

## **CRITICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF RACE AND IDENTITY IN CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH***

By

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### **Abstract**

In reading a literary text, it is important for readers not to concentrate only on the story line but also on how the story is being developed, that is, considering the words selected among alternatives and the way they are structured. Language plays a major role in the development of every text. The aim of the study is to explore how Jefferies (2010) Critical Stylistic tools, Naming and Describing, and Representing Actions/Events/States, aids in bringing out the ideologies of race and identity in the text *Americanah*. The objective is to examine the lexical choices Adichie used in the text. Using the critical stylistic framework proposed by Jeffries in 2007 as its theoretical framework, the study adopts the naming and describing, representing actions/events/and states and the assuming and implying tools for its analysis. Purposive sampling technique was used as method of data collection from the texts which are relevant excerpts that depicts the ideologies. The findings of the research reveal that Adichie used the naming and describing tool to choose alternative names that represent race and identity ideologies in the text, also the Material Action Intentional (MAI), Verbalisation process, Mental

processes and the Assuming and Implying tools made significant appearance in the text. The study concludes that the choice of words a writer employs skillfully aids in projecting the ideology in the text and recommend that further study could be carried out on the other tools suggested by Jeffries (2010) which were not analysed in this study.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, Naming and Describing, Representing, Race, Identity

## **1. Introduction**

The need for readers of literary text to explore beyond the storyline to other aspects such as the choice of words, the patterning of clauses and the ideology embedded in the text is necessary to achieve a deeper understanding of the text they are reading. To achieve this, language plays a vital role as a means of communicating ideas. A critical study of the ideologies in a text is therefore necessary to understand the meaning of the text. Norgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010) defines Critical stylistics as “a term used to refer to stylistic work investigating the ways in which social meanings are manifested through language (p.11).” This implies that social meanings are made obvious through language. Critical stylistics was proposed by Lesley Jeffries in 2007 with the aim of giving “the reader a clear set of analytical tools to follow in carrying out the critical analysis of texts with the aim of uncovering or discovering the underlying ideologies of the text “(Jeffries, 2010, p. 6). Hence, Critical stylistics examines ideologies in text. CS, which is an evolving discipline, is a subfield of Critical Discourse Analysis (Jayeoba et al., 2025).

Ideologies on the other hand, are beliefs or “ideas shared by a community or society ... communicated, reproduced constructed and negotiated, using language” (Jeffries 2010, p. 5). From the definition, ideologies represent beliefs individuals or society hold which are being communicated through language.

Chimamanda Adichie has written several novels on varying ideological issues, thus the aim of this study is to critically analyse the ideologies of race and identity in her literary text *Americanah* through the lens of Critical Stylistics using Jefferies (2010) Critical Stylistic tools, Naming and Describing, and Representing Actions/Events/States among others. The objective is to

examine the lexical choices Adichie used in the text to depict these ideologies. The research questions are:

What are the lexical choices that Adichie employed in the text to bring out the ideologies of race and identity? And how has these choice of words impacted the text?

### **Synopsis**

Adiche's novel *Americanah* revolves around Ifemelu and Obinze who meet and fall in love during their secondary school days. The setting is both in Nigeria and America where Ifemelu eventually goes to continue her schooling when strikes in Nigerian universities prolong. In America, she experience a lot of racism situations which leads her to start a blog on racism, where she shares her experiences. In her early days in America during her job search as a student, she experiences something divesting to her mental health which makes her to break up her relationship with Obinze. After spending thirteen years in America and had other relationships she decides to come back to Nigeria to work but her main desire is to be close to Obinze. At the end of the novel Ifemelu and Obinze come back together again in spite of the fact that Obinze is already married and has a daughter.

Adichie's stylistic impulses and the ideologies embedded in the texts are reflected in her choice of words (diction), patterning of phrases and clauses. The stylistic approach adopted in this work is CS.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Conceptual review**

#### **Racism as Ideology**

Race according to Wijeyasinghe, Griffin and Love (1997), is described as

a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on certain characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color) ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification... Racial categories subsume ethnic groups. (p. 88)

From the quotation above, it is clear that the concept of race is not inborn in man but is an idea conceived by the society in its classification of man. This has indeed caused division among men. In the same vein, Ballantine and Roberts (2010), view race as “a group identified by a society because of certain biologically inherited physical characteristics (pp. 246-247).” This definition also agrees that the biological make up of a group of people can make them to be classified.

Racism on the other hand, according to Farley, (2009 as cited in Ballantine & Roberts, 2010), is “any institutional arrangement that favours one racial group over another, and this favoritism may result in intentional or unintentional consequences for minority group” (p. 256). They further add that racism is frequently rooted in societies and reinforced by individuals that are not conscious of the repercussion of their actions (Ballantine and Roberts 2010). These implies that racism is a strong ideology that is promoted by powers that have stronger influence on the society it is found. Wijesinghe, Griffin, and Love (1997) see racism as:

The systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society (pp.88-89)

It can be deduced from the above quotation that racism is borne out of race. This occurs when one race sees itself as more superior to other races due to their social power that gives them more advantage over others which they use to subordinate them. “Racism has psychological and social costs, both to those on the receiving end and to the perpetrators” (Ballantine & Roberts, 2010, p. 256). Schaefer (2013, p. 255) also asserts that racism is ‘the belief that one race is supreme and all others are innately inferior.’”

The ideology of racism is depicted in Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy* which tells the story of apartheid experiences encountered by South African blacks. Examples from the text include the following excerpts:

Suddenly, a pick-up van swerved round a corner, policemen jumped out and ran down the street. The crowd scattered. Come! Joseph said. People ran in all directions. The gamblers made a grab for the stakes and ran.... Only the coloured people did not run, come! Joseph urged again. But we have done nothing. They will not ask you Joseph said in disgust and dashed round the street (Abrahams, 1946, p. 16).

You say you understand, Xuma said, but how can you? You are a Whiteman. You do not carry a pass. You do not know how it feels to be stopped by a policeman in the street. You go where you like. You do not know how it feels when they say, Get out! White people only (p.172).

From the two excerpts, the black South Africans are being segregated and treated unfairly by the Whites who feel superior to them.

### **Identity and ideological representation**

Sollberger (2013) posit that identity incorporates both group affiliations, like national or racial identity, and individual exceptionalism. In the same vein, Hogg (2014 as cited in Li, 2024, p. 213) asserts that "Contemporary identity studies categorise identity into self-identification, individual, collective, and societal identity, emphasising the dynamic interplay between personal autonomy and social belonging." Furthermore, Vignoles (2017), views identity as "the way people answer the question, 'Who are you?' He further explains that "This question may be posed explicitly or implicitly, at a personal or a collective level, to others or to oneself" (p. 1). These definitions imply that identity has to do with how an individual or a group of people are

perceived. Identity can also be viewed as both a personal and a social construct (Vignoles, 2017). Kelly (2019 as cited in Fnteel & Yasir, 2023, p. 62) defines identity as “a complex construct that plays a significant role in shaping individuals’ perceptions, experiences, and interactions within society.” Their definition looks at identity from the individual perspective. Coulmas, (2019 as cited in Li, 2024, p. 212) also views identity as “inherently linked to self-awareness, questioning “Who am I?” and “Where do I belong?” From all the definitions discussed, identity can be individual, collective or societal.

Examples of literary works that explore the theme of identity are: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe which discusses the infiltration of the Igbo identity and culture by the culture and religion of the British colonial masters. *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta which explores the identity of women as mothers in a patriarchal society and having to cope with societal expectations and traditions. And in the text *Americanah*, where the whites are perceived as higher in class and worthy of better treatment and privileges than the blacks whose identity meant disadvantage. This makes the blacks self-conscious and cautious in their dealings.

### **Empirical Review**

Studies have been carried out on Critical Stylistics and on the text *Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie. A few will be considered in this empirical review.

Koutchade and Koko (2016) in analysing the lexico-grammatical features in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah*, focuses on the linguistic patterns: transitivity, mood and theme in three selected excerpts from the text using the systemic functional linguistic theory. The findings in the three excerpts (clauses analysed) revealed the presence of textual, interpersonal and topical themes. It concludes that the author has been able to use “subtle writing strategy to” stealthily present the issue of race, racial prejudice, cultural identity and love.

This work is similar to the current study but differs in its theoretical framework and methodology as it uses Critical Stylistic tools Naming and Describing and Representing Actions/Events/States.

Agu, Agu and Yuguda (2017) investigates how ideology and racial biases have been presented using lexical items in Adichie’s *Americanah*. They use

fifty-eight (58) sentences derived from eight (8) purposely selected excerpts from the text for the data analysis. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is Halliday's systemic functional linguistics which focuses on metafunction (ideational, interpersonal and textual) as a model of discourse analysis. The findings of their research reveals that Adichie employs lexical items in different ways to connect ideology and the discourse of race. Another finding is that only Ifemelu, the main character in the text, uses lexical items that shows her affection for her African descent while the other characters are depicted as displaying inferiority complex at varying degrees through their lexical choices, imitation of ascent and behavioural patterns. The study concludes that Adichie used language to transmit pro-African cultural ideologies to the loss of foreign cultural influences. Also, in studying literature, having an understanding of the language employed will yield more appreciation to literary texts.

Bamigboye, Omotunde and Ogunrotimi, (2021) examine the stylistics of functional metaphors in Adichie's *Americanah*. The study was carried out using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as theory for evaluation where twenty metaphorical expressions were selected and analysed to show how metaphor determines the author's intention and how their usage contributes to the style of the text. The findings of their research reveals a stylistic organisation of metaphors establishing meaning and reinforcing lines of thought that run through the novel. Their position in the study is that Adichie "has used metaphors to weave a forceful story that speaks to her ingenuity as an original storyteller in the modern African mould" (Bamigboye et al., p.31). The findings of their research reveal a stylistic organisation of metaphors establishing meaning and reinforcing lines of thought that run through the novel. The focus of the current research is on Critical Stylistics how the Naming and Describing tool among others have been used in identifying ideologies of race and identity in Adichie's text *Americanah*.

Thomas (2023) examines re-enactment of actions in the texts *Interventions I, IV and VIII* by Wole Soyinka. The texts looks at the ills of leaders and leadership in Nigeria. The study adopts Lesley Jeffries Critical Stylistics with particular focus on the tool of representing actions/events/states as its theoretical framework. Verbs and verb phrases amongst others were analysed under Material Action Event (MAE) processes, Material Action Intentional

(MAI) processes. The findings reveal that Nigerian leaders are indifferent towards their duties as a result, they are responsible for the current predicament bedeviling the country which is being predicted as an ongoing thing since the current leaders are not ready to change. This work is similar to the current study due the Critical Stylistic tools used but only differs in the data being analysed.

Li (2024) explores the concept of diasporic black identity issues in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* where the challenges of the blacks ranging from racial discrimination, isolation and prejudice in Western societies and how these issues that impact their quest for belonging are investigated. The study adopts identity theory as its theoretical framework to analyse the experiences of the characters to comprehend their struggles with cultural identity and self-confidence against the background of global diaspora challenges. The study concludes by identifying Adichie's noteworthy impact in changing global opinion of Africa and her efforts to heighten African cultural pride, putting her work as a major contribution to the discourse on diaspora and identity. Although Li's work addresses the issue of identity it is different from this current study as the focus is on the CS tools used to identify ideologies in the text.

### **Methodology**

The study adopts a qualitative research method where excerpts from the texts *Americanah* have been collected through purposive sampling technique. The data selected are analysed using critical stylistic tool Naming and Describing, and Representing Actions/Events/State among others.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Critical stylistic tools**

The theoretical framework adopted for this work is Critical Stylistics. To be able to carry out a Critical Stylistic analysis successfully Jeffries (2010) has suggested ten tools of which a researcher may select from and use as it is relevant to his or her work. The following are the ten tools: Naming and Describing; Representing Actions Events/States; Equating and Contrasting; Exemplifying and Enumerating; Prioritizing; Assuming and Implying; Negating; Hypothesizing; Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other

Participants; and Representing Time, Space and Society. For the purpose of this research only three of the tools will be discussed as follows:

### **Naming and describing**

According to Jeffries (2010) there are different ways in which English text might “be said to ‘name’ the world.” She further explains that individual texts and their writers are likely to select from the usual “resources of the language in representing a view of the world” (p.17). In explaining the tool naming and describing, she adds that there could be alternative ways of naming or referring to the same thing accurately. Jeffries also asserts that there are other ways of naming that could be ideological in context and could create ideology which could be discussed in three vital ways: the choice of nouns out of available options; other information embedded in noun phrase or noun group; and the conversion of verbs into nouns through the process of nominalisation.

In summary, Jeffries explains that there are alternative ways of naming and describing things to give it meaning.

### **Representing Actions/ Events /States**

Jeffries (2010) opines that an author or speaker is at liberty to select words that are most appropriate for whatever they want to project including lexical verbs that will showcase the circumstance the way the writer/ speaker wants it to be. She further expounds that a situation could be presented as an event (what is happening), or an action (what is being done) or as a state of affairs (what simply is) these choices affects the hearer or reader’s perspective of the matter under discussion. The model that best denotes the element of meaning that connects to the verbal part of the clause is Halliday’s transitivity model. This model is approached from its metafunction rather than its form or structure to be able to give the ideological meaning to the clause. Simpson (1993) in his transitivity model, allocates lexical verbs into various classes based on the type of “process or state they appear to be describing.” The major categories include the following:

- a. Material Actions. These are the most prototypical verb referring to something that is done or happens frequently in a physical and also abstract way. It has an Actor (the grammatical subject of the clause which is performing the action) and a Goal (the grammatical object of

the clause receiving the action). Material processes are divided into three namely: Material Action Intentional (MAI) (intentional action performed by a conscious being); Material Action Supervention (MAS) (unintentional action by conscious being); and Material Action Events (MAE) (referring to the use of verbs with an inanimate Actor where human agency is either missing or played down).

b. Verbalisation processes (V) describes any action that employs the use of language. There is a Sayer (compulsory), Verbiage (common but not always present) and a Target (less common, but often possible).

c. Mental processes divided into three: Mental Cognition (MC), (like thinking, knowing, realizing, understanding); Mental Reaction (MR), (e.g. emotional feelings as liking and hating); and Mental Perception (MP) (like sensing, hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and others. Other participants in the clause with Mental Process verb in the middle are known as the Senser and Phenomenon.

d. Relational Processes. This signifies the static or stable relationships between the participants: Carriers and Attributes other than any changes or dynamic actions. It is divided into Intensive relations (RI) with the verb *to be*, Possessive relations (RP) with the verb *have*, and circumstantial relations (RC) with verbs that has to do with movement and the verb *be*.

### **Assuming and implying**

The assuming and implying tool: These looks at how meaning is assumed or implied in texts. Jeffries (2010, p.94) uses the term preposition to refer to assumptions that are constructed into the text, which are intangible and not directly encoded by the text though seen as the background in which a text is built. The two basic types of presupposition are existential and logical presuppositions. The existential presupposition looks at a text from the shared knowledge or assumed knowledge of what the reader or interlocutors already know about the subject matter. This presupposition is usually identified through noun phrases beginning with a definite article “the” or a demonstrative such as: “this”, “these”, “that”, “those”, or a possessive “my”, “our”, “his”, “her”, “its”, “your”, “their” (Jeffries 2010).

Logical presuppositions on the other hand are not easily identifiable as they possess “a set of triggers” that are “open ended” (Jeffries 2010, p. 95). Some of the triggers include: Change of state verbs, factive verbs, the cleft sentence, iterative words and the comparative structure. In explaining the logical presupposition trigger, change of state verbs, Jeffries (2010) states that it “presuppose the earlier state of affairs that has been changed by the process of the verb” (95). Here the state of the verb suggests what it was before. The second logical presupposition trigger, factive verbs on the other hand, are a minor group of verbs in English that include the following, “realize”, “understand”, “regret”, “discover” and “know” these are often followed by a clausal complement, but not always beginning with the subordinator “that”, which are the presupposed part of the sentence.

### 3. Data Analysis

#### **The ideology of race and identity**

##### **Excerpt 1**

*She went* to the door. *A burly red-faced man stood* there carrying cleaning equipment, something slung over his shoulders.... *He stiffened* when he *saw* her. First surprise *flirted* over his features, then it *ossified* to hostility. “You need a carpet cleaned?” he asked as if he did not care, as if she could change her mind. *She looked* at him, a taunt in her eyes, prolonging a moment loaded with assumptions: he *thought* she *was* a home owner, and *she was not* what he had expected to see in this grand stone house with the white pillars. “Yes” she said finally, suddenly tired. “Mrs Turner told me you were coming.” It was like a conjuror’s trick, the swift disappearance of his hostility. *His face sank* into a grin. She, too, was the help. (AME p.166) (All bold fonts and italise are researcher’s emphasis)

Excerpt 1 from the text *Americanah* depicts the ideology of race and identity. This is obvious through the choice of words that Adichie used to describe the scenario in the chosen excerpt. The white man in the excerpt is described by the phrase, “*A burly red-faced man*” which is an example of the naming and describing tool. Thus, the word “white man” has been replaced with “burly

red faced man” to refer to him. The ideology of race which made the white man surprised to see Ifemelu as a supposed house owner is that any black woman found in a white dominated environment should be a house help. The excerpt can also be analysed using the CS tool Representing Actions/Events/State where the Material Action Intentional (MAI) process on the action and reaction of Ifemelu and the carpet cleaner can be seen.

*She* (Actor) went (Process) to the door (Goal)

The process “went” in this example shows her intentional action.

*A burly red-faced man* (Actor) stood (Process) there....

He (Actor) stiffened (Process) when he (Sensor) saw (MP) her.

The MAI process “stood” and “stiffened” and the Mental Perception (MP) process “saw”, reveals the action and reaction of the carpet cleaner (a white man) when he saw a black woman in a white neighbourhood whom he assumed was the house owner. The excerpt also shows the mental process subcategory, Mental cognition (MC) with the process “thought” used to reveal what the man was thinking, thus:

... he thought she was a home owner, and she was not what he had expected to see in this grand stone house with the white pillars.

His thought is further exposed when he learnt that she was a help and not the house owner as depicted in the expression,

His face (Actor) sank (Process) into a grin (Goal)” (MAI)

This reveals his relieve and joy exposing his prejudiced mind.

More examples can be seen thus:

## **Excerpt 2**

When she told Ruth about the interview in Baltimore, Ruth said, “*My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair. Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job.*” Aunty Uju had said something similar in the past and she had laughed then. Now, she knew enough not to laugh. “*Thank you,*” she said to Ruth. (AME, p. 202)

### Excerpt 3

*“Oh my God,” Curt said.... “Why do you have to do this? Your hair was gorgeous braided. And when you took out the braids the last time and just kind of let it be? It was even more gorgeous so full and cool.”*

*“My full and cool hair would work if I were interviewing to be a backup singer in a jazz band, but I need to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight is best but if it’s going to be curly then it has to be the white kind of curly, loose curls or, at worst spiral curls but never kinky.”*

Later, after she breezed through the job interview, and the woman shook her hand and she said she would be “a wonderful fit” in the company, she wondered if the woman would have felt the same way had she walked into that office wearing her thick, kinky, God-given halo of hair, the Afro. (AME, p. 204)

Excerpts 2 and 3 (above), the context is a situation of a job interview preparation for Ifemelu in America where she was advised to ensure her hair lost its African Kinky nature to being straight or curly like that of the whites if she wanted to be seen as professional to be able to get a job. In analysing the choice of words “braids”, using the naming and describing tool, it is meant to refer to the black woman’s kinky hair and her identity. The phrase “straighten your hair” refers to the white woman’s straight hair.

The whites had the ideology of being superior to the blacks that they could not accept the unique nature of the African hair to the point of denying them job opportunities because of their identity as Africans. This is illustrated in Ifemelu’s conversation with Ruth her career counsellor as can be seen in the verbalisation process below:

*Ruth (Sayer) said (Process), “My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair.*

*Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job.”* (Verbiage).

In the quotation above, Ifemelu was preparing for a job interview and she was advised to “straighten” her African hair so that she would be accepted by the white employers.

In excerpt 3 her white boyfriend Curt prefers her wearing her African hair (identity) to straightening it as expressed in his expression:

*“Oh my God,” Curt\_(Sayer) said .... “Why do you have to do this? Your hair was gorgeous braided. And when you took out the braids the last time and just kind of let it be? It was even more gorgeous so full and cool.”.*

In her reply, Ifemelu explains to Curt why straightening her hair was necessary as can be seen in the illustration thus:

*“My full and cool hair would work if I were interviewing to be a backup singer in a jazz band, but I need to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight is best but if it’s going to be curly then it has to be the white kind of curly, loose curls or, at worst spiral curls but never kinky.”.*

If the women’s hair was not like the white women’s hair, then it’s not considered as professional. That was the real height of racism in the text. More examples of the ideologies of race and identity can be seen in the excerpt below:

#### **Excerpt 4**

*“It’s a lie,” Ifemelu repeated. The woman’s eyes bulged. “You’re telling me what my own experience was?” ... The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. But it’s a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America. When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn’t matter when you’re alone together because it’s just you and your*

*love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it.*" (AME, P.290).

In excerpt 4, Ifemelu gives more detailed information on the ideology of race and identity as contained in her reaction

*"It's a lie,"* (Verbiage) Ifemelu (Sayer) repeated (Process).

The subsequent verbiage above carries the detailed explanation of how Ifemelu's first contact with race came about when she arrived America:

*"I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America."*

Ifemelu's identity changed when she arrived in America as the race ideology made her to start seeing herself as black thereby changing her original identity. Analysing excerpt 4 using the naming and describing tool, the choice of the noun "black" instead of African is used ideologically in the text to refer to Africans in a racial way (connoting inferiority and negativity) as seen in the example:

*"I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America"*.

In this example, the *blacks* (Africans) are being looked down upon by the "whites" who are ideologically seen as more superior (*When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matter*).

The last example in this category is excerpt 5

#### **Excerpt 5**

"Do you remember when Dike was telling you something and he said '**we black folk**' and you told him 'you are not black?'" she asked Auntie Uju, her voice low because Dike was still asleep upstairs... "Yes, I remember." "You should not have done that." "You know what I meant. I didn't want him to start behaving like these people and thinking that everything that happens to him is because he is black." "You

told him what he wasn't but you didn't tell him what he was.”  
(AME, p. 379-380).

In excerpt 5, the context of the excerpt is Dike's attempted suicide. The ideology entrenched in the excerpt is that of race and identity, how being classified had frustrated caused young Dike into attempting to commit suicide. Ifemelu's assumption is that Aunt Uju (Dike's mother) is to be blamed as she did not handle the matter well as can be seen in the verbiage

“Do you remember when Dike was telling you something and he said ‘we black folk’ and you told him ‘you are not black?’”

The noun phrase “we black folk” presupposes that Dike had some belief about race that needed to have been addressed. Ifemelu felt that if Aunt Uju had explained more to Dike about who he was he would not have attempted suicide. This can be seen in the logical presupposition (which is negated):

“You should not have done that.” You told him what he wasn't but you didn't tell him what he was”

More instances of identity depicted in the text *Americanah* can be seen in the discussion between Aunt Uju and Ifemelu about her son Dike who does not seem to understand the identity crises going on in America.

Look at this boy! Come and see the nonsense he wants to wear to church. **He has refused to wear what I brought out for him.** You know that **if he does not dress properly**, they will find something to say about us. **If they are shabby, it's not a problem, but if we are, it is another thing** (AME, p. 215).

In this example, Aunt Uju is concerned that if Dike, dresses in an unusual way he will be stigmatised by the whites. But her worry is because she feels he does not understand the racism going on in American. These are depicted in the highlighted clauses above.

#### **4. The findings**

The findings of the analysis reveals that:

- i. The choice of words a writer uses can influence and shape the ideologies in a text.

- ii. The naming and describing tool have been employed to give alternative words to refer to the Africans colour and identity as “blacks” their hair “as curly “ and their “braids” as a negative symbol when going for a job interview.
- iii. The actions of the characters are captured in the Material Action Intentional processes (their conscious actions) Verbalisation process, through their dialogue, and Mental process, through their thoughts and perception.

The choice of words that Adichie used in the novel depicts the ideology of race and identity that she has portrayed.

## **5. Conclusion**

The study has carried out a Critical Stylistic analysis of the Ideologies of Race and Identity in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Americanah*. Findings from the analysis reveal that Adichie used the naming and describing tool to choose alternative names to describe the blacks and their hair, as well as the whites representing the ideologies of race and identity. The study also reveals that the Material Action Intentional (MAI) process in which the actions of the human participants are carried out consciously, have been judiciously employed to give meaning to the text so also Verbalisation process, Mental processes and the Assuming and Implying tools. The study therefore concludes that the choice of words a writer employs skillfully aids in projecting the ideology in a text and recommends that further study could be carried out on the other tools suggested by Jeffries (2010) which were not analysed in this study.

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