



## Pragmatic Exploration of Cross-Cultural Encounters in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Americanah*

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### Abstract

This study examines the realities of the immigrant experience, specifically focusing on Chimamanda Adichie’s novel *Americanah* as a lens through which to explore the contextual dimensions of race, identity, and immigration in contemporary America. The purpose of this research is to unravel how the cultural context shapes the portrayal of cross-cultural encounters and informs the characters’ experiences in the novel. Employing a qualitative approach, the study examines key excerpts from *Americanah* to unveil how cultural context helps in conveying the different challenges and triumphs faced by African immigrants in the United States. The findings of this research illuminate the complex dynamics of race relations, identity formation, and the emotional challenges of migration as portrayed in the novel. The framework of contextualism provides a good understanding of how these themes are deeply intertwined with the broader societal and historical context of America. The study concludes that the novel serves as a poignant narrative that emphasizes the importance of contextual understanding in comprehending the immigrant experience, presenting a powerful message about the realities of cross-cultural encounters in the United States.

**Key words:** Cross-cultural encounters; Cultural pragmatics; Cultural Context; Identity; Race

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural encounters have long been a focal point in literature, serving as a lens through which authors explore the complexities of human interaction, identity formation, and societal dynamics (Pinder, 2016). Chimamanda Adichie’s novel *Americanah* explores these themes with pragmatic viewpoints, offering readers a vivid portrayal of the immigrant experience in contemporary America. Against the backdrop of globalization and increasing migration, understanding the cultural dimensions of such encounters becomes imperative. This study aims to pragmatically explore the cross-cultural encounters depicted in *Americanah*, shedding light on how cultural context shapes the characters’ experiences and identities within the narrative.

Despite extensive scholarship on immigration and identity, gaps remain in understanding the cross-cultural encounters African immigrants face, particularly within literary contexts. Previous studies have examined broad issues such as the politics of belonging (Mufwene, 2001; Akinwumi, 2006), multilingual communication (Auer & Wei, 2007), and public perceptions of humanities (Bate & Bate, 2016). Butt (2019) explored integration challenges, while Chow (2007) and Dreby (2015) investigated immigrant life satisfaction and policy impacts. Finn (2019) specifically addressed race and belonging in Adichie’s *Americanah*. However, a focused analysis of how cultural context within *Americanah* shapes immigrant experiences remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining key excerpts from the novel to reveal the interplay between cultural context and cross-cultural encounters, offering deeper insights into the lived experiences of African immigrants. By doing so, it aims to enrich existing literature with a contextual understanding of immigration and identity formation, emphasizing the importance of cultural pragmatics in literary studies.

At its core, this study seeks to illuminate the significance of understanding cultural context in comprehending the immigrant experience portrayed in literature. By analyzing the intersecting themes of race, identity, and immigration within *Americanah*, it becomes evident that these issues are deeply intertwined with the broader societal and historical context of America. Through a critical exploration of Adichie's narrative, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the emotional complexities inherent in migration and the transformative impact of cross-cultural encounters. Ultimately, this study emphasises the importance of cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness in fostering meaningful dialogue about the realities of immigration and identity in today's globalized world.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Context and Pragmatics

Contextualism and pragmatics are two related theoretical frameworks that can help illuminate the difficulties of literary texts. Contextualism emphasizes the importance of situating language use within its broader social and historical context (Jegede & Osoba, 2019), while pragmatics focuses on the ways in which language is used in context to achieve specific communicative goals (Mey, 2001). Together, these frameworks can help us understand the ways in which language is used in literary texts to convey meaning, and how that meaning is shaped by the broader social and cultural context in which it is produced.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), pragmatics is concerned with the study of language use in context, and emphasizes the importance of understanding the communicative goals of speakers and listeners in order to fully grasp the meaning of a given utterance. In literary texts, these communicative goals can be complex and dynamic, and may include the desire to convey a particular emotion or affective state, to persuade or influence the reader, or to convey a particular perspective or worldview (Jegede, Adetuyi and Adeniran, 2018). Contextualism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of situating language use within its broader social and historical context (Jegede, Adetuyi and Adeniran, 2018). This includes not only the specific situational context in which an utterance is produced, but also the broader cultural and historical context in which that utterance is situated. As such, contextualism is concerned with understanding the ways in which language use is shaped by broader social, cultural, and historical factors.

In the context of literary texts, contextualism and pragmatics can be used together to help us understand the complex and diverse communicative goals of writers, as well as the ways in which those goals are shaped by broader social and historical contexts. For example, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Americanah*," the use

of different dialects and languages by the characters can be seen as a pragmatic choice aimed at conveying a particular aspect of their identity and cultural background. At the same time, the use of these different dialects and languages can also be seen as a reflection of the broader social and historical context in which the novel is situated, which includes issues of race, class, gender, and transnational identity. Thus, the use of contextualism and pragmatics can help us gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which language is used in literary texts to convey meaning, as well as the ways in which that meaning is shaped by broader social, cultural, and historical factors. As such, these theoretical frameworks can be valuable tools for literary analysis and interpretation.

### 2.2 Cultural Pragmatics

Cultural pragmatics, a concept rooted in the broader field of cultural sociology, examines how social actors produce, communicate, and interpret meaning in their everyday interactions. It builds on the foundational ideas of classical sociologists like Emile Durkheim, who explored the role of symbols and rituals in social cohesion, and Erving Goffman, who analyzed the dramaturgical aspects of social life. Cultural pragmatics goes further by integrating these insights into a more comprehensive framework that emphasizes the performative and interpretive dimensions of social action. It posits that cultural processes are inherently performative, meaning that social actors are constantly engaged in the performance of meaning, much like actors on a stage. These performances are not just about conveying information but about creating and sustaining social realities through the enactment of shared symbols and narratives.

At the heart of cultural pragmatics is the notion that cultural performances are structured by a series of elements: actors, audiences, scripts, scenes, and means of symbolic production. Actors are the individuals or groups who perform the cultural script, while audiences are those who witness and interpret these performances. The script refers to the symbolic framework or narrative that guides the performance, providing a blueprint for what is to be enacted. Scenes are the settings or contexts in which performances take place, shaping the way the script is understood and enacted. Finally, the means of symbolic production encompass the tools and resources—such as language, media, and technology—that actors use to convey their performance. By examining these elements, cultural pragmatics provides a good understanding of how meaning is co-constructed in social life.

One of the key contributions of cultural pragmatics is its focus on the dynamic and interactive nature of meaning-making (Beazley, 2015). It emphasizes that cultural performances are not static or unidirectional but involve ongoing negotiation and interpretation between actors and audiences. This interaction is influenced by

the authenticity and credibility of the performance, which can be bolstered or undermined by various factors such as the coherence of the script, the skill of the actors, the receptivity of the audience, and the appropriateness of the scene (Ager & Strang, 2008). Successful performances create a sense of shared reality and collective identity, while failures can lead to misunderstanding, conflict, or social fragmentation. By highlighting these performative and interpretive processes, cultural pragmatics offers a powerful lens for analyzing a wide range of social phenomena, from political speeches and media events to everyday interactions and organizational practices. Through this lens, sociologists can better understand how social order is maintained, challenged, and transformed through the convoluted dance of cultural performance.

### 2.3 Cultural Identity

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging, connection, and identification with a particular cultural group or community. It encompasses the shared beliefs, values, traditions, language, and customs that define a group's distinct way of life (Burke, p.(2008). Cultural identity is a multidimensional and dynamic construct shaped by various factors, including ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, socioeconomic status, and historical experiences. Individuals develop their cultural identity through socialization processes within their cultural environment, including interactions with family, peers, educational institutions, media, and broader societal influences (Ogunnubi, 2018a; Ogunnubi, 2018b).

At its core, cultural identity provides individuals with a sense of belonging and a framework for understanding themselves and their place in the world (Umezurike, 2017a). It serves as a source of pride, meaning, and connection to one's cultural heritage and community. Cultural identity influences various aspects of individuals' lives, including their behaviours, values, beliefs, relationships, and worldview. It shapes how individuals perceive themselves and others, influencing their attitudes, preferences, and behaviours in social, professional, and personal contexts (Umezurike, 2017b). Additionally, cultural identity contributes to individuals' sense of well-being and psychological fulfillment, providing a sense of continuity, stability, and belonging amidst the difficulties of modern life.

However, cultural identity is not static or homogenous but rather fluid and dynamic, evolving over time and shaped by individual experiences and interactions with diverse cultural influences. Individuals may traverse multiple cultural identities, drawing from various cultural backgrounds and experiences to construct their sense of self (Ho, 2019). Moreover, cultural identity is intersectional, intersecting with other aspects of identity, such as gender, sexuality, age, and ability, to shape individuals' unique lived experiences (Adesina & Jegede, 2019). Furthermore, globalization and increased

cultural exchange have led to the emergence of hybrid identities, where individuals integrate elements from multiple cultures into their sense of self, challenging traditional notions of cultural identity and emphasizing the interconnectedness of diverse cultural experiences.

Cultural identity is, thus, a fundamental aspect of individual and collective identity, providing individuals with a sense of belonging, connection, and meaning within their cultural communities (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). It influences various aspects of individuals' lives, shaping their perceptions, behaviours, relationships, and worldview. Cultural identity is dynamic and multidimensional, evolving over time and shaped by individual experiences, interactions, and cultural influences. Understanding cultural identity is essential for promoting inclusivity, diversity, and mutual respect in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world.

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## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONTEXTUALISM

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Contextualism is a theoretical approach that emphasizes the importance of context in understanding meaning and behaviour. It posits that actions, events, and expressions cannot be fully understood in isolation from their surrounding circumstances. This approach is rooted in the belief that meaning is inherently situational, shaped by specific cultural, social, historical, and environmental factors. Contextualism challenges the idea of universal truths or behaviours, arguing instead that what is considered true or appropriate in one context may not hold in another. This perspective is particularly valuable in the study of culture, where it highlights how cultural norms, values, and practices are deeply embedded in their specific contexts and cannot be easily generalized across different settings.

Applying the theory of Contextualism to the pragmatic exploration of cross-cultural encounters in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* reveals how context shapes the experiences and interactions of the characters. *Americanah* chronicles the journey of Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman, as she traverses life in America and later, her return to Nigeria. Through Ifemelu's story, Adichie explores the difficulties of identity, race, and belonging across different cultural contexts. The novel illustrates how Ifemelu's behaviours, perceptions, and interactions are deeply influenced by the varying cultural environments she inhabits. For instance, in America, Ifemelu becomes acutely aware of her race and experiences the subtleties of American racism, which shapes her understanding of herself and her interactions with others. This contrasts with her experience in Nigeria, where race is not a primary marker of identity, but other factors such as class and ethnic background come to the fore.

Contextualism helps in understanding these dynamics by highlighting how Ifemelu's identity and social interactions are context-dependent. Her blog, "The Non-American Black," serves as a pragmatic tool through which she traverses and critiques the cultural and racial landscapes of America. Through her blog, Ifemelu engages in a form of cultural performance, using her personal narrative to challenge stereotypes and offer insights into the African immigrant experience in America. This form of pragmatic engagement is shaped by the specific context of being a Nigerian immigrant in America, revealing how context influences the way cultural meanings are produced and interpreted. Moreover, Ifemelu's return to Nigeria and her subsequent cultural re-adjustment emphasizes the fluidity of identity and the importance of context in shaping self-perception and social interactions. By applying Contextualism to "*Americanah*," we can see how Adichie vividly portrays the good and situational nature of cross-cultural encounters, demonstrating that understanding such experiences requires a keen awareness of the diverse contexts in which they occur.

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#### 4. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative data analysis was adopted for the study. The analytical procedure involved close reading of the novel and identifying excerpts that exemplify the use of contextualism. Each excerpt was then analyzed in detail, including an explanation of the ways in which the use of contextualism contributes to the overall meaning of the text. The analysis was guided by the aim of highlighting the importance of cultural context in shaping our understanding of the immigrant experience in America. The analysis also involved considering the broader social and historical contexts in which the novel was written and published, including the ongoing debates about immigration, race relations, and identity in America. By situating the novel within its larger social and historical context, the analysis aimed to shed light on the ways in which cultural context shapes our understanding of these important issues.

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#### 5. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study, highlighting key insights gleaned from the analysis of data collected. This section also synthesizes the research findings and discusses their implications, providing a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the study and contributing to the existing body of knowledge in the field.

##### Excerpt 1

"It is not just a matter of taking off your shoes at the door. It is deeper than that." (Chapter 1, p.6)

The excerpt implies that understanding the cultural context is essential for grasping the workings of cross-

cultural encounters. By suggesting that the act of taking off one's shoes at the door holds deeper significance, the speaker implies that this practice is rooted in broader socio-cultural norms and values. In various cultures, such as Asian or Middle Eastern societies, removing shoes before entering a home can symbolize respect, cleanliness, or adherence to religious customs. Therefore, comprehending the cultural context surrounding this practice allows individuals to interpret the intentions and meanings behind such actions within different cultural settings. Cultural context serves as a lens through which individuals can traverse and make sense of cross-cultural encounters, enabling them to recognize and respect the diverse customs and traditions of others. It emphasizes the importance of considering cultural realities and sensitivities in intercultural communication and interaction, fostering mutual understanding and respect across cultural boundaries.

##### Excerpt 2

"There was something in the way people here understood themselves, something in the way they talked, that was both strange and familiar to her." (Chapter 1, p.6)

The protagonist, encountering a new cultural environment, observes an interplay between the familiar and the unfamiliar in the behaviours and conversations of the people around her. This observation suggests that individuals' self-understanding and communication styles are shaped by their cultural context, which influences their perceptions, expressions, and social interactions. By recognizing the realities of cultural context, individuals can better understand the underlying meanings and motivations behind the behaviours and communication patterns of others from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural context serves as a lens through which individuals can traverse the difficulties of cross-cultural encounters, fostering empathy, understanding, and mutual respect across cultural boundaries.

##### Excerpt 3

"She felt as though she were wearing a mask, one that she could not take off." (Chapter 1, p.11)

The excerpt conveys the challenges of traversing cross-cultural encounters and the role of cultural context in understanding such experiences. The metaphor of wearing a mask suggests a sense of detachment or inauthenticity experienced by the protagonist in her interactions within a different cultural context. This feeling may stem from the pressure to conform to unfamiliar cultural norms or from the perception of being perceived differently due to cultural differences. Understanding the cultural context is crucial in unpacking the difficulties behind this metaphorical mask. By recognizing the cultural factors at play, individuals can better comprehend the experiences and emotions of others in cross-cultural encounters, fostering empathy, communication, and

mutual understanding. Additionally, cultural context helps individuals traverse cultural differences with sensitivity and respect, facilitating more meaningful and authentic interactions across cultural boundaries.

#### **Excerpt 4**

“It was a different kind of blackness, a blackness that was not tied to the history of slavery and segregation.” (Chapter 1, p.12)

The excerpt highlights the importance understanding racial identity and history. By describing a “different kind of blackness” not tethered to the historical experiences of slavery and segregation, the speaker acknowledges the diversity within the Black experience across different cultural contexts. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to recognize the good ways in which race is constructed and experienced within different cultural settings. In this case, acknowledging the unique manifestations of blackness outside of the context of slavery and segregation sheds light on the difficulties of racial identity and challenges monolithic narratives about Black experiences. Cultural context facilitates a deeper understanding of the intersections between race, history, and culture, enriching our comprehension of cross-cultural encounters and fostering empathy and mutual respect across diverse racial backgrounds.

#### **Excerpt 5**

“He had an unshakable belief in the American Dream, which he defined as the right of each person to pursue happiness, regardless of background.” (Chapter 2, p.23)

The excerpt emphasizes the role of cultural context in shaping individuals’ beliefs and perceptions, particularly concerning cross-cultural encounters and the notion of the American Dream. In this case, the speaker’s belief in the American Dream reflects a cultural ideal deeply ingrained in American society, rooted in principles of individualism, opportunity, and upward mobility. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the significance of the American Dream within the broader framework of American culture and history. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and narratives influence individuals’ perspectives on success, happiness, and social mobility. Moreover, cultural context facilitates empathy and mutual understanding in cross-cultural encounters by enabling individuals to recognize and respect the diverse cultural perspectives and values of others.

#### **Excerpt 6**

“The workings of blackness in America escaped her.” (Chapter 4, p.51)

The excerpt illuminates the difficulties of racial identity in America. In this instance, the speaker’s acknowledgment of the difficulties of blackness in America suggests a recognition of the multidimensional

nature of racial identity within the American context. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to appreciate the realities and historical legacies that inform racial identities and experiences in America, including the impacts of slavery, segregation, and ongoing systemic inequalities. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse perspectives and experiences of others, particularly regarding sensitive issues such as race and identity.

#### **Excerpt 7**

“She was not used to the aggressive optimism of Americans, the way they pounded you with the idea that you could achieve anything you wanted, as long as you believed.” (Chapter 5, p.63)

The excerpt sheds light on divergent cultural attitudes and behaviours. In this instance, the speaker’s observation of the “aggressive optimism” prevalent among Americans reflects a cultural characteristic deeply ingrained in American society, rooted in principles of individualism, ambition, and perseverance. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind such behaviours within the broader framework of American culture and history. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and narratives influence individuals’ approaches to success, ambition, and personal fulfillment. Moreover, cultural context facilitates empathy and mutual understanding in cross-cultural encounters by enabling individuals to recognize and appreciate the diverse cultural perspectives and approaches of others, fostering respect and communication across cultural boundaries.

#### **Excerpt 8**

“She had not known that the experience of being black could be so varied, so vast.” (Chapter 7, p.90)

The excerpt emphasizes diverse experiences of individuals within the black community. In this instance, the speaker’s acknowledgment of the varied and vast experiences of being black suggests an awareness of the multidimensional nature of racial identity within different cultural contexts. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to appreciate the difficulties and realities inherent in racial identity, including the impacts of historical legacies, socio-economic factors, and cultural influences. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and narratives intersect with race, shaping individuals’ experiences and perceptions. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse perspectives and experiences of others within the broader framework of cultural diversity.

### Excerpt 9

“Her accent had become an unreliable thing, a chameleon that changed with each new person she spoke to.” (Chapter 9, p.115)

The excerpt highlights the fluidity of linguistic identity and adaptation. In this instance, the speaker’s observation of their accent as an “unreliable thing” reflects the complex interplay between language and cultural identity within diverse social contexts. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind linguistic adaptation and variation within the broader framework of cultural diversity. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and social dynamics influence individuals’ language choices and interactions, fostering empathy and mutual understanding in cross-cultural encounters. Moreover, cultural context encourages individuals to recognize and appreciate the diverse linguistic backgrounds and communication styles of others, contributing to effective communication and intercultural dialogue.

### Excerpt 10

“She had discovered race in America and it fascinated her.” (Chapter 10, p.125)

The excerpt emphasizes the importance of cultural context in comprehending cross-cultural encounters, particularly concerning the exploration of race within the American context. In this instance, the speaker’s fascination with race in America suggests an awareness of the difficulties and realities inherent in racial dynamics within American society. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to appreciate the historical legacies, systemic inequalities, and cultural influences that shape individuals’ perceptions and experiences of race. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values, societal structures, and historical events intersect with race, influencing individuals’ attitudes, behaviours, and interactions. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse perspectives and experiences of others within the broader framework of cultural diversity.

### Excerpt 11

“It was not a conversation about race. It was a conversation about the obligation of an oppressed group to teach their oppressor how to behave.” (Chapter 11, p.136)

The excerpt emphasizes the importance of comprehending discussions about race and power dynamics. In this instance, the speaker’s observation highlights the broader cultural dynamics at play within discussions of race, emphasizing the power dynamics inherent in relationships between oppressed and oppressor groups. Understanding the cultural context allows

individuals to interpret the motivations behind such discussions within the framework of historical legacies, systemic inequalities, and cultural norms. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values, societal structures, and historical events intersect with discussions of race, influencing individuals’ attitudes, behaviours, and communication styles. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse perspectives and experiences of others within the broader framework of cultural diversity.

### Excerpt 12

“She wanted, suddenly, to take him with her to Nigeria, to her childhood, to where the world made sense and there were no words for existential angst.” (Chapter 14, p.176)

The excerpt emphasizes the importance of cultural context in comprehending the desire to share one’s cultural background with others. In this instance, the speaker’s desire to take the other person to Nigeria reflects a longing to share their cultural heritage and childhood experiences as a means of fostering understanding and connection. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind such desires within the broader framework of cultural identity and belonging. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and experiences influence individuals’ relationships and interactions, facilitating empathy and mutual understanding in cross-cultural encounters. Moreover, cultural context encourages individuals to appreciate and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives of others, contributing to meaningful communication and intercultural dialogue.

### Excerpt 13

“She realized that the only reason she had succeeded, where others had failed, was because she had always been told, ‘You are special.’” (Chapter 15, p.186)

The excerpt highlights the significance of cultural context in comprehending individual perceptions of success and self-esteem. In this instance, the speaker’s realization suggests an awareness of the cultural influences that contribute to their perception of success and self-worth. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind such beliefs within the broader framework of cultural values and expectations. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural norms and societal messages shape individuals’ self-perceptions and aspirations, influencing their behaviours and interactions. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives of others, fostering meaningful communication and mutual respect across cultural boundaries.

### Excerpt 14

“The thing about American culture, she had learned, was that it was always in motion, always becoming something else.” (Chapter 16, p.199)

The excerpt emphasizes the importance of cultural context in comprehending the dynamic and evolving nature of American culture. In this instance, the speaker’s observation highlights the fluidity and adaptability inherent in American culture, reflecting the ever-changing landscape of cultural norms and values. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind such observations within the broader framework of cultural dynamics and societal shifts. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values and societal changes influence individuals’ attitudes, behaviours, and interactions. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and appreciate the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives of others, fostering meaningful communication and mutual respect across cultural boundaries.

### Excerpt 15

“He was one of those African-Americans who defined himself by his Africanness, as if to make a point.” (Chapter 18, p.219)

The excerpt illuminates the significance of cultural context in comprehending the difficulties of identity within the African-American community. In this instance, the speaker’s observation highlights the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the African-American community, reflecting the influence of cultural values and historical legacies on individual identity formation. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to interpret the motivations behind such expressions of identity within the broader framework of cultural dynamics and societal expectations. It provides insight into the ways in which cultural values, historical experiences, and social dynamics intersect with identity, influencing individuals’ attitudes, behaviours, and interactions. Moreover, cultural context fosters empathy and understanding in cross-cultural encounters by encouraging individuals to recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives of others within the broader framework of cultural diversity.

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## 6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

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In examining the various excerpts provided and their implications for understanding cross-cultural encounters, several key findings emerge. Firstly, the role of cultural context is consistently highlighted as essential for interpreting and traversing interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Each

excerpt illustrates how cultural context shapes individuals’ perceptions, behaviours, and attitudes in cross-cultural encounters. Whether it’s the fluidity of American culture or the varied experiences of being black in America, cultural context provides the framework through which individuals interpret and respond to the difficulties of cross-cultural interactions. Understanding the cultural context allows individuals to recognize the realities and workings of cultural differences, fostering empathy, communication, and mutual understanding across cultural boundaries.

Secondly, the excerpts underscore the diverse and multidimensional nature of identity within different cultural contexts. From discussions about race and linguistic adaptation to expressions of Africanness within the African-American community, identity is portrayed as fluid, dynamic, and deeply influenced by cultural values and experiences. Cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping individuals’ perceptions and expressions of identity, influencing how they traverse and negotiate their sense of self in cross-cultural encounters. By recognizing the influence of cultural context on identity formation, individuals can better understand and appreciate the diversity of experiences and perspectives within different cultural groups, fostering respect and inclusivity in cross-cultural interactions.

Lastly, the findings highlight the importance of empathy and mutual understanding in fostering positive cross-cultural encounters. By acknowledging and respecting the cultural context of others, individuals can bridge cultural divides and cultivate meaningful connections across diverse backgrounds. Cultural context provides the necessary tools for interpreting and traversing the difficulties of cross-cultural interactions, enabling individuals to recognize and appreciate the diverse perspectives and experiences of others. Through empathy and understanding, individuals can traverse cultural differences with sensitivity and respect, fostering harmonious and inclusive relationships in an increasingly interconnected world. Overall, the findings underscore the significance of cultural context in shaping cross-cultural encounters and emphasize the importance of empathy, communication, and mutual respect in fostering positive intercultural relations.

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## 7. CONCLUSION

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Chimamanda Adichie’s *Americanah* provides a powerful portrayal of the cultural context of the immigrant experience in America. Through Ifemelu’s reflections on her own experiences and observations of American society, Adichie highlights the many ways in which cultural context shapes our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. The excerpts discussed in this analysis provide a rich portrait of the complexity

of race relations, identity struggles, and the emotional toll of culture crossing. The importance of contextual understanding is emphasized throughout the novel, as Ifemelu traverses the difficulties of American society and seeks to reconcile her Nigerian identity with her life in America. Thus, Adichie's portrayal of the immigrant experience in *Americanah* offers a powerful reflection on the importance of understanding cultural context in shaping our understanding of identity, race, and belonging in America.

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