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## Literary Translingualism is Defying Expectations: Language, Culture, and Power in Okorafor's Afrofuturistic Short Story "The Magical Negro"

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### Abstract

This paper analyses the role of translingual practices in reshaping language, dialect, and identity within an Afrofuturistic fantasy framework, specifically through "The Magical Negro" by Nnedi Okorafor. Translingualism encourages a transition from these structuralist presuppositions about language to more fluid and extensive contextual and integrated strategies. This research aims to explore the use of translingual aspects in an Afrofuturistic fantasy plot by analyzing the elements of language, dialect, and impact. Changing the trope of the standard fantasy language, which often incorporates dominant ideologies and regional dialects, as well as the relationship between characters' accents and their socio-linguistic backgrounds, helps to subvert the clichés of the series. The theoretical framework included Vershawn A. Young's "code-meshing", where different languages or dialects are used simultaneously in speech or writing. Li Wei develops translanguaging as a practical theory of language, incorporating both sociocultural and cognitive approaches. Using Geneva Smitherman's concept of "Black sociolinguist reality," this article traces the concept of Afrofuturism through speculative fiction as a rhetorical praxis that recognizes Black language practices as processes of invention unique to Black linguistics, constructing the multitudinous nature of Blackness in the future. This paper emphasises the question of power concerning how language, identity, and interaction with people from another culture are interrelated. It

thus makes a reader think about the role language plays in the change of social relations and cultural identification in 'The Magical Negro' written by Nnedi Okorafor.

Keywords: translingualism, afrofuturism, power dynamics, science-fiction, stereotype.

## Introduction

"The Magical Negro" was founded on an occurrence that occurred while Okorafor was in Clarion East Writers' Workshop at Michigan State University. It was found that one of the writers enticed his readers to a story that featured a magical Negro. The following week, it was coincidental that the workshop instructor was African-American bestselling speculative fiction writer Steve Barnes. Okorafor's response was to submit this story to the workshop (Okorafor 257). As the concept of literary translingualism comes to the forefront, it invites scholars to view language as an increasingly expansive site for identity and social engagement (Kellman 337). Indeed, it is a framework that fosters multilingualism, enabling the coexistence and blending of dialects and language varieties at various social, cultural, and political levels. In this regard, "The Magical Negro" gives parables that ooze reasonable substance, contrary to the set linguistic policies of the fantasy genre. The work 'positions' itself against the stereotypical ideals of a "generic" constructed fantasy language that most screenplays and literary fantasies employ by utilising regional dialect, diverse accents, and linguistic trends corresponding to the characters' sociolinguistic identifiers. In this way, the text subverts stereotypes and socio-political discourses, which are so often destructive of or seek to exclude Black culture from speculative fiction.

This story work extends from Afrofuturism, a literary and cultural movement that combines science fiction, fantasy, and Afrocentrism genres to address new possibilities for the future, informed by the

Black subject. Because Afrofuturism is about redesigning futures for black folks, it is an ideal lens to examine the relationship between language, race, and authority. Translingualism in Afrofuturistic fiction is a rhetorical approach that speaks about the complexity and development of the Black linguistic experience. The primary approach here is Geneva Smitherman's Black sociolinguistic reality, as it involves the notion of language use by Blacks as creative and subversive ways of constituting diverse forms of Blackness. Through such linguistic constructions, the study explains how Afrofuturism enables the voices that have been excluded to transform cultural and linguistic terrains. On these concepts, the analysis further observes how Afrofuturism, translingualism, and theories of code-meshing and translanguaging can help point to the possibilities of change made through language in the context of culture storytelling and racism.

Vershawn A. Young's 'code-meshing' theory about the legitimate use of mixing languages and dialects, both in spoken and written words, in everyday communication, is used to conduct the research. Code-switching defies the traditional language binary that propagates a set model of language, which responds to context. The second theory, Li Wei's translanguaging theory, also validates this study because it approaches language as a socio-cognitive asset, which entails social and cultural relations, as well as personal subjectivity. Together, these theoretical perspectives enable a nuanced analysis of how language in "The Magical Negro" extends beyond signification and is employed as a means of mobilizing and resolving relations of power, identification, and culture.

Lastly, this research aims to explore how language practices in "The Magical Negro" can be utilized to examine other, more significant issues of social change and culture. Thus, the speculative aspects of this Afrofuturistic parable enrich the research findings that explore translingual features concerning post-colonial and, thus, postmodern power relations in the Third World context. In considering translingualism in a speculative fiction setting, the idea enlarges the conversation within Afrofuturism. It demonstrates how linguistic inclusion in the construct diversifies and reshapes Afrofuturistic ontology, narrative constructs, and the representation of the African-descended subject in future worlds. This study, therefore, highlights the revolutionary role of language as a resource for individual emancipation and as an agent of critical disruption of conventional social forms. Kubota asks, 'Can all English users, regardless of their racial, gender, socioeconomic, and other backgrounds, equally transgress linguistic boundaries and engage in hybrid and fluid linguistic practices?' (Kubota, 33). In examining the translingual elements within Nnedi Okorafor's "The Magical Negro", this study employs a framework that includes translanguaging theory, code-meshing, and Black sociolinguistic reality. Translingualism counters such approaches by attempting to create a new perspective on language that transcends borders throughout its practice. It does not adhere to the notion that language is an institution, but rather to activities, interactions, reflexivity, and sociality. Such a shift is particularly apt when culture and language constantly evolve due to enhanced globalisation. This research seeks to analyse the use of translingual elements within an Afrofuturistic fantasy context, explicitly examining how language and dialect influence character identity, social dynamics, and power relations in Nnedi Okorafor's "The Magical Negro".

### **Theoretical framework**

Vershawn Young's article "Nah, We Straight: An Argument Against Code-Switching" advocates code-meshing rather than traditional code-switching, particularly in the context of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and academic or formal settings. Young argues that code-switching, where speakers alternate between different language varieties based on the audience, reinforces a hierarchy of linguistic legitimacy, where mainstream or standardised English is privileged over other dialects. However, Young does accept code-switching, which is the practice of smoothly and simultaneously switching between different code varieties, thereby asserting one's cultural self and language background. Code-switching is employed to counter the otherwise hegemonic scholarly practice, which often overlooks subjugated knowledge. Young's view aligns with other code-meshing theories that see a purposeful integration of contrasting languages, dialects, or cultural practices as a means of transforming existing academic and social relations. This approach is most pertinent in situations where learners or speakers need to adopt more standard forms of interaction. Thus, through code-meshing, they proclaimed a more complex and elaborate way of using language that considers various linguistic assets (Young, 111-13).

Translanguaging, as articulated by García and Li Wei, challenges traditional monolingual norms by viewing language as a dynamic, integrated repertoire rather than as a set of bounded, named languages (García & Li Wei, 2018, p. 2). This theory emphasises the semiotic potential of bilingual or multilingual speakers to draw on diverse linguistic resources, thereby reshaping traditional language boundaries and challenging raciolinguistic ideologies that stigmatise non-standard forms (García & Li Wei, 3).

Lastly, Geneva Smitherman's Black sociolinguistic reality foregrounds the linguistic

uniqueness of Black communities, positioning Black language practices as innovative and reflective of Black identity. As applied to "The Magical Negro", this framework illustrates how language functions as both a medium of cultural resilience and a tool to critique dominant linguistic ideologies (Smitherman, 5). Smitherman's concept of Black sociolinguistic reality emphasises language as a cultural marker and a means of resistance against dominant linguistic norms. In the Afrofuturistic context, translanguaging emerges as a vital tool that reclaims language as a means of identity and cultural resistance. In Afrofuturistic stories, such as those by Nnedi Okorafor, language transcends traditional boundaries, fusing dialects, vernaculars, and African languages to establish a powerful sense of cultural authenticity and solidarity (Smitherman 18). Smitherman emphasises the ideological power of linguistic inversion, Afrofuturism, and sociolinguistic praxis, stating that African American language transcends mere communication and acts as a rhetorical praxis that affirms Black individuals' historical and cultural experiences in America. As shown in this study, by applying Smitherman's Black sociolinguistic reality to Afrofuturistic texts in the Black Speculative Fiction Canon, the research reveals how speculative fiction enables the reinvention of Black identities in a future context grounded in the sociolinguistic strategies of the Afro-Atlantic. (Smitherman, 22)

### **Language in Afrofuturistic Stories**

Each line of "The Magical Negro" serves as a critical site for analyzing the intersection of language, power, and identity. Saying things like "Y'all should know better. You know what I can do to you. You ain't that stupid." indicates how his language demands submission and threatens the darkness as he exercises linguistic power. His identity and the self-expression of his dialogue convey a sense of empowerment and autonomy, rejecting the narrative constraints placed upon him: There again he alights he rises angrily, "And I ain't got no

family of my own to risk my life for an' shit!" (Okorafor, 13). Black people start rebuilding their identities from scratch and sending them into the future. Drawing on the foundational work of Afrofuturist scholars Alondra Nelson, Nalo Hopkinson, and Octavia Butler, Jones reminds us that Black speculative fiction serves as a "liberation aesthetic" in response to the histories of colour that once again amputated Black cultures and counternarratives, which are valuable (Hopkinson 107). According to Jones, the reclamation subverts the colonialist tropes in SF/fantasy and in other no-longer postmodern texts in which black figures are marginalised or otherwise stereotyped. Thus, Black speculative fiction also emerges as a singular lens to navigate race, race relations, racial constructs, the Black community, and the future of a racially diverse federation (Jones 11). Fundamentally underlying Jones's perspective is Smitherman's notion of Black sociolinguistic reality, which contrasts with the notion that reality is socially constructed and linguistically so. According to Kaplan (2024), translanguaging practices in Afrofuturistic literature create "alternative spaces" for Black voices by integrating non-standard forms of English with African dialects and speculative vocabularies. These linguistic blends subvert colonial linguistic standards and reflect a future-oriented identity where cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated within imagined worlds (Kaplan 14)

Afrofuturistic stories offer the protagonist and the reader 'the third cultural option,' one in which living between cultures is not only possible but also desirable. From Bhabha's hybridity theory, Kaplan describes how Afrofuturistic authors write cultural crossing into black existence in post-civilisation America and other sci-fi landscapes, where Afrofuturistic form and the fluidity of black personae are deployed. (Kaplan, 11). According to this theory, the language used in the story reflects the in-between status characteristic of the African diaspora experience. Lance's perception of the African character's appearance and

language reflects a biased worldview shaped by his cultural context:

He could barely understand the dark man. What a strange dialect he was speaking. Controlling evil darkness? Could it be because he had internalized the evil of the shadows? Could that be what turned his skin that horrible color? Blew out his lips? Gave him such a huge deformed nose? Corrupted his hair? Lance frowned. Why am I thinking of such things in my last moments? (Okorafor, 13)

This contrast highlights the preconceptions and subconscious expectations that emerge in cultural exchanges, a key aspect of translingual texts. In African literary narratives, which situate cultural tokens from Africa and the Black diaspora alongside those of the West, translingualism is thus cast as a form of cultural resistance. Specifically, the work describes the encounter between Lance, an English-speaking protagonist, and an African character, who confronts two different cultural and linguistic systems.

### **Power and Linguistic Agency**

The interaction between language and power in Afrofuturistic stories illuminates the role of linguistic agency in combating cultural hegemony. Smitherman argues, "Black language practices resist the normative structures imposed by dominant groups". Afrofuturistic works build on this resistance by providing characters with the power to choose the language they speak. Kaplan builds on this by pointing out that characters in Afrofuturistic works can challenge colonialist dialectics by reassigning the linguistic meanings of their selves and worlds. (Kaplan 29)

In these speculative spaces, translingualism serves as a mechanism of power, enabling Black characters to assert their cultural and personal identities beyond the limitations of the dominant culture. This

linguistic resistance is not only an act of defiance but also a powerful tool for shaping the imagined futures in Afrofuturism, where language helps to construct new social relations and cultural identities. "The shadows were savage beasts. The horrible black things were known to skin a man alive..." (Okorafor, 13). According to Critical Language Awareness (CLA), the use of 'black' to portray evil forces is a good example of how language mitigates the negative connotations associated with darkness and blackness. CLA urges the readers to identify and deconstruct the choice of words, such as the ones that reflect racist perceptions. Lance grapples with his perceptions of the Magical Negro, which are influenced by societal stereotypes. The Magical Negro's ability to assert his minority identity through language gives the lie to these assumptions. It forces the reader to think about race and minority representation in fantasy fiction even more. The character's statement, "You need to stop reading all this stupidity," further emphasises his awareness of his role and the need for a more nuanced representation of characters of colour in fantasy literature. The "African man" is introduced in a way that contrasts with Lance, both linguistically and visually. Lance disappears, and the "African man" is presented in a space where language use also seems different. The stereotypical racial and cultural semiotic signs, "dark figure" and the exotic nature of the character construction. CLA objects to how such descriptors would further perpetuate race relations of domination in the literature. Li Wei's conceptualisation of translanguaging spaces aligns with the Afrofuturistic narrative explored in Okorafor's work, where characters navigate multilingual and cultural identities through language practices that transcend conventional norms. Translanguaging facilitates a critical examination of power dynamics, particularly in the representation and negotiation of identity (Li Wei, 4).

His language is a tool to subvert the stereotype where he questions his role in the narrative, bringing in a meta-commentary on racial and cultural expectations, "Whatchu' think I am? Some fuckin' suckin', jivin', happy Negro still dying for the massa 'cause my life ain't worth shit?" (Okorafor, 12). It presents the African character directly confronting and questioning the use of the so-called "Magical Negro" stereotype in the plot. This is a translingual deconstruction of available racial stereotyping in literature and other forms of media. In this way, by articulating the presence of the trope, the character challenges and disrupts the fantasy genre's modes of operation and writing. Thus, he represents both parts of the construction of the fantasy "I'm the motherfuckin' Magical Negro" (Okorafor 13) and a counter-discourse to the given stereotype. The actions of the Magical Negro can, therefore, be viewed as an act of cliché and narrative and linguistic resistance, as a result of a combination of reasons, some of which are self-preservation and or anger resulting from such stereotypical roles. The proposition that everyday resistance usually stems from individual backdrops and cultural environments means it can only be understood when one offers an ideological interpretation. The character's consciousness of his role serves as a critique of how representation operates in a political context within literature. Specifically, the paper analyses how translingual practices can shape political discourse, arguing that characters like the Magical Negro can alter the paradigm in which they are placed through their actions and decisions. In a way, he desires to transform his life roles outlined in the hetero framework. This aligns with local forms of resistance that emerge, which can counteract these overarching structures. Smitherman's concept of "Nommo" defines translingual practices as a process that intentionally changes perceived realities within the narrative. In "The Magical Negro", Black characters can manipulate language to recreate their world contrary to the suppression by the mainstream language. This aligns well with

Smitherman's much-emphasized opinion that language is not merely a means of transmitting ideas, but a tool for changing and reshaping reality. (Smitherman, p. 24 - 26). He asserts his authority and control through speech. The way the African character causes them to do what he wants, introducing himself with shadows of control, is purely an aspect of the power in language.

This perspective on linguistic reality posits that language both reflects and constructs the social world, particularly in Afrofuturist discourses. Thus, Black linguistic practices promoted speculative fiction as translingual acts to disrupt dominant narratives and imagine different possible realistic futures. Scholars such as Baker-Bell (2017) align with this perspective, arguing that black people can bear a "multiple consciousness" that does not conform to prescribed language conventions. Jones elaborates on this by stating that Afrofuturism, as a manifestation of language reclaiming, enables Black writers to positively assert their identity as they choose (Jones, 26).

### **Fantasy vs. Real-World Language**

The story fuses the fairy tale's high-flavoured medievalism with realistic twentieth-century colloquialisms (Taylor, 2022, p. 119). Lance uses eloquent and pompous language typical of fairy tale stories, while the Black African character speaks in slang and randomly modern, colloquial English. In Lance's speech, phrases such as "My life for my country" (Okorafor, 11) properly belong to a medieval, heroic fantasy world. The use of the African characters' informal language, which is composed of slang and vernacular, is well depicted in the following statements: "Yo, what the fuck is this bullshit!" and "My ass comes here to save his ass" (Okorafor, 11) differ from Lance's way of speaking. The story subverts genres by featuring characters who do not conform to the otherwise expected social and discursive roles in a fantasy world. This translingual element plays a productive role in

developing the narrative as it dares to complicate the reader's perception of how a character should and should not speak and act. "Lance the Brave stood on the cliff's edge, panicking, his long blond hair blowing in the breeze" (Okorafor 11). This first line presents Lance based on his ethnicity. The author uses the creation of this character to juxtapose it with a later African character, thereby distinguishing between social races. They argue that sociolinguistics analyzes how these identities are expressed in language and physical descriptions. It notes that identity is constructed through structural features, social processes, and micro-level interactional practices. The basic resources employed to build an identity, such as labels, stances, and even languages, are highly mobile and universal. Hence, identity is interactional, relational, and negotiated in a field of power. It is achieved through reciprocity, where one is both similar to and different from the other. It also makes us understand that agency of identity is not just personal but involves practices and ideological properties. Last but not least, it advises that scholars of language use, particularly those in sociocultural linguistics research, have a solid grounding in identity and that different theoretical frameworks should be viewed as complementary, given the complexity of the concept. (Bucholtz et al. 608). "He loved his sword; so many times it had helped him bring justice to the world." Lance's internal monologue and narrative voice reflect the traditional heroic narrative in fantasy genres. This voice contrasts sharply with the dialogue of the Magical Negro character, creating a dialogic tension between the conventional and subversive voices within the text (Bakhtin 324). Language is seen as an important resource in forming African American social personas, as Smitherman (1991) advanced in how Black folk engage themselves and their societies. Incorporating Black vernacular and linguistic patterns into narratives enables authors to work against dominant linguistic practices while affirming possibility. Such an approach mimics

the transgression of language identity against dominant cultural norms. (Smitherman, p. 4). All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day, and the hour. (Bakhtin 293). "The amulet responds to your heart," Communication Accommodation Theory, preferred by Howard Giles, argues that people adapt their way of speaking to the extent of similarity or dissimilarity of the overall speakers (Giles & Ogay, 306). Thus, in "The Magical Negro", the manner of using language differs significantly from Lance's more refined, even old-fashioned, English. Magical Negro who accommodates Lance's preference for AAVE (African American Vernacular English) stereotypes but whose speech breaks the power dynamic between them. Here, the African man (the magical negro) attempts to converge linguistically with Lance by straightforwardly offering advice. This convergence shows an initial attempt to engage within the dominant linguistic framework of the narrative, aligning with Lance's heroic quest. This divergence is a form of linguistic rebellion against mainstream cultural norms, as the author expected the Magical Negro to use correct and proper English. After that, another dialogue, "Yo, what the fuck is this bullshit!" (Okorafor, 11). The sudden shift to African American Vernacular English (AAVE) disrupts the narrative's flow. This is an example of translanguaging, where the character draws from his linguistic repertoire to express frustration. Vershawn A. Young's code-meshing also complements this perspective by highlighting the simultaneous use of multiple dialects or languages in a single discourse. This blending of dialects serves as a marker of authenticity and a means to subvert linguistic hierarchies, aligning with translanguaging's aim to disrupt monolingual bias (Young, 113). This also marks a divergence from Lance's language, challenging the dominant narrative norms. Here the 'Divergence' is when someone emphasises differences in speech or behaviour to highlight

their identity as the negro does. (Giles et al. 295). Ethnolinguistic vitality refers to the strength of a social group based on cognition, statistics, and public acknowledgement. High ethnolinguistic vitality enables its members to mobilise more effectively and claim a stronger ethnic identity, as well as other aspects such as language, dress code, and social conduct. Instead, subjective ethnolinguistic vitality, the perceived status of one's group, has a more substantial effect on people than objective ethnolinguistic vitality. (Giles et al. 299). As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as a heteroglot opinion, language lies on the borderline between oneself and the other, within the individual consciousness. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his intention, his accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention (Bakhtin 291). "With a wave of his hand, Lance fell from the cliff to his death." (Okorafor, 13). Bakhtinian Dialogism is evident in the sudden reversal of the expected narrative, where Lance, the hero, dies, and the Magical Negro survives, thereby disrupting the conventional dialogic exchange in fantasy literature. This subversion creates a new narrative direction where the marginalised voice takes control. "The Magical Negro rested his red cane on his shoulder and leisurely strolled into the forest to see if he could find him some hobbits, castles, dragons, princesses, and all that other shit." It combines modern slang with elements of the fantasy world, exemplifying translanguaging, where multiple linguistic codes coexist within the same narrative. This line also challenges the sociolinguistic norms of the fantasy genre, where such language is typically absent. The story ends by hinting at a collision between Afro-Caribbean mythology and the Tolkienian world of "hobbits, castles, dragons, princesses, and all that other shit."

Central to Smitherman's theory is the idea of "semantic inversion," where traditionally negative terms are reappropriated to affirm

identity and solidarity. Semantic inversion is the founding concept of Smitherman's Black English and refers to situations where linguistically endowed terms are turned into phrases to address historical wrongs. In this framework, language used by black characters in Afrofuturistic literature is performed as a radical democratic response to the hegemonic power of Standard English. This linguistic inversion exchanges the symbols of oppression for the language of power, positing black linguistic practices as the field of ideological struggle (Smitherman 13). Okorafor's theory of African futurism is a crucial tool for interpreting African science fiction texts. As demonstrated in the present novel, the postulates of African futurism are effectively presented and juxtaposed against the paradigms of Individuality and Community Spirituality. After briefly elaborating on semantic inversion and the overall concept of the different narratives constructed in African futuristic literature, the analysis proceeds to address the issues of cultural dialects and stereotypes pertinent to sociolinguistic realities and the representation struggle of often Otherized and marginalized communities in literary and media representations.

### **Cultural Dialects and Stereotypes**

"Sheeit," he drawled, looking directly at you. "You need to stop reading all this stupidity. The Magical Negro ain't about to get his ass kicked no more. Them days is ovah." (Okorafor, 12)

This self-referential dialogue breaks the fourth wall, examining the performative nature of language in literature and critiquing the conventions of fantasy. This commentary reveals an awareness of his position within the narrative and challenges the expectations associated with it. The AAVE (African American Vernacular English) used by the African character creates linguistic differences that reflect cultural prejudices. Language idioms, informal speech, and culturally related phrases

are evident in this character's language, suggesting a different socio-linguistic background. Jones's work is an impressive addition to the bibliography of Afrofuturist theorists, as it details how Black linguistic practices engage with speculative fiction, creating a sociolinguistic reality that is emancipatory for Black people. As a result, the investigation of language as a core aspect of identity and social transformation supports the author's call for comprehensive language policies and practices in the educational and public spheres. More broadly, the article presents a comprehensive picture of Afrofuturism as a literary and sociopolitical phenomenon, grounded in language and its capacity to construct a positive future for the black community while taking into account its history (Jones 16). Matthew W. Hughey's study on several Hollywood films that show Black characters assisting white characters states that such movies are politically progressive but perpetuate racist tropes. The study explains that such films involve both visible interracial cooperation and latent white control in a way that erases Black agency and maintains race relations as they currently exist. They do not represent an advancement in racial relations. Instead, they uphold the current racism and cement the current racist status quo in place. Many of the films serve to erase the possibility of black agency, perpetuate white normativity and hegemonic victory, and turn black power into a glorified trope as long as that power exists in diminutive racial subordination. (Matthew, 2009, p. 543). The linguistic decolonisation process, therefore, cannot be exclusively accomplished by writers. Governments must revise policies related to teaching African languages and develop economic opportunities within those languages, such as training agricultural extension officers in the languages of the target communities, teachers in African languages, and interpreters for national and international organisations. African languages still need to transition from social language variety to a political, cultural, and economic

development language variety ("Mukoma Wa Ngugi: What Decolonizing the Mind Means Today"). Another key point in Jones's argument is the concept of 'imagination-as-decolonization,' an idea outlined by Brown (2017) that views imagination as a revolutionary act and a form of decolonisation. According to Jones, Afrofuturism does not disapprove of other sorts of imagination but reimagines it as a measurable space that allows Blacks to reconquer a future that is liberated from oppression. This is similar to the work already done, particularly by scholars such as Brittney Cooper (2016), who discussed the racial construction of time and space and how the ability to take control over narratives within those frames is key to regaining control over Black people's future.

### **Real-Life Implications of Translingualism on Culture**

Translingualism in this research is highly relevant to attaining SDG 4 and SDG 16. It connects concepts such as Smitherman's Black sociolinguistic reality and Li Wei's translanguaging concept with implications for various real-world possibilities in educational, media, and institutional transformations. Canagarajah stresses that embracing translingualism challenges traditional linguistic hierarchies and aligns with the dynamic needs of an interconnected world. (Canagarajah, 589). In doing so, we expand knowledge in our positive science disciplines and apply it to improve the world by informing people how inequalities can be eradicated. Doing so enriches academic discourse and provides actionable insights for creating more inclusive and just societies.

### **Societal Integration and Cultural Exchange**

As Canagarajah points out, translingualism can help improve social relations and cultural sharing due to globalization. Contexts include, for example, multicultural workplace environments and social networking sites, which, through

mediated interaction, enable individuals to communicate beyond the linguistic and cultural contexts that may otherwise exclude them. Canagarajah emphasises that by allowing individuals to “shuttle between communities in contextually relevant ways,” translingualism cultivates environments where linguistic diversity is tolerated and celebrated (Canagarajah 592). Fear of ‘acting White’ or the elimination of some students’ primary source of identity and culture can make some of them oppose this type of instruction altogether. Furthermore, all of this fighting is aimed at eradicating prejudice. Discrimination based on language uses a prejudice that people of colour will persist in experiencing all too often. Personality, no matter how they express themselves in the target language. The promise that SWE is a race-neutral formula, which suggests that the education system provides an equal opportunity to all, is a fallacy, one that fails to address the racism that learners endure each day (McKinny and Hogan 391). In summary, language significantly impacts identity by shaping perceptions, fostering cultural recognition, influencing political mobilisation, and affecting self-esteem. Following the exploration of the socio-cultural role of translingualism in social cohesion and cultural diplomacy, the ensuing discussion scrutinises the part that linguistic policies and cultural narratives play in achieving social justice, voice, and recognition, as well as advancing the goals of SDG 16 (Mweri 17).

It is evident from the narrative that it envisions duties compatible with Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals by reflecting on social justice and cultural relations, and enabling marginalised groups. Nommo is Smitherman’s theory about language transforming the world to show individuals who wish to use it in public forums and grassroots campaigns. Policies supporting the use of media, education, and other public institutions in African languages and dialects help maintain African cultures, thereby

preserving the soul of the humanities for African communities. This supports the push for social justice in line with language decolonization, aiming to convert African languages into economically and politically valuable ones. Speaking of clichés like ‘The Magical Negro’, defaming it in media changes people’s perception of the racially inferior race by refuting racially established clichés (Hughey 547). Culturally pluralist intercultural communication sites that incorporate intercontinental and syncretic language and culture, grounded in Afrofuturist aesthetics, can foster understanding and appreciation. Translingualism is a valuable approach to communicating professionally and improving organisational culture. When communication is between people with diverse language backgrounds, it becomes an asset in international teams. Canagarajah further observes that people who can switch between different English are more capable of managing the complex environments of global business than persons bound by a single language. This adaptability is considered a virtue in the contemporary economy as more and more interactions are linked on the transnational level. (Canagarajah, 590). In addition, promoting multilingual policies in governance enhances ethnolinguistic vitality, as it promotes the status of languages in institutions for decision-making. By promoting the voices of marginalised people and cultural Otherness, the narrative strengthens the justice, diversity, and institutional responsiveness that are part of SDG 16.

Black people’s language is a strength that ought to be leveraged to build Black-empowered futures. When using Afrofuturism as a lens, Jones overwrites Black language as a product of the past and the means of the future insistent on appropriating Black language in speculative fiction as a counter-discourse to the mainstream language of colonialism (Jones 1), in integrating a specific element of Adrienne Maree Brown’s emergent strategy that

contributes to the development of Afrofuturist scholarship by illustrating the application of iterative social transformation in an organising and envisioning discipline. From Jones's perspective, an emergent strategy aligns with Afrofuturism because it enables Black people to design futures where their identities can be liberated from restraints (Jones 6). This integration of emergent strategy brings a new perspective to the discussion of the usefulness of Afrofuturism, not as a literary phenomenon, but as a sociopolitical tool for transformation.

### **Educational and Cognitive Development**

Students with diverse linguistic backgrounds possess various cognitive advantages when applying translingual approaches in educational settings. Canagarajah links the classes where learning is based solely on monolingual standards, implying that learners' limitations are evident in the globalized multilingual environment. Criticising the traditional writing process, this author argues that permitting students to use their African American English in conjunction with Standard English enhances facility and invention. Hence, it readies students for essential interpersonal, social, and occupational communication demands. (Canagarajah, 593). According to Pennycook, world English is inseparable from the flow and transformation of languages: Languages will flow and change around us, new combinations of languages and cultures will be put together, and texts will be sampled and mixed in ever-new juxtapositions. In other words, Pennycook argues that 'students are in the flow: pedagogy needs to go with the flow' (Pennycook, 2007, p.158). Hogan raises two essential issues regarding the implementation of diverse language use among adults learning a new language. First, because English is becoming an international language, knowledge of various English varieties and creoles, including AAVE and SAE, as academic and career-relevant language varieties, may be more beneficial in coping with the increasingly complex world than maintaining SWE as the

standard form. Second, educators need help addressing the dialect that often comes with racially or culturally diverse classrooms. Concerns about race, power, identity, and belonging cannot be ignored. In particular, future educational initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive society should preserve multilingualism, value it as a resource, and utilise language similarities and differences more extensively to foster more prosperous interpersonal relationships (McKinney and Hogan 392). When analysing how translingual frameworks enhance agency by acknowledging and developing the capability for effective operations across the language spectrum in the globalised world, the discussion shifts to how they support the notion of SDG 4, which focuses on rationale, cultural competence, and language as a tool for change in education.

The presented narrative is in coherence with the goals of the fourth SDG insofar as critical thinking, cultural components, and diversity inclusion are fostered in learning processes. It enables readers to assess the information provided by the media, scrutinize stereotyping, and reflect on the range of cultural presumptions inherent in a given narrative, thereby developing critical thinking skills. Kubota (2015) advocates for a more comprehensive framework for investigating language and cognition that encompasses more than English as a component of intellectual discourse. From this perspective, it becomes apparent that critical analysis is required of the political and ideological elements that mediate communication in additional languages (Kubota 37). Approving non-mainstream varieties, such as AAVE, is constructive for achieving equal representation. It embraces marginalised learners, aspects that are supported by Translanguaging, which can boost understanding and creativity in a diverse population, according to Canagarajah. Integrating Afrofuturistic concepts into curricula helps build linguistic and cultural perspectives while appealing to Black learners

through the use of modern language intermixed with tradition. When training educators to employ translanguaging and semantic inversion in classroom practice, we train them to break social barriers and prejudices. To foster such a state of mind, students need to be encouraged to critically examine the existing paradigms of linguistic propriety, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of cultural prejudice and historical oppression, as well as a conscious consideration of language as a means of power. All these elements collectively contribute to ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goal focuses on quality, equitable, and inclusive education, facilitating lifelong learning for all. An environment where bilingual children can leverage their full linguistic potential, not just within the constraints of separate language systems but through the fluid integration of their entire linguistic repertoire. (MacSwan & Faltis, p. 179). From the conception that translanguaging practices lead to equity and career opportunities, the story unfolds to discuss how Cultural Frames like "The Magical Negro" can be translated to local settings like Bangladesh to combat prejudice, encourage assimilation and give power to the oppressed through education, media, and activism.

### **Conclusion**

This research demonstrates how translanguaging practices significantly contribute to Afrofuturistic writing, as examined in Nnedi Okorafor's "The Magical Negro." Okorafor employs multiple linguistic traditions to disrupt dominant power structures within language, resulting in an effective challenge to establishment stereotypes related to race and culture. This study employed detailed translanguaging element analysis to demonstrate how the concept functionally transcends mere communication to become an empowerment and resistance mechanism, while simultaneously enabling a transformation of identity. The characters use their language strategy to defy traditional fantasy and speculative fiction, thus placing Black

expressions at the core of their storytelling. The study situates this analysis within Smitherman's Black sociolinguistic reality and Young's code-meshing theory to demonstrate how language serves as a crucial component of Afrofuturism. Through its language, "The Magical Negro" showcases three distinct functions: communication, social transformation, cultural empowerment, and anti-racial hierarchy activities in literary texts and society. Future scenarios in Afrofuturistic tales present decolonising possibilities for both language and narrative structures, thereby advancing the dialogue on race, power, and social justice.

The anticipated outcomes of this research include greater acknowledgement of translanguaging practices as essential to social and professional success in diverse communities. By validating multilingual capabilities, institutions can foster more inclusive environments reflective of a pluralistic society. Instructional implications suggest that educators should embrace translanguaging as a legitimate and valuable tool in the classroom. By recognising and nurturing the dynamic bilingual practices of children, teachers can better support their literacy and oracy development, help children consolidate their language skills, and foster deeper comprehension. Translanguaging should be viewed as an asset that enhances children's learning and sense-making. The themes and ideas in Nnedi Okorafor's "The Magical Negro" can be adapted to the Bangladeshi context, especially in addressing stereotypes, fostering inclusivity, and challenging dominant narratives. "The Magical Negro" could be relevant to Bangladeshi audiences in terms of stereotype imagery, challenging the status quo, and promoting integration. The country can progress toward a more diverse and inclusive society by giving voice to minorities, re-establishing legends with the help of myths that belong to the region. These ideas could be applied through educational media advocacy to influence culture and society. The country can move toward a

society that values diversity and empowers marginalised voices by reclaiming narratives, integrating local myths, and fostering inclusivity. The insights from this research demonstrate that policymakers need to establish policies that value various linguistic practices beyond their communicative function, since they operate as a transformative social instrument. The language strategies researched in this paper will assist in breaking down oppressive structures to create a society where linguistic diversity is acknowledged and utilised to empower marginalised communities about the future.

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