



A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Transcultural Identity in Iyer's *The Global Soul* (2001) Using the Tool of Negation

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Abstract: This study is intended to examine the concept of *transcultural identity* in the travel book *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home* by (Iyer, 2001). Jeffries' model of critical stylistics (2010) (henceforth, CS) has been selected to analyze the book. To be more specific, Negation is selected to analyze the concept under study. As such, the study aims at finding out how Negation is used to portray ideological meanings representing the concept of transcultural identity in one non-fictional travel book; and finding out the ideologies related to the concept analyzed. The analysis of the data shows that Negation is a suitable analytical tool to reach the ideational meaning of the text towards the concept of transcultural identity. It is also a powerful tool that provides a means for a coherent and rigorous discussion for the analysis of identity. Besides, the concept of transcultural identity, as the analysis shows, is used to reveal the ideologies of homelessness, identity globalization, spiritual connectedness, imagined homes, etc. The importance of the study stems from being an attempt to investigate transcultural identity using a critical stylistic approach which constitutes a gap in the literature since such a study of transcultural identity is very rare or even nonexistent.

Keywords: Culture Crossing, Travel Writing, Transcultural Writing, Transcultural Identity, Critical Stylistics, Negation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The sociologist Castells (2000, p.3) asserts that "in a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity—collective or individual, ascribed or constructed—becomes the fundamental source of social meaning". The new wave of cultural studies investigates the post-colonial discourses and the identity of their individuals (Barker *et al*, 2001). Therefore, this study takes as its focus the investigation of the identity of transcultural subjects who live between categories and borders. Those transcultural individuals—such as Pico Iyer—are offering new ways to look at the concepts of *identity* and *culture*.

The cultural psychologist Suárez-Orozco (2004) writes that for the children of immigrant

parents, "The task of immigration . . . is creating a transcultural identity." She continues that "these youth must creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and the new culture or cultures. In doing so, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures but incorporates traits of both cultures" (p.192). The transcultural identity is the creative fusion of features of two cultures by individuals who had migration or any travel experiences that exposed them to two different cultures. (Dagnino, 2012) uses transcultural identity among other terms to refer to the identity of an individual that is a result of wide international experiences lived by that person, that is, "a plural, flexible, metamorphic identity, with multiple states of belonging" (p.10). She refuses to use the terms international, cross-

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cultural, and intercultural, claiming that these terms stem from and presuppose existing boundaries between nations.

Following Dagnino's (2012) description, it is suggested that the transcultural individuals have the following features:

1. That mode of being—referred to in this study as transcultural—is related to small highly intellectual individuals.
2. There is no one way to have a transcultural identity, thus, each is specific to the individual experience himself.
3. The transcultural individuals can bring about different cultural identities and use them to act in different cultural situations efficiently.
4. Their lifestyle depends on the interaction between several cultures regularly or daily.
5. Since they have several migrations or travel experiences—either they have moved or their parents—, their allegiances and backgrounds are complex to describe with ordinary categories like national, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic affiliations.
6. The self-identification of the transcultural individual is a conscious act that the individual chooses to identify them as living beyond categories.
7. They have a planetary view of humanity, that is, they see humanity as interconnected on a higher level of existence.
8. They consider identities as constantly developing and flexible rather than fixed entities.

Several studies have utilized the CS analytical framework in the analysis of various concepts. (Ibrahim *et al*, 2018) investigated the concept of death in John Donne Poems. Kareem (2018) investigated the concept of genocide or racial killing in English and Arabic Political speeches. Coffey (2013) examined the construction of men's identity in women's magazines. Also, Tabbert (2013) examined the identity of offenders in the German and UK Press. This study, unlike other studies, uses one tool of the CS analytical framework, namely Negation, to investigate the concept of transcultural identity in one travel book entitled: *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home* (2001). It aims at examining the ideational meaning towards the concept of transcultural identity through the textual- conceptual functions of the text. The study has two main objectives, first, finding out how Negation is used to portray ideological meanings representing the concept of transcultural identity in one non-fictional travel book; second, finding out the ideologies related to the concept analyzed. Extracts that are representative of the

concept under analysis are selected from the travel book and analyzed according to the CS tool of Negation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Critical Stylistics

CS is a method of linguistic analysis that is concerned with how language conveys social meanings. It is developed by Jeffries in 2007 when she conducted a study that tried to explain the hegemonic discourses on women's bodies in society and whether feminist ideologies consolidate these discourses. CS is about collecting the basic general functions that texts utilize in representing reality. CS tools are comprehensive and systematic in revealing the ideologies within texts. Since CS works to reveal ideologies and power relations within texts, it could be considered as one approach to CDA. CS does not hold a political view to texts; it rather believes that there are no texts that are ideologically free whether these ideologies were conscious or unconscious (Olatuwoye, 2015, p. 2).

Jeffries asserts that the word critical in CS is not intended to refer to ideologies related to political and social biases toward dominated groups. The critical in CS is rather concerned with ideologies in the wide sense of the word ideology that includes any set of ideas reproduced in discourses (Jeffries, 2014, p. 410). The ten tools of CS are a series of textual-conceptual metafunctions of language. These metafunctions are ways in which meanings and ideas are communicated in texts. The conceptual meaning—or simply meaning—is conveyed in language by speakers/writers in several ways drawing upon the linguistic resources of language. The textual-conceptual metafunctions of language are the core of the CS perspective to the analysis of language. In Halliday's words, these metafunctions are the ways by which people use language to show their attitudes about the world (Jeffries, 2010, p. 12).

These analytical tools represent all possible ways by which texts make meaning, in more scientific terms, CS tools are all the textual-conceptual metafunctions of language that shape the worldview in texts. They are an amalgamation of textual features and ideational functions. These tools are: Naming and Describing; Representing Actions/Events/States; Equating and Contrasting; Exemplifying and Enumerating; Prioritising; Assuming and Implying; Negating; Hypothesizing; Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Other Participants; Representing Time, Space, and Society (Jeffries, 2014, p. 413).

The following is a detailed description of the CS analytical tool of Negation that will be utilized as the methodological framework for the current study

as presented in Jeffries' (2010) *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English*.

2.1.1 Negation

The use of negation is strongly significant because it leads the reader/hearer to explore two contrasting realities: the absence of something and the existence of it. The speaker/writer, thus, may choose to use the negative to refer to a world that he hopes to find. Negation is triggered in sentences via the following triggers as stated by Jeffries (2010):

1. Syntactic negation which is realized by adding *not* to the verb phrase either to the auxiliary verb or, if there is no auxiliary, the negative particle *not* is added to the dummy auxiliary 'do' as in 'This holiday does not cost you a fortune'.
2. Another realization for negation in sentences is by pronouns such as none, no, nobody, nothing, and nowhere as in the example sentence 'Nobody has joined my political party'.
3. Negation can be realized lexically using words like nouns such as luck, absence, death, scarcity, verbs like fail, omit, and refuse, adjectives such as absent and scarce.
4. The morphological negation that is realized by affixes attached to words such as incompetent, unhappy, uncompromising, amoral, anti-depressant, inactivity, and disrespect.

2.2 Transcultural Identity

Studies on identity have become a large and growing field of academic inquiry all over the world resulting in a growing literature on identity. It is suggested that a new concept of identity is needed since migration, as one facet of globalization, is changing the construction of communities. If it was once possible to find shared ties among the people of one nation in "heroic past, great men, glory," as the French philosopher Renan suggests, this could not still be applied today.

Many individuals that have experienced the situation of being posed between more than one national identity have tried to define their complex belongings and mingled identity in more new terms and away from nationality, religion, race, language, and other such affiliations. The author Maalouf who was born in Lebanon and spent 27 years of his life there and later settled in France and had been living there for 22 years when he was asked whether he felt more French or Lebanese answered "Both!" He believed that most of the tension and conflict in the world was a result of issues about misunderstanding identity which results in violence between us and them.

Dagnino (2012) uses the term transcultural identity to refer to the identity of an individual that is a result of wide international experiences lived by that person, that is, "a plural, flexible, metamorphic identity, with multiple states of belonging" (p.10). To identify oneself as having a transcultural identity is a new way of looking at the concepts of culture and identity that is in line with the modern theory of culture as a flow, rather than entities (Hannerz, 1992), that is, as constantly developing and changing with the increasing interaction and experiences of an individual.

3. METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The researchers of this study are following a qualitative approach to analyze a literary text. The travel book that is selected for analysis in this study is representative of transcultural writing, thus, it involves various instances of the concept under investigation, namely, transcultural identity. Extracts are selected using a purposive sampling method which involves intentionally excerpting instances in which the concept of transcultural identity is found. Thus, the selected extracts are the most representative ones, that is, they exhibit the concept under investigation. Besides, they are the most important ones within the selected data. After excerpting extracts that contained the concept sought, the researchers analyzed them using the CS analytical tool of Negation.

For conducting the present study the researchers followed the procedures below:

1. Subjecting the travel book to a thorough concentrated reading;
2. Identifying some extracts in the travel book in which the functional meanings of transcultural identity are found;
3. Subjecting the parts in which the functional meanings of transcultural identity are located to a CS analysis depending on Negation, as a linguistic tool of Jeffries' (2010) model;
4. Identifying the performance of this tool in the discourse of transcultural writing;
5. Uncovering the ideologies embedded in these parts towards transcultural identity.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Text 1

- *I'd spent much of the previous year among the wooden houses of Japan, reading the "burning house" poems of Buddhist monks and musing on the value of living without possessions and a home* (Iyer, 2001, pp. 14).

Analysis

Just before this extract, Iyer describes in full detail the incident of the great fire that burned out

the hills of Santa Barbara, California destroying the entire neighborhoods where he lived, his home, and writings. That was a life-changing experience for him as it inspired him later to appreciate life with no material possessions and belonging that falls off typical national categories. He often found in the poems of the “burning house” an understanding and meaning for his life’s circumstances. These poems depict an incident of a fire that was set in a house of a Buddhist monk. In these lines of the poem, the monk instead of grieving about his lost house celebrates life without attachments and material possessions.

A lexical Negation is found in this text via the use of the preposition “without.” Negation is related to the words “possessions” and “house.” The transcultural individual considers himself free of attachments as his travels result in his leaving everything behind including his “possessions,” “house,” and even his friendships. In this case, the use of Negation encourages the reader to explore the situation of living without any fixed ground to place oneself at with no material attachments. At the same time, the use of Negation expresses a hope and a longing for a real basis and home. The theme of *homelessness* is apparent in this text because the need to belong and find a home is a conflict that is part of the past of transcultural subjects.

Text 2

- *At least along its fringes, the unspoken message of the conference, for me, was that it was not just goods and data (or even “gypsy capital”) that were being sent around the world in ever greater quantities, but souls, and souls not always used to living without a sense of orientation* (Iyer, 2001, p. 24).

Analysis

In this extract, Iyer is talking about the annual World Economic Forum which he refers to as “its fringes.” Iyer concludes a message from this conference that he sees very important and he discusses in this extract which entails that globalization of the world affects every aspect of life, including people’s identities. It is humans, besides goods and data, that are moving across the globe traveling from one place to another for different purposes like for study or to pursue a career or even as migration from less fortunate places in the world. This must have effects on human identity. On this basis, Iyer demands a new conceptualization of one’s identity and belonging. Morphological Negation is found in “unspoken” which is a reminder that this mode of living—the transcultural mode of living—is still unacknowledged. Being transcultural is a situation that is often frowned upon by the public since having multiple belongings is still

unacknowledged. Although the number of people having multiple belongings is increasing recently, the public still finds it unnatural to be, for instance, British-Indian or Korean-American and the like. Iyer, thus, uses the word “unspoken” to refer to the worldview to transcultural identity as an undesirable situation.

Text 3

- *There is a “universal soul” behind us, Emerson writes in Nature, and shining through us, that is “not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its* (Iyer, 2001, p. 26).

Analysis

Emerson, an American essayist, philosopher, and poet who led the transcendentalist movement in the mid-19th century (“Ralph Waldo Emerson,” 2021), is another figure referred to in the extract. Emerson’s ideas have a special influence on Pico Iyer that he considers as his basis and the source of meaning in his life. In his essay “Nature” Emerson writes that there is a “universal soul” that resides in all human beings. A syntactic Negation is found in this extract via ‘not’ in “not mine, or thin, or his” which indicates that no individual keeps the “universal soul” merely for himself, instead, it is made up of all humans. The theme of *identity globalization* is found in this extract. The idea that all humans have the same soul is a belief that is carried by transcultural individuals. This is because transcultural individuals have multiple belongings or belong to the entire universe, thus, they can see that the human's soul is one.

Text 4

- *Lacking a binding sense of “we,” he might nonetheless remain fiercely loyal to a single airline* (Iyer, 2001, p.28).

Analysis

In this extract, Iyer continues to further describe the transcultural individual that he postulates. He talks about that person’s place of living, his possession, the words he repeatedly hears, his memories, and his sense of belonging. In this text, Lexical Negation is realized through the word “lacking.” It reveals the theme of *homelessness*. Negation is a strong tool that allows the reader for a wider view of a situation. Here the author highlights the typical need of humans to belong and the difficulty for transcultural individuals to belong to one particular group. To belong is an important thing in the construction of one’s identity; however, the transcultural individual in Pico Iyer sense seems to belong to “a single airline” rather than any group of individuals.

Text 5

"- One country's not enough,' said a sweet, unplaceable soul who approached me one night at a gathering in rural Japan, introducing himself as half-English and half-Japanese (Iyer, 2001, p.28).

Analysis

In this extract, the author mentions a short incident that he faced on a visit to rural Japan in which he met a person who is half-English and half-Japanese. That person is so attached to Japanese culture as part of himself that he needs to come to Japan often to fulfill himself. One type of Negation triggers is found to capture the conceptual meaning under investigation in this extract. It is found in the word "unplaceable" which is a Morphological Negation. The difficulty to explain one's belonging is something that must have troubled every transcultural individual at some point in his life. In the case of Iyer who is an Indian who was born in England, moved to California, and later settled in Kyoto Japan, it was not an easy thing for him to explain where he is exactly from to others, so he calls himself a "global soul" as he is.

Text 6

- The only "un-English" boy at all the schools where he found himself (Iyer, 2001, p.29).

Analysis

In this extract, Iyer refers to another character, Kazuo Ishiguro who is a British prize-winning novelist who was born in Japan and whose family went to England when he was five years old ("Kazuo Ishiguro," 2021). Iyer refers to Ishiguro's complex belongings as "he only "un-English" boy" which is another representation of the concept of transcultural identity. Negation is found in the word "un-English" which is a Morphological Negation through the prefix "un-." This word captures one's conflict that every transcultural individual must have experienced which is being the other in the foreign place where he moved to. In the case of Ishiguro, he was treated as the "un-English."

Text 7

- A person like me can't really call himself an exile (who traditionally looked back to home now lost), or an expatriate (who's generally posted abroad for a living)" I'm not a nomad (whose patterns are guided by the seasons and tradition); and I've never been subject to the refugee's violent disruptions (Iyer, 2001, p. 32).

Analysis

In this extract, Iyer reflects on his life's movement in place and is trying to fit it with the existing terms such as being "an exile," "an expatriate," "a nomad," and "a refugee." However, he

concludes that he does not fit into these categories and he would rather see himself as falling between categories as a "Global Soul." The word "can't" is a Syntactic Negation. Syntactic Negation is also found in "I'm not." The word "never" is a Lexical Negation. All these instances of Negation are attached to different terms that are often mistakenly used to refer to transcultural individuals. However, transcultural individuals, as Iyer believes, cannot be defined by any of these terms.

Text 8

- My complexion (like my name) allows me to pass as a native in Cuba, or Peru, or Indonesia, and none of them, in any case, is more foreign to me than England where I don't look like a native, the America where I'm classified as an alien, and the India where I can't speak a word of any of the almost two hundred languages (Iyer, 2001, p. 33).

Analysis

In this extract, Iyer talks about his complex state of belonging. He speaks of his foreignness to almost everywhere that the notion of home is foreign to him as well. Syntactic Negation is found in "I don't look like a native" to English people and "I can't speak a word" of the many languages in India, the country where Iyer's parents were born and have lived most of their lives. In both of these instances, Negation is attached to the idea of foreignness. The transcultural individual is foreign to everywhere, to the place where he has lived and spent most of his life and to the place where he was born. Again the theme of *homelessness* is apparent here.

5. FINDINGS

The study reveals that the selected extracts from the travel book, *Global Soul* (2001), employ Syntactic, Lexical, and Morphological Negation; however, they do not employ Negative Pronouns. Syntactic Negation revealed seven occurrences, Lexical Negation revealed three occurrences, and Morphological Negation scored two. As the analysis showed, Negation is important in the discursive construction of transcultural identity.

The transcultural identity as the analysis reveals is in the first place about belonging to the entire globe. It is made up of a deep sense of equality, that humans are equal no matter the differences between them. The bond that the transcultural individual feels is like a spiritual connectedness that binds all humans on a higher level. Home for the transcultural individual is not a physical place. It could be an idea like that in the poems of the Buddhist monks to which the transcultural individual fixes himself. The transcultural individual does not belong to any of

the national states; moreover, he does not admit the legibility of such an outdated system. He rather calls to replace the system of the national state with one that suits modern life and admits multiple belongings. The transcultural individual is someone who must have felt at some point in his life a deep

sense of homelessness and foreignness everywhere; however, he eventually had got over it as he developed a transcultural identity. The following diagram shows the occurrences of each type of Negation:

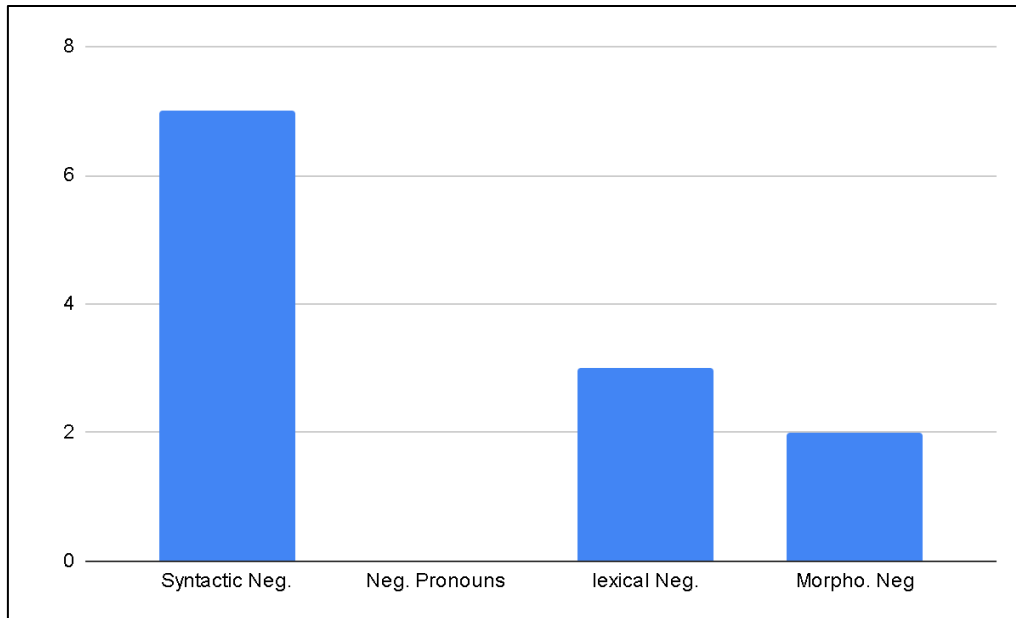


Figure 1: Negation Triggers

The ideologies that are connected to the concept of transcultural identity are homelessness, identity globalization, spiritual connectedness,

identity globalization unacknowledged, imagined homes, and National states. Instances of these ideologies are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Ideologies related to the Concept of Transcultural Identity

Ideologies	Examples
homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 1 "I'd spent much of the previous year among the wooden houses of Japan, reading the "burning house" poems of Buddhist monks and musing on the value of living without possessions and a home"
spiritual connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 3 "There is a "universal soul" behind us, Emerson writes in Nature, and shining through us, that is "not mine, or thin, or his, but we are its"
identity globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 2 "the unspoken message of the conference, for me, was that it was not just goods and data (or even "gypsy capital") that were being sent around the world in ever greater quantities, but souls, and souls not always used to living without a sense of orientation"
imagined homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 4 "Lacking a binding sense of "we," he might nonetheless remain fiercely loyal to a single airline"
national states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 5 "'One country's not enough," and "introducing himself as half-English and half-Japanese" Text 6 "The only "un-English" boy" Text 8 "My complexion (like my name) allows me to pass as a native in Cuba, or Peru, or Indonesia, and none of them, in any case, is more foreign to me than the England where I don't look like a native, the America where I'm classified as an alien, and the India where I can't speak a word of any of the almost two hundred languages"

6. CONCLUSION

The data for this study are analyzed using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics as an analytical framework, more specifically the tool of Negation.

Working with the model shows that the transcultural identity is well constructed through the critical stylistic tool of Negation. The study has provided linguistic evidence which allows assertions

about how a new concept of identity is constructed linguistically in the travel book, namely *Global Soul* (2001). The travel book under analysis shows how identity can be viewed differently by individuals. This new concept of identity is far from national, religious, racial, and political ties.

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