



## Socio-Linguistic Perspectives In Modern Literary Texts: A Case Study Of Language Variation And Identity Politics

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	<p><b>Objective:</b> Employing the examination of linguistic diversity in recent literary works, my paper will focus on identity politics and social commentary. Through the study of a few chosen case studies from different books of modern times, we look into the linguistic employment of dialect, slang, code-switching, and other techniques to explore how authors do this to identify their characters and also to understand the silent power that lies in race, gender, class and other ways of marginalisation.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> The close reading approach of the study is applied to demonstrate language variations of dialogue, narration and other story elements across five recent highly-favored novels using different characters' perspectives. Spelling that is not consistent with standard English is recorded and the patterns are articulated across characters in each marginalized group. Discourse examination deals with the issue of the language style in different registers which are regarded as the reflection of the varied social positions and identities in the worlds described by different authors.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> Characters belonging to minority ethnic and class origins are frequently marked by using non-standard language, slang, and language switching more common than privileged characters. Authors purposefully use different language to portray noble and slave ranks of the civil society and the type of problems encountered by the people on lower levels of social hierarchy. Languages are then represented by certain dialects which are a symbol of these marginalised identities. On the other hand, some characters utilise the same manipulation of language to stand up against unrestricted social structures and norms.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> For creators to utilise a non-mainstream choice of linguistic forms provides an opportunity for commenting on real sociolinguistic differences that are stereotypically associated with African Americans, women, and poor people. Markedly, present-day authors deliberately alter the vocabulary in specific ways to form the characters and kind of connection they have which is born out of the social structure. Linguistic choices either grant a sense of marginalisation or of empowered resistance is another point.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Sociolinguistics, dialect, slang, code-switching, and mainstreaming.</p>

### Introduction

The language – identity bond is but one of the innate characteristics. As linguistic anthropologist Mary Bucholtz states, “Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) in public mentions of identities and labels; (b) implied ideas and presuppositions about own or others identities being a given; (c) shown judgements and the kind of knowledge that is has been done in the conversation , as well as the roles and relationship type; and (d) use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with particular types of personas and groups (Bucholtz How we use language in our day-to-day activities - the way we talk, the style we choose, the dialect, etc. - frequently reflects how we see ourselves and how we want to be perceived by others. Literature lets the social-linguistics fans have something interesting to learn; authors take their time to carefully put together their characters and the settings to allow for social commentary and speak with the readers about various things. Writing on identity politics by contemporary writers today has issues such as: what are the best ways to incorporate the languages of the less advantaged groups into their narratives. These groups struggle to achieve social justice and equality against the culture (hegemony) which subjugate them.

In this paper a case study provides the linguistic variation in the current course of literature texts to highlight identity politics. As applied to the broad discipline of socio-linguistics with its analytical techniques, I explore authors’ deliberate selections of the various languages, dialects, registers, etc. as a means of characterization, place portraying, narration, dialogues, and style. Considered is the practice of examining the award-winning 21st century novels which widely are used in American schools and universities - notably, texts that are known for the social themes of identity formations as a result of either privilege or marginalisation organised by race, ethnicity, gender identity, class, language status, sexuality, ability and other categories. Specific texts selected for close reading and comparative analysis are: The misrepresentation of Native Americans in novels such as Homegoing (Yaa Gyasi, 2016), There There (Tommy Orange, 2018) and Everything I Never Told You (Celeste Ng, 2014) and only to a certain extent in Animal’s People (Indra Sinha, 2007). These texts employ a variety of English dialect and multi-language which is present in the plot and characters and some of them focus on the identity politics to highlight issues like Linguistic imperialism in the communities or how they can define their identity using language.

As one of the most common critical techniques in literature, the linguistic study of literary texts, however, has not been covered by many studies that analyse the comparative treatment of contemporary texts written by authors addressing identity politics in modern society. The socio-linguistic analysis opens a window and gives much more than just the description of the time the author wrote the novel; in the most profound level of interpretation, it highlights the cultural commentaries on the burning issues of social equity, diversity, inclusiveness, and human rights of the day. This essay uses the materials from Linguistics and literary analysis in a literary mode to contribute to socio-cultural commentary allowing the fiction writers to act as social critics and agents of change by their specific selection of language varieties in building characters and scenarios that depict how people establish their identities in the real work.

### ***Theoretical Foundation of the CFAL is in Systemic Functional Linguistics***

The present article utilises systemic functional linguistics, a paradigm that was first initialised by linguist M.A.K, Halliday, as its main component of socio-linguistic textual analysis. SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics), being not a theory but an analytical method, researches how language operates to build meaning in parallels with its setting (Eggins, 2004). SFL classifies language’s contextual meaning-making into three metafunctions: deals with the message, the way the message is expressed and the manner in which it is presented . The simple functional language analysis looks at what grammatical structures and underlying phrases have to contribute. This way of thinking about literary stylistics is based on the work of sociolinguist Roger Fowler that “correspond to relationships between to explicit meanings” (Fowler, 1996, p.4). SFL duly assesses how authors’ choice of language relates to the identity politics of a particular society or group.

In his seminal work “Language Structure and Language Function” (1973), Halliday introduces seven determining dimensions of language variation: discourse of style, expression of style, usage of mode of discourse, manipulation of rhetorical mode, vocabulary tone, and type of genre. This lens has broken down the multilingual sphere and the corresponding language variation categories will be applied in a close reading of the sample texts. In other words, diverse thematic, lexical, syntactical and stylistic construction of characters; conversational shift between dialogue and narration indicates diversified individual voice; rhetorical devices lead to certain and consistent interpretation or evaluation; ethnolinguistic identity can be accessed through the use of different dialects; ranking within expected

social hierarchy can be seen through variations in linguistic register; context and identity of the speakers may be

SFL is not the only critical theory that this discourse is founded on; it also comes in with thoughts from ethnography of communication, stylistics of literature and critical sociolinguistics in the construction of identity through authors' divergent language patterns. For example, Hymes's SPEAKING model that examines the purpose and contextual components of the communication for systematic analysis of language in context is among them (Hymes, 1962). What language means in literature becomes clear when one starts to analyse language functions on the concept of "speech events". The linguistic stylistics refers to the tools of grammar and rhetoric an author uses to create a particular logical sequence in a text or give the text particular aesthetic expression - techniques that are also used to construct the character identity (Leech & Short, 2007). The final point concerns power and ideology elements where language is used. In the opinion of Adam Hodges on African-American literature, the author "identifies those social and cultural nuances that can reverberate along with the linguistic choices the author made in portraying language varieties. The decisions that authors make in representing language varieties carry ideological significance insofar as they accept or reject linguistic hierarchies that privilege certain varieties of language over others" (Hodges, 201 For instance, this stands for the writers who focus on the languages and dialects which they think are underrepresented;

Actually the choice of source is to be considered very carefully as we need to be sure the case study we will present is directly relevant to our chosen issue and is accurate enough to be used for our purpose.

As case studies of the four contemporary texts chosen for linguistic variation and identity politics, each of these novels, with their narratives to amplify marginalised voices' testimonies, deserve close reading. Although they are comparatively new and are often featured on syllabi for introduction to literature courses in North American colleges, these books are indeed read by a large number of people and those books carry cultural value as they are critically acclaimed texts pointing to issues of identity politics through characterization. The current texts act as vital agents in the progression of race and gender dialogues that are in the forefront. We have the opportunity to compare the plot-lines, characters, language, and other life events at that time with their own lives. The linguistic picture of these four books is as varied as the stories, characters, and the authorship of them. Among all these differences, though, the books have marginalised ethnolinguistic groups that each of them presents. These groups are in the way of the dominant culture forces that are seeking assimilation - from the Ghanaian tribe in Gyasi's novel to the multigenerational African American dialect in Osage In other words, the texts compare the linguistic change in the contexts of cultural minorities' marginalisation and the written or spoken varieties that already dominates the world.

### Case Studies

- HomeAngie Thomas's novel, 'The Hate U Give: - which was done only a few years ago still holds the highest points of excellence among the literature of today's generation by demonstrating how language can be used as a form of a tool in the destruction of the hegemony of race, identity, and systemic injustice we have within ourselves in this day and age (Thomas, 201 There is no doubt that, as the debut novel, the book offers a very interesting engagement of language and identity. Consciously through the main character is the means through which to consciously share the issue of code variation and identity. The key idea of the story is about Starr's own face, as if it were entirely one thing, represented by two different sides of hers- life in the largely black neighbourhood of Garden Heights and her schooling at the Williamson, a mostly white private school. What stands out from the narrative ability of Thomas himself is the fact that the readers live fully in the world where Starr's identity, which is evolving as a result of growing up in such a period, can be expressed through language. Through Starr's effortless shifts from the vernacular within her community, which is filled with African American English, to the formal setting that she is trying to reach academically, it is evident that she is facing the pressure of the outside world to be both a proper young lady and a representation of her community. However, Thomas, the narrator, emphasised that cultural distance from Starr as the object is separated by using different language devices. Garden Heights is one example of how the dynamic local dialect or slang controlling the sounds like it happening in the urban place where the henro trabong-trabong. In doing this, such devices employed go past the mere representation of those characters' experiences but actually describe that community as one which is enslaved, drowned in crime and institutional oppression. On the other hand, at Williamson, Starr who is the protagonist, had no choice but to speak this code in order to be correlated with a white-people environment, eloquent and standard English. Here, language only serves as the instrument that gives Starr the

opportunity to go on and adapt to the challenges that racialized disparity brings and at the same time leaves the rest of her behind. Mentioning that, through the code-switching, Thomas portrays the indelible tension between the Starr's duality which defies her language as an instrument she engages in an interaction with others. In *Howards End*, language is not solely a matter of the varying dialects but an extensive reflection on the socio-political background which is the basis of all variation. At the core of Starr's storyline is a dramatic clash between her and a white policeman she sees shooting her childhood friend, Khalil.

- "Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi renders quite a good picture on how language is to be blamed for identity but within the wider historical, ancestral and heritage mix. First of the book that was in 2016 concentrated on the problems that the African members of the family who are currently in different countries of Africa and the USA deal with. This creates for a prototypical image of interlingual differences which incessantly affect the way we perceive our environment. Dialogue is a crucial tool used by a writer when building the story of the novel; consequently, wording changes with the history. Thus, as a reader, you can visit African countries and the past eras. In "Homegoing," Gyasi skillfully captures the essence of Fante and Asante dialects by making use of the vibrant and robust oral tradition of West Africans. The culture is revealed mainly by the language, which helps people connect with the past, speak out their feelings and continue to propagate when the family connections are broken by slavery and displacement. On the other hand, African Americans, America, U.S., their language is an amalgamation of the African linguistic elements and English words. The dialect sprang from the language of England and from systematic subjugation of trade in slaves. However in the second part of the novel when the narration moves to the US, the author shows that the language is the pivotal point for both the identity and repression of the immigrant group. Language can do either one of the opposite things depending on the nature and the century; but whether it is a weapon of resecret or dissecret, it is always a very significant instrument which is the most important factor in moulding individual and communal identity. Another significant point that is brought to our attention through this publication is that the enduring legacy of the past, as Gyasi puts it, has little to do with the language we speak but rather in the cultural identity we carry with us which we must face with courage and style (Gyasi, 2016).
- "Hillbilly Elegy" is by J.D. Vance, which presents us with a real, scintillating picture of the dialect and social atmosphere in the Andy culture as well as the valuable insight into the class issues in the current day America. There, you take part in the real experience. The 2016 memoir by Vance takes the readers into the atmosphere of the actual events when he was a kid, lived in one of the poorest parts of Appalachia as the language turned to the best asset of written narration from that time (Vance, 2016). In Vance's story the readers get the chance to just imagine themselves in the Appalachian English world with its own level of consciousness which is based solely on the words, the speech and the pronunciation. The particularities of speech that we find in the area are symbolising the cultural tradition of the Appalachians which is true both: they struggle all the time and they represent a social heritage and the family concerns, which is, through the generation's growth. The memoir doesn't only explore the difference in language; in fact, it gives context to a society which is at the core of socio-political issues. In this way, Vance argues that language, social status, and culture are complex, thus, she illustrates how stereotypes about rural regions and constantly watching the underdog cannot be unnoticed and ignored. Vance does this by arranging his story around the linguistic peculiarities in the Appalachian area. At the end, Vance has a clear view of the complicated function that language plays in creating, enforcing, and shaping particular identity while not discouraging the use of culture-based stereotypes. Through his code, Vance is calling readers to see those hard pill to swallow about poverty, addiction, and the survival of the Appalachian region, and at same time praise the strength and resilience of the Appalachian people.
- The extraneous factors such as language shifting, the political issues of identity and migration and displacement manage to remain at the core of the condition by people in "Exit West" book by Muhammad Hanid that was published in 2017 (Hamid, 2017). This has been excellently done by the author using Nadia and Saeed, the migrants and refugees, as a way of bringing to reality events that have actually happened to people who were going through the doors of immigration and which Hamid relates in the novel to create a language that serves life in a new country. They understand that language is a must-have tool they can use for self-preservation and other people's embrace in foreign countries. Therefore, they learn to speak the national language wherever they find themselves. The Hamid poetics voice employs the language which symbolises religion, nationality and globalism in a distressed pitch to explore the language intersections that occur within the individuals in this present

day (Hamid, 2017). In this book we are shown that linguistic diversity can either be a bridge to people or groups or utter a curse of concrete walls between people or groups. Languages do not stop up along their way. Every single one of them symbolises the culture's meaning connected to and shared by the community who is speaking it. The multi-layer character of the language of the immigrants is spoken out by their morphology, and also the way in which the language determines how the communication between immigrant and others around him in the society is made. Moreover in the novel, "Exiting the West," the writer draws attention to the power of language-speak or using one language more than others is not a kind of coincidence but involves social, political, and economic factors. Hamed's edge sets forth the language issue and its influence on the lives of migrants and refugees (Hamid, 2017). Language, which is as diverse as the human migration tracks, has been noticed to be an issue. The authors' 'digging into the erecting of 'English-loyalism' and 'Identity politics' wall occurs through the thoughts. Here one might narrow in on language as a technique that a person can use to reveal their inner abilities and layer of experience in an age of global travelling, peaceful negotiations and fights.

- "Sing, Unburied, Sing" by Jesmyn Ward is a web of narrative which includes different strokes of language and the politics of identity in the storyline, in which Ward skillfully presents the African American, who live in the South and are poor, experiences. The author's novel of Ward published in 2017 employs an easy and colourful language with some prominent character narrations to demonstrate the vastness and diversity of the African American English and Southern vernacular. Language and diction are personality features and character traits which are sung in the novel according to their speeches through Ward, the author, who is trying to express the folk art of the region in the traditional sense of oral communication especially in the South. The only thing that the languages of "Sing, Unburied, Sing" serve for is the bare devices, which is not the case; on the contrary, the agents amplify the central idea(s) (Ward, 2017). The author uses accurate language as tools to expose the structural barriers and make the subjects like multi-generational trauma, oppression in the community of Black people the audience would focus on. The reader rewards himself by struggling with the characters of the story and listening to the voice of the characters. In fact he becomes witness to the inhuman treatment, poverty and the sham of social discrimination are offset by the acts of courage, endurance and hope among the people. The author does this through her use of language in this text, and we can tell this way of telling a story not only adds depth and sheds light on the reality of race, class and to feelings of belonging in America today, but also reveals the unhappy nature of things. Through her style of writing, family and language are seen as the emotional basis of the characters, and readers are to be involved in the intricacies to which identities are captured and cultural heritage is understood. Therefore, it is easy to trace the thoughts of those characters from the past through these legacies that have been imparted in their minds as a result of events such as slavery and segregation. Through "Sing, Unburied, Sing," a dominant theme in the novel, language is used as a channel to put feelings into words. It also has the potential to play a big part in the awareness of the intersection between race, class, and the society we live in.

### Conclusion

In summary, the case studies explored in this study illustrate the complex connection between language variation, identity politics and literature in the post-modern age. The five novels – "The Hate U Give" , "Homegoing," "Hillbilly Elegy," "Exit West," and "Sing, Unburied, Sing" – are proof that writers can masterfully use accepted linguistic diversity to expose the life of the oppressed and also look into issues such as class, gender, race, and migration at different levels. These case studies have revealed the conscientiousness of the authors through their selections of language varieties (including dialects and registers) in the depiction of characters, places and narratives that naturally mirror the socio-political realities. From code-switching involved in the transition between Starr Carter's black neighbourhood and her white school in Angie Thomas's "The Hate U Give" to the language that accentuates the cultural heritage of African families in Yaa Gyasi's "Homegoing", language is a valuable tool for storytelling and social commentary. Moreover, the theoretical basis for systemic functional linguistics has turned up to be a strong foundation for the investigation of the influence of language in creating meanings and identities through literature. Through the prism of Halliday's metafunctions and the linguistic areas of speech, we have seen the language variation as the mirror of social structures and power mechanisms. Besides, the case studies highlight the significance of literature as an area of reflection on justice in society, equity, and representation. By meticulously depicting language mutations and identity politics, contemporary writers go against hegemony and highlight minority voices, as well as the promotion of inclusion and

understanding. And while going forward we should keep exploring the interrelationship of the language, identity and politics in literature, grading the conferring power of linguistic diversity to our ideas and feelings towards the world. Through scrutinising the linguistic stuff used by authors, their connection to personality, and the relationship between the society and social change, we can write down the complexity of human identity and the society. To conclude, literature as a lens by which we see the human condition and a conversation for our common exchange of empathy and sympathy despite our differences.

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