



## From Oppression to Expression: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice*

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### Article

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### Abstract

*This study applies Critical Discourse Analysis to the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* to examine the role of language in shaping meaning, constructing identity, and reflecting power dynamics. Focusing particularly on the linguistic patterns of the protagonist, Adunni, the research investigates how language operates as both a medium of resistance and a vehicle for personal and social agency. The protagonist's evolving command over language is analyzed as a crucial factor in her journey from marginalization toward empowerment. The analysis delves into how discursive practices within the novel reinforce or subvert entrenched power hierarchies related to class, gender, and socio-economic status. Through a close reading of key dialogues and narrative structures, the study demonstrates that while language is often used to enforce structural inequalities, it also serves as a powerful tool for challenging them. Adunni's unique voice, shaped by her socio-linguistic background and lived experiences, exemplifies how linguistic expression becomes central to identity formation and self-assertion within oppressive systems. Furthermore, the research deconstructs how social control is maintained through language, while also emphasizing the capacity of the oppressed to reclaim power through discursive strategies. The findings affirm that *The Girl with the Louding Voice* not only portrays systemic injustice but also celebrates the resilience and agency of marginalized voices through language. By highlighting the intersection of language, power, and identity, this study contributes to postcolonial literary discourse and reaffirms the transformative potential of voice and narrative in socio-political resistance.*

### Keywords:

*Critical Discourse Analysis, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Language and Power, Resistance in Discourse, Identity Formation, Oppression and Subversion in Literature.*

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## 1. Introduction

Abi Daré's gripping novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* follows the novel of a young Adunni, a Nigerian girl. The novel, which is set in a patriarchal and repressive environment, illuminates Adunni's struggle for agency and a voice in a society that often stifles females' ambitions. Adunni's perseverance emerges as a major theme as she negotiates the complexity of her surroundings. Gender inequality, forced marriages, and the fight for education are all prominent in the novel, which offer a moving perspective on the difficulties that many girls in Nigeria and elsewhere experience.

The novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is based on self-discovery and empowerment. Adunni's will to break free from social norms and discover her voice is a potent metaphor for the larger challenges that women in a culture where they are often ostracized confront. The novel asks readers to consider the structural problems that support gender-based inequality and the fortitude needed to fight these standards via the prism of Adunni's experiences. Readers are enthralled by Abi Daré's storytelling because of its compelling tale, colourful characters, and common need for autonomy and individuality.

The current study aims to investigate power dynamics and societal construct in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis. Fairclough's model investigates the ways language and discourse shape power dynamics and determine the social standing. Additionally, critical discourse analysis interprets discourses related to gender, sexuality, race, and class. By bearing this notion in mind, the researcher has opted for the three-dimensional model of Fairclough as a theoretical framework to achieve the objectives of this study.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the current studies, there is a conspicuous lack of a thorough examination of the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) lens, despite its rich thematic content. Therefore, closing this gap is essential for both a deeper understanding of the novel and its relevance in larger conversations about modern societal challenges. This study aims to point to language, discourse, and power dynamics at play in the novel, which would enable readers to fully appreciate the novel's potential contributions to the discussion on inequality and social justice. Moreover, thorough critical discourse analysis of *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the study investigates the ways in which language is used to support or subvert dominant beliefs.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

This study aims:

- To examine and evaluate the linguistic structures, allegories, and rhetorical strategies in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* to learn how language shapes meaning and how social groupings are portrayed
- To analyze the discourse practices in the novel, paying particular attention to exchanges of ideas, interactions, and power relations, to see how language is used in a variety of settings and circumstances, exposing both resistance and dominant discourses
- To examine historical, political, and social contexts to place the novel in a larger sociocultural framework and comprehend how the power dynamics shown in the novel relate to larger society structures.

### 1.3. Research Questions

This study aims at answering the following questions:

- What role does language play in the meaning in the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice*?

- In what way does the power dynamics in the novel either reinforce or contradict larger social structures, especially when it comes to themes of gender, class, and social hierarchies?
- How can the novel's discourse practice such as, character interactions and dialogues showcase power relationships as well as moments of subversion or resistance?

#### **1.4. Significance of Study**

In the field of critical discourse studies, this work is very important. Through the application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, this study seeks to provide significant contributions to scholarly discourse. The following factors may be used to define the study's significance:

1. Exposing Power Relations
2. Enhancement of Literary Scholarship
3. Fostering Social Understanding
4. Educational Implications
5. Cultural Dialogue

#### **1.5. Delimitation**

This research focuses only on applying Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model to *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Instead of exploring larger literary or cultural settings, the study focuses exclusively on linguistic and discursive features within the novel, restricting the scope to the investigation of language usage and power relations. The research focuses on the internal discourse and linguistic patterns found in the novel rather than providing an analysis of the author's intentions or outside influences that may have influenced the work's production.

## **2. Review of Literature**

As this is a current novel and it has been published in February 2020, there is dearth of research works on this novel. The study by Cartei et al. (2019) underlines the significance of vocal expression in both reflecting and resisting societal gender norms by drawing attention to the fact that children may manage how they portray masculinity and femininity via voice. The researchers also examine how peer audiences impact children's vocal masculinity and femininity, underscoring the impact of social relationships on vocal performances. This is consistent with the novel's examination of the ways in which society shapes Adunni's voice and her attempts to fit in. The study offers insightful information on the subtleties of vocal expressiveness and how it relates to gender stereotypes.

Also, Firingawaty and Nurcahyani (2021) have written an article *Empowerment in The Girl with the Louding Voice*. This article focuses on how the main character of the story reaches the level of empowerment and gets her dreams to reality. They have incorporated qualitative research with descriptive and analytical methods. Moreover, the researchers have used matrix of domination and self-definition theories to deduce that girls and women in some societies are facing severe problems towards their empowerment. The study mainly focuses on the struggle of the protagonist to prove that if a woman in any society comes forward to change her life, she can and nobody can stop her. They denounce the idea that women are mentally weak and have less courage as compared to men. However, the study by Firingawaty and Nurcahyani (2021) does not address any linguistic aspect of the novel.

Besides, the research work by Anwar and Setyowati (2023) looks at the purpose of small chat, or phatic language, in interactions between characters in the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. They also explored the female protagonist's resistance against subjugation based on gender in the novel. They examine the protagonist's experiences with different types of subordination and talk about how she confronts and subverts these oppressive systems. The study carried out by these researchers did not address any linguistic aspect of the novel.

Furthermore, Gita Saputri et al. (2023) have conducted a study to investigate feminism in the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The research has employed a qualitative descriptive analytical technique to unearth different types of feminism and resistance in the novel. The entire focus of this study is on liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Socialist and Existential feminism in the novel. However, the research doesn't incorporate any strategy to analyse linguistic patterns underlying the novel.

In addition, King and Pringle (2018) highlight the importance of amplifying disadvantaged perspectives by discussing the counter stories of black girls' formal and informal learning experiences in STEM. The ethics of ownership are examined by Mitchell et al. (2023) in participatory visual research, with a focus on the significance of rural girls' ownership reflections. This aligns with the novel's theme of empowerment and agency. Furthermore, Zimmerman et al. (2021) investigates how gender-unequal norms and empowerment relate to early adolescents, offering insights into the dynamics of power and gender, two major issues in the novel. However, this research didn't focus on any linguistic aspect of the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice*.

On the other hand, many researchers have used Fairclough's three-dimensional model in their studies. Sabir and Kanwal (2018) used this model to analyze the poem of Robert Frost *Fire and Ice*. The researchers have used qualitative research methodology to identify the hidden ideology of the poet in making and producing the text of the selected poem. The study deduces that Robert Frost has emphasized the idea that people should be moderate in carrying out certain actions in their lives to restrain untoward circumstances that can be caused to anyone.

Adding to the same idea, Akbar et al. (2019) made use of a three-dimensional model of CDA by Norman Fairclough to investigate the Partai Amanat political campaign. The focus of this study was on the linguistic features of the political banners. The researchers used qualitative research approach in this study to analyse the collected data. The research found out that text and visual are interdependent and are inseparable when examining political banner campaigns.

Moreover, the Fairclough model has been used to investigate the political speech of four candidates in Rasht City Council elections, by Jalali (2014). The study focuses on the analysis of ideological discourse structures in their political speech to persuade their interlocutors by legitimizing their own ideas. The research has made use of interviews, posters and questionnaires to gather data and subsequently, analyze the data through analytical methods to unearth persuasive techniques, power relations and ideological strategies. The study finds the theme of power through the interpretation of registers and imperative sentences used by the candidates.

Besides, the results of all the research works that have been conducted to explore the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* have been inconclusive, as majority of them focused on the literary aspects of the novel. Therefore, further research is warranted to establish a more precise and comprehensive linguistic analysis of the novel. Such research endeavors have the potential to provide valuable insights into the linguistic features at play in the novel and to investigate the ways they contribute towards the main themes and aspects of *The Girl with the Louding Voice*.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study applies Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to the novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* using a qualitative research approach. The objective of the study is to identify the ways language, power, and ideology interact in the novel. The novel itself serves as the main source of data for this study. To find patterns that contribute to the meaning and depiction of social groups in the novel, the researcher will identify important phrases, metaphors, and rhetorical techniques. This entails dissecting character relationships, discourse, and moments of subversion, resistance, or power dynamics. The researcher will focus on how characters question or establish power hierarchies via language.



Moreover, the study also incorporates critical analysis of the ways in which language within the novel serves to perpetuate or alter power dynamics and ideologies. Through reflection, this method seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the novel's implications for resistance, injustice, and social justice. Besides, in order to preserve the validity and reliability of the study, any possible biases will be recognized and taken into consideration. By using this research technique, the study aims to provide insights into how language functions in the context of *The Girl with the Louding Voice*.

### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model is a framework which is used to analyse any text to unearth power relationships. It has been divided into three main components which he named as textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice. Textual analysis as per Fairclough deals with the analysis of a text in which it delineates the grammatical structures, cohesion, word choices, tenses and the usage of active and passive constructions. Its basic purpose is to analyze the linguistic features of an underlying text to explain the ways in which meanings are constructed and communicated to the audience. It is further divided into three components, which see who are the producers of a text and the ways the writer has produced certain text. The second subcomponent is distribution, which analyses the ways through which the text has been disseminated among the audience. Lastly, consumption is also a subcomponent that deals with the ways the audience interprets and understands a text.

Moreover, discursive practice deals with the text and its participants. It explains the audience and the roles given to the participants in the text. It sees the ways in which participants make use of the text to achieve their meanings and objectives. It further emphasizes the way participants interpret and give certain responses to the text.

Adding to the same idea, the last important component of the model is social practice. Basically, it refers to the analysis of the historical and social conditions in addition to the power relations and ideologies of a text under discussion. It analyzes the discourses produced by the text and sees the ways through which a text reproduces or challenges the historical and social conditions of a text. It is an important component as it analyses the ways language is used or language use shapes power.

## 4. Discussion and Findings

### 4.1. Description

The novel *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is classified as contemporary literature. Most of the writing is narrative in nature, and it uses a conversational, informal tone to establish a personal connection with the reader. The novel addresses issues including gender dynamics, human agency, and societal norms in an interdisciplinary register. The novel's tone is character-driven, delving into the protagonist's inner monologue and interpersonal interactions. For instance, when the protagonist was thinking about the death of her mother, her father called her to come inside the parlour, and she started thinking,

*I know he want to tell me something bad. I can see it inside his eyes; his eyeballs have the dull of a brown stone that been sitting inside hot sun for too long. He have the same eyes when he was telling me, three years ago, that I must stop my educations (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020)*

Besides, to meet the needs of several story situations, the text combines active and passive grammatical patterns. For instance, *I was told that I was going to be a housemaid.* (p. 07), is one of the passive constructions used in the novel, while *I am looking at Papa's face and I am seeing that he is wanting to hit me (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020)*, is an instance of active sentences incorporated in the novel.

Adding to the same idea, the novel's textual structures also make good use of headers and section breaks to guide the reader through many phases of the protagonist's journey. These structural elements improve the overall order and readability of the story. The compelling narrative is further enhanced by the author's deft use of literary devices like metaphors. The examples of metaphors in the novel can be seen through the use of word

expressions like *big blackness* (Dare, Chapter 23, 2020), it was used by Adunni to express her feelings when she was captivated in a dark room by her employer, *two brown bottles of beer* (Dare, Chapter 02, 2020), was used by Adunni for her father's eyes, *matchstick* (Dare, Chapter 10, 2020) was used by the protagonist for big madam, and *rainbow* (Dare, Chapter 09, 2020), was used when the protagonist of the novel described the face of the big madam, which was full of makeup. The use of such metaphors gives the story layers and depth. Besides, the chapters in the novel's conventional format define different stages of the protagonist's life and provide a historical context that makes it easier to comprehend how her experiences have changed over time. Aspects of oral storytelling traditions are also included in the novel, which blends in well with Nigerian cultural influences and gives the plot a distinctive rhythm.

Furthermore, the novel's first-person narrative allows the protagonist to address the reader directly with her thoughts, emotions, and observations. This narrative choice improves the closeness and immersion of the reading experience by disclosing the character's inner problems and aspirations. For instance,

*I rub my head, feel hot tears burn my eyes. I know the meaning of "forsake." I know it means when somebody has leave you by yourself. When you of no use to the person. A wasted waste. I am not a wasted waste; I am Adunni. A person important enough because my tomorrow will be better than today. (Dare, Chapter 18, 2020)*

Moving on, the novel also makes use of Nigerian Pidgin English to highlight the linguistic and cultural diversity of the area. This language choice enhances the realism of the story and brings the reader closer to the protagonist's unique voice and cultural upbringing. This can be justified from the words used in the novel like, *I am not knowing what to do* (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020), this is quite similar to the British English which simply means that 'I don't know what to do', *My heart is beating like a kpangolo* (Dare, Chapter 36, 2020), in simple, this sentence states that the heart of the protagonist Adunni is beating like a drum, and *I am not wanting to be a quiet person* (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020), refers to a state of the protagonist where Adunni asserted her personal agency and tried to retaliate against the systems and norms which were oppressing her. The use of certain enriched expressions from the Nigerian Pidgin English clearly manifests the writer's approach to portray the conditions of the Nigerian society and their rich culture as well as the state of women in that society.

Moreover, the grammar of the novel employs a range of syntactic structures, including simple and complex sentences. It can be seen in the given sentences from the novel: *I am not knowing what to say* (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020), this expression occurs when the protagonist came to know that her father wanted to tie her knot with a taxi driver Morufu, and *I am remembering the story of the three foolish men that Mama was always telling me before she was dying* (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020), this occurs in the very start of the novel as a part of the introduction, when the protagonist was narrating her desire to acquire proper education and the grief over the death of her mother. The dialogue, which is often laced with regional dialects, adds authenticity and cultural nuance to the novel. Along with detailed descriptions and similes, the author often uses figurative language to evoke feelings in the reader and give them a sensory experience. For instance, *the sun is angry today* (Dare, Chapter 29, 2020), *I have a louding voice* (Dare, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, 2020), and *I am feeling like a million ants are biting my skin* (Dare, Chapter 01, 2020).

Additionally, in terms of thematic coherence, the novel addresses a wide range of subjects, including empowerment, resilience, and finding one's voice in the face of societal constraints. For example, *I want to ask, to scream, why are the women in Nigeria seem to be suffering for everything more than the men?* (Dare, Chapter 24, 2020). The novel is well constructed to maintain balance between the protagonist's personal journey and the more significant societal issues at hand. In a nutshell, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is a captivating and socially relevant piece of modern fiction that combines an

informal storytelling style, a wide range of language, and cultural authenticity, extensive vocabulary that incorporates both cultural and vernacular phrases, and clever textual organization. The narrative and linguistic structural decisions made by the author enhance the text's overall impact and efficacy in telling the protagonist's tale and addressing social issues.

#### 4.2. Discursive Practice

The protagonist of *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is Adunni, who also acts as the storyteller and narrator. Adunni, the main character, is an essential player in the novel since her voice drives it forward and she assumes the dual roles of speaker and the person whose experiences are being recounted. The connections in the novel are based on Adunni's interactions with a variety of characters, including Big Madam, Tia, and other people she meets along the way. The author wants to fight for the agency and empowerment of people like Adunni, as well as to shed light on the struggles and disadvantaged voices of especially young girls in Nigeria. In response, the readers interact with the novel to learn more about the protagonist's environment and to think about larger social concerns.

The speaker, Adunni utilises the text to relate her own experience. She narrates in the first person to express her feelings, ideas, and experiences. The narrative structure itself accomplishes this goal by offering a thorough comprehension of Adunni's trip and the social environment via its chronological order of events and interspersed observations. Moreover, the exchanges between Adunni and Big Madam, Tia, and other characters in the novel, as well as other character relationship dynamics, relate to the broader themes of power, resiliency, and social expectations. As the protagonist, Adunni's goal is to overcome the terrible conditions she lives in, underscoring the goal of the novel to highlight the difficulties faced by young females in Nigeria. Abi Daré, the writer, purposefully uses Adunni's voice to highlight these hardships and push for reform, in line with the larger social goal of promoting compassion and understanding. For instance, in the novel, the protagonist tenders her wish and desires which clearly show the condition of women in Nigeria and their miserable lifestyle.

*I am not a thing – I am a person. I am a girl who deserves to play and have fun and learn and go to school like any boy. I am a girl who deserves to be valued for herself – not for her body or for the promise of a dowry. (Dare, The Girl with the Louding Voice, 2020)*

Moving on, the text roles and connections dynamically affect the narratives examination of social expectations and power dynamics. Adunni creates a clear link between the audience and the struggles encountered by young girls in Nigeria by playing the roles of both narrator and a character going through personal development. To provide readers with a more complex knowledge of the protagonist's experiences and to encourage critical engagement with the social concerns raised, the author skillfully utilises Adunni's narrative viewpoint.

The main goal of the novel is to educate readers about the difficulties faced by marginalized voices, especially young girls who must choose between an early marriage and little autonomy. Raising awareness, encouraging introspection, and advocating for social change are the goals. With the use of Adunni's journey as a means of narrative, the author conveys larger social themes via the use of her voice. This is depicted from the desire she tendered in the novel,

*A day will come when my voice will sound so loud all over Nigeria and the world of it, when I will be able to make a way for other girls to have their own louding voice, because I know that when I finish my education, I will find a way to help them to go to school. (Dare, Chapter one, 2020)*

Furthermore, McDougal et al. (2018) provides some new insights into the decision-making process surrounding early marriage and brings attention to the fact that girls have very little control in the process of initiating marriage proposals. The novel focuses on the fact that girls have very little control in the decision-making process surrounding early marriage. This ties in well with the novel's investigation of free will and the process of making choices, in particular, as it relates to the demands

that are placed on young women by society to adhere to specific expectations. This can be comprehended from the lines in the novel when Adunni was exposed to the fact that she is supposed to marry a taxi driver without her consent, "*I bite my lips to lock the tears inside my eyes. Marriage is a good thing in our village. Many girls are wanting to marry, to be wife of somebody, or of anybody; but not me, not Adunni*" (p.19).

Moving on to the next idea, the novel also portrays the lack of voices of the Nigerian girls. They were not autonomous in their lives. Besides, the novel also highlights the lack of power to make decisions. For instance, in the novel, the protagonist says,

*I wipe my face with the back of my hand and sniff up the catar from my nose. This decision is too hard, and maybe I am not doing the correct thing. Maybe I can go back home and try to follow Papa to the village chief?* (p.83)

Moreover, the imposition of the decisions and not considering the others' opinions are also portrayed in the novel when the protagonist says: *The children's have their own mama and papa.*" *Enitan cross her hand in front of her chest, roll her eyes around. "And when you born your own childrens, then you can be teaching them!* (p.19)

Additionally, the novel also involves the factors of power and agency, which can be seen when the protagonist was engrossed in a conversation with her father. *Adunni?" He wipe his eye, shake his head. "It is you?", "Sah." I am shaking too much, it is hard to be kneeling down. "It is me, sah. Good afternoon, Papa"* (p.77). This ties in nicely with the novel's study of voice and agency, especially in the context of Adunni's quest to find her voice and proclaim who she is to the world.

In addition, the protagonist Adunni's unique voice, enhanced by cultural allusions and everyday language, is used to draw readers into her world and help them develop a stronger bond with the topics being discussed. The work deftly blends tense, strong, and triumphant moments to hold readers' attention both mentally and emotionally. Moreover, the use of metaphors, as depicted earlier in the analysis section, and several other language devices across the body of the novel is intended to draw attention to the authority to speak, the exclusion of some voices, as well as the reinforcement or subversion of power relations. As a result, readers engage with the text's ideas and consider the depicted social systems in order to comprehend it. The novel challenges readers to think critically about accepted conventions and to weigh the effects of early marriage, restricted autonomy, and gender inequity. Reactions can include agreement with the novel's demands for reform and empowerment, which might lead to discussions on social justice and the amplification of underrepresented voices.

Essentially, the participants in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* work together to create a novel that goes beyond the realm of fiction and serves as a forum for advocacy, introspection, and discussion. The work succeeds in its goals of educating, motivating, and provoking critical analysis of society norms because of the interwoven roles of author, protagonist, and reader.

### **4.3. Social Practice**

Nigeria is the setting for *The Girl with the Louding Voice* which offers a realistic depiction of the social and historical circumstances that are common there. The novel demonstrates the persistence of patriarchal norms and the economic power dynamics that support inequality via a close examination of how power relations are woven throughout Nigerian culture. Characters with little autonomy, such as Adunni, struggle with choices about early marriage. By highlighting Adunni's tenacity and will to define her identity independently of society norms, the novel questions these power dynamics.

In addition, it challenges conventional beliefs about gender roles and social expectations from an ideological standpoint. It refutes the idea that a girl's value is determined only by her ability to become a wife and mother. Through Adunni's journey, opposing viewpoints surface that demonstrate the transformational potential of education and personal agency. The work advocates for a reevaluation of society ideals and exposes the unpleasant repercussions of authoritarian standards, hence criticizing the current beliefs.



The depiction and creation of reality, identity, and knowledge are all covered by the discourses in the work. The novel uses Adunni's voice, which is full of cultural quirks and Nigerian Pidgin English, to accurately depict the protagonist's situation. Adunni challenges traditional conceptions of identity for young females in Nigeria via her quest of education and changing sense of self. The text's discourses emphasize the value of education as a means of voice reclamation and empowerment.

By opposing existing power structures and ideas, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* openly confronts the social and historical realities it depicts. Adunni's novel acts as a weapon of resistance against the systems of oppression that restrict her freedom. It promotes critical thinking about society conventions and a better comprehension of the effects of structural injustices. Through presenting opposing viewpoints and promoting reform, the novel acts as a spark for questioning deeply embedded historical and social norms. Moreover, through elevating the voices of oppressed people and illuminating the effects of repressive conventions, the novel encourages introspection and, maybe, group action. It challenges readers to reevaluate their own viewpoints, encouraging empathy and understanding that may lead to changes in the way society views gender, education, and personal autonomy.

Adding to the same idea, the novel's idea of *loud voice* might be seen as a metaphor for under-represented groups. As in the novel, "*My mama say education will give me a voice. I want more than just a voice, Ms. Tia. I want a louding voice*" (Dare, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, 2020). Moreover, Domínguez et al. (2021), emphasizes the difficulties experienced by people trying to have their words heard within the established power structures and address the effect of hierarchical power dynamics on adolescent truths. Furthermore, by depicting Adunni's pursuit of education to resist the restrictive pressures of early marriage and restricted prospects for females, the narrative subverts the established power dynamics. For instance, when Adunni's mother was telling her the importance of education to become autonomous, these lines occur,

*Your schooling is your voice, child. It will be speaking for you even if you didn't open your mouth to talk. It will be speaking till the day God is calling you come. That day, I tell myself that even if I am not getting anything in this life, I will go to school. I will finish my primary and secondary and university schooling and become teacher because I don't just want to be having any kind voice . . . I want a louding voice* (Dare, Chapter one, 2020). Besides, King and Pringle (2018), shed light on the social identities and psychological processes associated with racialized and gendered experiences in educational settings by exploring the counter stories of informal and formal learning experiences of Black girls in STEM. Referring to depicted words in the novel as,

*At first I am only seeing the dark cloth, but as I shift the cloth and I look deep, deep inside of me, I bring myself out and put myself inside the classroom, then I am holding chalk and writing on the blackboard. Behind me, the childrens are wearing white and red uniforms, sitting on the bench and hearing me as I am teaching them.* (p.65)

On this, Annamma et al. (2020) brought attention to the challenges that girls of colour confront in the society of today by shedding light on unequal classroom relationships. This portrays the power disparities that are pervasive throughout the novel, and it is coherent with the novel's description of the hardships and marginalization that the protagonist, Adunni, suffers throughout the novel. Moreover, on educational class differences, the protagonist says:

*Why she is calling her abroad peoples white and black when colours are for crayons and pencils and things. I know that not everybody is having the same colour of skin in Nigeria, even me and Kayus and Born-boy didn't have same skin colour, but nobody is calling anybody black or white, everybody is just calling us by our name: Adunni. Kayus. Born-boy. That's all.* (Dare, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, 2020)

In addition, at another place in the novel, the protagonist says,

*I was born in Lagos. My primary school education was here in Lagos as well. Afterwards, Adunni says, in Ikoyi, actually. My dad then got a job in an oil company in Port Harcourt, and so we moved over. She says the word "Port Harcourt" as if it is a song, her tongue wrapping around the words, making them dance. (p.150)*

Adding to the same idea, the author also shed light on the social identities and psychological processes that are related with racially charged and gender experiences in educational settings. These interactions include both unstructured and organized types of educational opportunity. In addition to this, it provides light on the underlying patterns of accommodation and resistance that are present in the dynamics of the characters' interactions with one another. On the lines in the novel, *She will know the man was telling lies. Now I know that speaking good English is not the measure of intelligent mind and sharp brain. English is only a language, like Yoruba and Igbo and Hausa (p.250).*

So, the discourses in the novel create a narrative that challenges readers' preconceived notions about gender, and personal autonomy in addition to portraying Adunni's reality. Furthermore, it pushes readers to consider the constraints placed on them by social conventions and encourages them to rethink the alternatives available to people like Adunni. By doing this, it helps to alter the conversation in Nigeria about the agency of young girls and women.

*The Girl with the Louding Voice* offers a compelling novel that may cause a shift in perceptions about gender, education, and personal agency while also actively engaging with and challenging the social and historical context of Nigeria. For instance, the novel inspires readers to take part in the current conversation about social change and empowerment by using the challenges of its characters as a catalyst for contemplation and change in society.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the novel under examination skillfully weaves a narrative intricately bound with power dynamics and social intricacies. The language employed within this novel becomes a potent tool, revealing the complexities of societal structures and the struggles of marginalized voices. The recurring motif of early marriage and limited agency, symbolized by phrases like, *"the children have their own mama and papa"* reflects broader societal norms and challenges faced by underrepresented individuals. This narrative aligns with existing research emphasizing the limited control girls often have in decision-making processes surrounding early marriage. The examination of unequal relationships within the narrative resonates with scholarly discussions on the hardships and marginalization experienced by certain social groups.

The novel's narrative depiction of emotional and tonal nuances in speech, especially during critical encounters, aligns with scholarly explorations of how such nuances contribute to the reinforcement or subversion of power structures. This musical quality of speech serves as a reflection of the characters' emotional states and their ability to navigate societal expectations. In observing classroom differences and gender-related issues within the narrative, the novel reflects wider discussions on the transformational potential of education and the challenges faced by individuals navigating societal norms. The subtle examination of societal hierarchies and power structures enriches the thematic exploration of the novel.

In essence, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* employs language features masterfully to unravel the challenges, agency, and empowerment of voices within the novel. This nuanced analysis contributes to a more profound understanding of power dynamics, resistance, and societal challenges depicted in the novel, elevating its thematic significance.

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