

The Neoliberal Mind Style in the Postcolonial Novel: The Case of Ngozie's *Americanah* and Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*

أسلوب العقل النيوليبرالي في رواية ما بعد الاستعمار: حالة أمريكانا لنقوزي
وأون بلاك سيسترز ستريت ليونيغوي

Le style d'esprit néolibéral dans le roman postcolonial: le cas de *Americanah* de Ngozie et de *On Black Sisters' Street* d'Unigwe

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Introduction

This paper attempts to offer insights into the linguistic manifestations of neoliberal ideology in Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009) through examining the way characters and their mind styles are construed from a cognitive stylistic lens. This mode of analysis equips us with efficient tools to dig out some of the subliminal messages which embody postcolonial writers' ideological points of view about the issues related to postcolonial societies, namely the neoliberal ideology. We will ground our research specifically on the main tenets of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) that is originally constructed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) along with the frameworks developed in Critical Discourse analysis by Van Dijk (2006).

The rationale behind propounding Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the analysis of mind style in postcolonial fiction is grounded on Lakoff and Johnson (1980) 's argument that metaphors can encapsulate political and economic ideologies and aspects of reality. In research rituals whenever ideology is mentioned, Critical discourse analysis automatically comes to the fore as an effective means of analysis. Nevertheless, the reason we have opted for Critical Discourse Analysis is twofold. Firstly, the analysis of ideologies embedded in texts is logically congruent with Fowler's notion of mind style as a site of exposing ideology and they both overlap in that on the one hand ideology is defined by Van Dijk (2006) as the cognitive representations that underlay discourse; on the other hand mind style, as defined by Fowler (1977), also

analyzes the formulation of prejudices and perspectives which bias someone's worldview and which are cognitively structured. Second, postcolonial literature, a literature aiming to prove the existence and treat the problems of previously colonized people, primarily encompasses a wide array of interwoven ideologies encapsulated in characters and narrators' mind styles.

We will amalgamate two pillar modes of literary analysis namely thematic analysis and linguistic analysis in the interpretation of two postcolonial novels namely Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. In this enquiry, we will argue that themes and language are complementary; and blending these two modes enriches our interpretation by providing a systematic analysis from linguistic analysis with having an eye on context by examining the themes present in postcolonial novels so that to ensure an analysis at macro-level as well as micro level. The incorporation of thematic approach and linguistic approach is realized within the frameworks of both Cognitive Poetics, a field that utilizes cognitive linguistic theories in the analysis of literary texts, and Critical Discourse Analysis, a discipline that examines ideology as an interface between cognition and society (Van Dijk, 2006). Cognitive Poetics may share some common tenets with the structuralist or deconstructionist approach. However, the fine difference that distinguishes them is that this interdisciplinary field scrutinizes the cognitive mechanisms that underlay literary texts; second, instead of considering literary texts as mere linguistic data or in isolation from their context, Cognitive Poetics stipulates a deep knowledge about context, literary theory, and philosophy in order to have a clearer view about the work (Stockwell, 2002; Semino, 2009; Gottschall, 2008). In the case of our study, we will analyze the language of the text in parallel with postcolonial themes developed in the narratives namely neoliberalism. The primary aim of postcolonial narratives is to change reality through language. Bearing this in mind, we will examine the linguistic manifestations recurrent in postcolonial literary texts that can tell us more about the circulation of ideologies.

Postcolonial literature refers to the set of literary works produced by previously colonized countries. It is not until the publication of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* where he analyzes a set of European novels which embody a racist attitude towards the Orient that postcolonial theory becomes a branch in its own right. In effect, postcolonial authors treat fundamentally issues related to the period of colonialism providing other stories from the colonized people given the reality that stories about the colonized were exclusively told from the part of colonizers. The underlying premise of the field therefore is to

make colonized people speak for themselves by embellishing the postcolonial Man with agency in a stark attempt to desert passivity that was always attributed to non-westerners. The current concerns and problems of colonized countries are also significantly apparent in the majority of literary works that fall under this category portraying such major themes as racism, otherness, identity fragmentation, corruption, immigration, nostalgia, neoliberalism to name a few. In doing this, writers try to transmute the reality of their countries through coalescing their thoughts and the language they use in their productions embodying an ideology of resistance as a part of their mission to make their voices heard. Therefore, language is an important device that helps the thematic development of the postcolonial novel.

A few decades ago, the linguistically-based analysis of literature has proven to be an effective method to extract minute details about the author, narrator, and characters. This mode of analysis investigates the significance of the linguistic choices apparent in the novel to unveil authorial intention, perspectives, and even ideologies endorsed. The perspectives and ideologies are linguistically referred to as worldview or mind style in cognitive stylistics. The term has been first coined by Roger Fowler in his 1977's *Linguistics and the Novel* to refer to the modes of linguistic representation of reality of an individual, society, or a novel postulating that language and inner representation of outer reality are tightly interconnected. According to him, mind style is "any distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self". Ever since its inception, the concept of mind style has received remarkable attention in literary analyses, among them, deviant mind style reflecting cognitive limitations such as autism (Leech and Short, 2007; Semino, 2014), schizophrenia, autism, and criminal mind (Pinies, 2005), paranoia of the character Miss Shepherd in Alan Bennet's play *The Lady in the Van* (McIntyre and Archer, 2010) difficulties dealing with visual and aural perceptions which stimulate uncertainty, fear, anxiety, discomfort in Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic novel *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Zupan, 2008). In an attempt to break the tendencies of restricting mind style to deviant mind style in previous studies, Pillière (2013) argues that the use of the notion has been limited contrary to the propositions of its first creator. Perhaps following this remark, subsequent studies have extended the concept to include normal mind style like: real mind style and authenticity in war literature in McEwan's *Atonement* (Nutall, 2019) the doctor mind style in the creation of Williams Carols Williams's poetry (Fu, 2017) the antagonistic ideologies against Catholicism and Puritanism of teenage narrator in John McGahern's *The Dark* (Hermosilla and Lazaro, 2020). To our surprise, in reviewing the previous studies

so far, we have found no single study that deals with the correlation between mind style and the thematic development of the postcolonial novel. Grounded on this significant gap and building on Pillière (2013)'s suggestion that the socio-cultural context is essential in the analysis of mind style in narratives, we will examine the way mind style in the postcolonial novel reflects the ideologies and perspectives of characters and narrators. In doing this, we will unveil the subliminal message that is embedded in the linguistic choices of the narratives. i.e, we believe that the textual cues comprise discrete elements that are reflective of characters, authors, and narrators' mind styles using CMT and CDA.

1. Cognitive Stylistics

Among the variety of definitions attributed to the field of Cognitive Stylistics, the simplest one is provided by Gomez (2015) which states that Cognitive Stylistics is the application of Cognitive Linguistic theories to the analysis of literature. Some scholars (e.g. Tsur, 2008; Stockwell, 2002) would burn with resentment over Gomez's over simplified and reductionist definition in the sense that regarding literature as mere data to be analyzed by cognitive linguistic theories may coincide to intersect with the scope of the Formalist approach. Alternatively, other researchers define This hybrid interdisciplinary field that may have been called Cognitive Poetics in some occasions (e.g. Tsur, 2008; Stockwell, 2009) as the use of theories from linguistics, literary studies, and Cognitive Science in the interpretation of literary texts (Tsur, 2008; Semino, 2009). Stockwell (2009) may relatively agree with this definition adding that Cognitive Poetics concerns itself more with the reader and the mental processes he goes through during the reading experience. Others (e.g. Freeman, 2010; Tsur, 2008; Gottschall, 2008) argue that Cognitive Stylistics provides a scientific grounding to literary impressionistic intuition by substituting readers' arbitrary impressionism to objectively consistent interpretations or "shrinking the space of possible explanation" (Gottschall, 2008). In describing the field, Tsur (2008) sums the aforementioned definitions noting that there are two significant tendencies among researchers who practice Cognitive Poetics. First, the impressionistic critics who study exclusively the effects of literary texts yet failing to relate this effect to the structure of the text. Second, the analytic and structuralist critics who describe the structure of the text without clarifying its effects on readers. But to recognize the limitations of each trend is not to negate their importance; instead, Tsur aims to bridge their gaps joining cognitive stylistic traits that underlay the text with their effects on the reader's mental processes.

For our purpose in the present work, we adopt Tsur's seemingly comprehensive definition to delineate the scope of the field of Cognitive Poetics: "Cognitive Poetics (...) offers cognitive theories that systematically account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects." (Tsur, 2008,p. 1). It is worth mentioning that our enquiry strongly opposes Barthes's Death of the Author and Derrida's Deconstruction in the sense that we do not aim to decontextualize the literary text as we strongly believe that the integration of context with a cognitive linguistic analysis can provide a comprehensive account in our critique. Gottschall (2008,p. 17) s view is well congruent with this assumption stating that "The prime activity of literary critics of all theoretical and political slants has been to pry open the craniums of characters, authors, and narrators, climb inside their heads, and spelunk through all the bewildering complexity to figure out what makes them tick."

1.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Among the pillar approaches in Cognitive Linguistics is Conceptual Metaphor Theory that is developed by Johnson and Lakoff (1980) in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*, an outstanding book that marks the beginning of an alliance between Cognitive linguistics and literary criticism. More than a figure of speech, metaphors, according to Johnson and Lakoff, underlay most of our daily experiences as it is evident in recent experiments in neuroscience that on average, people use a metaphor every 20 words. They operate as a mechanism of simplification by generating an infinite number of concepts and experiences in terms of a limited number of basic domains of experiences. Lakoff (1993,p. 203) calls this process 'a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system' where the human brain resorts to more familiar and basic domains of experiences (source domains) in order to make sense of less familiar experiences (target domains). For instance, the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR suggests that the concept argument (target domain) is defined by means of war which is a more familiar concept (source domain) generating such metaphorical expressions as: defending an opinion, attacking a claim, gaining and losing in a debate, bombarding an opponent, etc. In Cognitive Science, this is empirically proved in a recent series of experiments (e.g.) where the metaphoric conceptual structures originate from the same region of the source domain; for example, if you hear it was a bitter experience, the regions associated with taste are activated.

A basic tenet in CMT is Embodied Realism where the human brain constructs mental representations for some experiences based on direct sensory-motor

contact with the outer world: space, possession, force, movement, etc (Johnson and Lakoff, 1999). For instance, wait until you own yourself is a Self-metaphor that is conceptualized as SELF IS AN OBJECT which uses possession schema to handle the complexity of the target domain self. In a series of studies in the field of cognitive linguistics, scholars (e.g. Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Semino, 2002; Semino, 2007; Nutall, 2019) remark that there is a set of conventional metaphors which is widely shared by people of the same culture and which embodies cultural aspects of that community; while in the contrary there can arise some idiosyncratic metaphors that exhibit the way their tellers conceptualize and view the world around them. Semino (2002), for instance, in examining the mind style of the male protagonist Clegg in John Fowles's *The Collector*, notices that he views women as butterflies which is the source domain of conceptualizing women. The metaphor WOMEN ARE BUTTERFLIES is an idiosyncratic metaphor that conveys Clegg's deviant tendency to fantasize women as sexual objects. Thus, the construction of metaphors grounds itself on an analogous simulation where, in Nutall (2018) s words, "metaphor (...) involves taking the mental operations involved in one area of experience and applying them to another set of circumstances."

In order to meet the aims of our study, it is adequate to set out to explore both idiosyncratic and conventional metaphors that are reflective of the worldview and ideologies authors, narrators, and characters endorse by examining the prevalent source domains upon which authors and characters construct their utterances.

1.2. Mind Style

In simple terms, mind style refers to the way we view and experience situations in the world. If two persons witness the same event, they would probably describe it differently depending on their way of conceptually processing information. For example, an architect can describe a house in geometrical terms, a woman can refer to it emotionally as family niche that comprises affection, a property dealer describes it by means of its economic value, and so on. As previously mentioned, the term mind style is first introduced by Fowler in his book *Linguistics and The Novel* (1977) in an attempt to denote the consistency of linguistic patterns that demonstrate one's mental self referring to Halliday's analysis of Golding's projection of the Neanderthal man in *The Inheritors* and the way he uses syntactic structures to show the primitive and limited cognitive abilities of the character. Fowler further emphasizes the extent to which examining vocabulary and syntax are remarkably important to infer the mind styles of James Joyce's Lenold Bloom

being vulgar and lacking intellectual fitness, Jenny Bunn's shallowness and poverty of content, Benjy's retarded mind in Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*. Semino (2002) accuses Fowler for regarding mind style as synonymous to the ideological point of view; in contrast, she argues that the relationship between these notions is complementary but their essences should be delineated in the sense that the notion of the ideological point of view refers to features of social, cultural, religious, and political world views for instance, a character's tendency to view the role of human species in the economic system or the attitudes towards a specific ethnic group; while the notion of "mind style" denotes the cognitive and personal aspects of worldviews which are specific to an individual or common to individuals who share the same cognitive habits for example, autism. Schizophrenia, higher order intelligence and wit and so on. In our enquiry, we refer to mind style as the ideological point of view for it is most suitably consistent with the analysis of novels in a postcolonial context since we will rely also on Critical Discourse Analysis that marries the cognitive and social aspects of ideology.

2. A Brief Note on Methodology

Among the various approaches to textual analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis, an interdisciplinary approach developed by Van Dijk to explore the way ideologies, as basic frameworks, organize the social cognitions shared by people. Ideology, in broader terms, refers to the set of ideas and beliefs that guide someone's attitudes and beliefs that may perhaps in turn influence the personal cognitions of this individual (Van Dijk, 2006). For this, Van Dijk proposes some basic domains of ideological expression that can enrich our understanding about how ideology shapes and in some occasions manipulates human thought and behavior including: surface structures, syntax, lexicon, rhetoric, pragmatics, etc.

It is evident in a series of studies (e.g. Semino, 2002; Nutall, 2018) that the Conceptual Metaphor Theory can be most appropriate to the analysis of the ideological point of view because there is an overlapping of their scopes. While mind style is defined as the linguistic representation of how an individual conceptualizes reality, metaphors project the way certain communities or individuals conceptualize reality in the form of conventional or idiosyncratic metaphors. In addition, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), the construction of metaphors is an unconscious process which may expose more accurate images to certain phenomena that have long received controversy such as self, mind, time, etc. This is why we adopt Conceptual Metaphor Theory to approach the postcolonial literary texts and further decipher the latently

endorsed ideologies present in the text. In addition, we will provide evidence from CDA to prove the efficiency of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

3. Neoliberalism in the Postcolonial Novel

Neoliberalism is the current economic and political ideology that is sweeping almost every aspect of the modern world. It receives wide attention in the recent years regarding its policies, effects on the individual and the social fabric, and its benefits and drawbacks in world economy. Neoliberalism through massive privatization has gradually shifted human life into benefit-cost metric where, unlike liberalism, the line between public sphere and private sphere is blurred and substituted by free market (Wilson, 2018). Put a little differently, in the liberal system the market was part of the private sphere; and state which is part of the public intervenes in both sectors to preserve human rights through welfare state and security of basic social services; conversely, neoliberalism allows free market to control all social aspects to optimize profit (Rottenberg, 2018; Wilson, 2018); and government, in Chomsky's words, "should get out of the way." Hence, people lay bare at the mercy of market laws which serve capital owners and the elites favoring profit over people (Chomsky, 1999).

The underlying competition principle in neoliberal economy sets people in perpetual racing which results in anxiety and insecurity, as Wilson (2018) notes, "as human capital, the self is something that can always be further developed, expanded, maximized, and optimized. There is no endpoint (...) Self-fulfillment is impossible because there is always potential for more self-appreciation." Wilson's positive register ends in a tragic phrase about the impossibility of self-fulfillment, despite competition and thrift, which summarizes the real essence of neoliberal perpetual subjugation. Adding that the mechanism of self-appreciation pushes the individual to internally perceive oneself as a subject of investment; thus, he tends persistently to convince employers with his potentials to maintain his status as Wilson believes that because of the danger of insecurity and disposability in the current workplace, workers internalize the fact that they are brands and therefore thrive to present themselves "as valuable commodities and sound investments (...) workers must develop and manage their own branded personae for their audience of potential employers and consumers". The problem of Neoliberalism is not only invisible human rights violation, but the illusionary promise of prosperity in thrift and competition which Chomsky calls the device of manufacture consent of the governed by progressive opinion while individuals endorse it vaguely and blindly. This system controls the public mind through crafting a manual of how worthy individuals should be by labeling them with captivating egocentric parameters to describe

their potential like: self-appreciating and personally responsible. This culture of personal responsibility and self-appreciation carries an intensified oppression that is hardly visible and difficult to articulate (Wilson, 2018). With the absence of government in providing social security, capital owners cease the opportunity to exploit people and women per se in low-wage jobs, often without insurance (In America, nearly one in six working mothers who have children under 18 are in low wage jobs and 37 per cent of employed women in Africa were poor in 2018).

With the dangers of the neoliberal ideology discussed so far, some scholars (e.g. Brown, 2019; Donnelly, 2019) go further with an assumption stressing strongly the fact that Neoliberalism happens to be a continuous form of imperialism. These political critics agree that it is not only figuring out and protesting against Neoliberalism and its danger including the historical reproduction of inequality with the suppression of human and social solidarity are needed, but a deep awareness of this economic order as a continuous manifestation of imperialism in 21st century. In line with a well-established tradition in postcolonial writing that locates itself in mainstream social and political activism and concerns itself fundamentally with issues of imperialism and cultural hegemony as firstly pointed by Edward Said's seminal books *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism*, neoliberalism may coincide to be an interesting topic that may solicit postcolonial writers. In a similar vein Sarkowsky and Stein (2021) agree that postcolonial theory can be conceived primarily as a cradle of perpetual ideological struggles while postcolonial critics generally treat these ideologies including neoliberal ideology as sources of systematic oppression. In parallel with the newly published load of literature on neoliberalism, few literary works and even fewer critical literary analyses to these works highlight this regime as an imperial practice. In the recent years, the concept of neoliberalism has conquered the discourse of economic, sociological, psychological, feminist, and human rights debates, but the challenges of representing how neoliberalism becomes a tool for social control aesthetically and the critical response to such a phenomenon, which can powerfully raise people's awareness to this new kind of imperialism, signifies that literary treatments of the danger of neoliberalism are falling behind in comparison. Nevertheless, as if compelled by these dangerous effects of Neoliberalism, Unigwe and Ngozie take upon themselves the mission to unravel the secrets of this system and capture aesthetically individuals and society under this hegemony.

The novel *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009) is written by Chika Unigwe, a Nigerian diasporic female writer. We have picked this work because it meets

our overall aim in two ways. First, it tackles the topic of prostitution from a different angle where protagonists are not depicted as pure victims but it allows us to unveil how neoliberalism tames individuals to meet the interests of the minority wealth owners and makes them consent to be dehumanized. Second, it comprises an array of prevalent neoliberal register that conquers the discourse of people and goes unnoticed. The story revolves around four young African girls who are sent separately to Belgium by a procurer called Dele who promises them to provide a job that can save them from poverty. The girls, right after their arrival to Belgium, meet Madam, the governess of the business of prostitution who exercises a purely neoliberal ideology regarding her perceptions about the girls as human capital. One of the girls, Sisi or called Chisom back in Nigeria, though a graduate from Banking studies, is quite unaware to the fact that Madam and Dele exploit her mainly because of the numbness caused by the allusions that ground the neoliberal system and its ability to control human action. The novel does not only denude the underlying mechanism by which neoliberalism controls human actions but it also indicates the appearance of new planes of oppression in a hostile neoliberal economic system where benefit-cost metric informs human lifestyle and interconnections. Along with the traditional forms of oppression, the author highlights the pressure that the economic system puts on individuals and how capital owners impose dominance on employees; especially the layer of immigrants and poor people. Unigwe tackles this serious subject to uncover the underlying greed and wickedness of capital owners and the imperialist nature of this system epitomized in Dele's cross continental control.

Americanah, a novel written by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie in 2013 for which she won one of the most literary awards in the US, The National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) award. It tells the story of a young Nigerian girl called Ifemelu who immigrates to the US to continue her studies. Ifemelu, with experiencing a cultural shock, realizes the difficulty of the stressful life in America especially the harsh hustle to earn a living under a neoliberal economy before she decides to free herself and return to her country. The journey to discover America begins with her depression because of the economic burdens namely, the rent and the overloaded bills that mar her life. It is not until she meets the tennis coach who offered her money for transactional sex that she discovers the worst that this economic system can bring. In parallel, Ngozie projects utterly the drastic changes that happen to the personality of Auntie Uju, a doctor and Ifemelu's cousin. After she was carefree, sociable, exquisitely feminine, and confident, Auntie Uju becomes a very cautious, self-enclosed,

devoid of any feminine trait but a neutral individual who is absorbed in the cyclic life dictated by neoliberal economy. One of the many appealing characteristics of the novel is the ability of the author to assign linguistic specificities that are representative of the newly emergent discursive register of Neoliberalism and which is in a significant way pervasive and widely accepted by people.

Notwithstanding their different plots, both *Americanah* and *On Black Sisters' Street* zoom in the mechanism with which neoliberalism manipulates people along with its felt consequences on both society and individuals. As if to apply the load everyday phenomena directly or indirectly linked to the literature recently published on the danger of neoliberalism, Unigwe and Ngozie skillfully extract the individual from the hustle and echoe his sufferings in modern society exhibiting neoliberal ideas and their direct impact on individuals. In the present study, I claim that Unigwe and Ngozie adopt an anti-neoliberal stance in their denunciation of the oppression imposed by neoliberal economic system and its negative impact at the level of individual and society. This anti-neoliberal stance is projected linguistically in the utterances of narrator and characters. We suggest that a procedure that examines the novel within a framework that interrogates how the dogmas of neoliberal ideology that conquers all aspects of life becomes a tool for dominance, slavery, hierarchy, self-enclosed individualism, and social control- problems that both Unigwe and Adichie highlight in their novels- are integrated and channeled in discourse. We will expand one of the four principles about neoliberalism as cited by Wilson (2018): disposability. We examine how this neoliberal fact is internalized and reflected linguistically in the novels with reference to the way this economic system aims to configure the human as *homo economicus*.

4. Reading *Americanah* And *On Black Sisters' Street* As Novels Using Conceptual Metaphor To Reflect The Neoliberal Mind Style

The effect of neoliberalism on the individual is striking. This regime has brought forth the worst record for dehumanization on a gigantic scale. The dehumanization of people through the instrumentation of neoliberal ideals was deliberate through the marketization of all aspects of life including human beings. It transforms them into human capital which are considered agents to generate money. As if to accentuate this process, Unigwe uses the job of prostitution. First, the neoliberal system changes the word prostitution for sex work to naturalize the nature of the job and ground it on explicit benefit-cost relationships. Second, prostitution can be an adequate site to render the

symbolization of neoliberal laws of marketization more visible and direct. Third, through assigning linguistic idiosyncrasies to each character, the author aims to spotlight how people internalize a habit of representing oneself as human capital. This is evident in the humiliation of Sisi's death by the cold-hearted bossy materialist Madam who acts normally to Sisi's Death. On the occasion of Sisi's death, the narrator describes,

Sisi's death brings their own mortality close to them. The same questions go through their heads, speech bubbles rising in front of each of them. Who is going to die next? To lie like a sheet of paper unnoticed on the floor? Unmourned. Unloved. Unknown. Who will be the next ghost Madam will try to keep away with the power of her incense? Nobody says it, but they are all aware that the fact that Madam is going about her normal business, no matter what they are, is upsetting them. There is bitterness at the realization that for her, Sisi's death is nothing more than a temporary discomfort] ... [she added, "Another one bites the dust, in a voice that she might have used to talk about the death of a dog or a cockroach.

This excerpt demonstrates some of the linguistic manifestations of a typically neoliberal conceptual metaphor present in the narrative: PEOPLE ARE MERCHANDISE. This conceptual metaphor is an idiosyncratic metaphor that is not known among English speakers but reflects the creative and aesthetic view through which Unigwe configures the practices of Neoliberalism. CMT is a tool of identifying patterns of the narrator's mapping which conceptualizes people (target domain) by means of merchandise (source domain). The simile to lie like a sheet of paper and the word ghost symbolizes the dehumanization practiced by Madam where Sisi, the human being is considered a lifeless substance through an analogy with a thing without a soul. All the repetitive manifestations of this metaphor throughout the novel may be considered markedly expressive demonstrating a special cognitive habit of the narrator to creatively depict people as lifeless and deprived from humanity in an attempt to dramatize his/her dissatisfaction with the life dictated by neoliberal credentials. Through the consistent use of this metaphor, the narrator grabs the readers' attention highlighting the deviant mind style of Madam that she believes that people indeed are commodities tolerating her own attitude because, for her, the girls can only be seen as capital specks that can generate money.

In Ngozie's narrative, the narrator similarly describes Ifemelu's feelings after she has received the one hundred dollars for a service, she could never imagine herself doing: "She felt like a small ball, adrift and alone. The world was a big,

big place and she was so tiny, so insignificant, rattling around empty.” The narrator emphasizes the degree of degradation one can witness in neoliberal society. Lakoff and Johnson point out that when some political or economic ideologies ignore personal or cultural meaningfulness, they are said to be dehumanizing. They further argue that political and economic metaphors are able to hide aspects of reality; and thus, if accepted blindly can lead to human degradation. This is evident in Madam’s reaction towards the tragic event of Sisi’s death. The death of Sisi is economized as it is considered a temporary discomfort that may cause a diminution of revenues as Madam, the capital owner regards Sisi as a failure because she cannot produce material value. In addition, Madam does not only act normally to the event and continue her business as usual but also points to the ineffectivity and failure of Sisi and even conceptualizes Sisi’s attempt to free herself from the shackles of manipulation as a loss of an opportunity, a pillar allusion in Neoliberalism. The girls were absorbed in their materialistic hustle life and Sisi’s death and Madam’s reaction come as an epiphany that makes them realize and understand the nature of their existence from an entirely different perspective- they are mere capital agents.

There is another major conventional metaphor **LABOUR IS A RESOURCE** proposed by Lakoff and Johnson and which also underlay the metaphor **PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES**. The difference between these metaphors is while **PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES** is an idiosyncratic metaphor used by the narrator to describe and dramatize Madam’s perceptions, **LABOUR IS A RESOURCE** is a conventional metaphor that is more general and used by all industrialized nations in their economic theories and policies; unfortunately, this metaphor can be deemed illusionary because it hides the reality of whether the labor is meaningful or dehumanizing (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). They explain that in **LABOUR IS A RESOURCE** metaphor, Labor (target domain) is equated with natural resources or commodities (source domain) and business men always talk of this labor in the same terms as the cost and supply of raw material and commodities. The analysis of such a metaphor and its conceptual mapping may answer the controversial questions: why is there a wide acceptance of neoliberal ideology despite the fact that it is mainly exploitative ? And how do a minority wealth owners manage to convince the majority of laborers to be enslaved ? The metaphor **LABOUR IS A RESOURCE** is manifest largely in Unigwe’s narrative but its most intense manifestation occurs in the narrator’s description of the business of Efe a few years after the death of Sisi. Consider the excerpt below :

The women would be called into the room one at a time for the buyers to see and admire. They would all have numbers, for names were not important. Their names would be chosen by whoever bought them. Names that would be easy for white clients to pronounce. Easy enough to slide off the tongue. (...) “Imagine her inside a window. This one is material for catching plenty white men. Look at her color.” (...) “She is one good investment.” Number Three’s smile grew wider. Efe would buy numbers Five and Seven. Number Five because she smiled easily. Number Seven because she looked docile and eager to please, the sort of girl who was grateful with little. Like Madam, Efe would have some police officers on her payroll to ensure the security of her girls and her business. She would do well in the business, buying more girls to add to her fleet.

The passage explicitly demonstrates the consistent correspondings between the two domains: labor and resource which are projected linguistically. In this way, sex trafficking is conceptualized in terms of economic words; for instance: buyers, investment, business and so on epitomizing the power of neoliberalism to naturalize oppression through discourse. What is striking about this passage is the ultimate dehumanization of girls by labeling them with numbers, erasing their names, and emptying them from any identity marker. However, while *LABOUR IS A RESOURCE* is a conventional metaphor, identifying the girls with numbers is considerably creative in Unigwe’s narrative because in normal situations human beings should hold a name that is representative of their individual identities and distinguishes them from others. In a similar vein, the attitudes of these business owners can be understood in the light of Johnson and Lakoff’s comments that the metaphor *LABOUR IS A RESOURCE* assumes keeping the low cost of resources which is a good thing in economy. Here, girls are understood as resources and the cost of these resources should be kept down to boost profits. As if providing a manual to the mechanism of the neoliberal system, Unigwe does not only present the girls as sound investments through the trafficker’s proposal, but she also juxtaposes it, through the narrator’s description, with the mind style of a girl who is defined as eager to please or in technical terms: self-investing. The girl accepts the rules of this business and ends up presenting herself as in Rottenberg’s term “speck of capital” and thus take upon herself the mission that she must convince them that she is a good investment. The trafficker’s diction (look, imagine, material) tends to activate the audiences’s visual schematas following a tradition of marketing that attempts to convince people to buy a certain product by establishing a debate between words and the unconscious mind. Though Efe

suffered from the oppressive circumstances in her occupation as a prostitute, the choice of Efe's business cannot be random for Unigwe wants to stress the historical reproduction of inequalities and the cyclic oppression inherent in Neoliberal economy.

In Americanah, a similar interpretation of self-investment is consistent with an event of the call from a customer service where the narrator dramatizes the extent to which an employee strives to please customers in order to maintain his job: "an aggressive customer service friendliness that was not aggressive at all; it was as though he was saying what he had been trained to say but was mortally worried about offending her." The use of oxymoron aggressive friendliness creates a dramatic effect portraying an absolute confusion paired with neoliberal dogmas. *LABOUR IS A RESOURCE* also appears in Auntie Uju's complaint about her job "honestly to be a resident doctor is slave labor." The grounding in this simile is that resident doctors in America do too much work for little gain just as slaves. Since healthcare system in America is privatized, its underlying neoliberal policies determine the aggressive attitude of capital owners to keep the wages very low so that they maximize the profits.

Unigwe centralizes Dele, the trafficker, as an epitome of ultimate oppression and manipulation via his neoliberal stance. Utilizing the same neoliberal metaphor *LABOUR IS A RESOURCE*, Dele chooses upon a variety of registers a semantic field of business when addressing the girls: money, cost, rent, installments, buy, etc. Similar with the mind style of Madam, Dele views the death of Sisi as a loss of profit in the excerpt below which is a conversation of Dele with Madam :

"Yes, yes, Kate. I trust you. I trust say you go take the necessary steps. Dat gal just fin' my trouble. She cost me money. How much money you pay de police ? I know. Yes. Tell de gals make dem no try insubordinate me. I warn all da gals, nobody dey mess with Senghor Dele. Nobody ! You treat these gals well and wetin dey go do ? Just begin misbehave. Imagine ! All my gals, I treat good. I dey tell dem before dem comot. I dey dey straight wit dem. Me, I be good man. I just dey try to help poor gals."

The phrase she cost me money reflects the way Dele regards Sisi as a property that he buys with money. The cruel irony in all this is the fact that he has taken Sisi's life in cold blood but still blames her for her attempt to free herself. He even believes that he is a good man and he just tries to help poor girls. In his self-presentation, the tennis coach in Americanah also uses positive attributes to conceal the negative aspects of his personality "I work so hard

I can't sleep. I can't relax. I don't do drugs so I figured I need help to relax. You can give me a massage, help me relax, you know. I had somebody doing it before (...) Helped her with a lot of her college debt." Again, like Dele, he presents himself as kind though he has been exploiting the girl in an unethical affair. Both Dele and the tennis coach reverse roles with the girls they are exploiting where they present themselves as kind or ultimately as victims like in the case of Dele, a phenomenon widely shared by wealth owners who tend to justify their manipulation by claiming to have good intentions: "dominance is semantically signalled by positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation or derogation." (Van Dijk, 1993).

At the pragmatic level, it is evident that when Dele uses threatening words, he is implying a relation of inequality and inferiorization since Van Dijk (2006) affirms that "commands and threats (...) presuppose relations of dominance and power." It is worth mentioning that before establishing this relation of inequality, he repeatedly adopts the technique of vagueness and impreciseness in his initial dialogue with the girls so that he can soften the harshness of his offers :

1. "She dey go work. You wan' go, too ? You wan' go abroad, too ?
2. "If you wan' comot from dis our nonsense country, come see me, make we talk, he continued loudly, not giving the girl a chance to say anything.
3. "I dey get girls everywhere. Italy. Spain. I fit get you inside Belgium. Antwerp. I get plenty connections there. Plenty, plenty !

Through saying too much about the peripheries without ever mentioning directly the heart of the matter, Dele wants to distract and hypnotize his prays. Similarly, the tennis coach in Americanah employs this strategy when he is trying to convince Ifemelu to work for him.

"So here's the deal. There are two positions, one for office work and the other for help relaxing. The office position has already been filled. She started yesterday, she goes to Bryn Mawr, and she'll spend the whole week just clearing up my backlog of stuff. I bet I have some unopened checks in there somewhere." He withdrew a hand to gesture towards his messy desk. "Now what I need is help to relax. If you want the job you have it. I'd pay you a hundred dollars, with the possibility of a raise, and you'd work as needed, no set schedule."

If the passage is read in isolation, one could never tell that this man wants transactional sex for money. The tennis coach tints his utterances with ultimate professionalism by vaguely using clichés related to professional meetings but

never being direct. Perhaps the most direct utterance is when he says “I just need some human contact to relax” where he uses euphemism to reduce the tension and make the dangerous matter more digestible. It is apparent that he is very careful in choosing his words. Whenever he alludes to the service he wants, he juxtaposes it with a mention to money so that he confuses and disorients his victims since he knows that no one can lower himself/herself and go to an unknown house unless he/she are in desperate need of money.

Conclusion

This article has analyzed two postcolonial novels: Ngozie’s *Americanah* and Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters’ Street* from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Our goal was to examine the authors’ use of conceptual metaphors in the formation of mind styles of characters and narrator to embody ideological perspectives, namely neoliberalism and anti-neoliberalism; and to back up this examination with Critical Discourse Analysis. In both novels, we have found that the use of the metaphor *LABOUR IS A RESOURCE* disrupts our habitual ways of conceiving the experience of labour. Perhaps, the use of this metaphor is largely prevalent in *On Black Sisters’ Street* because of the nature of the overall subject treated in the novel compared to *Americanah* where there are few direct encounters with wealth owners. In Unigwe’s narrative, we have found through the analysis of metaphors and CDA that *Dele* and *Madam* are typical examples of neoliberal mind style. In *Americanah*, the tennis coach uses the strategies of manipulation forged by neoliberal policies to convince his victims to do him unethical services for money. In our examination of both works, we have remarked a tendency among characters who follow the neoliberal orthodoxy to substitute the word prostitution with business grounded diction as work, occupation, business, etc to make the disastrous violations of human rights seem natural and more digestible. In response, both narrators of *Americanah* and *On Black Sisters’ Street* endorse an anti-neoliberal stance where they tend to harshly criticize the way neoliberalism commodifies human beings.

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine mind style in two postcolonial novels, Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. We will demonstrate how neoliberal ideology is conveyed linguistically by means of characters' mind styles. In doing this, we argue that it is productive to link Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and postcolonial theory to arrive at a comprehensive image to the way the author attributes

neoliberal aspects to his characters for the purpose of highlighting the danger of this ideology in postcolonial societies. Throughout the analysis, we will explain the significance of the authors' linguistic choices that are attributed to novel's characters and their importance in the thematic development of postcolonial novel. Specifically, we will adopt the main principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to dig out the conceptual processes that set the mind style that adopts a neoliberal ideology backing them up with Critical Discourse Analysis.

Keywords

Mind Style, Cognitive Stylistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Postcoloniality, Neoliberalism

مستخلص

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى فحص أسلوب العقل في روايتين لمابعد الكولونيالية، أمريكانا لشيما ماندا نقوزي أديشي وفي شارع بلاك سيسترز لتشيكا يونغوي. سوف نثبت أن الإيديولوجيا النيوليبرالية محمولة في اللغة عن طريق أسلوب عقل الشخصيات. لتحقيق هذا، سنبين أنه من المفيد ربط نظرية الإستعارة المفاهيمية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، والنظرية البعد كولونيالية للوصول إلى صورة شاملة للطريقة التي ينسب بها المؤلف الجوانب النيوليبرالية إلى شخصياته بغرض تسليط الضوء على خطر هذه الإيديولوجيا في المجتمعات البعد كولونيالية. خلال التحليل، سوف نشرح أهمية الخيارات اللغوية التي ينسبها الكاتب لبعض الشخصيات و أهميتها في تطور تيمات الروايات لمابعد الكولونيالية. على وجه التحديد، سوف نعتد المبادئ الأساسية لنظرية الإستعارة المفاهيمية لاستخراج العمليات المفاهيمية التي تحدد الأسلوب العقلي النيوليبرالي مدعمين هذا بتحليل الخطاب النقدي.

كلمات مفتاحية

أسلوب العقل، أسلوبية معرفية، نظرية الإستعارة المفاهيمية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، مابعد الكولونيالية، نيوليبرالية.

Résumé

Cet article vise à examiner le style d'esprit dans deux romans postcoloniaux, *Americanah* de Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie et *On Black Sisters' Street* de Chika Unigwe. Nous montrerons comment l'idéologie néolibérale est véhiculée linguistiquement à travers les styles d'esprit des personnages. Ce faisant, nous soutenons qu'il est productif de lier la théorie de la métaphore conceptuelle, l'analyse critique du discours et la théorie postcoloniale pour arriver à une image complète de la façon dont l'auteur attribue des aspects néolibéraux à ses personnages dans le but de mettre en évidence le danger de cette idéologie dans les sociétés postcoloniales. Tout au long de l'analyse, nous expliquerons la signification des choix linguistiques des auteurs attribués aux personnages du roman et leur importance dans le développement thématique du roman postcolonial. Plus précisément, nous adopterons les grands principes de la

théorie de la métaphore conceptuelle pour creuser les processus conceptuels qui définissent le style d'esprit qui adopte une idéologie néolibérale en les soutenant avec l'analyse critique du discours.

Mots-clés

Style d'esprit, Stylistique cognitive, Théorie de la métaphore conceptuelle, Analyse critique du discours, Postcolonialité, Néolibéralisme