p. 387)
- (56) Racism is absurd because it is about how you look (p. 387)

From the above examples, we see that the issue of race is enacted in the negative sentences as containing experiential values which Blacks try to shy away from it, but these issues are real even though they don't want to admit it, but they know within themselves that they are real, and hence can be distinguished from the real life happenings. Positive sentences on the other hand recapitulate that racism is real in Europe and America and that there is no better word to be used than to state it the way they really are, rather than finding pleasant expressions for them, because we do not

really want to get the whites offended but race is everything.

Declarative sentences

A declarative sentence is said to be informative and it surely follows the SVOCA using Fairclough's model.

- (57) Obama's victory was also their personal victory (p. 18) (SVAO)
- (58) Her taxi driver was black and middle-aged (p. 19) (SVC)
- (59) A thin Whiteman with malted hair the colour of straw had cheated (p. 192) (SV)
- (60) You have to blame the black kid first (p. 401) (SVO)
- (61) My president is black like me (p. 412) (SVCO)

From the sentences above, we have three main kinds of process: actions (SVO), events (SV) and attributes (SVC). An action involves two participants, the agent and the patient from (60) above: "You have to blame the black kid." This shows that the black kid is always blamed for any bad action as Dike was blamed for hacking into his school computer. This process can also be reversed taken into passive voice; the black kid was blamed by you. Event sometimes also involves participants either animate or inanimate, but in (59) above there is no participant, or this sentence cannot be changed to passive, hence makes the action relational. Attribute (SVC) sometimes with participant but most times unlike and always possessive, here it is the taxi driver who possesses the quality exemplified above.

With these illustrations, one can infer that declarative sentences, following the processes involved, are also ideological because they create significant choices that are of burning interest to the Blacks in America and Europe.

Grammatical questions

The use of grammatical question by the writer or speaker to recover or gain information from the addressee also adds or beefs up our knowledge as a reader or participant in any discourse about the relevant issues at stake. We have the sentence structure as (VS)

- (62) Is your mother white? Are you a half- caste? (p. 35)
- (63) You don't know America. You say Senegal and American people, they say, Where is that? My friend from Burkina Faso, they ask her, your country in Latin America? (p. 165)
- (64) So where do you work guy? (p. 286)
- (65) How did you see race in America? (p. 316)

- (66) Why would they do this sort of rubbish? (p. 400)
- (67) Why that only Black is people are criminal over there? (p. 459)
- (68) How can a monkey be president? (p. 404)

In the grammatical questions above, we see these questions as means of generating more information even though some are accusative, like blacks being generally seen as criminals and also reduce to nothing but animals, there are also complaints that they register in their minds especially in relation to where they work, either in mines or as labour force and if your mother is a white then you are a half-caste, hence there is a promise attached to this, and you are less victimized. Also paying close attention to the grammatical question in 62 above, here it is evident that Americans do not even recognise the Black neither do they know them not to talk of identifying with their country, hence they must ask you where that is in Latin America.

Imperative sentences

In the case of imperative, what the writer or the speaker does to authoritatively request something of the addressee, and the addressee is “ideally” a complaint actor.

- (69) Don't say “I am colour blind . . . (p. 374)
- (70) Stop arguing; stop saying. .. (p. 374)
- (71) Don't say “we are tired of talking about race “or” the only race is the human race (p. 374)
- (72) Don't preface your response with “one of my best friends is Black” (p. 374)
- (73) Don't say racism is over ; slavery was so long ago (p. 374)
- (74) Don't say “your grandfather was Mexican so you can't be racist (p. 374)

The above sentences are explicit enough to inform us what Blacks are expected to do in a racist society and also what Whites are refrained from talking about within this same society. All the above discussed modes show the experiential values that are embedded in the sentences outlined above.

Modality

These are expressed by modal auxiliary verbs like can, could, may, shall, etc., but also by some other features of adverbs and tenses.

- (75) A must like (you just have to do it to Ifemelu)
- (76) You must nod back when a black person nods at you in a heavily white area
- (77) Well, it because of the pain that word has caused you shouldn't use it (p. 163)

- (78) . . . or somebody will worry that you're about to pull a gun
- (79) You must immediately become offended (p. 256)
- (80) Even though you would like to be able to decide for yourself how offended to be, or whether to be offended at, you must nevertheless be very offended. (p. 256)
- (81) Stay well away from the crime area for weeks, you might be stopped for fitting the profile.(p. 256)
- (82) If you go to eat in a restaurant, please tip generously. otherwise the next black person who comes in will get awful (p. 257)
- (83) Obama will end racism in this country (p. 334)
- (84) It must make be sensible and make sure this country remains a refuge (p. 317)
- (85) You have been brainwashed by the west. You should be ashamed to call yourself a Nigerian (p. 139)
- (86) As far as I could see, the man was white not much different from the classmate herself (p. 217)
- (87) But we must digress.

From the above modal verbs as "must" and "should", show expressive modality that is with authority from the writer that must be adhere to, it is obligatory or rather logical necessity. While modal verbs as "could" and "have" show relational modality between the writer and the characters involved in the text, while "will" on the other hand is insistence, more related to expressive modality being asserted by the writer on behalf of an unseen character.

Logical Connectors

People tend to assume what should be but never happened because of one reason or the other.

- (88) Even the American embassy was different. (p. 40)
- (89) As far as he was concerned. I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked
- (90) It was a strange moment for me, because until then I thought nobody in America cheated
- (91) When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race does not matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love (p. 335).

From the examples stated above, the logical connectors "when", "even", "because", "as far as", give a detailed ideological stand using the common sense which makes it to be

commonsensical by showing the casual or casual relationships between texts. The writer tries as much as possible to differentiate what should have been, but because of some one or two reasons it is not so. Like when Obinze was actually declined of a passport, but now when his account seems 'heavy' it doesn't matter, and also Blacks generally are not privileged to own a very large asset.

Complex sentence

This is when a sentence has one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause. The main clause always presupposed the subordinate clause and takes the main idea of the sentence.

- (1) (91) "I write an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black" (p. 6)
- (92) She is one of those Black people who want to be the only Black person in the room, so any other black person is an immediate threat to her (p. 243)
- (93) It seemed to me that in America Blacks and whites work together but don't play together and here blacks and whites play together but don't work together
- (94) When you are in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you are alone together because it's just you and your love (p. 335)
- (95) So three black women in maybe two thousand pages of woman's magazines, and all of them are biracial or racially ambiguous, so they could also be Indian or Puerto Rican or something (p. 340)
- (96) Although if he wins, he will no longer be black, just as oprah is no longer black, she is Oprah (p. 47)

The above cited textual references give a detailed account of racist view. Meanings reside more in the independent clauses, while the subordinate clauses also have added meanings to the sentences cited above.

Coherence

- (97) "I have told you what they told me. You are in a country that is not your own. You do what you have to do if you want to succeed.
- (98) When it comes to dressing well, American culture is so self- fulfilled that it has not only disregard this courtesy of self-presentation, but has turned that disregard into virtue. "we are too busy superior/busy/cool/not-uptight to bother about how we look to other people, and so we can wear pajamas to school and underwear to the mall"

- (99) As far as he was concerned I didn't fit in as the owner of that safely house because of the way I looked. In America public discourse "Blacks as a whole are after often lumped with "Poor Whites." Not Poor Blacks and Poor Whites. But Blacks and Poor Whites. A curious thing indeed (p. 195)
- (100) However, all others think they're better than blacks because, well, they're not black (p.239)
- (101) Dear non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black (p. 255)
- (102) when a crime is committed, pray that it was not committed by a black person, and if it turns out to have been committed by a black person, stay well away from the crime areas for weeks, or you might be stopped for fitting the profile (p. 256)
- (103) it seemed to me that in America blacks and whites work together but don't play together and here blacks and whites play together but don't work together (p. 316)
- (104) A white boy and a black girl who grow up in the same working- class town in this country can get together and race will be secondary, but in America, even if the white boy and black girl grow up in the same neighbourhood race would be primary (p. 316).
- (105) When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. but the minute you step outside, race matters (p. 335)
- (106) "Although if he wins, he will no longer be black, just as Oprah is no longer black, she's Oprah", . . . (p. 407)

From the examples cited above, it is evident enough that there are some personal pronouns that are referential in nature like "You", "I" and "He". They are used emphatically to make references to characters within the texts, and these characters represent Blacks at a larger world. Some clausal stance like "but", "however", "even", etc., are used to either create a disparity or further expatiate a view by the writer, and some additive conjuncts are used "and" to create a link between what has been stated earlier to cohere hence, a concrete ideology is established via these illustrations.

In conclusion, this analysis has been able to explore the linguistic tools used by the Adichie to capture various social practices, especially racism. Thus, it is clearly revealed through this study that racism is real and it is everyday discourse enacted by individuals in the society regardless of their colours.

Within the American society, socially and legally sanctioned privileges and rights were given to the white Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latin Americans; while Anglo Americans were granted extendings from the 17th century to the 1960s in matters of education, immigration, voting rights, citizenship, land acquisition and criminal procedures. Other forms of segregation included refusal to sit next to blacks in lecture halls, ignored their (blacks) contributions in class and informal segregation.

FINDINGS

This study examines how Adichie explores language through choice of words, which are very simple and explicit in addressing the social practice of racism.

Racism has been discussed by exploring its linguistic tools to show the ideology behind each critical issue. With this analysis, it is evident enough that racism is a serious issue because people as creative acts of God, were not responsible for their colour nor the race into which they were born. If these are true, why should they be antagonized? Why shouldn't they enjoy the privileges their other counterparts enjoy in their country? Why should they be tagged "APES"? Why should the society configure them to be what they don't want to ever be? Well it is these questions that CDA prioritizes as it tends to pay attention to societal practices that hinder growth within the society, and also create enmity among various countries in the world.

It is also found that CDA is a theory that gives a close, line to line reading of a text or any discourse. It is only through this means that one can be able to unravel the critical issues within the society as seen in *Americanah*, to fit in a supposed reality as it also cuts across the 21st century as Obama's election is also captured.

CONCLUSION

This study has been able to vividly exemplify that CDA is a great tool for analysis which helps to divulge the stance of different group members in the society as seen in *Americanah*. The whites are categorised as the "in-group" and the blacks as the "out-group". This study has revealed that racism is a great issue that every society must talk about and it is only in talking about it that such a society can only be free from its effects. It can therefore be concluded that both whites and blacks are racists in their judgements because both parties antagonize each other.

CDA is a strong tool for the analysis of any discourse that portrays social practices, and it helps to divulge critical issues in the society. It was also found that social practices are numerous and are not just limited to racism which this study mainly focuses on. Issues

like immigration, love, politics, power, ethnicity and class are also critical issues that are also portrayed in the novel.

REFERENCES

- Adichie, N. C. (2013). *Americanah*. Lagos: Farafina.
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) (2020) Scotland.
- CRER (2020) <https://www.crer.scot/what-is-racism>
- Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G. & Trew, T. (1979). *Language and control*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Lewis, B. (2006). "The New Anti-Semitism". *The American Scholar*, 75 (1), 25–36.
- Puzzo, Dante A. (1964). Racism and the Western Tradition. *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 25(4), 579–586. [doi:10.2307/2708188](https://doi.org/10.2307/2708188). [JSTOR 2708188](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2708188)
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
- Huckin, T. (1995). Critical discourse analysis. *The Journal of TESOL*, 2(3), 95–112.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329–342.
- Lewis, C. W. (2006). Pursuit of the public interest. *Public Administration Review*, 66(5).
- Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., & Hamilton, H. (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1985). Cognitive situation models in discourse production. The expression of ethnic situation models in prejudiced stories. In J.P. Forgas (Ed.), *Language and social situations*. New York: Springer. pp. 61-79.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1989). Mediating racism. The role of the media in the reproduction of racism. In, Wodak, R. (Ed.), *Language, Power and Ideology. Studies in political discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 199-226
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1992a). *Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis Some Methodological Reflections in Race and Ethnicity in Research Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 92–134.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1992b). Discourse and the denial of racism. *Discourse & Society*, 3, 87-118.

- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993) Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Japanese Discourse*, 1(1), 17-28.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2000). New(s) Racism: A discourse analytical approach. In Cottle, S. (Ed.), *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press. pp. 33-49.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2002). Discourse and racism. In Goldberg, D. & Solomos, J. (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 145-159.
- Webster Dictionary (2008). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism>
- Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism>