

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work, A Critical Discourse Analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, is the product of my own research efforts undertaken under the supervision of Dr. Rabi Abdulsalam Ibrahim and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of degree or certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this dissertation and the subsequent write-up by OMAMO AKPORUBERE (SPS/12/MEN/00019) were carried out under our supervision.

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This dissertation entitled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Adichie’s *Americanah*” undertaken by OMAMO AKPORUBERE (SPS/12/MEN/00019) has been examined and approved for the award of M.A in English Language in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This research work is specially dedicated to God Almighty who gave me the power, might, and wisdom to put the research work together.

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Abstract

This study is a critical discourse analysis of Adichie's *Americanah*. The work is aimed at investigating the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance. It examines how language is used to enact, expose and resist racial discrimination in discourse. The study is subjected to a content analysis of expressions extracted from the blog posts of Ifemelu, Jamilah, as well as utterances of other characters in the novel *Americanah*. Thirty expressions were selected through purposive sampling and analysed under the following classifications: mental context, socio-cognitive context and linguistic indices. The analysis reveals that language is manipulated in a literary text to enact, expose and resist prejudices and racial discrimination. The findings affirm that the mental and socio-cognitive contexts of Ifemelu, Jamilah and other characters in the text influence the enactment of their discourse. The study further reveals that the mental and socio-cognitive contexts give an insight to what accounts for what is obtainable in human societies. The study therefore concludes that critical discourse theory which views language as a form of social practice can be used to interpret and comprehend discourse which enact and expose transparent as well as opaque structural relationships of dominance and discrimination as manifested in a language.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a general introduction to the whole study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Language is used for many purposes and it is the vehicle through which a society evolves and progresses. Language helps to shape and manipulate a community so as to evolve the type of society needed. The study of the ways in which language is used in texts and contexts is the concern of discourse analysis. Discourse focuses on language use in social contexts and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers. Critical Discourse Analysis (hence forth CDA) subsumes a variety of approaches towards the social analysis of discourse. CDA is a branch of critical social analysis which contributes to the latter, a focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements. It is the study of how discourse figures in ideologies and power relations (Fairclough 2012). This study sets out to investigate the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance in a novel *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Here, dominance refers to the exercise of social power of elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality. The study conducts a critical discourse analysis of *Americanah* using the socio-cognitive approach of Van Dijk (1993) in order to investigate the background competence which language users reactivate to (re)produce or enact social practices within social structures. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views languages as a form of social practice. It states that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditional.

Discourse is an opaque power object in modern societies and CDA aims to make it more visible and transparent. According to Wodak (1995:204) “the purpose of CDA is to analyse opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language”. CDA was first developed by the Lancaster School of Linguistics with Norman Fairclough as a prominent figure. In addition to linguistics theory, the approach draws from social theory with contributions from Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michael Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu e.t.c. in order to examine ideologies and power relations involved in discourse. Teun A. van Dijk and Ruth Wodak developed the psychological versions of CDA which is assumed to be a socio-cognitive interface between social structures. Critical Discourse Analysis emerged from Critical Linguistics (CL) developed at the University of East Anglia in the 1970s. It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. Some of the proponents of CDA include Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk. According to van Dijk cited in Wodak and Meyer (2001:2) “CDA and Critical Linguistics are at most shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis”.

The shared perspective relates to the term “Critical” and it is the work of some ‘Critical Linguists’ that is traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School (Fay in Wodak and Meyer 2001 eds). Here “Critical” denotes the practical linking of social and political engagement with a sociologically informed construction of society (Krings et al in Wodak and Meyer 2001 eds). As postulated by (Fairclough in Wodak and Meyer 2001 eds), “in human matters, interconnections and chains of cause and effect may be distorted out of vision. Hence ‘critique’ is essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things”. Thus, Critical Linguistics and CDA share perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis as they are concerned with

analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie is a new generation writer who came on board with her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* in October, 2003. Her novels have interested and attracted various literary scholars and this has given the works considerable critical attention. Literary studies which deal with diction, themes, criticism, characterization, stylistic analysis and so on, have been extensively carried out on her books by some linguists such as Tunca (2009), Udumukwu (2011), Wallace (2012). Although, available data shows that limited scholarly works have been carried out in her latest novel, *Americanah* because it is a recently published novel (2013), a literary study of the novel was attempted by Chepkorir (2014). Chepkorir critically examines the representation of female African immigrant experience in the West. Scholastica (2014) made a stylistic analysis of the novel and his study only focuses on the realization of the semantic effect through graphological and syntactic use which aid in the interpretation of the text. The present research however, analyzes the novel using the critical discourse theory to investigate the expressions employed by characters to enact, expose and resist racism. The study examines how the mental context aids to interpret and comprehend the text. These make it different from the previous studies. In addition, in the previous studies of the novel, little attention has been paid to the use of discourse structures in institutionalizing social practices in the novel.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of *Americanah* so as to explicate how expressions in literary texts enact racial inequality within social structures.

The study specifically sets out to achieve the following objectives:

1. to examine the various expressions employed by characters that enact and expose racism in the novel;
2. to investigate how mental representation(mental context) influence the interpretation and comprehension of these expressions; and to examine how social structures are institutionalized through discourse structures in the novel;
3. to examine how the exercise of dominance results in racial inequality and how expressions employed by characters resist such inequality in the novel.

1.5 Research Questions

The study examines the following research questions in line with the above aim and objectives.

1. What expressions are employed by characters in the novel to enact and expose racism?
2. How do context models aid to interpret and comprehend these expressions in the text?
3. How is dominance exercised to result into racial inequality and how do the characters use expressions to resist racial discrimination in the novel?

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is restricted to the critical discourse analysis of *Americanah* using the socio-cognitive approach. It is the primary text for the analysis. *Americanah* contains many expressions that enact and expose social practices which include political, cultural, racial and class inequality, injustice and immigration. But this research focuses on only the language expressions that enact

and expose racial discrimination or inequality. In other words, the study is limited to the analysis of racism expressions in *Americanah*. Out of seventy-five expressions from the blogs of Ifemelu, Jamilah, and utterances of other characters that enact racism, only thirty (ie 40%), due to time constraint, were purposively selected and used for full analysis. These twenty five expressions are representatives of others.

1.7 Significance of the Study

There have been different studies carried out in Adichie's novels due to the growing interest in her works. These studies aim at exploring the thematic issues in the books. For instance, pragmatic and stylistic analyses have been made on *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. These analyses focus on how explicit and implicit meanings are examined in the novels. Scholastica (2014) however analyses Adichie's latest novel, *Americanah* by carrying out a stylistic research but only focuses on the features of style employed by the writer to convey explicit meaning in the text. The present study is therefore significant in that it conducts a critical discourse analysis of *Americanah* in order to examine the relationship between discourse structures and power structures. Such analysis is crucial for our understanding of actual power and dominance relations in society.

The study equally gives insight to the influence of cognition (context-mental models) in the interpretation and comprehension of discourse in literary texts. This helps us to comprehend what accounts for what is obtainable in our societies because literary works reflect our real world. This therefore, provides a better analytical framework because it will help to determine the mental and social contexts in which utterances are (re)produced and understood and also as they relate to real life situations.

1.8 Biography of Chimamanda Adichie

This section presents a biography of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It is largely based on the source from www.13.ulg.ac.be/adichie/cnabio.html. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the fifth of six children of Mr. James Nwoye and Mrs. Ifeoma Adichie, was born on 15 September, 1979 in Enugu, Nigeria. Adichie's family's ancestral hometown is Aba in Anambra State but she grew up in Nsukka and lived with her parents near the University of Nigeria. Adichie's father, who is now retired, worked at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He was Nigeria's first professor of statistics and he was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. Her mother was the first female registrar at the same institution.

Adichie completed her secondary education at the university school where she received several academic awards. She went on to study medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria but later dropped out of the medical school to pursue her dream of becoming a writer. At the age of nineteen, she studied communication at Drexel University Philadelphia under scholarship for two years. She went further to pursue a degree in communication and political science at Connecticut State University. In 2001, she did MFA courses in Literature at Hopkins University, Baltimore. This formed the basis for her literary works. She was spurred by Chinua Achebe's work after reading his book *Things Fall Apart* at the age of ten.

She started working on her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* during her senior years at Eastern Connecticut State University. The book was released in October, 2003 and it has received wide critical acclaim. It was shortlisted for the Orange Fiction Prize (2004) and was awarded the commonwealth Writer's Prize Best First Book (2005). Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, was published in August, 2006 in the United States. She is the author of the play *For Love of*

Biafra (1998) a collection of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009) and a collection of poems *Decisions* (1998). Her third and recent novel is *Americanah* published in 2013 is the focus of the study. Chimamanda is now married and divides her time between Nigeria, where she regularly teaches, and the United States. www.13.ulg.ac.be/adichie/cnabio.html.

1.9 Plot Summary of *Americanah*

Americanah is Adichie's third and recent work that chronicles the Nigerian immigrant experience in America and London. The story is written in the third person narrative style (i.e. omniscient). It is about two teenagers from Lagos, Ifemelu (the only child of her parents) and Obinze. They fell in love while in secondary school. Their country, Nigeria is under Military dictatorship and the citizens who have the opportunity are leaving the country for America and London. Ifemelu, beautiful and self assured departs for America through the help of Uju (her aunt), to study. She stays there for a while with Aunt Uju who is struggling to pass a nursing examination in order to be gainfully employed.

After moving to her own apartment, Ifemelu faces many challenges in getting menial jobs and in coping with her education. While she struggles, she suffers defeats and triumphs. She also finds and, loses relationships and friendships with white men. Meanwhile, she forgets about her plans with Obinze to join her in America. Ifemelu met with migrants from other nations and Nigerians who together were suppressed with the issue of racism in American Culture. Obinze, back home in Nigeria, struggles to join Ifemelu in America but his struggles and hope were dashed by the post 9/11 American policy which denies immigrants moving to America. He struggles to move to United Kingdom and then plunges into a dangerous undocumented life in London. There too, Obinze suffers racial discrimination and struggles to do menial jobs. He is eventually deported

back to Nigeria when it is discovered that he is leaving illegally in London. Years later Obinze is a wealthy married man in a newly democratic Nigeria. He becomes a property developer in Nigeria while Ifemelu has achieved success as a writer of an eye-opening blog about race in America. Ifemelu also returns to Nigeria and she and Obinze reignite their shared passion for their homeland and for each other. The two have to make tough decision of coming together after reviving their relationship.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes a review of relevant critical works on *Americanah* and works on Critical Discourse Analysis. The concept of Critical Discourse and some notions in Critical Discourse are discussed. Included in this chapter is the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter is divided into four major sub-headings which are as follows:

- a. The concept of Critical Discourse;
- b. Some notions in Critical Discourse;
- c. A review of applied studies of Critical Discourse;
- d. Critical works on Adichie's *Americanah*.

2.2 The Concept of Critical Discourse

Discourse can be referred to as written or spoken communication or debate. Discourse Analysis is the study of the ways in which language is used in text and contexts. It was first developed in the 1970s and it concerns itself with the use of language in a running discourse, continued over a number of sentences and involving the interaction of speaker and listener or writer and reader within a framework of social and cultural conventions (Abrahams and Harpham 2005). The prevalence of Discourse Analysis in research has been traced to the 'Linguistic Turn' of the 20th century (Locke 2004) by which is meant the development in philosophy that recognized that language was not so much to be understood as reflecting reality but as creating reality. That is, reality did not pre-exist to be discovered by language but that language brings reality to life in the sense of being understood and interacted with by humans.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a school of Discourse Analysis that concerns itself with relations of power and inequality in language and it explicitly intends to incorporate social theoretical insights into discourse analysis and advocates social commitment and interventionism in research.

According to Wodak (1995:204),

“CDA studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of :(a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed.

CDA states that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned. In addition, discourse is an opaque power object in modern societies and CDA aims to make it more visible and transparent. To buttress this view, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:4) posit that: CDA is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity; that they exist as discourse as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that these processes are substantively shaped by these discourses. The roots of CDA lie in classical Rhetoric, Text linguistics, Sociolinguistics as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. (Renkema 2004; Blommaert 2005).

Researchers in CDA rely on a variety of grammatical approaches. In contrast to the “total and closed” theories such as Chomky’s Generative Transformational Grammar or Michael Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics, CDA studies are multi-farious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds. It provides a heterogeneous method and theoretical approaches. This confirms van Dijk’s (1993: 131) point that “Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Linguistics are at most a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis”. As a critical

theory, CDA is afforded special standing as a guide for human actions. Critical theories are aimed at producing “enlightenment” and “emancipation” and do not only seek to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. One of the aims of CDA is to demystify discourses by deciphering ideologies. Thus in agreement with its critical theory predecessors, CDA emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organizing social institutions or in exercising power (van Dijk 2002; Gee 2004; Blommaert 2005). CDA attempts to reveal the intricate association among dominance, power and social disequilibrium, injustice and inequality, that operate in diverse social communities. This is done in order to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between the role and structure of language. Most specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimize, reproduce and challenge relations of power and dominance in a society. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-80) summarize the main tenets of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems;
2. Power relations are discursive;
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture;
4. Discourse does ideological work;
5. Discourse is historical;
6. The link between text and society is mediated;
7. Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory;
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

The model of discourse developed by Fairclough (1992) is framed in a theory of ideological processes in a society. He sketches a three-dimensional framework for conceiving of, and analyzing discourse. They include:

1. **Discourse – as – text** .ie, the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse – the choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g wording, metaphors), grammar (e.g modality, transitivity), cohesion (e.g conjunction) and text structure (e.g episoding, turn – taking) should be systematically analyzed.
2. **Discourse –as – discursive – practice** ie, discourse as something that is produced, circulated, distributed and consumed in society. This means that in analyzing vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure, attention should be given to speech acts, coherence and intertextuality three aspects that link a text to its context.
3. **Discourse – as – social practice**. This is the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature. Discourse is seen in terms of processes of hegemony. In Gramsci's notion, hegemony is the integration of dominant groups in laws, rules, norms, habits and even a quite general consensus. If the minds of dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance, and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will, we use the term 'hegemony' (Gramsci 1971).

Wodak (2006) in her historical approach to critical discourse, made an attempt to integrate systematically, all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text. The approach attempts to trace in detail, the constitution of an anti-semitic stereo typed image as it emerged in public discourse. One of the aims of Wodak is the practical application of critical research in guidelines for non – discriminatory language use towards women and so on. The historical approach shows that the context of discourse has a significant impact on the structure, function and content of the anti-semitic utterances (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001).

van Dijk (1981) devises a theoretical framework that critically relates discourse, cognition and society. He posits that:

CDA is not a specific direction of research and so does not have a unitary theoretical framework. The theoretical and analytical types are quite diverse. Most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in (and) reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and context (p.353).

According to van Dijk (1981), language use, discourse verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro level of the social order while power, dominance and inequality between social groups are terms that belong to a macro level of analysis. He stresses that the recent task of CDA is the study of the role of discourse in the enactment and reproduction of ethnic and racial inequality, and such work focuses on ethnocentric and racist representations in the mass media, literature and film. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA features such notions as power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure and social orders (van Dijk 1981). Most of the works of Teun van Dijk focus on the (re)production of ethnic prejudices and racism in discourse and communication. In his earlier studies, he examined the ways white Dutch and Californians talk about minorities (van Dijk 1984, 1987). He also aims at reconstructing ethnic attitudes and ideologies from everyday conversations.

2.3 Some Notions in Critical Discourse Analysis

It is pertinent to discuss issues that CDA tackles. This will give insight to the understanding of how discourse contributes to their reproduction. Such notions include:

- a. Power and Dominance;
- b. Discourse and Access;
- c. Social Cognition;

2.3.1 Power and Dominance:

A central notion in most critical works on discourse is that of power and more specifically, the social power of groups or institutions (van Dijk in Tannen 1981). Such groups according to van Dijk have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups. In the views of Luke (1986) and Wrong (1979), the ability to control the acts and minds of groups presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, culture, or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication.

Power involves ‘control’ of one group over other groups. A powerful group may limit the freedom of action of others, but also influence their minds. Besides the elementary resource to force to directly control action (as in police violence against demonstrators), ‘modern’ (often more effective power) is mostly cognitive and is enacted by persuasion, manipulation among others in one’s interests. According to van Dijk cited in Tannen (1981), it is at this crucial point where discourse and critical discourse analysis come in: managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk. He further stresses that dominance on the contrary, may be enacted and reproduced by stable, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear “natural” and “acceptable”. Hence in the words of Fairclough (1985), CDA focuses on the discursive strategies that legitimate control or otherwise “naturalize” the social order, and especially relations of inequality. Power and dominance are organized and institutionalized and thus, CDA seeks to analyze.

Contrary to the above notion of power, Foucault (1998:63) argues that power is not just the analysis of actors who use power as an instrument of coercion and discreet structures in which those actors operate but that it is a kind of “Metapower or Regime of Truth” that pervades society and which is in constant flux and negotiation. Foucault (1998) uses the term power or knowledge

to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and truth. According to him, truth is a thing of this world and it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint which induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned (Foucault, in Rabinow 1991). Foucault further argues that, the regimes of truth are the result of scientific discourse and institutions and are reinforced (and defined) constantly through the education system, the media and the flux of political and economic ideologies (Foucault in Rabinow 1991). In this sense, Hayward (1998) focuses on power as a boundary that enables and constrains possibilities for action on people's relative capacities to know and shape the boundary.

Foucault (1991:94) stresses that, "we must cease once and for all, to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth and the individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production". He challenges the idea that power is wielded by people or groups by way of episodic or sovereign acts of domination or coercion but rather sees it instead as dispersed and pervasive. In the same vein, Gaventa (2003:3) observes that "discourse can be a site of both power and resistance, with scope to evade, subvert or contest strategies of power. Foucault is one of the few writers on power who recognize that power is not just a negative, coercive or repressive thing that forces us to do things against our wishes, but can also be a necessary, productive and positive force in society (Gaventa 2003:2). Foucault's approach has been widely used to critique the ways in which development discourses are imbued with power (Gaventa 2003). However, the different notions of power as approached by various scholars according to Karlberg (2003), have been unable to escape the gravitational pull of "power-over" model which social theory employs as a primary means of conceptualizing the nature of the fundamental inequalities in society.

2.3.2 Discourse and Access:

As stated earlier, one of the social resources on which power and dominance are based is the privileged access to discourse and communication. These notions of discourse access and control are very general, and it is one of the tasks of CDA to spell out these forms of power. Van Dijk (1989, 1993) observes that language users or communicators have more or less freedom in the use of special discourse genres or style, or in the participation in specific communicative events and contexts. For instance, (members of) power groups may decide on the possible discourse genre(s) or speech acts of an occasion. A teacher or a judge may require a direct answer from a student or a suspect respectively, and not a personal story or an argument (Wodak 1984, 1986).

Linell and Jonsson (1991) exemplify in a more critical situation on how powerful speakers may abuse their power. For instance, in a situation when a police officer uses force to get a confession from a suspect. Similarly, genres typically have conventional ‘schemas’ consisting of various categories. Access to some of these may be prohibited or obligatory. For example, some greetings in a conversation may only be used by speakers of a specific social group, rank, age or gender (Irvine 1974). The more discourse genres, contexts, participants, audience, scope, and text characteristics they may actively control or influence, the more powerful social groups, institutions or elites are. In the same way as power and dominance may be institutionalized to enhance their effectiveness, access may be organized to enhance its impact: Given the crucial role of the media, powerful social actors and institutions have organized their media access by press officers, press releases, press conferences, PR departments and so on (Gans 1979 and Tuchman 1978). Thus, power and dominance of groups are measured by their control over access to discourse. A Foucauldian notion on discourse is that, discourse is a culturally constructed representation of reality. It constructs knowledge and thus governs through the production of

categories of knowledge and assemblages of texts. Foucault (1998:100-1) stresses that “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart”.

2.3.3 Social Cognition

Van Dijk (1993: 257) assert that:

The management of discourse access represents one of the crucial social dimensions of dominance. That is, who is allowed to say/write/hear/read what to from whom/where/when and how, and that the exercise of power, except in the forms of military, police, judicial force, usually presupposes mind management involving the influence of knowledge, beliefs understanding, plans, attributes, ideologies, norm and values. The modes of this access is geared towards the public mind which are conceptualize in terms of social cognition.

Socially shared representation of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning among cognition (Farr and Moscovici, 1984; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Wyer, and Srull, 1984) are social cognition because they are shared and presupposed by group members, monitor social action and interaction and cultural organization of society as a whole (Resnick et al, 1991). Discourse communication and other forms of action and interaction are monitored by social cognition.

2.4 A Review of Applied Studies on Critical Discourse Theory

There are many works done by many scholars using the critical discourse theory for their analysis. One of such scholars is Evans (2013). Evans looks at the coverage of a recent news event in two British Newspapers. He adopts the critical discourse theory to analyze the speech of Hilary Mantel on the British monarchy, Kate Middleton’s role within it, having become the wife of the heir to the throne, and the media’s treatment of the Middleton. Evans investigates the language used to test veracity of the different reactions to the texts. He does this by analyzing

naming, opposition and speech presentation and then presents the ideologies underlying the articles. His findings reveal that differing ways in which Mantel and Middleton are named seems to position the reader closer to Middleton while aspects of speech presentation give the impression of Mantel having made a concerted attack on an institution and its treatment by the press. However, Evans (2003) only analyses the speech presentation, naming and opposition to analyze and interpret language used by participants but the present study deals with the influence of mental representation and social context that aid in the interpretation of language used by participants.

Another work done using Critical Discourse Analysis is that of Lawal and Alabi (2013). They analyze the use of language and ideology in *Purple Hibiscus* to find how Chimamanda Adichie employs language to project the unique ideological configurations of gender, power and her attempt in critiquing in the society. According to them, Adichie has been able to use language to deploy the ideological dispositions of gender and power. For instance, the author uses language to effectively project Papa's religious fanaticism which subjugates his family and this also projects the oppression going on in the larger society through different forms of unfairness by government on the people. The study reveals that language as an essential tool of expressing ideology has been properly employed by Adichie to express her opinion on the issues of gender and power relations in critiquing the society in *Purple Hibiscus*. Their study however, fails to address what accounts for such enactment. The present study therefore uses the same theory to examine how language is used to express racism in *Americanah* and looks at how Adichie employs language to depict social issues as racism and what accounts for such.

Gonsalvez (2013) also uses critical discourse theory in his work to address the gaps, exclusions and oversights in active citizenship education. In his study, he examines whether policies, curriculum and pedagogies are out of touch with current realities or reproducing deep-seat

structural inequalities. According to him, Critical Discourse Analysis parallels a critical emancipatory approach for exploring the complexities of modern day citizenship education. He notes that a critical theoretical framework demands a critical deliberation and reflection. In support of this, Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010: 140) postulate that:

Critical theory, if nothing else, is a moral construct designed to reduce human suffering in the world. In the critical theoretical context, every individual is granted dignity regardless of his or her location in the web of reality. Thus, the continuation of human decision is a morally unacceptable behavior that must be analyzed, interpreted and changed.

Hebert (2004 cited in Gonsalvez,2013), asserts that in order to do justice to an exploration of active citizenship education, it is important that the discussion reaches outside the “internal politics of schooling” and global realms where rapid changes are taking place.

Hebert (2004:23) stresses that:

The idea of critical theory is not only of the internal politics of schooling but of the social conditions and historical relations in which education for citizenship is positioned. Critical theory then refers to a broad span of arguments about power – how people operates in the various forms, and how audience, postulates, habits, ways of acting and thinking, common place, beliefs are shaken up and re-examined to take a new measure of rules and institutions.

This implies that the idea of critical theory is for internal politics, social conditions and historical relations. The role of language in the social construction of knowledge cannot be over emphasized. This is in consonance with the view of Fairclough (1989) in which he gives his opinions on the actual nature of discourse and text analysis. Fairclough (1989:24-26) posits:

There are three levels of discourse: Firstly, Social conditions of production and interpretation ie, the social factors affect interpretation. Secondly, the process of production and interpretation, ie, in what way the text was produced and how this affects interpretation. Thirdly, the text being the product of the first two stages mentioned above.

For Fairclough, CDA is perceived as a research tactics rather than a direction of thought or a model of analysis. He gives three stages of CDA as follows:

- a. **Description:** This is the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of a text.
- b. **Interpretation:** The stage that is concerned with relationship between text and interaction, with seeing the text as a product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.
- c. **Explanation Stage:** Which is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the process of production, and interpretation, and their social effects (Fairclough 1989:26).

Based on Fairclough(1989) view, Horvath (2015)uses critical discourse theory to examine the covert ideology and persuasive strategies of President Obama’s inaugural address. Horvath (2015) analyzes the discourse of political speaking enshrined in Obama’s Speech and observes that ideology is both property of structures and of events. He further stresses that language plays a crucial role in the process of struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice, and that political action is prepared, accomplished, influenced and played by language.

The result of his analysis shows that the discursive event shaped the text; the discursive structure, plus, the discourse became subject of interpretation by the audience, which shaped the discourse practice of Obama. However, the study only looks at the covert ideology in political speech which is significant in times of economic turmoil but does not analyze the language used to express issues as racial inequality in the society and this is the focus of this study to fill the gap.

2.5 Critical Works on Adichie's *Americanah*

Literary works mirror the society and in any literary world, language is always the primary focus. There have been many studies on themes, characterization, plot, setting of literary texts. Various scholars such as Tunca (2009) and Kiguru (2012) have carried out linguistic analyses using relevant theories on literary texts of both old and new generation writers. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the literary writers whose works have interested and attracted critical attention. Her works deal with themes that are relevant in the modern society; for instance, racial discrimination which is the main theme in *Americanah*. To buttress this, Kamal (2014:1) states “*Americanah* is a searing exploration of race relations in America as well as a tender love story”. There have been few reviews and analysis on *Americanah* as far as available data reveal. This is because it is a new novel. One of the works on *Americanah* is that of Scholastica (2014) who conducts a rigorous analysis of the features of stylistic domain that are fore grounded in the text. Scholastica (2014) explores patterns, forms and the different levels of style (graphological, syntactic and semantic) employed by Chimamanda which helps interpret the various themes of race, love, migration e.t.c. He also discusses the term intertextuality. Citing Roland Bathes, Scholastica (2014) notes that the meaning of a text does not reside in the text, but is produced by the reader in relation not only to the text in question, but also the complex network of texts invoked in the reading process. He further affirms that intertextuality seems such a useful term because it foregrounds notions of rationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life. However, he only focuses on the style employed by the writer to depict the social issues in the text. The present study explores how the writer manipulated her characters in the text to enact and resist social wrongs. It also shows how social structures are institutionalized through discourse structures which Scholastica’s study fails to depict. This study therefore fills the gap.

Idowu-Faith (2013) also explores *Americanah* by investigating the language style employed by Adichie to depict the form of migration in the text which he calls return migration. According to Idowu-Faith (2013), Adichie simultaneously interrogates and transcends the borders of international migration theories by introducing a new factor that both influences migration and projects a new perspective on return migration.

Migration was meant for people who flee wars, hunger and woes but the type of migration theory in *Americanah* is defined as the need to flee choicelessness – people who belong to middle class, who were raised well fed decide to flee to other countries because they mired in dissatisfaction and believe that real lives happened in that somewhere else. From this perspective, the need to flee choicelessness defines *Americanah* as a new kind of migratory story and sets the text in motion against recognized migration theories (Idowu-Faith 2014, pg. 13)

Navaratnam (2013) reviews the theme of racism in the text. He explores how Adichie uses characterization to project racial inequality in America. Navaratnam in his review of the text observes that weaved into the dominant love story of Ifemalu and Obinze, are the narratives of racism, displacement, migration, liberalism, Nigerian middle-class apathy, Nigerian ruling class exploitation, colourism and its cousin, hairism, and white American “do – gooders”. He discusses many instances of Ifemelu’s experiences of racism in America. For instance, in a conversation between Blaine (Ifemelu’s boyfriend) his sister Shan and Ifemelu about how American white men and European white men, view black women differently. This experiences made Ifemelu a successful blogger of racism in America. To buttress this review, Peed (2013:1) argues that

Americanah tells the story of a smart, strong-willed Nigerian woman name Ifemelu who after she leaves Africa for America endures several harrowing years of near destination before graduation from college, starting a blog entitled “Raceneeth or various observation about American Blacks (those formerly known as Negros) by a Non-American Black”

He stresses that *Americanah* examines blackness (dark complexion) in America, Nigeria and Britain but it is also a steady dissection of the universal human experience – a platitude made fresh by the accuracy of Adichie’s observations.

In projecting the notion of racism in *Americanah* as reviewed by Sutcliffe (2013) in *The Independent* newspaper, Ifemelu finds an outlet to her frustrations and observations by increasing popular blog, with musings such as “Why Dark – Skinned Black Woman – Both American and Non-American – Love Barrack Obama” and to My Fellow Non-American Black: In America, You are Black, Baby” The newspaper further reported in its review of the book that Ifemelu’s online postings turn her into a sought – after speaker on the hot – button topics of race, diversity and multiculturalism. This study borrows from this review as it investigates the expressions used to enact racism. Yohannes (2013) analyzes Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *The Thing Around Your Neck* from a post-colonial perspective. She discusses how the theory is concerned with making a positive turn in the human race through resistance to racism. Although the approach of the present study is from a Critical Discourse perspective of Adichie’s *Americanah*. Yohanne’s study will be more appropriate when analyzing how racism is resisted through Ifemelu’s blog posts in *Americanah*. Chepkorir (2014) studies *Americanah* from a literary point of view. Using the relevant theory, she examines the representation of female African immigrant experience in the West. She also examines and discusses how institutionalized racism prevents immigrants from acquiring intellectual jobs making them keep low status jobs involving physical labour. The present study draws from this argument to examine how racism is institutionalized by social structure through discourse structures.

The National Book Critics Circle(NBCC) (2014) in its review of *Americanah* observes that through Ifemelu’s blog posts, Adichie editorializes the often hilarious and equally biting observations about Blackness, Nigerianness, race relations and the dark side of immigration

policies in America and the United Kingdom . NBCC reports that with Adichie as our societal mirror, *Americanah* creates an incubated space within which to expose the bitter roots of American racial history from an observers perspective and ought to be sociological required reading. In their observations, most of what Adichie wrapped in the experiences of Ifemelu and Obinze are her own life experiences. As shown in their comment: “It is in America that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was introduced first to race and began to indentify hereby as Black in a way that she is never made to acknowledge or known in Lagos – an experience she details vividly as Ifemelu in *Americanah* (2014:3).

It is obvious from the review of the aforementioned literatures that there have been a number of works done using Critical Discourse Analysis. There are also magazine articles and reviews on *Americanah*. Some of which are the enactment of racism and migration using relevant theories, but there has not been any work done yet, as far as available data reveals, that adopts the Critical Discourse approach to analyze *Americanah* as is the focus of this work. This reason, therefore, informed the decision to undertake this study in order to fill the gap.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study is the Critical Discourse Analysis from the perspective of van Dijk (1993). Teun A. van Dijk is a prominent name in critical discourse studies and his socio-cognitive model of CDA is one of the influential approaches in the field. This model focuses on the reproduction of ethnic practices and racism in discourse and communication. CDA attempts to reveal the intricate association among dominance, power and social disequilibrium, injustice and inequality that operate in diverse social communities. This is done in order to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between the role and structure of language.

Most of the works of Teun van Dijk focus on the (re)production of ethnic prejudices and racism in discourse and communication. In his earlier studies, he examines the ways white Dutch and Californians talk about minorities (van Dijk 1984, 1987) van Dijk (1993) describes in detail how to inter-relate power and dominance relations to text and discourse structures, thus relating macro level and social cognitive understandings to micro level text and talk; and to find out how power and dominance is manifested, produced and reproduced through discourse. van Dijk (1991) also examines the role of the news media in the reproduction of racism and he investigated a hypothesis which increasingly suggested itself in the previous studies namely that the elites play a crucial role in the reproduction of racism (van Dijk 1993). In his view on the study of cognition, those who control most dimensions of discourse (preparation, setting, participants, topics, style, rhetoric, interaction etc.) have the most power. He argues that no direct relation can or should be constructed between discourse structures and social structures, but that they are always mediated by the interface of personal and social cognition. Cognition, according to van Dijk, is the missing link in many studies on critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. This fails to show how societal structures are in turn enacted, instituted, legitimated, confirmed or challenged by text and talk.

van Dijk (2001, 2003, 2005) proposes a new approach by taking up a more detailed study of the role of knowledge on the study of context models in episodic memory, that is, in terms of subjective, dynamic representations of the ongoing communicative event and situation. The main argument behind van Dijk's theory is that text and talk do not exist in isolation, but that context plays an important role. In his view, context is not simply some kind of social environment, situation or structure such as the social 'variables' of gender, age or race in classical sociolinguistics, rather a context is a subjective mental representation, a dynamic online model,

of the participants about the for-them-now relative properties of the communicative situation and such representation van Dijk refers to as a context model (van Dijk, 2007:283).

According to the socio-cognitive perspective, context models are strategic tools that we use in our daily conversations and in order to function properly, they require a minimum of knowledge from the participants. This theory of mental model is consistent with the concept of relevance and is also providing a cognitive basis for communication events and interactions. “All relevant properties of interaction such as mutual awareness of participants, mutual knowledge and co-ordination according to (van Dijk 2007:28) are unthinkable without such a cognitive dimension”. Context models control interaction, speech acts, style, rhetoric and all other aspects of discourse that make discourse appropriate in the current situation. These ‘semantic’ models and social representation control the meaningfulness (both in production and understanding of discourse socio-cognitive shows how schemata are related to the mental. How schemata are related to the mental).

van Dijk (2000) adopts a psychological or cognitive study of discourse which is rather different from a more, formal, grammatical, stylistic or narrative analysis. Cognitive study deals with the actual mental representations and processes of language users. Psychology intends to provide a more ‘empirically’-based understanding of discourse. Thus, instead of analyzing ‘given’ structures, it adopts a more ‘strategic’ approach and studies discourse processing ‘online’, at several levels at the same time, as a fast but imperfect sequence of mental acts that are geared towards ‘making sense’ of the respective words, clauses, sentence, paragraphs etc of discourse. In such analysis interpretation is not static, nor an abstract procedure, as in linguistic semantics, but a dynamic, ongoing and functions to units of discourse.

Psychology makes use of a large number of more or less technical notions describing various aspects of the ‘mind’ to account for such processes of production and understanding. Such technical notions include:

- Short Term Memory (STM) vs Long Term Memory (LTM)
- Short Term Memory (personal, autobiographic vs Semantic Memory (socio-cultural shared)
- Situation or Even Models
- Knowledge (scripts, etc) van Dijk (2000:2).

According to van Dijk (2000:4). “A meaning of text is not ‘in’ the text, or on paper, or in the air, but assigned to a text by language users, and as such represented in their minds”. A cognitive analysis does not at all exclude a further social analysis because many aspects of cognitive representations and processing are themselves social – such as the socially shared knowledge and other beliefs, as well as the jointly constructed social aspects of the context. But creating a mental model helps people understand what is happening, take turns in speaking and listening or opt for actions. van Dijk’s observations seem intuitive enough because they point out that we have plenty of communicative situations in which the relative elements are blended with ‘absolute’ ones, while subjective traits are mingled with objective traits.

The van Dijk’s socio-cognitive theory is suitable for the present research because it provides an encompassing framework for the analysis of the data for this study. His view of mental context combined with social context help people to understand what is happening in the society and what accounts for it. The model reveals what accounts for certain utterances and their interpretation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology for this study. The chapter is divided into the following sub-headings: Research design, method of data collection and sampling procedure.

3.2 Research Design

This research is designed as a content analysis of utterances in *Americanah* using the socio-cognitive model of critical discourse theory proposed by van Dijk (1993). Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and so is able to decode meanings at a deeper level. It is therefore useful for this study because it will provide a basic frame for proper analysis of the utterances in the novel.

3.3 Data Collection

The main sources of data for this research are utterances in the blog posts of Ifemelu (a major character), Jamilah and other characters in *Americanah*. The blogs are in a form of editorials of race relations and immigrations in the novel.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling technique was adapted for the study. Out of seventy-five expressions that enact racism, only thirty (ie 40%) that are relevant and useful to the study were purposively selected from the blog posts and utterances of characters in the novel and analysed. These thirty expressions are representative of other racial expressions in the text.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the data and their analysis. In doing this, each of the analysis takes into consideration the following: the mental context, the social context and the linguistic indices of the expressions as they enact racial discrimination and resistance in *Americanah*. Mental context considers the meaning of an utterance or expression assigned by the speakers as represented in their minds. The social context represents the socially shared knowledge of language participants. The mental and social contexts are termed socio-cognitive context. The expressions are analyzed based on the socio-cognitive context. A total of thirty expressions are analyzed.

4.2 Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis of data. The expressions picked are those analyzed and this was done in no particular order. The analysis as presented here is done in block form.

The conversation in expression 1 took place when Ifemelu was in a train going to Trenton to braid her hair. Ifemelu met with other passengers whom she discusses her blog posts with. A man from Ohio wanted to know what Ifemelu meant by 'lifestyle blog'. She told him, expecting him to become reserved because he is white, but to her surprise, the man said, "Nobody wants black babies in this country, and I don't mean biracial, I mean black. Even the black families don't want them".

Expressions 1: Nobody wants black babies in this country and I don't mean biracial, I mean black. Even the black families don't want them. (*Americanah* p.4).

Mental Context: In the mental representation of Ifemelu, we are made to understand that ‘black babies’ are perceived to be inferior to ‘white babies’. This is stated in the expression, that even the black families do not want black babies.

Social Context: The text presents to us that the skin colour of white people which is believed to be superior to black skin is valued and this is established in the minds of both white and black people. The author presents a picture of American society which accepts that the skin colour of white people is better than the skin colour of black people. This is shown in the expression “Nobody wants black babies in this country” This is the perception of what the society embraces thereby making the blacks to see themselves as inferior to the whites. This shows outright racial inequality.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker uses ‘black’ colour as symbol of inferiority to enact racism. ‘This’ is used by the man from Ohio to refer to America as a country that does not want black babies. ‘Them’ refers to the black babies that are not wanted among the white race.

The background of the conversation in the text is when Ifemelu went to plait her hair at Aisha’s shop. Aisha expected Ifemelu’s hair to be relaxed, but it is not. When Aisha asked her why her hair was not permed, Ifemelu made it clear to her that she liked her hair the way God made it.

Expression 2: Aisha touched Ifemelu’s hair. “Why you don’t have relaxer?”

“I like my hair the way God made it”

“But how you comb it?”

“Hard to comb,” (*Americanah* p.12)

Mental Context: The mental context representation of Aisha and Ifemelu is that relaxed hair is better than strong hair which is difficult to comb.

Social Context: This presents the picture of a society where people in America, both black and white race value the texture of the hair of Americans and that is why they use relaxer on their hair. Ifemelu absolutely resists this notion when she says “I like my hair the way God made it” Ifemelu admires her African type of hair and decides not to perm her God-given hair. To Ifemelu, God made every race unique and people should remain the way they are made by God. By implication no race is superior to another.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses direct statement to drive home her message. For example “I like my hair the way God made it” This emphasizes that God is supreme to any race. The author also uses this expression to show absolute resistance to racism. The use of ‘hair’ as a symbol of racism is relevant as observed by Scholastica (2014) that symbol exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. He stressed that Ifemelu uses the ‘hair’ as a symbol of racial discrimination and that Ifemelu describes how blacks struggle to make their hair look like that of Americans through the use of relaxers.

The background of this conversation is when Aunty Uju eventually passes her medical examination after writing for several times and is invited for interview. She has to take her braids out and perm her hair because Americans do not permit braids if you are to do an honourable job in America.

Expression 3: “If you have braids, they will think you are unprofessional”

“So there are no doctors with braided hair in America?”

“You are in a country that is not your own. You do what you have to do if you want to succeed” (*Americanah* 119).

Mental Context: In the mental representation of Aunty-Uju, braids are associated with the hair of Africans while relaxed hair with Americans’. The hair of Americans is perceived to be superior to the braids of Africans. The mental context aids the interpretation of the social context.

Social Context: Aunty Uju presents the picture of what is obtainable in American society through her expression. She made us understand that Americans value their relaxed hair more than braids and this, Ifemelu perceives as racism. The Africans living in America have inferiority complex in them based on their mind’s perception of braided and relaxed hair. Aunty Uju has to take her braids out and perm her hair before she attends an interview for a medical job because Americans do not permit braids if one is to do an honourable job in America. Africans Struggle to make their hair look like Americans’ through the use of relaxers.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu and Aunty Uju uses “relaxed hair” and “braided hair” as symbols of racism. This corroborates the view of Scholastica (2014) that symbolism exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. Scholastica stresses that Ifemelu uses the “hair” as a symbol of racial discrimination and that Ifemelu describes how blacks struggle to make their hair look like that of Americans through the use of relaxers. The pronoun “they” is used by Aunty Uju to refer to the Americans who will not accept braids. “If” a conditional clause is used to mean that you have

to avoid braids in order not to give yourself an identity of discrimination in America. This is shown in the expression, “If you have braids, they will think you are unprofessional”.

This expression came out in Ifemelu blog post as a result of the way Ifemelu, Jackie and her room mates dressed to a party. They were all in frayed fabrics and slack collars. The dressing is accepted by American society.

Expression 4: When it comes to dressing well, American culture is so self-fulfilled that it has not only disregarded this courtesy of self-presentation, but has turned that disregard into a virtue. We are too 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. (*Americanah* p.129).

Mental Context: In Ifemelu’s mental representation, whatever an American puts on whether it is good-looking or not, is presented as more special than the dressing of other races. Dressing is part of a people’s culture. To the Americans their culture dominates other cultures even in dressing and this, Ifemelu regards as racism.

Social Context: The blog post of Ifemelu presents the picture of the manner of dressing of the American society which is part of their culture. The American society is presented to us a self-fulfilled, too superior, cool, not uptight that they don’t bother about how they look to other people. This is socially realistic where the American culture accepts nude dressing. People dress the way they like whether it is good looking or not. They feel it is the best way and believe that no other society dresses better than them. The blog post

ridiculed this perception of the Americans as shown in the expression “So we can wear pajamas to school and underwear to the mall”. Pajamas and underwear are not dresses for outing but because the American society undermines what they wear, they put on things like that to school, mall and other places outside their homes and see nothing wrong with it, instead, they accept it as a self-fulfillment and a virtue. The text presents this as cultural dominance which the American society uses to control the acts and minds of people as stressed by Wrong (1979) “the ability to control the acts and minds of groups presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources such as force, money, status, culture or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication”. As a result of this cultural dominance the citizens are influenced to dress in the so-called superior way of Americans.

Linguistic Indices: The use of the pronoun ‘We’ to refer to Americans who believe that their manner of dressing is superior to other race emphasizes dominance and self-satisfaction by American society. This is what Fairclough (1992) refers to in discourse – as – “discursive practice”. That is, the act of analyzing the vocabulary and grammar that link a text to its context. The use of sarcasm such as “so we can wear pajamas to school and underwear to the mall” shows how discourse is used to ridicule the perception of American society about their dressing. The author uses this sarcasm to resist the perception of American society of being superior in dressing.

This expression was made during the meeting of African Students Association (ASA) where Africans who hail from different countries meet to discuss their plight in America. In one of the meetings, they mimicked what Americans tell them about the poor condition of Africans. The Africans themselves mocked Africa in this meeting.

Expression 5: They mimicked what Americans told them. “You speak such good English. How bad is AIDS in your country? It’s so sad that people live on less than a dollar a day in Africa” (*Americanah* p.139).

Mental Context: The mental representation of Africans in America is that Americans believe that an African is an inferior race and is not expected to speak good English. It is also perceived by Africans in America that Americans see Africa as a poor continent and as such cannot take care of AIDS.

Social Context: This expression presents the notions of Americans about Africans. Africans in America mimic what Americans told them such as “You speak such good English”. By implication, Americans do not expect Africans to speak good English as it is believed that Africa is an inferior race. The author also uses African students living in America to show the perception of Americans on the poor condition of Africans. African Students Association (ASA) presents discourse of Americans on them as racism. As posited by van Dijk (1991), racism is a complex system of social and political inequality that is also reproduced by discourse. Africans in America mimicked what the Americans communicate to them on how bad AIDS is in Africa. Africans themselves mocked Africa, trading stories of absurdity and stupidity of Africans and that Africa would be made whole again. The text captures the racial attitude of the Americans who exercise dominance over Africans whom they believe are too poor to tackle disease

like AIDS. The ASA meeting was a forum for Africans to air their views on themselves and what Americans think about them.

Linguistic Indices: The author uses the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘your’ to refer to Africans who live in poverty. The expressions “how bad is AIDS” (a rhetorical question) and “less than a dollar” show the poor condition of Africans as perceived by both Americans and Africans themselves. In the expression, sarcasm is used by both Americans and Africans to ridicule Africans.

The background of this expression in Ifemelu’s blog was when Ifemelu was working as a baby sitter with Kimberly Turner. A cleaner was invited to clean-up the house. When the cleaner met Ifemelu in the house, his countenance changed into a hostile mood because she was not the one he expected to be the homeowner of a grand stone house with the white pillars. The hostility in his face disappeared when Ifemelu told him that Mrs. Turner told her he was coming. With this drama between her and the cleaner, Ifemelu decided to write the blog about the attitude of the cleaner towards her. In the blog, she states that it did not matter to the cleaner how much money she had. As far as he was concerned, Ifemelu did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way she looked.

Expression 6: Sometimes in America, Race is class. In America’s public discourse, “Blacks”, as a whole are often lumped with “poor whites”. Not poor Blacks and poor whites. But Blacks and poor whites. A curious thing indeed. (*Americanah*.166)

Mental Context: The mental representation in this expression is that the American social structure is stratified according to class in which racism is hidden.

Social Context: The expression demonstrates how America is stratified into social classes and wrapped in this social classes is racism. The blacks are rated poor and lumped with the poor whites while the affluent or influential whites are in a different class. In a normal social class order, the poor blacks should be lumped with poor blacks but because race is wrapped in this social class, all the blacks whether affluent or poor are lumped with only poor whites in the public discourse of America. The text captures this as racism in disguise. This is emphasized in the statement “Not poor Blacks and poor whites, But Blacks and poor whites”. “Blacks” is emphasized here to show that they are discriminated against.

Linguistic Indices: The language exposes the condition of the black race in America using expressions like “Blacks as a whole are often lumped with poor blacks”. The word “often” shows how frequent this happens in America. The phrases “poor blacks” and “poor whites” are symbols of racism. The language vividly exposes the enactment of racial discrimination in the social order of the American society.

The background of this conversation is when Ifemelu met with Blaine in a train when she was having a round trip to Haverhill and a conversation ensued between them. Both of them studied in America. The discussion centred on Nigerians being everywhere in African countries. Ifemelu asked Blaine if Southern Africa was his discipline. In replying her, he says “You can’t do just Africa in Political Science graduate programmes in this country” They don’t let you do that”.

Expression 7: Ifemelu: “So is Southern Africa your discipline?”

Blaine: “No comparative politics. You can’t do just Africa in Political Science graduate programmes in this country. You can compare Africa to Poland or Israel but focusing on Africa itself? They don’t let you do that”. (*Americanah* 177).

Mental Context: In the mental representation of Ifemelu, Americans are perceived to be a superior race to African race and that is why only Africa cannot be studied in Political Science graduate programmes in America.

Social Context: We are made to understand by Ifemelu and Blaine that you are not allowed to study only Africa in Political Science graduate programmes in American school. Based on the mental perception of Ifemelu, Americans consider Africa (a whole continent) comparatively too insignificant to be studied alone in graduate programmes and this, Ifemelu consider as racism. It is a display of power by the American race as noted by Lawal and Alabi (2013) that language has been playing a vital role in generating and disseminating the affairs of power and social relations.

Linguistic Indices: The expression “they don’t let you do that in this country” shows that you do not have a choice. This means it is compulsory and so if you do contrary you will be discriminated against. “They” is used to refer to Americans.

The expression is Ifemelu’s blog post on American tribalism.

Expression 8: There’s a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on top. Specifically White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP,

and American Black is always on the bottom, and what's in the middle depends on time and place (*Americanah* p.184).

Mental Context: It is perceived in the mind of Ifemelu, the blogger that colour matters in America. A white American is valued more than a black “white is always on top, and Black America is always at the bottom”.

Social Context: The author presents the picture of a hierarchical society whereby white people are on top of the ladder of the hierarchy in social settings. The White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) is presented as the superior race to others. Black Americans are at the bottom of the ladder as instituted by American society. It is the social order of the society and this affects every facet of the social structures such as judiciary, politics, schools, neighborhood and so on. This is perceived by Ifemelu as racial discrimination. This is in relation with what van Dijk (1984) examines in the ways white Dutch and Californians talk about minorities in his earlier studies.

Linguistic Indices: The statement “There's a ladder of racial hierarchy in America” shows the enactment of racial discrimination in *Americanah*. The words ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ show the difference in the hierarchy between the white and black Americans and the word ‘always’ tells us how often this occurs.

This expression is extracted from Ifemelu's blog post to her readers who are both whites and blacks in America

Expression 9: If you're white, you're all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back (p.184)

Mental Context: The mental representation of Ifemelu is that ‘white’ is associated with superiority, ‘black’ is associated with inferiority while ‘brown’ is in between the two.

Social Context: The expression depicts a typical American society where the black is dominated and this leads to racism. The whites can be anywhere and be all right. The brown race is preferred to the black race. This shows outright discrimination against the black race as enacted by the text. This is stressed by van Dijk in Tannen (1981) that dominance may be enacted and reproduced by stable, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear ‘natural’ and acceptable.

Linguistic Indices: “If” is used by the speaker as a conditional clause to say that you have to be a white for you to have a say or you will be discriminated against as a black. This is indicated by the expression, “If you’re black get back”.

Ifemelu posted a blog on understanding America for the Non-American Black after discussing with Curt in Baltimore. Their discussion centered on how Ifemelu relaxed her hair in order to be qualified for an interview in America. In the blog, Ifemelu discussed what Professor Hunk told a Jewish guy about civil rights. In reply to the Professor, the Jewish guy told him that the blacks have not suffered like the Jews. Professor Hunk asked if that was the oppression Olympics.

Expression 10: But there is an oppression Olympics going on. American racial minorities – blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Jews – all get shit from white folks, different kinds of shit, but shit still. Each secretly believes that it gets the worse shit. So, there is not United League of the oppressed. However, all the others think they’re not black (*Americanah* p.205).

Mental Context: Here, the mental representation of Ifemelu is that blacks are the most oppressed of all the race(s) in American society.

Social Context: The text presents a form of legitimated oppression in disguise in the social structure of American society. The oppression as presented in the text is a form of game where some races are referred to as minorities. The discourse reproduced here shows that in American society, blacks, Hispanics, the Asians (Indians, Pakistanis,) and Jews are rated in different ways as minorities and are treated very badly by the whites. Each race believes that it receives the worse treatment but still, the blacks receive the worst maltreatment. This enactment is in accordance with the work of van Dijk (1984) where he focuses on the (re)production of ethnic prejudices and racism in discourse and communication. The bad treatment given to different races is enacted by the Jews, Asians, Hispanics and blacks in their discussions in America. In van Dijk's work, he looked into how such prejudices are (re)produced in discourse.

Linguistic Indices: The use of words such as 'minorities', 'oppression' 'get shit' by the speaker shows that whites dominate other race(s) and this results into racial inequality. Inequality is shown in the expression "all get shit from white folks". The word 'shit' is a symbol of racism.

This expression is a continuation of the discussion on "oppression Olympics" in Ifemelu's blog. Ifemelu gave example of Aunty Uju's experience with a Spanish-speaking woman called Lili. Lili did not like working for black people. Ifemelu wrote this in her blog for her readers to show how the black race is discriminated against by other races.

Expression 11: Take Lili, for example, the coffee-skinned, black-haired and Spanish-speaking woman who cleaned my aunt's house in a New England. 'My aunt believed Lili didn't like working for black people. Before she finally fired her. My aunt said, "Stupid woman, she thinks she's white, "so whiteness is the thing to aspire to. Not everyone does, of course, but many minorities have a conflicted longing for WASP whiteness or more accurately for the privileges of WASP whiteness'. (*Americanah* p.205).

Mental Context: The mental perception of Ifemelu and Aunt Uju as represented is that there is a special whiteness which people perceive as superior and these whites have more privileges than others. It is shown that even the minorities which are discriminated against have a longing for the whiteness.

Social Context: Ifemelu through her blog, presents to us how the black race is dominated by every race. It is believed that the black race is inferior. The text presents a picture whereby the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) whites have more privileges in the American social structure and so everybody aspires to be white in order to enjoy these privileges. This is shown in the example given in the text whereby Lili a Spanish-speaking woman with coffee skin is unfriendly, proud, disrespectful, does her work poorly and makes demands because she works for a black woman. This depicts how black people are treated in the American society. Ifemelu and her aunt, Uju resist this perception about the blacks. Aunt Uju in resisting this perception says "stupid woman, she thinks she's white", "so whiteness is the thing to aspire to. Not everyone does, of course".

Linguistic Indices: The expressions "stupid woman" "so whiteness is the thing to aspire to" and "not everyone does, of course" are used by Aunt Uju to resist racial

inequality. The language use, discourse, verbal, interaction and communication according to van Dijk (1981) belong to the micro level of social order. The micro level includes the vocabulary verbal interaction and communication used by participants to feature notions of dominance, class, race, social structure, social orders etc. Aunty Uju expressed the notion of racism and she also resisted it in her communication.

This expression is Jamilah's blog post on her love for natural hair. This blog post was remembered by Ifemelu when she went to the beauty supply store and ran her fingers through small bundles of silky weaves.

Expression 12: I love the 'Sistas' who love their straight weaves, but I'm never putting horse hair on my head again (*Americanah* p.213).

Mental Context: There is the mental representation by Jamilah that some females prefer to put "weave-on" (artificial hair) on their hair to look like the hair of the whites which they believe is superior.

Social Context: In this blog post, Jamilah tells us that some females use weave-on on their heads. She says she is not against them but she will never attach such artificial hair on her head again. The mental context of Jamilah prompted this expression in her blog post. Jamilah resists the love for artificial hair which she refers to as horse hair. She makes us understand that weave-on is not superior as some people think. This shows that she is against the discrimination of the make-up of the hair of other races. Jamilah, uses her blog post to show that she hates how some blacks prefer to attach artificial hair to their natural hair in order for it to look like that of the white people

which they perceive as superior to the natural hair of her own race. This discourse in form of sarcasm enacts the resistance to racial discrimination. Jamilah refers to the hair of Americans as horse hair. Jamilah's mind perception aids the interpretation of the expression. This is in consonance with the view of van Dijk (1993) that there is a relationship between the mind, discursive interaction and society.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker's use of 'straight weaves' and 'horse hair' as a symbol of racism is relevant. 'Horse hair' is used by the author to describe the weave-on used by Africans in order to look like the whites.

This expression is extracted from Ifemelu's blog post to both Americans and non-Americans. It is about how Non-American blacks love Barrack Obama to be president in order for their plight to be changed. In the mental representation of Ifemelu, the attitude of whites towards black women is shown in movies.

Expression 13: In movies, dark black woman get to be the fat nice mammy or the strong, sassy, sometimes scary sidekick standing by supportively. They get to dish out wisdom and attitude while the white woman finds love. But they never get to be the hot woman, beautiful and desired and all. So dark black women hope Obama will change that (*Americanah* p.214).

Mental Context: The mental representation is that black women are not loved and desired even though the virtue in them is outstanding because they are invisible and not smart like white women.

Social Context: The writer uses blog post in form of editorials to lampoon the American society whereby the movies in America reflects how they treat the black

race. The text presents a picture of the American society in which black women are looked upon as less important, and used as helpers and supporters of the white people. The white people cunningly use the wisdom of the black women to their advantage but never show love to them as they do to white women. Even though the black women are nice, strong and confident, the white people do not love and desire them as they do to the white women. The text presents this action as discrimination of white people over the black race. The virtue of strength and wisdom in the black women do not qualify them to be loved and desired because they are not smart.

Linguistic Indices: The use of the words ‘nice mammy’ ‘strong’ ‘sassy’ ‘scary sidekick’ ‘supportively’ as qualities of black women and yet are never loved and desired by the white people, captures the theme of racial inequality.

This is an expression from Ifemelu’s blog post to her fellow non-American blacks in America.

Expression 14: You must show that you are offended when such words as “watermelon” and “tar baby” are used in jokes, even if you don’t know what the hell is being talked about – and since you are a Non-American Black, the chances are that you won’t know. (*Americanah* p.220).

Mental Context: It is perceived in the mind of Ifemelu that fruits or foods from the country of blacks especially the non-American blacks are believed to be inferior to the fruits of Americans.

Social Context: It is presented to us by the author that in the American society, you must show that you are not happy when words like ‘watermelon’ ‘tar baby’ are

mentioned. Watermelon is a type of fruit from the African countries while ‘tar baby’ means a black baby. The society of America as presented by the author does not value things that come from African countries and that is why you must be offended at the mention of such things in jokes. This action is presented by the text as discrimination against the black race as observed by Kamal (2014) that *Americanah* is a searing exploration of race relations in America.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker’s use of watermelon (a fruit in Africa) and ‘tar baby’ as symbol of racism is relevant. ‘Tar’ represents dark colour. ‘You’ refers to both black and white persons who must show that such words as ‘watermelon’ and ‘tar baby’ sound offensive. ‘even if’ the conditional clause is used to say that you must not know the subject of discussion before you show you are offended when you hear such words as (watermelon) in order not to be discriminated against.

This expression is Ifemelu’s blog post to her fellow Non-American Blacks in America.

Expression 15: When a crime is reported, pray that it was not committed by a black person, and if it turns out to have been committed by a black person, stay away from the crime area for weeks or you might be stopped for fitting the profile. (*Americanah* p. 221).

Mental Context: It is perceived by Ifemelu and fellow Nigerians in America that if any black person commits a crime in America, any other black in such crime vicinity can be arrested. This depicts persecution of black race in America.

Social Context: The author of the novel uses the blog posts of Ifemelu in the text to show that the black race is persecuted in American society whereby in their social settings, any black person suffers for the crime of another black man. That is, if a black person commits a crime in America, any other black person that is caught around the vicinity of the crime is arrested and taken to court and nothing is done about that. This, the text presents as outright injustice against the black race and power and dominance institutionalized in American social structure.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker uses the expression “if it turns out to have been committed by a black person” “stay away from the crime area for weeks, you might be stopped for fitting the profile” to show that the black race is maltreated and persecuted in America. The conditional clause “if” shows that the white person does not suffer for the crime of another white person but the black does.

The background of this expression is when Curt (Ifemelu’s boyfriend) picked up a copy of *Essence* in Ifemelu’s apartment and he commented that the magazine is racially skewed because only black women featured. This comment moved Ifemelu and she drove Curt to a bookstore where she took down copies of women’s magazines. Ifemelu took the magazines to where Curt is and she settled down in a café. She spread the magazines on the table for them to go through and see how many black women are found in the magazines. After counting, only three black women were found in *Woman’s Magazine*.

Expression 16: So three black women in may be 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. No one of them is dark.

Not one of them looks like me, so I can't get clues for make-up from these magazines. (*Americanah* p.295).

Mental Context: It is perceived in the mind of Ifemelu that dark colour is inferior to white colour. This is what she perceives as dominance and that is why the white women are more in number in *Woman's Magazine* in America.

Social Context: The text in critiquing the American society, uses Ifemelu's blog post to present the picture of the nature of American *Woman's Magazines*. The white women are shown in the *Woman's Magazine* to dominate black women. As presented by the text, in two thousand pages of *Woman's Magazines*, only three black women are found. The women are either biracial (that is, belonging to two races) or racially ambiguous (that is, their races may not be understood). Indian or Puerto Rican women are presented in the *Woman's Magazine* but not dark women. The writer made us understand that *Woman's Magazine* supposed to be for women of all races, but it is not so in American society. The blog therefore uses figurative expression to resist what is obtainable in the *Woman's Magazine*. In resisting this, she says "No one of them is dark. Not one of them looks like me, so I can't get clues for make-up from these magazines". This expression shows that the speaker is dark and so the magazine is not useful to her.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses the expression "three black women in two thousand pages of *Woman's Magazine*" to depict dominance of white women. The expression – "all of them are biracial, Indian, Puerto Rican" "Not one of them is dark" shows dominance. The speaker resists this by using simile in her expression. "No one of them looks like 'me'" so 'I' can't get clues for

make-up. “Them” refers to the white women. ‘Me’ and ‘I’ refer to the speaker who is dark.

This expression is the continuation of what the *Woman’s Magazine* contains. The article in the magazine contains an advertisement of hair products for women.

Expression 17: Look, this article tells you to pinch your cheeks for colour because all their readers are supposed to have cheeks you can pinch for colour. This tells you about different hair products for ‘everyone’ and ‘everyone’ means blondes, brunettes and redheads. I am none of those. And this tells you about the best conditioners-for straight, wavy curly. No kinky. See what they mean by curly? My hair could never do that. (*Americanah* p.295).

Mental Context: The mental representation of Ifemelu is that, straight, wavy and curly hair of Americans is perceived to be superior to ‘kinky’ hair of Africans.

Social Context: The author presents to us the article in an American magazine where the society is aware of the caliber of people they make advertisement for. This is shown in the expression. ‘look, this article tells you to pinch your cheeks for colour because all their readers are supposed to have cheeks you can pinch for colour’. The text also presents a picture of the American society where advertisement for hair product is meant for the blondes, brunettes and redheads. Blonde is a person who has pale or yellow hair while brunette is a woman whose hair is dark brown. Redhead is someone who has red hair. The hair products advertised in American articles and magazines cannot be used by a person with black hair and that is why the writer who is black says “I am none of this” This is an outright resistance

and rejection of the hair products. The text made us understand that the black race is deceived because the advertisement says hair products for 'everyone'. 'Everyone' supposed to include the black race but is not so. The writer also expresses her perception about the best conditioners advertised for only straight, wavy and curly hair. Africans do not have such type of hair. Their hair is kinky. Kinky hair is not straight and curly but has a lot of small curves. This shows that the black race is dominated through advertisement in American society and is discriminated against.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker uses the word 'everyone' to refer to particular race which is perceived to be superior. The speaker uses the 'everyone' supposed to include every race but 'everyone' in this context refers to only blondes, brunettes and redheads. The speaker's use of 'straight', 'wavy' 'curly' and 'kinky' hair as symbol of racism is relevant. The expression, "I am none of those" "My hair could 'never do that'" enact resistance to racial inequality. 'They' is used by the speaker to refer to the Americans who advertise best hair conditioners for 'curly' and not 'kinky hair' of Africans.

This expression is made as a result of the comment Curt made on 'Essence' magazine. Curt told Ifemelu that Essence magazine contains only black women and so is racially skewed. Ifemelu had to take him to a bookstore where she showed him, the woman's magazine that is racially skewed because it contains advertisement for only white women. She convinced him of why *Essence* magazine exists. It is meant to counter what is obtained in *Woman's Magazine*.

Expression 18: This tells you about matching your eye colour and eye shadow-blue, green and hazel eyes. But my eyes are black so I can't know what shadow works

for me. This says that this pink lipstick is universal, but they mean universal if you are white because I would look like a golliwog if I tried that shade of pink. Now, let's talk about what is racially skewed. Do you see why a magazine like 'essence' even exists?" (*Americanah* p.295).

Mental Context: The mental representation is that, Ifemelu perceives that in American magazines, advertisements are made for only white persons.

Social Context: The utterance tells us that magazines that exist in America contain articles and advertisements that are in favour of the white people. The picture presented to us by the text is that of domination by the white people in American society. The magazine advertises make-up for blue, green and hazel eyes and not for black eyes these are symbols of racism. We are also made to understand that when they say pink lipstick is universal, they use the word 'universal' to deceive the black people because the text made us believe that 'universal' to the Americans refers to white people only since the colour of the product does not fit the black person. This is perceived by the speaker that racism manifest in America in a deceptive manner. Ifemelu uses the utterance to expose how the white people in America dominate the black race and this domination is resisted sarcastically. The blog post says "I would look like a golliwog if I tried that shade of pink". This means that Ifemelu is black and the colour of lipstick advertised in the magazine does not fit a black person and as such the writer would look like a golliwog. Golliwog is a child's doll made of cloth with a black face, white eyes and short black hair. This description looks like a monster and is a racist term. Ifemelu made us understand that she cannot use the colour of lipstick advertised in *Women* magazine because it is meant for only

white people. This enactment depicts resistance to racism. In order to counter the *Woman's Magazine*, *Essence* magazine contains more of black women.

Linguistic Indices: The author's use of 'eye shadow', 'blue', 'green' 'hazel' and 'black' eyes as symbol of racism is relevant. The racist term 'golliwog' is used by Ifemelu to show resistance to what the magazine advertises as perfect to her eye colour. 'if' is used as a conditional clause to say that you have to be white before their lipstick fits you. This is shown in the statement "they mean universal if you are white". 'They' is used by the speaker to refer to the Americans who mean that 'universal' refers to white people. Ifemelu also uses rhetorical question in her blog to emphasize that the magazine '*Essence*' exists in America because it counters what is obtainable in *Woman's Magazine*. This is shown in the rhetorical question "Do you see why a magazine like *Essence* even exists?"

Ifemelu wrote this blog after making her mind clear to Blaine on how she felt about Paula, Blaine's ex-girlfriend. The blog is about an American Black who wrote a book titled *Travelling While Black*. It is based on his experience as he was travelling around the world. He experienced discrimination even among fellows blacks.

Expression 19: A friend of a friend, a cool AB (American Black) with tons of money, is writing a book called *Travelling while Black*. Not just black, he says but recognizably black because there's all kinds of black and no offense but he doesn't mean those black folk who look Puerto Rican or Brazilian or whatever he means recognizably black. Because the world treats you differently. So here's what he says: 'I got the idea for the book in Egypt'.

So I get to Cairo and this Egyptian Arab guy calls me a black barbarian. I'm like hey, this is supposed to be Africa! (*Americanah* p. 330).

Mental Context: The mental representation of Ifemelu is that even among the blacks there is racism. That is, the blacks discriminate against their fellow blacks.

Social Context: The social situation presented in the expression is that of a black American writing a book titled *Travelling While Black*. In the book, we are presented with the attitude of the world towards the black race which is looked upon as inferior. We are made to understand that there are different kinds of black. There is Puerto Rican black and there is Brazilian black. These blacks are not treated badly as what they describe as recognizable black. The world views this kind of black inferior and treats them as such. The text presents a social context of a traveller who has come across people from different countries and has experienced how some black people discriminate against their fellow black people. This is shown in the expression, "so I get to Cairo and this Egyptian, Arab guy calls me a black barbarian". Some black people are referred to as barbarian (people who are believed to be wild, cruel and not civilized). This enactment shows that among the black race, there are some that see themselves superior to others depending on the country you come from. The so-called inferior blacks are discriminated against by the world. The statement "Because the world treats you differently" is used to show that the world sees some blacks as inferior. This is an absolute display of racism.

Linguistic Indices: The author uses the adjective "recognizably" to describe the type of black that faces discrimination in the world. The use of the word "barbarian" is a symbol of racism. The word 'this' is used to emphasize that a fellow

African discriminating against another African as shown in the expression, “this is supposed to be Africa” This statement shows that the writer is surprised that a fellow African can discriminate against another African.

This expression is the blog post of Ifemelu to both whites and blacks in America.

Expression 20: They tell us race is an invention that there is more genetic variation between two black people than there is between a black person and a white person. Then they tell us black people have a worse kind of breast cancer and get more fibroids. And white folk get cystic fibrosis and osteoporosis. So what’s the deal, doctors in the house? Is race an invention or not? (*Americanah* p.302).

Mental Context: The perception in the mind of Ifemelu is that dangerous diseases are associated with Africans while less dangerous ones with whites.

Social Context: The text presents a picture of how the Americans practice racism in disguise. They say race is an invention. This means race is not real. That is, it is not true that racism exists but is invented, yet in the discourse of the Americans, racism is hidden. As enacted in the discourse of Americans, black people are believed to have the worse breast cancer and get more fibroids. To Americans, this notion about the blacks is not racism but it is unveiled in the text as racism. In resistance to the notion of Americans, the author uses sarcasm to ridicule them. Ifemelu in her blog post made us understand that whites in America believe that black people have a worse kind of breast cancer and more fibroids. She then ridiculed the whites by pointing out the diseases white folks suffer from – cystic fibroids and

osteoporosis. Cystic fibrosis is a serious medical condition, especially affecting children in which breathing and digesting food is difficult while osteoporosis means a medical condition in which your bones become weak and break easily.

Linguistic Indices: The use of sarcasm, a figurative speech by the author is a linguistic device to expose and resist racism. The author uses the pronoun ‘they’ to refer to the Americans who tell black people that they have a worse kind of breast cancer and more fibroids. The author uses rhetorical questions to ridicule the notion of the Americans. These linguistic devices are employed by the author to expose and resist racial inequality. van Dijk (1993) notes that language users or communicators have more or less freedom in the use of special discourse genres or style, or in the participation in specific communicative events and contexts. The blog post of Ifemelu is used as a genre in form of editorials, to expose racism in America.

This expression is Ifemelu’s blog post on “who is racist” to her fellow Africans in America.

Expression 21: In America, racism exists but racists are all gone. Racists belong to the past. Racists are the thin lipped mean white people in the movies about the civil rights era. Here’s the thing: the manifestation of racism has changed but the language has not. So if you haven’t lynched somebody then you can’t be called a racist. If you’re not a bloodsucking monster, then you can’t be called racist. Somebody has to be able to say that racists are not monsters. They are people with loving families, regular folk who pay taxes. Somebody needs to get the job of deciding who is racist and who isn’t. Or

maybe it's time to just scrap the word "racist" Find something new. Like Racial Disorder Syndrome. And we could have different categories for sufferers of this syndrome: mild, medium, acute. (*Americanah* p. 315).

Mental Context: In Ifemelu's perception the idea of racism in America is in form of deception.

Social Context: The author of the novel uses Ifemelu's blog post inform of editorial to show that the Americans never accept that they are racists. The writer makes us to believe that racism in the past used to be a form of direct intimidation and confrontation and show of hatred which could easily be identified. But in contemporary America, racism is practiced in deception. The manifestation of racism is in language. The text made us understand that racism in America is no longer manifested inform of a blood sucking monster who one can easily identify but racists are people that look loving, pay taxes and live with you as neighbours. They are people you cannot easily identify as racists through their appearance. This is shown in the expression, "somebody needs to get the job of deciding who is a racist and who isn't". The text uses the blog posts to expose how racism is manifested in history of America. This is in consonance with the reports of NBCC that *Americanah* creates an incubated space within which to expose the bitter roots of American racial history from an observers' perspective and ought to be sociological.

Linguistic Indices: The author uses the expression, "Racists are the thin-lipped mean white people" to mean that white people in America still practice racism and are mean. "Thin-lipped" is an adjective used to describe the white people who are racists in disguise. The use of the expressions "blood-sucking

monster”, lynched’ described how racism manifested in the past in America while the expressions, “people with loving families, regular folk who pay taxes describe how racism manifested in contemporary America. The expression “Racial Disorder Syndrome” is used to rename the act of racial discrimination by the author to replace the word ‘racist’.

This is Ifemelu’s blog post read by Paula (Blaine’s ex-girlfriend) at a birthday party of Marcia in Hamden. Present at the birthday party were Blaine, Ifemelu, Benny, Michael and Paula. Paula indicated her love for the blog post of Ifemelu to American Non-Black. Paula brought out the blog from her phone and read it aloud.

Expression 22: But racism is about the power of a group and in America, it’s white folks who have that power. How? Well. White folks don’t get treated like shit in upper-class African communities and white folks don’t get denied bank loans or mortgages precisely because they are white and black juries don’t give white criminales worse sentences than black criminals for the same crime. (*Americanah* p.327).

Mental Context: In the mind of Ifemelu, the white people in America dominate in all social structures. They have the power which they exercise to dominate others.

Social Context: We are made to understand that the American social order recognizes the white folks as powerful group and as a result dominate every sector of social structures. van Dijk in Tannen (1981) argues that “a central notion in most critical work on discourse is that of social power of groups or institution and such groups or institutions have power if they are able to control the acts and minds of other groups. The picture presented by the

text is that of domination of white people over the black people in banks, law courts, schools and politics in America. The black people are treated poorly in everything among the white community while the white people are treated well among the black communities. The texts presents this acts as racial discrimination.

Linguistic Indices: The text employed the use of negation to show that the black communities do not maltreat white people but the white communities maltreated the black people.

This Ifemelu's blog post was written a month after the birthday party of Marcia. Ifemelu attended the party with Blaine, Michael, Nathan, Grace, Paula, Pee and Benny. While in the house of Marcia, Benny tuned on the TV and they watched Barack Obama campaigning for presidency in America. Their discussion then centered on what Obama said. Pee said he was ready for a black president but he was not sure if the nation was. Nathan also asked if white people were ready for a black president. This discussion made Ifemelu write the blog on how it is absurd to ask if America is ready for a black president.

Expression 23: Does nobody see how absurd it is to ask people if they are ready for a black president? Are they ready for 'Mickey Mouse' to be president? How about Kermit the frog? And Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer? (*Americanah* p.329).

Mental Context: The mental representation is that a black person is not qualified to be an American president because of his colour which is perceived to be inferior.

Social Context: The text presents the picture of the American society who do not want a black American to be president. The white people see the black people as Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse means something small and of less importance. To the white people in America, the black race is not important at all and so cannot rule them. This is perceived as racial discrimination and so is enacted in the blog post. In resisting this, the author employed the use of sarcasm to fire back by referring to the white people as ‘Kermit the frog’ and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’. ‘Kermit the frog’ is in form of a puppet used in cartoons. Rudolph is an image that looks like a deer used in cartoons. These are used sarcastically to ridicule the white people since they refer to the black as Mickey Mouse. This discourse depicts resistance to racism.

Linguistic Indices: The use of the word ‘absurd’ to say that it is stupid and unreasonable for American to ask if they are ready for a black person to be the President of America is relevant. The phrases ‘Mickey Mouse’, ‘Kermit the Frog’ and ‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’ are sarcasm used as symbols of racism. The speaker also uses rhetorical questions to emphasize resistance to racism. This is shown in the expressions “Does nobody see how absurd it is to ask people if they are ready for a black president?” “Are you ready for Mickey Mouse to be president? “How about Kermit the Frog?” “And Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?”. The writer employed these linguistics devices to enact and resist racism.

This expression is Ifemelu’s blog to her readers who are blacks in America. The blog is about the perception of blacks on Obama (black) who won the presidency in America.

Expression 24: So lots of folk-mostly non black-say Obama's not black, he's biracial, multi-racial, black-and-white-anything but just black. Because his mother was white. But race is not biology: race is sociology. Race is not genotype: race is phenotype. Race matters because its about how you look. Not about the blood you have. It's about the shade of your skin and the shape of your nose and the kink of your hair (*Americanah* 337).

Mental Context: In the mental representation of Ifemelu, the blacks race is seen and treated as inferior while the white race is perceived to be superior.

Social Context: The expression in Ifemelu's blog made us understand that Americans discriminate against the black race because they see them as an inferior race. When Obama won the presidency of America, the whites say Obama is not black but biracial in order to justify their perception about the black race Americans never want a black man to be the president of America. To Ifemelu and other blacks in America, Obama is a black man and now the president of America. Ifemelu says, "race matters because of racism" This means that the whites discriminate against the blacks; that is why race matters. The blog also made us understand that the colour of your skin, the shape of your mouth and the kink of your hair are identity of the race you belong to and so all these make you to be discriminated against or not. This looks stupid to Ifemelu. The perception of her mind influenced what she expressed in her blog post.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses the words "skin", "nose" and "kink" as symbol of racism. The expressions "race is not biology" "race is sociology", "race is not genotype: race is phenotype", "racism is about how you look" depict the enactment of racism in Ifemelu's discourse.

This is the continuation of Ifemelu's blog about Obama.

Expression 25: Imagine Obama, skin the colour of a toasted almond, hair kinky, saying to a census worker – I'm kind of white. Sure you are, she'll say. Many American Blacks have a white slave owners liked to go a – raping in the slave quarters at night. (*Americanah* 337).

Mental Context: The mental perception of Ifemelu is that the black skin is perceived to be inferior and is treated as such.

Social Context: In Ifemelu's blog, the perception of whites about blacks is shown in their discourse. Obama who is a black man says to a census worker he is a white man because his mother is white and the census worker agrees with him. She says many American blacks have a white person in their ancestry. To Ifemelu, this is ridiculous. Obama claims to be white because his mother is white. Ifemelu does not accept this notion of Americans about Obama because to her, Obama has a black skin and kinky hair which are identities of the black race. Ifemelu wants the Americans to accept defeat that a black man has won the presidency of America.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses the phrases, "skin colour of a toasted almond, "hair kinky" as symbols of racism. She also uses the word "imagine" to emphasize and show surprise of why Obama who is black claims to be white. To her, it is because the black skin is perceived to be inferior in America.

This is Ifemelu's blog to whites and blacks in America.

Expression 26: In America, you don't get to decide what race you are. It is decided for you. Barack Obama, looking as he does, would have had to sit in the back of the bus fifty years ago. If a random black guy commits a crime today. Barack Obama could be stopped and questioned for fitting the profile. And what would that profile be? "Black man" (*Americanah* 337-338).

Mental Context: The mental representation of Ifemelu is that, racism in contemporary times in America has changed. To her, in the 50s racism in America manifested violently where the black man was confronted anywhere and in everything but now the manifestation has changed to that of deceitfulness. This is shown in the expression: "Barack Obama, looking as he does, would have had to sit in the back of the bus fifty years ago".

Social Context: Here, Ifemelu presents to us what is obtainable in American society. According to her, America decides for you what race you are and that racism in the past in America was glaring and violent. The expression tells us that fifty years ago, the black man is made to sit in the back of a bus and that if a black man commits a crime today, every other black man seen around the scene of the crime, fits the profile and is arrested for that crime. This shows that the black race is persecuted in every facet of life in America in the past and present. Ifemelu made us understand that the manifestation of racism now in America has changed in form but not in language. To Ifemelu, Americans justify Obama being president by saying that he is white because his mother is white whereas in the past it wouldn't have been so. Obama's physical appearance according to Ifemelu, is that of a black man but Americans see him as a white through his gene.

Linguistic indices: Ifemelu emphasizes the phrase “Black man” as a symbol of racism. The expression, “Barrack Obama, looking as he does, would have had to sit in the back of the bus fifty years ago” describes how racism manifested in the past. The expression, “If a random black guy commits a crime today” shows the manifestation of racism in the present.

This expression is extracted from Ifemelu’s blog post “Understanding America for the Non-American Black. A Few Explanations of What Things Really Mean”. Her readers are both whites and blacks in America.

Expression 27: If you are having a conversation with an American, and you want to discuss something racial that you find interesting, and the American says, “Oh, its simplistic to say it’s race, racism is so complex,” it means they just want you to shut up already. Because of course racism is complex. Many abolitionists wanted to free the slaves but didn’t want black people living nearby. Lots of folk today don’t mind a black nanny or black limo driver. But they sure as hell mind a black boss. What is simplistic is saying “it’s so complex”. But shut up anyway, especially if you need a job/favour from the American in question (*Americanah* p. 350-351).

Mental Context: The representation in the mind of Ifemelu is that, the Americans who discriminate against other race do not want the issue of racism to be discussed at any time. They say racism is so complex.

Social Context: This blog post is used by the text to present how the American society manifests racism in a deceptive form. The Americans pretend to be offended whenever anything racial is discussed in order to show to the

world that they are not racists. But they manifest racism cunningly. The blog post lampoons the American society by showing different ways the Americans display racial discrimination. It says “many abolitionists wanted to free the slaves but didn’t want black people living nearby. Lots of folk today don’t mind a black nanny or black limo driver. But they sure as hell mind a black boss”. We are made to understand here that the Americans do not want black people living around them and they want black people to serve them as nannies, drivers but never for the blacks to be boss over them. This, the text presents as latent racism and the Americans do not want anybody to discuss it. This is a display of racism in a deceptive form.

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses ‘irony’ to lampoon the American society who discriminate against other races and they say racism is simplistic and complex and so should not be discussed. The use of the phrases ‘black nanny’, ‘black limo driver’ and ‘black boss’ by the speaker is a symbol of racism. The conditional clause ‘if’ is used by the speaker to say that you must not talk about racism if you need a job or favour from an American. The text uses language through Ifemelu’s blog post to show the manifestation of racism in a deceptive form.

This expression is a continuation of the blog post of Ifemelu about American’s tribalism and discrimination of black people.

Expression 28: Diversity means different things to different folks. If a white person is saying a neighborhood is diverse, they mean nine percent black people

(The minute it gets to ten percent black people, the white folks move out) if a black person says diverse neighborhood, they are thinking forty percent black. (*Americanah* p. 351).

Mental Context: In Ifemelu's mental representation, the whites in America believe that living in the same neighborhood with the blacks is intimidating and downgrading.

Social Context: The social setting as presented by the blog post of Ifemelu is that of neighborhood of white and black people. The white people do not want to live in the same neighborhood with black people who they perceive as inferior race. The white people show this in their speeches. If a white person says a neighborhood is diverse, it means there are lots of black people. The blog compares what the white people mean by diversity with what the black people view as diversity. To black people, diversity neighborhood means forty percent black while to white people, diverse neighborhood means nine percent black people. The picture painted here is that in an area where there are ten percent black people in America, white people move away from such areas. This shows racial inequality in American society as shown in the expression, "if a white person is saying a neighborhood is diverse, they mean nine percent black people. The minute it gets to ten percent black people, the white folks move out".

Linguistic Indices: Ifemelu uses 'they' to refer to the Americans who say neighborhood is diverse if it contains nine percent black people 'they' refers to Americans who dominate the black race 'if' is used as a conditional clause to mean that white person says a neighborhood is diverse only when the black people there is nine percent but when a black person says diverse

neighborhood is diverse, they mean forty percent black persons. This shows racial inequality.

This expression is Ifemelu's blog post to her readers who are Americans and Africans living in America.

Expression 29: Sometimes they say "culture" when they mean race. They say a film is "mainstream" when they mean "white folks like it or made it". When they say "urban", it means black and poor and possibly dangerous and potentially exciting. "Racially charged" means we are uncomfortable saying "racist" (*Americanah* p. 351).

Mental Context: The mental representation of Ifemelu is that, the Americans manifest racism in disguise in their culture. They value their culture and perceive it to be superior to other cultures. They associate poverty and danger with blackness.

Social Context: This blog post of Ifemelu made us understand that Americans hide racial tendency in their culture. This is racism manifested in disguise in the American society. So also, when white people made or like a film, the Americans say the film is "mainstream". That is, the film contains the most usual ideas or methods. To them, the black people cannot produce such a film. The Americans say "urban" to mean black, poor and dangerous. Urban areas are usually town and cities which are usually overpopulated. They believe black people live in such areas. When an area is overpopulated, there is tendency of poverty and danger. The Americans associate the black race with such areas. That is why to them,

‘urban’ means black. This discourse enactment depicts how the Americans manifest racism in disguise.

Linguistic Indices: The author uses ‘they’ to refer to the Americans who say ‘culture’ when they mean race. The Americans say a film is “mainstream” when they mean “white folk like it or made it”. ‘They’ is used by the speaker to refer to the Americans who are racists. The speaker also uses the words “mainstream” “urban”, “poor”, “dangerous” “racially charged” as relevant to symbol of racism. The author carefully selected these words to lampoon the American society in dominating the black race.

This expression is extracted from Ifemelu’s blog post titled “Understanding America for the Non-American Black”. Ifemelu posted the blog after rejoicing with her friends, Paula, Blaine, Grace, Nathan over the victory of Barrack Obama becoming the president of America. Her readers are non-American Blacks.

Expression 30: So there is in much of America, a stealthy little notion lying in the hearts of many: that white people earned their place at jobs and school while black people got in because they were black. But in fact, since the beginning of America, white people have been getting jobs because they are white. Many whites with the same qualifications but Negro skin would not have the jobs they have. But don’t ever say this publicly. Let your white friend say it. If you make the mistake of saying this, you will be accused of a curiosity called “playing the race card” Nobody quite knows what this means. (*Americanah* p.361).

Mental Context: Ifemelu perceives in her mind that the black race is treated as inferior to the white race.

Social Context: We are made to understand by Ifemelu that the whites discriminate against the blacks in places of work and at school, but the blacks must not say it. It is perceived by Ifemelu that whites get jobs because they are white but it is perceived the other way round by the white that the blacks get jobs without being qualified while the whites earn their place at jobs and schools.

Linguistic Indices: The speaker uses a figurative expression (irony) to show that the Americans reject being racists and this is not true according to Ifemelu. This is shown in the expression, “so there is in much of America a stealthy little notion lying in the hearts of many: that white people earned their place at jobs and school while black people got in because they were black” “But in fact, since the beginning of America, white people have been getting jobs because they are white”. This is ironical and that is why the speaker says “Nobody quite knows what this means” The use of the word “Negro skin” is a symbol of racism. The perception of Ifemelu’s mind that the black race is treated as inferior, aids the interpretation of the expressions in her blog posts. Micro context and macro context as well as interaction and social structure mutually influence each other. van Dijk (2009) postulates that “societal racism influences racist practices of its members through shared social cognitions, mental models and discourse and these in turn reproduce the system of racism. This is a typical example of how context and discourse mutually influence each other”. The expressions in the blog post present the notion of racial discrimination

against the black race. Ifemelu's mind's perception influences the enactment of her discourse.

4.3 Discussion

This section discusses the data analyzed based on the mental context, social context and linguistic indices. The data analyzed revealed that by using the Critical Discourse theory one is able to give an insight to what is obtainable in human societies. The analysis shows that the mental context of communicators influences the reproduction of ethnic practices and racism in their discourse and communication in the text. This corroborates the view of van Dijk (1993) in critical discourse studies. His socio-cognitive model focuses on the reproduction of ethnic practices and racism in discourse and communication. The model studies the role of knowledge on the study of context models in episodic memory which is in terms of subjective, dynamic, mental representations of the ongoing communicative event and situation. Context models in the view of van Dijk are strategic tools that we use in our daily conversations, and they require a minimum of knowledge from the participants in order to function properly.

One of the themes of the text is racial discrimination against the black race by the white race in America and United Kingdom. The white people want the blacks to see themselves as not only being inferior and weak but also to accept it as the truth. This is in consonance the view of Peed (2013). Peed (2013) observes that *Americanah* examines blackness in America, Nigeria and Britain. To buttress this view, Navaratnam (2013) also observes that, weaved into the dominant love story of Ifemelu and Obinze in *Americanah* are the narratives of racism.

Through the mental context of the characters in the text, the notion of racism is enacted and reproduced. We are made to understand that black people in America are perceived to be inferior to white people and this notion is accepted by blacks in America. For instance,

Expression 1:

*Nobody wants black babies in this country
even the black families don't want them.
(Americanahp.4)*

In the mental representation of the participants, black babies are “half” babies that are not wanted or allowed in America. This is because black babies are perceived to be inferior to white babies and this notion is accepted by the black people in America. That is why even black families do not want black babies. Expression 13 also reveals how the black race is perceived to be inferior. Due to the knowledge of the participants on the attitude of white folks towards black folks the expression is reproduced in their discourse. In the mental representation of the participants, black women, no matter the virtue in them, are not loved and desired by the white people because they are black and are not smart. Mental context accounts for the reproduction of prejudices and racism in the text and this reflects what is obtainable in human societies at large.

The genre employed by the text to enact and expose racism is the blog posts of Ifemelu which is inform of editorials as observed by NBBCC (2014) that through Ifemelu’s blog posts, Adichie editorializes the often hilarious and equally biting observations about “Blackness”, “Nigerianess” and race relations in America and Britain. This is also in consonance with the notion of van Dijk (1981) about CDA. van Dijk stresses that CDA is the study of the role of discourse in the enactment and reproduction of ethnic and racial inequality and such work focuses on mass media, literature and film. The linguistic indices employed by the blog posts in the text are

carefully selected to enact and expose racism. For example, in expression 13, the writer uses adjectives such as “nice” “strong” “sassy” “scary” to describe the black women who are never desired and loved in America. In Expression 14, words like “watermelon” “tar” are used as symbols of the African fruits and colour respectively that are looked down upon in America. The use of “straight” “wavy” “curly” and “kinky” hair in Expression 17 depicts symbol of racism. This is similar to the findings of Scholastic (2014). Scholastic stresses that Ifemelu uses the “hair” as a symbol of racial discrimination. As noted by Scholastic, symbolism exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. Adichie employed the use of symbolism, sarcasm, rhetorical question, figurative expressions in most of the blog posts to drive home her point on issue of racism in the American society. Other examples of symbolism in the text are seen in Expression 18, 22 and 23. The words “shit” in expression 22 to represent bad treatment; “eye colour” in expression 18 and the words “Mickey Mouse” “Kermit the Frog”, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” in expression 23 are symbols of racism. This is similar to the observation of Lawal and Alabi (2013) on the use of language by Adichie. According to them, Adichie has been able to use language to project the unique ideological configurations of gender and power in the society. Their study reveals that language as an essential tool of expressing ideology has been properly employed by Adichie to express her opinion on the issues of gender and power relations in critiquing the society in *Purple Hibiscus*. The present analysis however, reveals how Adichie employed language to depict social issues as racism and what accounts for such reproduction of discourse.

All through the data analyzed, it is revealed that the characters in the text skillfully employed language to capture the exercise of dominance which resulted into racial discrimination in *Americanah*. Through the social context of the expressions analyzed, we are made to understand that the white race dominates the black race in the social order of the American society. The

socially shared knowledge and beliefs of participants in the text help us to interpret and understand the utterance of characters in the text. Expressions 1, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 22, 28 and 30 reveal outright racial discrimination against the black race. As shown in these expressions, the black people in America are not given equal human right with the white people because their skin is black. The black race in America is treated as second class citizens in schools, malls, law courts, media, neighbourhood, buses, trains and so on. This is revealed through the enactment of discourse in the blog posts of characters in the text. This corroborates the review of Sutcliffe (2013) in the *Independent Newspaper* that in projecting the notion of racism in *Americanah*, Ifemelu finds an outlet to her frustration and observations by interesting popular blog, with musings such as “Why Dark-Skinned Black Woman-Both American and Non-American-Love Barack Obama” and to my fellow Non-American Black: In America, you are Black, Baby”. The review however does not capture what accounts for enactment of racism and its resistance.

Similar to the notion of racism, is the view of Navaratnam (2013) who reviews the theme of racism in the text. In his review, Navaratnam observes that weaved into the dominant love story of Ifemelu and Obinze, are the narratives of racism, displacement, colourism, hairism and white American “do-gooders”. He discusses many instances of Ifemelu’s experiences of racism in America. Navaratnam’s discussion only captures the social context of the racial utterances but does not capture the mental context which accounts for the enactment of such utterances. The present analysis captures both the social and mental context of utterances. The analysis using Critical Discourse theory, exposed both opaque and transparent structural relationship of dominance and racial discrimination in *Americanah*, van Dijk (1993) puts it that CDA is interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination power and control when these are manifested in language.

The analysis also exposed through the social context, how racial discrimination is manifested in disguise or deception in America. For instance, expressions 10, 12, 21, 27 and 29 made us understand that racial discrimination is manifested in form of a game. That is, it doesn't manifest transparently but it is hidden in the American culture and social class. As shown in expression 29 as follows: "sometimes they say culture when they mean race". The American culture dominates the other races in the aspect of dressing and in the type of food they eat and with this they control the acts and minds of others. Wrong (1979) puts it that the "ability" to control the acts and minds of groups presupposes a power base of privileged access to scarce resources such as force, money, status, culture or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication".

Expression 27 also reveals that Americans do not want the word "racism" to be discussed by black people so that they would not be seen as racists, but in their language and actions, racism is manifested. The social context of the expressions analyzed gave appropriate interpretation to the text as viewed by Fairclough (1989) that CDA is in three stages. The third stage being the explanation stage and is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the process of production, interpretation and their social effects. The interpretation of the social contexts is based on the mental contexts of the characters in the novel. The mind perception of characters influences their discourse which is based on the social practices and this in turn influences the interpretation of the discourse. This corroborates the view of van Dijk (2000:4) that "A meaning of a text is not "in" the text by language users, and as such represented in their minds". Language users as social actors have both personal and social cognition.

The social context reveals that in the blog posts of Ifemelu racism in the past in America is manifested in form of slavery and violence where the race discriminated against cannot be in the same cab, school, market place with the so-called superior race without been attacked violently and called names such as “Ape”. Racists in the past (ie 1860s) appeared as monster but racism in contemporary times manifests in deception. It is manifested in language. The blog post that shows this is: “In America, racism exists but racists are all gone. Racists belong to the past. Racists are the thin-lipped white people in the movies about the civil rights era. Here’s the thing: the manifestation of racism has changed but the language has not. So if you haven’t lynched somebody then you can’t be called a racist....” (*Americanah* 315). This means that racists in America are no longer looking fearful/ they are people that look normal but discriminate against other races in disguise.

The analysis also reveals how language is properly employed by the writer of the text to express resistance to racial discrimination. Expressions 2, 11, 17, 18 and 20 are examples of expressions that resist racism through sarcasm and the use of simile. The expression states “I would look like a golliwog if I tried that shade of pink”. This means that the pink lipstick that the white people value so much is nothing for the speaker because it would make her look like a grotesque black doll. Golliwog is a racial slur in Germany, England, Ireland, Greece and Australia. It is sometimes applied to dark-skinned whites as well as common name for black pets. Blyton is one of the most prolific European writers who included Golliwogs in many stories. Her depictions of Gollowogs by contemporary standards are racially insensitive. Enid Blyton has been accused of racism and sexism. A new academic appraisal of the work of Enid Blyton claims that golliwogs may have been innocent victims of well-intentioned political correctness when they were banished from revised editions of the Noddy books more than twenty years ago (Ward 2000). (www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/jul/03/books.race). Rudd (2000) deals with the construction of

Blyton as a cultural icon. He argues that Golliwog equals ethnically black person. Expression 16 and 17 reveal resistance to racism. For instance in Expression 17, the speaker says “I am none of those” “my hair could never do that” This is absolute resistance to racism.

The author employs racist terms in most of Ifemelu’s blog posts to expose racial inequality in America. For example, golliwog, barbarian, Mickey Mouse e.t.c are racist terms used in the text. The blog post also shows how blacks use racist terms against themselves. For example, in expression 19, Ifemelu’s blog post tells the story of an American Black who is writing a book called *Travelling While Black*. The book presented us with the experience of blacks among their fellow blacks. An Egyptian Arab guy called a fellow black man “black barbarian”.

4.4 Findings

The findings of this study:

From the analysis and discussion of thirty expressions in *Americanah*, the study has revealed the following findings:

1. The socio-cognitive model of analysis reveals what is obtainable in the social order of human societies;
2. The writers of literary texts use their world knowledge as well as that of the audience to frame their language and themes;
3. The mental context of participants in communication influences the enactment of their discourse;
4. The social context exposes both the opaque and transparent acts of dominance and racial discrimination as it is enacted in literary texts;

5. It is also discovered that language is manipulated to resist dominance and racial discrimination in the literary text; and also social structures are institutionalized through discourse structures in the novel.
6. It is discovered that the manifestation of racism in the past in America, is in form of assault but in contemporary times, racism manifest in form of deception.
7. The study reveals that critical discourse theory can help us see beyond the ordinary speaking and interpreting. This shows that language has the power of probing into the human mind.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study.

5.2 Summary

This research has attempted a Critical Discourse Analysis of *Americanah*. The socio-cognitive model has been used to analyze how racism and its resistance are enacted in a literary text. The study investigated the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance. It commenced with a background look at critical discourse. Discourse focuses on language use in social contexts and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers. Critical Discourse Analysis subsumes a variety of approaches towards the social analysis of discourse. It is concerned with the analysis of both opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. The study adopted van Dijk's socio-cognitive theoretical framework to investigate the background competence which language users reactivate to reproduce social practices within social structures.

The study is basically a content analysis of the blog posts of Ifemelu, Jamilah and utterances of other characters in *Americanah*. One of the themes in *Americanah* is racial discrimination against the black race by the white race in America and the United Kingdom. We are made to understand through utterances of characters and the blog posts of Ifemelu and Jamilah that in America, black people are perceived to be inferior and are discriminated against by whites in almost all facets of social structures.

The data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source include: related corpora, the use of ethnography and the internet. Purposive sampling

technique was adopted for the study. Thirty expressions were purposively selected from the blog posts of Ifemelu, Jamilah and utterances of other characters. These thirty expressions were analyzed under the following classifications: mental context, social context and Linguistic indices. The findings show that the mental context of Ifemelu, Jamilah and other characters in the text influences the reproduction of ethnic practices and racism in their discourse and communication. The social context exposed how racial discrimination is manifested in deception. The Linguistic devices employed by the author of the text reveals how language is manipulated to express racial discrimination and resistance to it.

5.3 Conclusion

The study has attempted a critical discourse analysis to show the relationship between discourse structures and power structures. It also sought to show how prejudices and racism are exposed and resisted in discourse. From the analysis in this study, it has been established that the mental context (cognition) influences the enactment of racism in the discourse of Ifemelu, Jamilah and other characters in *Americanah*. The knowledge of what is obtainable in the environment that has been stored in the long term memory of Ifemelu, Jamilah and other characters influences their utterances. This study also shows how the social context of characters aids the interpretation of their utterances. The choice of linguistic devices in discourse plays a vital role in the interpretation and understanding of what is meant by the author in a literary text.

In essence, this study has established the fact that prejudices and racism are institutionalized in the social order of human societies. The most powerful groups (powerful in terms of culture, status, money, class etc) dominate other groups; this is recorded in the long-term memory of people. The knowledge of what is obtainable in the social environment accounts for the enactment of prejudices and racism. The researcher is of the opinion that critical discourse analysis gives insight to what is obtainable in the social order of human societies. Critical

discourse analysis provides a linguistic evidence that aids the reproduction of opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance and discrimination in literary texts. The researcher also hopes that linguistically, this study will contribute towards the comprehension of how linguistic analysis of a text can be used to reproduce social wrongs. It can also be used to comprehend what accounts for enactment of prejudices and racism in our social order.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

Base on this study, the researcher has identified the following areas for further study.

1. This work is a critical discourse analysis of racism and its resistance in *Americanah*. Research can be carried out using the same theory to look at the aspect of migration in the text.
2. Any meaningful research into the lexico-semantic analysis of the text will be of vital use to language learners and researchers.
3. This study concentrated on the critical discourse analysis of the text, further research can focus on functional Systemic Analysis of the text.

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