

Ideational Representation of Ideology and Identity in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* and Barret Igoni's *Blackass*

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Abstract

*This study investigates how Adichie and Igoni employ Halliday's ideational metafunction as a linguistic strategy of representing different ideologies, identities and social relations. Many ideological and identity studies have been done on Adichie's *Americanah* and Igoni's *Blackass* (BA, henceforth) but enough critical studies have not been done using Halliday's ideational metafunction. Therefore, the theoretical orientation is anchored on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL henceforth) as a tool to explicate the linguistic resources that express ideology, identity and social relation in the texts under study. The study reveals that Adichie and Igoni espouse the process itself, participants in the process and circumstantial elements to communicate their views about ideology, identity and social relations. The results indicate that Adichie campaigns for ethnic/national identity, symmetrical relations, social equality but battles against racism, social inequality and asymmetrical relations. Igoni's ideological and identity interest is on anti-colonialism; neo-colonialism, racism, social inequality, asymmetrical relations and identity crisis. The results prove that ideology, identity and social relation embedded in the texts have been decoded with the aid ideational metafunction. In conclusion, the study supports that language is a channel that enables writers or speakers to construct ideas, opinions, concepts, emotions, ideologies, identities and social relations.*

Key Words: *SFL, Identity, Ideology, Social Relations and Ideational Metafunction*

1.0 Introduction

This study investigates Adichie and Igoni's idiosyncratic representation of ideology, identity and social relations. The resources of ideational metafunction enable Adichie and Igoni to reveal the social problems in America and Nigeria respectively. Through the ideational metafunction, Adichie reveals gender issues and strong racial discriminations and how they affect the lives of black migrants especially the female migrants in the United States of America. Adichie applies linguistic devices that portray a true image of racism, asymmetrical relations and ethnic/national identity. Igoni unveils his world of inner and outward experiences through the use of ideational metafunction. He adopts linguistic items that expose identity crisis as a result of loss of identity marker. His work divulges the superiority of white colour over black colour. His work enables the reader to understand the consequences of the wounds colonialism has caused on African minds.

Adichie and Igoni apply linguistic strategies to construct, convince and persuade the public to accept their opinions, ideas, and concepts. This assertion supports Chomsky's concept of language that language is important channel that enables man to achieve actual message as it reflects the mind in deep and significant ways (Chomsky, 1975). Similarly, Kress (1989) contends that language produces meaning; also part of man's experience and at the same time closely involves in the assembling and organization of our experience. Halliday believes that the evolution of language is determined by specific demand of the

society in which language is used; meaning that language application determines the nature of language (as cited in Bakuuro, 2017, p. 212). Consequently, Bakuuro (2017) affirms that language is an instrument of thought or conceptualization of experience or our real world including the inner world of our consciousness (p. 212). The crux of this study is to decode the linguistic features Adichie and Igoni engage to express their thoughts, emotions, concepts and conceptualize their experience in the society.

2.0 Review of Relevant Literature and Theoretical Orientation

Language is an integral part of people's culture, traditions, and customs. Literary and non-literary writers have employed language to express their intentions, opinions, emotions, ideologies and construct social relations. Language is interrelated with ideology and identity. It is a tool that exposes people's ideologies, identities, experiences and helps to understand social relations. Speakers or writers can exploit language to express ideologies and typify identities, at the same time deconstruct as well as reconstruct ideologies and identities depending on the intention of the speaker or writer. Podhovnik (2015) believes that "language is connected to personal, social, and cultural identity (p. 115). Kroskirty (1999) conceives identity as the "linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories" (p. 111). Language helps audience to understand the identity and ideology of a writer or speaker. In order to decipher the ideological and identity inclinations of a writer, the linguistic devices adopted by the speaker or writer should be properly studied. Consequently, a relevant theoretical orientation should be engaged to decode the linguistic devices that reveal the ideological and identity proclivities of the writer. McAdams (1995) avers that language is a means of constructing, negotiating and communicating identity by directly interacting or discursively, or through several forms of media" (p. 31). It implies that people actively produce identity through conversation. Scholars such as Davies and Harre (1990), Geschiere and Meyer (1998), Kroskirty (1999), Duzak (2002), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) agree that identity is polyvalent or multiple in nature. There are diversities of identities and they could be constructed through language. van Dijk (2004) perceives "ideology as a system of beliefs" (p. 6). It suggests that ideology is what a society or group believes or ideas of a society, which can be social, political or religious.

Woolard (1989) asserts that "ideology stands in dialectical relationship with, and thus significantly influences social, discursive and linguistic practices" (p. 235). It implies that ideology affects language and vice versa. Ideology has been approached from different perspectives within SFL, as a "social-semiotic theory of language meaning potential" (Threadgold, 1986; Hasan, 1986; Martin, 1985, 1986, 1992; Kress, 1983, as cited in Caffarel & Rechniewski, 2009, p. 27).

Halliday redirected the focus of linguistics from syntactic age to the semiotic age. His choice in language is based on meanings rather than structure of the language. He sees language as a resource for construing meaning. He believes that language is the reflection of its functions in the life of social man (Halliday, 1973). SFL helps to describe the way social reality is encoded in language; and how language is a means of reflection on things and acting on people (Halliday, 1978).

Within the purview of SFL, language can be seen from two semantic approaches: semiotic system and as a text. The semiotic system refers to the full meaning potential available to speakers or writers (i.e. the full semantic options available to a speaker or writer). It is what the writer can mean in contrast to what he cannot mean. The text represents the result of the meanings that were actually selected; it is the output of the semiotic system.

SFL is an approach to linguistics that considers language as a "social semiotics". Language as social semiotic shows how people use it to communicate with each other and in attending daily social life (Trask & Stockwell, 2007). Nordquist (2017) asserts that language

is perceived as a “system” because of availability of choices of words. It comprises linguistic system that is composed of three strata: “meaning” (semantics), “sound” (phonology), and “wording” or “lexicogrammar” (syntax, morphology and lexis). Halliday’s conception is that language is a strategic “meaning-making resource” (as cited in Kamalu, 2018, p. 73). It is “functional” because the semantics or meaning of language is considered in a linguistic system.

Halliday’s focus is on the function of sentence, in other words, the writer’s purpose in writing (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). The claims are that function and meaning can help shape form (Bavali & Sadighi, 2008); and stresses the “interdependence of meaning and context of situation” (Kamalu, 2018, p. 69). Eggins (2004) asserts that Halliday’s interest centres on the “meanings of language in use in the textual process of social life, or the sociosemantics of text” (as cited in Kamalu, 2018, p. 73)

Halliday’s point of departure from other neo-Firthians like R. P Fawcett, Richard Hudson, Erik Enkvist, John Spencer and Michael Gregory is based on the questions: “How does language work?” What is the writer or speaker trying to do? What linguistic devices are available to help the writers do it and on what basis do they make their choices? (Nordquist, 2017) Halliday concentrates on the manner of language utilisation in social settings in order to achieve a particular target (O’Donnell, 2012). He is not bothered with language process in human brain, or the way language structure is composed in the brain but he attaches great importance on how language functions; or the purpose of using language (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). This common interest leads systemic linguists to develop four main theoretical claims about language:

- (i) That language use is functional;
- (ii) That its function is to make meanings;
- (iii) That these meanings are influenced by social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged and
- (iv) That the process of using language is a semiotic process; a process of making meaning by choosing.

These four theoretical claims that language use is “functional”, “semantic”, “contextual” and “semiotic” are what Suzanne Eggins (2004) calls “functional-semantic approach to language”. In SFL, language analysis is considered from two dimensions, namely (i) the semiotic or contextual and (ii) the semantic or functional perspectives. There is a symbiotic relationship or interconnectedness between the contextual (semiotic) and functional (semantic) features of language:

Field —————> Ideational metafunction
Tenor —————> Interpersonal metafunction
Mode —————> Textual metafunction

The contextual features or semiotic functions are grouped into field, tenor and mode, while the functional features or semantic components are classified into ideational, interpersonal and textual. The interrelatedness is what field, tenor and mode represent in the semiotic or contextual features are what ideational, interpersonal and textual represent in semantic or functional features. The systemic functional model affirms the interdependence of meaning and context of situation. SFL is a linguistic model that combines the formal properties of language with situational dimensions, thus recognizing both the linguistic and extralinguistic forms and functions of language (Kamalu, 2018, p. 71).

Our interest in this study is to investigate the traces of ideational metafunctions in the texts under study and how they help to mediate and shape ideology, identity and social relations. Critical analysis of the ideational elements will enable the reader to understand that Adichie and Igoni’s idiosyncratic views about ideology and identity influence their style of writing. The objective of the study leads us to seeking to provide answer to such question as:

What is the ideational metafunction that express ideology, identity and social relations in the texts under consideration?

3.0 Sources of Data and Methodology

The data for this study are drawn from Adichie's *Americanah* and Igoni's *Blackass*. *Americanah* is a novel that reveals the battle against stereotypes and affliction of racism, social discrimination, asymmetrical relations and representation of ethnic/national identity. *Blackass* is a novel that portrays a picture of colonialism, neo-colonialism, social inequality and representation of identity crisis. The choice of these texts is informed as a result of its revelation of idiosyncratic view about social phenomenon.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

The study divulges how Adichie and Igoni predominantly employ the resources of ideational metafunction to construe their beliefs and experiences. Transitivity is the grammatical system of ideational metafunction of a language. Ideational metafunction refers to speaker/writer's world of experience. It is the same thing with clause as a representation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Halliday develops a new concept of transitivity which relies on transitivity process, namely (i) the process itself, (ii) the participants and (iii) the circumstances associated with the process. The process is realized by verbal group, participant is achieved by nominal group; while circumstance is realized by adverbial or prepositional group. Analysis of this study work is anchored on these three stages of transitivity

4.1 Deployment of Transitivity

Ideational metafunction embraces the process itself, participants in the process and circumstantial elements. Transitivity enables the reader/hearer to assess what is going on; the psychological state of the participants, the classification of people and things in the narrative. The study reveals that Adichie and Igoni employ the mental, relational, verbal and material processes to communicate their views on ideology, identity and social relations.

The **mental** process is a process of sensing. It involves the process of perception (seeing, hearing, etc.); process of affection (liking, fearing, etc.) and process of cognition (thinking, knowing, understanding, etc.). The **relational** process is the process of being; commonly used to assign personality to people and things. It is applied to classify people and things as one thing or another, to name their parts or to identify them. The **verbal** process is the process of saying. The verbal process denotes relationships constructed in human consciousness and acted in form of language, like saying and meaning. **Material** process is the process of doing. It reveals actions of the participants or tenors in the clauses.

4.1.1 Processes as representation of ideology/identity

Adichie exploits mental process to convey how culture assimilation results to loss of national/ethnic identity and her fight against racism, social inequality and asymmetrical relation in America. Few examples are given below:

- (i) She **looked** at photograph of these men and women and **felt** the dull ache of loss, as though they had prised open her hand and taken something of hers (perception) (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p.6)
- (ii) She **thought** that because you're dark you don't **need** sunscreen (cognitive, desiderative). Many people don't **know** that dark people also **need** sunscreen (cognitive, desiderative) (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 184)

In item (i), the mental verbs, “looked” and “felt”, portray perception and they enable the reader to infer that Ifemelu has lost her ethnic/national identity. The photograph is a reminiscence of her true nationality contrary to the American life she has embraced. The American lifestyle she embraced is as a result of culture assimilation; signifying the negative influence of western culture on African culture. In item (ii), the mental verbs, “need”, “thought”, are pointers to Haley’s racist’s attitude against Dike. Ifemelu’s explanation of Haley’s attitude to Dike suggests that there is racial segregation against the blacks in America. Adichie uses mental verbs to paint a picture of racism in America.

Similarly, Igoni utilizes mental verbs to communicate identity loss, identity crisis and racial discrimination in the society. This can be decoded from some of the encoded mental verbs in the narrative:

- (iii) From now on he will be **known** only as Frank Whyte (cognitive) (Excerpt 1, BA, p.205)
- (iv) **See** here, it says that Wariboko is Nigerian! (perception) (Excerpt 3, BA, p.24)
- (v) He was white, full oyibo, no doubt about it—and, with his knees swinging, the flesh of his thighs jiggling, his mind following these bone and-flesh motions for **bewildered** seconds before moving its attention to other details of his physiology, he began to **comprehend** the extent his transformation (cognitive) (Excerpt 6, BA, p.5)

It is a truism that name is a mark of identity. In item (iii), the cognitive verb, “known” reveals that Arinze (senser) introduces Furo as Frank Whyte instead of his birth name, Furo Wariboko. Furo accepting to be christened Frank Whyte instead of Furo Wariboko his true name means denial of his identity. The perception verb in item (iv) and cognitive verb in item (v) reveal that there is identity crisis because of irregularities in Furo’s colour and the name in his document. The name in his document shows that he is a Nigerian while his colour indicates that he is a white.

Adichie and Igoni mainly capitalize on the relational process to reveal their experiences and concepts about social problems. Adichie primarily plays on relational process to define how culture assimilation results to loss of ethnic culture and national identity and show her disgust against racism and asymmetrical relation in America.

- (i) They **were** living her life. Nigeria became where she **was** supposed to be, the only place could **sink** her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p. 6).

The relational verbs point out that the photograph of Nigerian men and women in their native regalia serve as recollection of Ifemelu’s true identity contrary to the American life style she chooses to live. The relational verbs show how the African pictures remind Ifemelu of her true identity as a Nigerian. Adichie adopts this style to state how influence of foreign culture assimilation can result to loss of native culture and identity.

- (ii) The only race that matters **is** the human race. ... and I don’t **mean** biracial, I **mean** black (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 4)

The relational verbs permit the reader to presume that Adichie uses race/colour to expose the practice of racism and asymmetrical relation in America. This is clearly understood from the interaction between Ifemelu and the man she met in the plane. Ifemelu’s expectation fails when she discovers that the man she met in the plane has a different view about the blacks. He advises her not to write on the black because of social and racial discrimination against the blacks from both the whites and blacks themselves. Adichie applies this technique to portray the picture of racism and neo-racism in the society. Neo-racism is a situation where the blacks discriminate against their fellow blacks.

- (iii) They said, instead, I'm not sure, which did not give any information but still suggested the possibility of knowledge. They **avoided** giving direct instructions: they did not say (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 134)

Through relational verbs, the reader can deduce that the author uses accent/language as a mechanism to convey the message of national identity. The relational elements designate that Americans use certain words, phrases and sentences differently from Nigerians. It is indication of different Englishes, such as American English, British English, Ghanaian English and Nigerian English; meaning that language use is mark of national identity.

Igoni greatly uses relational verbs to illustrate identity crisis, identity loss and national identity. Examples below will be adequate for explanation:

- (iv) I **am** Furo (Excerpt 1, BA, p. 14) And yet he said, his voice shaking with conviction, I **am** Furo Wariboko (Excerpt 1, BA, p. 25)

The relational verb, "am" shows that the identified (Furo) maintains that his name is Furo Wariboko (identifier). At this juncture, Furo has not changed his name; meaning that he still retains his personal identity.

- (v) That jeans **nah** your own, dem make am for you, **nah** your size finish. But Furo different, he spoke pidgin like a true born Nigerian, and even though his skin **was** white and his bia-bia **was** red and eyes were green, his heart without doubt **was** black. Abi no be so? (Excerpt 4, BA, p. 174)

The relational verbs expressed in Nigerian Pidgin English help the reader to construe that the author uses language as a tool to communicate national identity. The word "nah" in Pidgin English means "is" in English language. Yellowman is amazed to hear Furo fluently speaks Nigerian Pidgin English like every other Nigerian; indicating that Nigerian Pidgin English is a mark of national identity.

Authors of the texts under study adopt verbal process to tell the public their experiences in a dysfunctional society and the battle against abnormality. Adichie principally utilizes the verbal process to illustrate symmetrical relation, identity denial/identity loss, and ethnic identity. Few examples will serve for illustration:

- (i) Kimberly **said**, "Oh, look at this beautiful woman," and pointed at a plain magazine whose only distinguishing feature was her very dark skin. "Ifemelu paused. "You know, you can just **say** black! (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, pp.146-147)
- (ii) A petite woman in a severe pink jacket **said**, "I'm chair of the board of a charity in Ghana" (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 169)
- (iii) So the other day I **say** to her – I wonder if Michelle Obama has a weave, her hair looks fuller today, and all that heat every day must damage it. And she **says** — you mean her hair doesn't grow like that? (Excerpt 3, *Americanah*, p. 296)
- (iv) She had perfected, from careful watching of friends and news casters, the blurring of the t, the creamy roll of the r, the sentences starting with so, and sliding response of 'Oh really', but the accent **creaked** with consciousness, it was an act of will (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 173)

The verbal process in item (i) is vocal expression of sayer's (Kimberly) perception of the beauty of black African woman (receiver) which suggests that colour (black) is a sign of identity. In item (ii), the verbal process shows free interlocution between the sayer (white woman) and receiver (Ifemelu, a black woman). The free conversation signifies absence of racial discrimination and promotion of symmetrical relation between the white and black. The implication is that not all Americans are racial discriminative. In item (iii), the verbal process indicates that Ifemelu uses a blog to promote relaxed hair as beautiful and natural

hair as ugly. Connotatively, Ifemelu's action signifies identity denial/ identity loss. In item (iv), the verbal element, "creaked" gives an idea that American words and accent are peculiar with the Americans and a mark of national identity.

Igoni implements the verbal process to clearly communicate to the audience on his experience of identity crisis, identity denial/identity loss, and ethnic/national identity. Few examples are given below:

- (v) See here, it **says** that Wariboko in Nigerian! (Excerpt 1, BA, p. 24)
- (vi) Just **tell** us where you're from (Excerpt 3, BA, p.257)
- (vii) I full ground, Furo **replied**. (Excerpt 4, BA, p. 173) But Furo different, he **spoke** pidgin like a true born Nigerian (Excerpt 4, BA, p. 174)

The verbal process in item (v) shows that Obata doubts Furo's true identity because the name in his document contradicts the colour he bears; signifying identity crisis. The verb, "tell" in item (vi) points out that Headstrong commands Furo to declare his nationality and Furo replies "I'm American" (BA, p. 257). Furo's claim as a citizen of America implies denial of his nationality. The verbs in item (vii) designate that Yellowman is surprised to hear Furo communicates fluently in Nigerian Pidgin English; indicating that language is a mark of ethnic/national identity.

This study discloses that Adichie and Igoni chiefly adopt material process to demonstrate their revulsion against social disorder. Adichie predominantly uses the material process to brilliantly communicate her abhorrence for racism, social inequality and explain how culture assimilation causes loss of national identity and identity denial.

- (i) She looked at the photographs of these men and women and felt the dull ache of loss, as though they had **prised** open her hand and **taken** something of hers. Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could **sink** her roots in without the constant urge to **tug** them out and **shake** off the soil (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p.6)
- (ii) She **gave** sunscreen to everyone but wouldn't **give** me any (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, pp.183-184)
- (iii) Since she **came** to America, she had always **braided** her hair with long extensions, always alarmed at much it cost. She **wore** each style for three, even four months, until her scalp itched unbearably and the braids **sprouted** fuzzily from a bed of new growth (Excerpt 3, *Americanah*, p. 203)
- (iv) They said, instead, I'm not sure, which did not **give** any information but still suggested the possibility of knowledge. They avoid **giving** direct instructions: When you **tripped** and **fell**, when you choked, when misfortune befell you, they did not say sorry. (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p.134)

In item (i) the material verbs enable the reader to understand that culture assimilation influences Ifemelu to lose her Nigerianness or Africanness. The material verbs in item (ii) point at the ill treatment Haley gives to Dike because of his black colour. Haley's refusal to give Dike sunscreen because of colour difference signifies racial segregation and social inequality. On the other hand, the material verbs in item (iii) indicate that Ruth influences Ifemelu to change her naturally beautiful hair to American hair style so as to get a job. Ifemelu's action signifies culture assimilation and identity denial. This alludes to how the blacks easily assimilate foreign culture in order to achieve their aim. In item (iv), the material verbs indicate that there is a difference between American and Nigerian accents. It implies that there are different Englishes (American, British, Ghanaian, and Nigerian etc.) with diverse usages; signifying that language usage is mark of national/ethnic identity.

Igoni primly deploys material verbs to give detailed explanation of identity crisis, identity denial, social inequality and racial discrimination.

- (v) With the same hand **jabbed** a finger at Furo and said in a voice gruff with challenge, You are Furo Wariboko? (Excerpt 1, BA, p.23) And **attended** Ambrose Ali University! He **flung** down the resume and **glared** at Furo (Excerpt 1, BA, p.24)
- (vi) Abeg, excuse me o, I'm very sorry for asking, but how **come** your voice is sounding like a Nigerian? (Excerpt 2, BA, p. 121) ...and how **come** he had a Nigerian accent, how **come** he had lived in this rubbish country? (Excerpt 2, BA, p. 216)
- (vii) That jeans nah your own, dem **make** am for you, nah your size. **Take am** for two thousand. (Excerpt 4, BA, p. 174)
- (viii) You'll **get** respect because you're white (Excerpt 6, BA, p. 282)

The material verbs in item (v) signify that Obata doubts Furo Wariboko's identity because of the discrepancy of the name in his document and his white man's colour. The incongruity can be inferred as identity crisis. In item (vi) the material verb shows that Furo claims to be American in order to cover his false identity before Tosin; impliedly, his action means identity denial and identity loss. The material verbs in item (vii) point out that Furo is able to interact with the second-hand cloth seller in Nigerian Pidgin English. Furo's ability to understand and respond fluently in Nigerian Pidgin English signifies that he is a Nigerian and that language use is a mark of national identity. In item (viii), the material verb indicates that Yuguda believes in colour superiority. The analysis proves that he respects the white more than the blacks. He believes that Furo will command respect from the society because he is white. This is a true picture of neo-colonialism and imperialism in Africa. The blacks oppress their fellow blacks but give preferential treatment to the whites.

Table 4.1a: Processes involved in Adichie's text

Excerpts/Identity markers	Processes involved				Type of ideology	Type of identity
	Met	Mat	Rel	Ver		
Ex 1: nationality	√	√	√	-	Nationalism or patriotism	National/identity loss
Ex 2: race/colour	√	√	√	√	Racism/anti-racism, social inequality	Ethnic identity
Ex 3: hair	√	√	√	√	Culture assimilation,	identity loss, ethnic identity
Ex 4: accent/language	√	√	√	√	Nationalism	Ethnic/national identity

Source: Mbazuigwe, 2021

Table 4.1b: Processes involved in Igoni's text

Excerpt/identity markers	Processes involved				Types of ideology	Types of identity
	Rel.	Mat	Ver	Met		
Ex.1: name	√	√	√	√	Ethnicity	identity crisis, identity loss,
Ex. 2: accent	√	√	√	√	Ethnicity	Ethnic identity
Ex. 3: nationality	√	√	√	-	Nationalism	identity denial/loss
Ex. 4: language	√	√	√	-	Nationalism	Ethnic/national identity,
Ex. 5: food	√	√	√	√	Colonialism,	Ethnic identity, identity crisis
Ex. 6: colour	√	√	-	√	neo-colonialism,	identity loss, social

					racism	inequality
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Mbazuigwe, 2021

From tables 4.1a and 4.1b, the study reveals that Adichie and Igoni graphically express their diverse ideologies and identities through the use of mental, relational, verbal and material processes. The analyses of Adichie and Igoni’s works are based on the four (4) and six (6) identity markers respectively. The study reveals that Adichie and Igoni have divergent views on ideologies and identities; but there is a common bond on the issues of national/ethnic identity, identity denial/loss, and social equality/inequality.

4.1.2 Participants as representation of ideology and identity

We have earlier stated that participants in the process are realized by nominal group. Adichie and Igoni exploit the resources of nominal group to brilliantly represent social problems. The participants in a diegesis, the events, the setting and other contextual variables are explained through the help of nominal group (Kamalu, 2009). Nominal group is a grammatical unit with a noun as its head; the head is the key grammatical word in the group (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 186). The structure of nominal group consists of a deictic (determiner), the epithet (adjective) and the thing (noun). The term noun group and noun phrase are used in the same sense. “In addition to its head, a NG may contain one or more modifiers”. Modifiers may be determiners (the, that, these, etc.), numerals (four, fourth), adjectives (red, clever, political), verb particles (broken, running), nouns (bus in bus station, labour in Labour Party), prepositional phrases or embedded clauses (the last two are usually post-modifiers, placed after the head). Modifiers play various ideational functions, e.g. determiners are deictic (having a “pointing function, saying which one I’m talking about), this versus that. Possessive pronouns sometimes are deictic (traditionally classified as adjectives) my, his, their, are also deictic, just as possessive nouns are deictic, e.g. Cameron’s, America’s etc.

Adichie adopts the resources of the nominal group to paint a colourful picture of problems of social relations in America. It enables the reader to understand how the narrator distinguishes and narrates her experience and environment. Few examples are adopted for analysis:

Use of Deictic elements

- (i) **The only race** that matters is the human race (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 4)
- (ii) **The simplest solution to the problem of race** in America? (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 296)
- (iii) **My name** is Ifemelu (embedded possessive) (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 175)
- (iv) **That where your family** came from? (specific, demonstrative) (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 175)

In items (i) and (ii) “the” as deictic element shows that the referents are identifiable; meaning that the things being referred to such as “race” and “problem of race” are known. The two deictic elements, in items (iii) and (iv) “my” and “that” used in the text are embedded possessive and demonstrative respectively. “My” is a specific deictic element serving as an embedded possessive to name; it helps to track the referent in the text which is Ifemelu. “That” is equally a specific deictic element serving as a demonstrative of the geographical location where Ifemelu’s family came from. It enables the reader to trail the referent (location) in the text which is Nigeria, Ifemelu’s country of origin. The deictic elements enable the reader to identify the things being referred to like “name” and “family”. These two deictic elements imply that the name, Ifemelu is peculiar to her as an Igbo woman and also states her place of origin and where she grew up. The implication is that “name”, “nation” are marks of national identity.

Head as deictic: According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) non-specific Deictic functions as Head. For example:

- (v) **Everyday** you see them carrying a bottle of water as if they will die of heat if they are not drinking water every minute, Ranyinudo said (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p.14)

This is non-specific Deictic. The Head, “every” in item (v) conveys the meaning of all; which means there is no specificity in the meaning. It connotes that regularly these Americanised Nigerians portray themselves as civilized people because of the influence of American culture on them. Their attitude shows loss of native culture and identity.

Head as a thing: The three deictic elements in the clause have Thing (noun) as their Heads. These nouns serve as the potential Subjects of the clauses. Therefore, “race”, “name”, and “family”, serve as the Subjects of the clauses as illustrated in the table below:

Experiential structure of Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 290

The	simplest	solution	to the	problem	of race
Deictic 1	Epithet	Thing 1	Deictic 2	Epithet 2	Thing 2
Determiner	Adjective	Noun	Determiner	Adjective	Noun

Epithets

- (i) **Everyday** you ... (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p. 14)
 (ii) **The** only race ... (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 4)
 (iii) **The** simplest solution to the problem of race ... (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 290)
 (iv) **My** name ... (embedded possessive) (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 175)
 (v) **That** where your family ... (experiential) (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 175)

Item (i) is a non-specific element and the epithet falls within the category of interpersonal. The interpersonal deictic element, “everyday” does not define the subset because the deictic is non-specific. Items (ii) and (iii) are all specific deictic elements and the epithets fall within the category of experiential. The specific deictic element, “the” is experiential elements, because they define the subsets. The deictic elements in items (iv) and (v) are all specific and the epithets fall within the category of experiential because the deictic elements are specific and define the subsets. In a specific deictic element, the epithets are experiential; therefore, the epithets in the text are experiential. These epithets potentially define the subsets, “name” and “family”. The experiential epithet in this text expresses the functionality of the subsets.

Igoni applies the wealth of nominal group to give a dramatic illustration of challenges in his society. Few examples will help for the analysis.

- (i) Arinze said as he led Furo into office after office and presented him to the staff as Frank Whyte, **the new head of marketing** (Excerpt 1, BA, p. 203)
 (ii) In response to his curious questions, Furo explained that Frank was his Christian name and Whyte was *furo ere*, his family, **the English version of his compound name** (Excerpt 1, BA, p. 205)
 (iii) He stares at his hands, **the pink life lines** in his palms, **the shellish-coloured cuticles**, **the network of blue veins** that ran from knuckle to wrist, more veins than he had ever noticed before (Excerpt 6, BA, p.3)

All the nominal groups listed above fall within the category of specific deictic. The things (nouns) being referred to in the texts such as “marketing”, “name”, “lines”, “cuticles” and “veins” are identifiable. They convey the message that those nouns being referred to in the texts are directly known by the reader. In item (i), the nominal group helps the reader to identify Frank Whyte as the referent in the text. Frank whyte is the new name Furo Wariboko

adopted in order to cover up his false identity. Item (ii) enables the reader to locate “furo ere”, as the referent, which is the family name for Whyte. It shows how Furo tries to answer the questions that erupted as a result of irregularities in his identity. The image painted in this narrative is that of deceit. The nominal groups indicate that Furo has denied his true identity. Item (iii) aids the reader to recognize the referents in the text such as “Furo’s palms”, “cuticles” and “veins” as a result of sudden transformation in his hands. It indicates that Furo is confused of the unexpected change of his colour. He slept as a black man and woke up as a white man; it connotes identity crisis.

Deictic: The deictic element, “the” applied in the excerpts falls within the class of specific deictic. The essence of using them is to track the referents (things or nouns) used in the texts. They enable the reader to identify the referent in the texts.

Epithet: The epithets used by the writer fall within the class of experiential epithets. They are potentially defining the subsets (referents) because the deictic elements are specific. The experiential epithets express the functionality in the texts. It shows the roles or functions of the adjectives to the referents or things.

Epithet as the thing: In items (iii), the specific deictic, the head determines the value of the entity in the mood system and serves as the potential subject. Therefore, “lines”, and “cuticles” serve as the Subjects of the clauses.

4.1.3 Circumstance as a representation of ideology and identity

Earlier we indicated that circumstance in the process is achieved by adverbial or prepositional group. The adverbial group serves as Adjunct in the modal structure of the clause – either circumstantial Adjunct or modal Adjunct (mood or comment) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.354). The Adverbial group has an adverb as the Head, which may or may not be accompanied by modifying elements. An adverbial group serving as a circumstantial Adjunct has an adverb denoting a circumstance as Head – for example, a circumstance of time (e.g. yesterday, today, tomorrow) or of quality (e.g. well, badly, quickly, slowly). Adverbial groups serving as modal Adjunct have an adverb denoting an assessment as Head – for example, an assessment of time (e.g. still, yet, already) or intensity (e.g. really, just, only, actually) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.355).

Adichie and Igoni deploy adverbial group to express their individual conceptions of ideology and identity. Adichie capitalizes on the elements of adverbial group to let her audience be aware of the asymmetrical relation that exists in America and her movement against racism.

- (i) She looked at his face, which was almost expressionless, **eerily so** (manner, quality) (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, pp.183-184)

The writer explores this adverbial group to expose the level of traumatic experience victims of racism suffer. The adverbial group shows the facial expression of emotional trauma Dike suffers because of racial discrimination. The action of the group leader against Dike is a mark of racism.

Igoni takes advantage of the resources of adverbial group to inform his readers of influence of colonialism, and expression of national identity.

- (ii) Furo’s answer: I’ve **already told** you I’m Nigerian (Excerpt 3, BA, p. 137)

The adverb, “already” is used to describe a previous situation; before this time, or before now. The writer extracts it to demonstrate that Furo insists on retaining his identity despite the abrupt skin transformation. Furo has earlier or previously told Syreeta that he is a Nigerian; suggesting that initially Furo is not ready to deny his identity and nationality; despite his sudden skin transformation.

- (iii) It’s **just plain** rude ... (Excerpt 6, BA, p.254)

The writer applies the adverb, “just” to show how colonialism has badly affected the Africans. The whites are perceived as superior beings to the blacks. The adverb, “just” expresses the exact manner in which the blacks look at the whites as superior beings.

(iv) His ass was **robustly** black (Excerpt 6, BA, p. 295)

The adverb, “robustly” is used to show that nature cannot be easily changed. It indicates that Furo’s ass is strongly constructed or formed; sturdy and cannot be easily removed or hidden. This assertion implies that black or white colour is a work of nature and cannot be denied; meaning that one cannot deny his identity.

Use of prepositional group

Circumstance associated with process is realized by prepositional group. The prepositional phrase serves as Adjunct in the modal structure of the clause. Like the adverbial group, it can serve as circumstantial Adjunct or, less commonly, as interpersonal Adjunct; and like the conjunction group, it can serve as conjunctive Adjunct (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.359). A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition plus a nominal group (e.g. on the burning deck). A prepositional phrase is not an expansion of anything but a clause-like structure in which the Process/Predicator function is performed by a preposition and not by a verb (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.359).

Adichie and Igoni deploy prepositional phrase to inform their readers of their concepts about certain social problems. Adichie applies prepositional phrase to promote patriotism; expose racism in America and reveal that language use is a mark of ethnic/national identity. Similarly, Igoni utilizes prepositional phrase to expose how colonialism has badly affected African minds. Few examples below will help in the analysis:

(i) Nigeria will not be like this forever, I’m sure I will find part-time work and it will be tough, yes but one day I will start my clinic, and **on** The Island! Auntu Uju had told Ifemelu (Excerpt 1, *Americanah*, p. 46)

It refers to Lagos where auntu Uju wants to establish her clinic when she returns to Nigeria. It implies that auntu Uju believes in her nation which is mark of patriotism.

(ii) 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.” (Excerpt 2, *Americanah*, p. 290)

Adichie extracts from the elements of preposition to aid the reader understand the level of racial discrimination in America. The prepositional phrases help the reader infer that there is no racism in Nigeria while the same obviously exists in America. The writer uses it as a tool to portray America as a racist country. The social problem in Nigeria is not racial discrimination but ethnicity, religiosity, god-fatherism, and political affiliation. These social problems have resulted to increase in disunity, lack of meritocracy, joblessness, poverty, insecurity, agitation for secession, incompetence in the work force and wrong political ideology.

(iii) She had perfected, from careful watching **of** friends and news casters, the blurring **of** the r, the creamy **of** the t, the sentences starting **with** “So”, and the sliding response **of** “Oh really”, but the accent creaked with consciousness, it was an act of will (Excerpt 4, *Americanah*, p. 173)

Adichie takes advantage of the preposition-headed constructions in her narrative as a rhetorical device to expose the difficulty a second learner encounters trying to learn American accent. “Of” as a preposition serves as a function word that indicates a characteristic or distinctive quality or possession of American accent. Similarly, “with” plays the role of function word indicating accompaniment and a close association. Adichie uses it to paint a picture that American accent is unique with Americans and a mark of their identity.

- (iv) A whiteman **with** a strong Nigerian accent, stranded **in** Lagos without a place to stay, without any friends to turn to and **with** a job as a bookseller **for** a company so small I hadn't heard **of** it? (Excerpt 1, BA, p.203)

Igoni deploys prepositional phrase to reveal that accent is a mark of national identity. The use of "with" as a preposition reveals that Furo uses Nigerian accent. It implies that Furo is a Nigerian despite his whiteman's colour. Other prepositions used in the context expose the ugly experiences Furo passes through in the country. The last preposition shows that the speaker doubts Furo's true identity; suggesting identity crisis.

- (v) The way we stared **at** others, **at** white people, we Nigerians, it makes me ashamed. (Excerpt 6, BA, p.254)

Igoni cashes on the prepositional elements to illustrate the influence of colonialism on Africans. Tosin was not comfortable with the manner in which the blacks worship the whites as superior beings. Through colonialism, the whites establish a doctrine of superiority and inferiority, supremacy and subjectivity. The whites believe that their colour is superior to black colour. With these principles of subjugation and domination practiced for so long in Africa, Africans developed African mentality that hunts them till date.

Conclusion:

The reader understands that Adichie and Igoni deploy ideational metafunction to express their experiences, concepts, opinions, and reveal certain social disorder in America and Nigeria. Through the use of ideational metafunction, Adichie campaigns against racism, neo-racism, social inequality, asymmetrical relations and at the same time expresses her view on ethnic/national identity. Igoni cashes on the ideational metafunction to fight against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racial discrimination and also represent identity crisis, ethnic/national identity and identity loss. From the abovementioned, we affirm that ideational metafunction is important linguistic tool in the realization of meaning in language and discourse. Therefore, the study affirms that ideational metafunction is one of the linguistic items Adichie and Igoni employ to express ideology, identity and social relations in their works.

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