

## Tragic Discrimination in Hidden Figure Movie Dialogue

Imelda M. Simorangkir<sup>1\*</sup>, Yulia Sofia<sup>2</sup>  
Universitas Indraprasta

**Corresponding Author:** Imelda M. Simorangkir [mime.files14@gmail.com](mailto:mime.files14@gmail.com)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Movie, Dialogue, Hidden Figure, Minority And Critical Discourse

*Received :* 14, June

*Revised :* 28, June

*Accepted:* 29, July

©2024 Simorangkir, Sofia : This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

The movie dialogue from Hidden Figure is used in the present research. Published in 2016, this is an American motion picture. Theodore Melfi was the director of this movie. The same-titled novel served as the inspiration for this movie. The lives of three African-American women who work at NASA are chronicled in this movie. Theodore Melfi was the director of this movie. As a minority, they are positioned. By using Norman Fairlough's critical discourse theory, the researchers in the present research wanted to analyze this movie. The primary source of data for the present research is the dialogue used in the movie. The approach used to get meaning from this movie is the descriptive qualitative method. The findings from the research demonstrate that colored people in America continue to face a great deal of discrimination. However, two philosophies are represented in this movie: the philosophy of ideology of feminism.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Literary works are one type of corpus data utilized in language study. Film is one literary work that is frequently used in research. A film, as defined by Arsyad in Rokhyanto et al (2022), is a compilation of multiple images contained in frames that are mechanically projected through the projector lens so that the images appear to come to life on the screen. For the reasons listed above, the researchers is able to argue that a film is a kind of artistic creation in which people use a camera to communicate with the audience through aural and visual means. Numerous experts provide clarifications in discussions about literature. A film, according to Javandalasta (2011, 2), is "a series of moving images that form a story or is also usually called a Movie or Video." Thus, films are viewed as segments of moving images when referring to audio-visual presentations. A vast amount of literature exists that attempts to explain movies using various definitions of what movies are, all of which lead to the same conclusion.

A instrument for mass communication that incorporates a variety of artistic mediums in its creation and presentation is the film. Castano (2021) defines film as a mass communication medium that combines a variety of creative aspects and technological advancements. Film is obviously not the same as painting, sculpture, or literary art. Filmmaking is a creative art form that greatly depends on technology for both production and audience participation. However, in the words of Arsyad in Budi (2018, 3), a film is a sequence of many images that are mechanically projected through the projector lens frame by frame to give the impression that the image is alive on the screen. Drawing from the aforementioned arguments, the researchers reaches at the idea that film is a form of artistic creation in which human beings use a camera as a tool for audio-visual communication in order to express ideas to viewers.

By the primary and supporting characters in the *Hidden Figure* movie, this research examines discourse analysis. The fact that this movie is a literary work that describes the struggles that people who are African-American face in America makes qualities fascinating for researches. Theodore Melfi is the director of the biographical drama film *Hidden Figures*, which he co-wrote with Allison Schroeder. In December 2016, this about 130-minute film had a limited theatrical run. 20th Century Fox is the producer of the movie *Hidden Figures*. The movie *Hidden Figures* belongs to the biographical drama genre. Theodore Melfi directed this movie. Melfi and Allison Schroeder co-wrote the dialogue for this movie. This semi-documentary film follows the path of two mathematicians who work at NASA, Dorothy Vaughn and Marie Jackson, and mathematician Kathrine Johnson.

The characters are also packaged rather effectively in *Hidden Figures*. Dorothy is a knowledgeable leader, Katherine is shy, and Mary is upfront. The third main character is also distinct in her own right. Katherine may be the major character because she was closest to the space shuttle launch, but Dorothy was the most powerful individual in advocating for black women's rights. Dorothy consistently paid attention to the employment status of her black female coworkers, even if she had private job offers. Little Kathrine's

narrative opens this movie. Katherine was in her seventh year of high school. Katherine's interests after that were limited to studies. Katherine's brilliance helped her land a job with NASA, where she worked with other black women at East Computer in the coordinate computation department. The many forms of racial prejudice faced by African Americans employed at NASA are portrayed in this 1950s-set movie.

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis in conjunction with racism theory was chosen as the data analysis method in the present research. By classifying the discourse in the movie *Hidden Figures*, researchers were able to evaluate data. The researcher learned three categories—smart and educated women, democratic women leaders, and women combating racial discrimination, that were developed based on an ideology. Talking about critical discourse, historically, in the 1960s, Critical Linguistics (CL) gave rise to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This seeks to expose both overt and covert types of social relational inequity. Similar to this, Wodak and Meyer (2004) contend that CL and CDA concentrate on the examination of actual and hidden gaps that are incorporated into language, seeking to carry out critical studies of how they are replicated and applied in the language. CDA can be defined as analytical research that seeks to identify societal gaps and mechanisms through the use of language. Numerous experts put proposed a number of CDA techniques. Fairclough is one among them. There are four stages in the implementation of Fairclough's (2012) AWK technique. Identifying social injustices, recognizing obstacles to addressing social injustices, evaluating whether social injustices are necessary for the advancement of society, and determining potential solutions to these obstacles comprise the stages.

In addition, critical discourse necessitates an unsystematic approach as Fairclough (2015, 52) believed that being critical entails the creation of hidden ideologies and the connections between things that are evident through analysis, as well as critiquing the critical relationship between the text's properties and social processes and power relations. The individual creating and reading the text is unsure of it. However, Rogers (2004) contends that by employing this method, critical discourse analysis forfeits its objectivity and examines unseen dynamics in discourse in connection to more extensive social and cultural structures. A widely accepted definition among scholars is that discourse is the application of language in both writing and speech, according to critical discourse analysis.

On the other hand, Wodak & Weiss (2003, 74) since language is frequently used in discriminatory behaviors, it is also used to create and perpetuate unequal power relations, as well as to question and alter social asymmetries, CDA is particularly interested in the relationship between language and power. As a result, CDA is regarded as a social practice. It is implied that there is a dialectical relationship between some discursive events and the circumstances, organizations, and social structures that frame them when discourse is presented as a social practice.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

A component of media consumption that has many intricate details is film. Both visual and auditory elements in a film have the power to sway audiences. Film has the ability to reflect societal ideals and ideas through its structure and style. Movie is a means for message delivery to its audience because, according to Alfathoni & Manesah (2020), it can capture the reality that surrounds it through sound and visual art. The aforementioned quotation clarifies that movies serve as a platform for the widespread dissemination of ideas and are constantly generating meanings that are anticipated to have an impact on an extensive audiences variety, through a number of ways.

Talking about discourse, a way to think of discourse is as a message containing truths. The primary instrument used in the construction of the message was the sign system, which draws its influence from the language of the social structure. A key component of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis methodology is social practice. Discourse as symbolic interaction and social practice. Discourse, according to Kasanah et al. (2023), can be conveyed verbally or in writing and has a distinct beginning and conclusion. Discourse research and critical discourse analysis can be used to contrast the movie's ideology with reality in the real world. In the words of Mulyana (2021) critical discourse analysis aims to gain an overview of linguistic elements before connecting them to a context utilizing language as a tool.

Critical discourse analysis, according to Fairclough in Fauzan (2013), is a type of discourse analysis that looks at the relationship between determination and causation across texts, events, and discursive practices in a systematic way. The representation of wider social and cultural structures, relationships, and processes is another aspect of critical discourse analysis. Investigating how practices, events, and texts emerge outside of and are ideologically affected by power relations and surviving power is the focus of critical discourse analysis.

Text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice are the three categories into which Fairclough divides discourse analysis. As stated by Eriyanto (2011, 37), the text influences the process of developing and constructing discourse. Determining what is identified, connected, and represented in the movie is the first step in the text dimension analysis procedure. The representational aspect is thoroughly evaluated in the first stage by providing an explanation of the meaning that currently exists. The resulting meaning is derived from a description of the social reality that already exists.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The author applied a qualitative method in this study. A qualitative approach, according to Noor (2011), is a process of research and comprehension built on a technique that looks into a human issue or social phenomenon. A qualitative technique was employed, according to Sugiyono (2023), to ascertain the significance of the observable data aside from that. People's words and actions are frequently insufficient to comprehend social issues. Everybody has a meaning behind their words and deeds. In addition, it helps with understanding social relationships. The researchers focus to considerable value

on how reality is socially produced and how the author and the topic of the research are related.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Text*

From word units to discourse, text is an expression of language. In discourse, every form of language, including spoken, written, and visual expressions like images, photos, and audio, is referred to as text. In discourse, text structure and meaning are two interrelated things.

### *Morphology*

Like other literary works, the Hidden Figures movie expresses ideas, information, and messages through the use of language elements like pronouns, nouns, verbs, and adjectives. By affixation, which takes place at the morphological level, these entities are connected. There are various morphological systems in this movie, including the example below:

DIALOGUE	MEANING	MORPHOLOGY
Pulling up, we reveal: KATHERINE COLEMAN (8), a peculiar, quiet, mouse of a child, wearing glasses bigger than her bookish face. Counting to herself. (00:46-01:00)	Katherine is being insulted	Roots
You have books in the colored section 00.50.11	Dorothy is not accepted	Derivasi
it <i>doesn't</i> have what <i>I'm</i> looking for 00.50.17	The court officer's statements about systematic racism resonated with Mary, who was then pursuing legal action to ensure her rights were met. The court officer's claim that the back chairs were designated for Black people suggests that, at the time, it was customary to have separate seating for	Contraction Observation

	White people and Afro people.	
Court Officer : Mrs. Jackson. Colored seats are at the back of the <i>courtroom</i> 00.58.13	These words of systemic racism are reflected in the statement that black women do not belong in court	Neologism (Analogical Formation)
On the windows opposite her: the tetris-like patterns of her mind"s eye come alive. KATHERINE (@8 YEARS OLD):Trapezoid, tetrahedron, octahedron, dodecahedron...	The rise of Katherine's enthusiasm for studying, even though she experienced discrimination	Neologism (Analogical Formation)
Bill : Hey, what the hell are you doing? You <i>can't</i> be in here 01.19.26	The sentence uttered was very racist because Afros did not belong among white people	Contraction Observation
Dorothy: <i>I'm</i> with the West Computing Group. Dorothy Vaughan, sir. 01.19.30	Dorothy explained her position and her reasons for being there	Contraction Observation
Bill : Well, this is a very delicate piece of <i>equipment</i> . 01.19.35	Bill underestimates Dorothy's work	Afiksation
Dorothy : <i>I'm</i> sorry, sir. I'm just trying to be <i>helpful</i> . 01.19.39	Dorothy remains patient even though she has been humiliated.	Contraction Observation Adjective Suffix
Katherine: "Excuse me, ma'am. Mr. Harrison's computer <i>reporting</i> 00.17.11	Mr. Harrison gave a work progress report	Adjective Suffix

Mrs. Ruth : “Take the desk in the back. I’ll get your work in a... bit. Mr. Harrison won’t warm up to you. Don’t expect it. Do your work, keep your head down. 00.17.17	Mrs. Ruth accepts Katherine and hopes that she will work seriously, even though she is placed at the back.	Contraction Observation
Katherine : America’s greatest engineering and scientific minds are not gonna have a problem with having their work checked, are they, Paul?” (00:20)	Katherine's satire	Contraction Observation

English morphology was discovered in a number of instances during this analysis, including derivation, contraction aberration, adjective suffix development, affixation, and new word construction (analogical formation). For instance, the phrase in the colored area appears in the derivation. This sentence derives from a noun and is a verb derivation. Naturally, this does not imply that a particular part should be colored. Dorothy doesn't belong among white people, though, as indicated by the colored area. Then, the second morphological process is Contraction Aberration. Contraction Aberration is a word or group of words that can be changed morphologically into an abbreviation. From the data above, it can be explained that the discussion about morphemes is very broad. In this phase, practice is expected to review all the concepts learned in previous analysis. One can track learning using this phase as a tool. Getting feedback right away after the exam is over is crucial. This is the point at which learning vocabulary in English becomes important. Furthermore, when reading content-area texts, researchers can observe a rise in the application of morphemic analysis in context.

**Semantik**

Dialogue	Semantik
Pulling up, we reveal: KATHERINE COLEMAN (8,) a peculiar, quiet, mouse of a child, wearing glasses bigger than her bookish face. Counting to herself.	Insult
Pastor: you’re a computer at NASA. What’s that entail?	Profession
JIM JOHNSON : Aeronautics. Pretty heady stuff. They let women handle that kind of	Underestimate women
WHITE COP :Those boys are the best we got. That’sfor sure. We have-ta get a man up therebefore the Commies do. Whole damn	A man superiority

country's counting on „em.	
Vivian: The Space Task Group needs a computer ASAP. Someone with a handle on Analytic Geometry. Much to my chagrin, we can't fill the position outta the East Group.	An Expert
Katherine: Excuse me, ma'am, Mr. Harrison's Computer reporting.	Subsidiary
SAM TURNER: This wasn't emptied last	Still full
Bill : Well, this is a <i>very delicate piece of equipment</i>	Tools that are easy to operate and do not require the help of an expert
Mrs. Mitchel : "Yes. Well, the official word is no. They're not assigning a permanent supervisor for the colored group	Black employees
Mr.Stanfford: "We have been through this Katherine. It is not possible there is no protocol for <i>women attending</i> ".	Female job applicants
The Judge: "What would warrant a Colored woman attending a <i>White school</i> "?	White people's school
Katherine's crowded in the back seat with her siblings (CHARLES, MARGARET and HORACE.) She stares out the window, studying the cows whizzing by, the patterns on their hides forming shapes in her mind. She studies the shapes, only now she's...	Katherine just realized that he was treated differently

**Discourse**

The discourse and language analyses in this part are connected. As a representation of a system of prejudice, which includes negative emotional reactions and stereotypes—judgments or assumptions based on the features of groups and society—racist behavior toward Black people is also depicted in the film *Hidden Figures*. Prejudice of African-American women is the subject of the film's first social justice discourse, seen in this analysis. The film depicts complex discrimination in a variety of forms based on degrees and causes. Human behavior on a daily basis is directly linked to systemic racism. One example of direct racism is found in government-run public spaces like libraries. In the scene is demonstrated in:

*Librarian : You have books in the colored section*

*Dorothy : it doesn't have what I'm looking for*

*Librarian : Well, that's just the way it is*

One of the sequences in the movie *Hidden Figures*, which was shot at a public library reserved for white people, features the data above. The discrimination between white and black libraries, as well as racist activities committed by white librarians, are evident throughout the library. Dorothy



went to the white library to look for a book, but it was not available in the black area of the library:

*WHITE LIBRARIAN : We don't want any trouble in here. Hidden Figures -  
DOROTHY : I'm not here for any trouble.*

*WHITE LIBRARIAN : What are you here for?*

*DOROTHY : A book.*

*WHITE LIBRARIAN : You have books in the colored section.*

*DOROTHY : It doesn't have what I'm looking for.*

*WHITE LIBRARIAN : That's just the way it is.*

Dorothy received inadequate service when she subsequently visited. As an African American, Dorothy was clearly the target of racism when the librarian said, "You have books in the colored section." All things considered, it can be said that the discussion that was just had is an example of institutional discrimination because these racist behaviors are connected to government-provided public spaces and laws that only enforce segregation between the white and African-Americans.

Besides in the library, courtrooms are another place where racial discrimination happens. The courtroom provides the second instance of racial rhetoric:

*COURT CLERK : This is your court date. (stamps her case file) Colored seats  
are at the back of the courtroom.*

*Mary nods. Too happy to be offended.*

Every social movement is tightly tied to the topic at hand; racism manifests itself, for example, in government-provided public spaces. An image of Mary attending court in America in the 1960s can be found in the data above. The court officer's chat with Mary, who was then pursuing legal action to ensure her rights were met, mirrored this act of deliberate racial discrimination. This discrimination is also seen between Paul and Katherine Paul treated Katherine in the same way. Due to Paul's authoritarian leadership style, which involves managing his organization and viewing his subordinates as a tool to accomplish objectives, members of the organization or subordinates are frequently treated inhumanely. Since Paul's leadership style implies that subordinates have no rights. Katherine is treated like a tool or computer that he uses to calculate. Katherine is also not permitted to add her name in the report.

The fact that the court officer stated that the back seats were designated for Black people suggests that, at the time, the policy of assigning separate seats to White and Black people was rather typical. However, given this fact, it is apparent that racism is a daily occurrence for people of African American origin. Thus, it might be said that this incident is part of the representation of

systemic racism in the movie *Hidden Figures* if there is segregation or unequal treatment in court.

When Dorothy sought to apply for a position as a supervisor, she also encountered discriminatory discourse. Racism is a global topic in society that many people discuss about, as demonstrated by the numerous examples above, which also serve as one of the societal tensions in the movie *Hidden Figures*. In addition to being a topic of discussion, people may see and feel it readily in books, in their surroundings, and in some literary works. Many people experience discrimination from others due to their race or skin tone. This behavior is also depicted in literature, which is a fascinating subject for further study because it reflects reality. Racial discrimination is defined as the idea that some racial groups are better than others.

### ***Social Practice***

This movie seems to support the idea that studies on human relations attempt to make people the primary subject. To better comprehend it, however, this CDA technique does not posit any socio-linguistic study object. Hence, the primary obstacle in this study is to view skin tone as an object and a factor in the personalization, idea transmission, and interpretation of human knowledge (in this case, racism). A complex subject is presented in a clear and comprehensive manner in the beginner-friendly movie *Hidden Figures*, as tolerance is a skill that can be acquired at any age. In this instance, black individuals never stop being colored.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main emphasis of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is on the ways in which language shapes and reflects social power structures. By applying this approach to study the film *Hidden Figures*, numerous key conclusions are going to be drawn:

1. The value of representation in speech is emphasized by Fairclough. *Hidden Figures* illustrates, how African-American women are frequently dismissed and neglected in a world controlled by white men. The fight against prejudice and misconceptions, as well as their demonstration of their ability and important contributions to the US space program, are depicted in this movie. It is possible to analyze how power and social hierarchy function in regular interactions at Jpl by using a critical discourse method. Unequal power relations are highlighted, for instance, by disparities in employment possibilities and access to amenities (such as separate bathrooms) based on race and gender. It took a systemic struggle for individuals such as Katherine Johnson to receive the due respect and gratitude.
2. *Hidden Figures*, as defined by Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach is a text that depicts the struggle against unjust power structures. It also supporting ideological and social change by promoting inclusive and just narratives about the role of African American women in the history of science and technology. In the words of Fairclough, discourse has the power to both reflect and shape ideology. The rhetoric

presented in Hidden Figures questions the prevailing racial and gender ideologies of the day. The film not only offers an inspiring story, but it also serves as a social critique, emphasizing the necessity of diversity and social justice, as well as encouraging a shift in public perception of African American women's capabilities and positions.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

In order to raise awareness among movie researchers who aspire to perform critical discourse analysis studies, this research hoped that its findings would add to the breadth of information already available on the subject. In addition, researchers' findings can hopefully be used as a discourse learning medium by lecturers and next researchers

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The writers of this journal article are Yulia Sofiani M.Hum and Imelda Simorangkir M.Hum from Indraprasta PGRI University. The researchers would like to express their sincere appreciation to each and every reviewer who helped with the peer review process for the publications. The professional supporting and aid provided by all esteemed reviewers has qualified this journal for publication. The researchers would like to express their gratitude to everyone who has helped to support our research. Professor Sumaryoto as The Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Consoler, Dr. Dani Susanto, Univeristas Indonesia, and Dr. Mirna Laksman Huntley, Univeristas Indonesia

### **REFERENCES**

- Alfathoni, M. A. M., & Manesah, D. (2020). Pengantar Teori Film: Deepublish.
- Budi. (2018). Analisis Semiotika Film dan Komunikasi. Malang: Intrans Publishing
- Castano Gomez et al (2021). Extraction and Physicochemical Characterization of Dried Powder Mucilage from *Opuntia ficus-indica* Cladodes and Aloe Vera Leaves: A Comparative Study. *Polymers*, 13(11), 1689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/polym13111689>
- Eriyanto. (2011). Analisis Wacana Pengantar Analisis Teks Media. Yogyakarta: LKIS.
- Fairclough, N. (2015). Language and power (3rd ed.). Routledge
- Fairclough's (2012). [Fairclough, N. & Fairclough, I. \(2012\). Political Discourse Analysis: A Methode for Advanced Students. London and New York: Taylor & Francis Group.](#)
- Fauzan (2013). Analisis Wacana Kritis Model Fairclough. *Jurnal Pendidik*, 5(2), 1-10.[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Umar-Fauzan/publication/351118810\\_Analisis\\_Wacana\\_Kritis\\_Model\\_Fairclough/links/6088bc36881fa114b431b1b3/Analisis-Wacana-Kritis-Model-Fairclough.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Umar-Fauzan/publication/351118810_Analisis_Wacana_Kritis_Model_Fairclough/links/6088bc36881fa114b431b1b3/Analisis-Wacana-Kritis-Model-Fairclough.pdf)

- Javandalasta, P. (2011). 5 Hari Mahir Bikin Film. Surabaya: Mumtaz Media.
- Kasanah, U., Rahmayantis, M. D., & Pitoyo, A. (2023). Aspek Gramatikal pada Novel Rasa Karya Tere Liye (Kajian Wacana). *Wacana: Jurnal Bahasa, Seni, Dan Pengajaran*. 7(2), 152-162.  
<https://doi.org/10.29407/jbsp.v7i2.20964>
- Noor, J. (2011). *Meteode Penelitian*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Rokhyanto et al (2022), *Generosity in Indonesian Literature. An Implication of Character Education*. <https://doi.org/10.33503/journey.v5i2.2059>
- Sugiyono, S. (2023). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta Bandung
- Rogers, R. (Ed.). (2004). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers
- Wodak & Weiss (2003). *Theory, Interdisciplinarity and Critical Discourse Analysis*. In *Critical Discourse Analysis. Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Wodak, R. and Chilton, P. (2005). *A New Agenda in (Critical ) Discourse Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.