

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Literature Review

1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society, how language functions in a community, how people in community use language as well as how this language usage reflects the social identity of the users. There are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior. A second possible relationship is directly opposed to the first: linguistic structure and/or behavior may either influence or determine social structure. A third possible relationship is that the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other (Wardhaugh, 2005).

Trudgill (1974: 32) states that sociolinguistics is a part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. The way people talk is determined by social context in which their speaking takes place. People select language which is suitable with the situation in which they are talking, who they are speaking to, and how close their relation with the hearers. By regarding these factors, people may convey their message in different ways or in different language varieties. Varieties of language along racial, ethnic, and social

lines have been too apparent in many countries, including America and Britain (Holmes, 2001:190). Sociolinguistics deals with explaining why people speak differently in different social contexts and with identifying the social function of language as well as describing the ways it is used to convey social meanings.

2. Language and Society

Language is the main element in human life used for communication. In terms of communication, language means the use of a system of sounds and words to communicate. The use of language is almost always a social activity (Falks, 193: 59). Standing on the idea that language is a means of communication and social interaction between human beings, Wardhaugh (1992: 1) says that language is what the members of a particular society speak. Communication itself always involves individuals with their distinctive personality traits, attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. As an instrument of communication among people, language is a social phenomenon used as a process of conveying ideas to others that enables people to regulate relationships in order to keep their role as social beings in society.

The society in which people live affects the way they use language. In other words, society is any group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes (Wardhaugh, 1992: 1). In a society, people have to interact with each other, or in this case in a social interaction people should notice the norms which hold for the society about how to be

a good person in the society. In addition, Macionish (1994: 82) states that society refers to a group of people who interact within a limited territory guided by their culture.

Language and society are, indeed, closely related; they cannot be separated. There are so many phenomena showing that language and society influence each other. One example here is that different social status of people in a certain society results in different use of language. In Indonesian culture, younger people usually speak politely by using formal language to the older ones. In a certain situation, however, the case is vice versa in which an older person speaks by using formal language to a younger person. The social status of the two persons plays significant role in this case. The older person who has a lower social status has to speak politely by using formal language to the younger person who has a higher social status. This case is one example showing that a certain condition in a society can influence the way language is used and that language and society are closely related.

Moreover, there is a culture that cannot be separated from the living process of human being. Culture is defined as the custom and beliefs, arts, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group and it also means the beliefs and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share. People from different ethnic groups use language differently too. In other words, particular groups may develop ways of speaking which are appropriate to their

culture. Dealing with this phenomenon, Holmes (2001: 333) defines culture as positive politeness on solidarity oriented culture value involvement with others. In addition, Wardhaugh (1992: 217) even proposes culture in the sense of “whatever a person must know in order to function in particular society”. It implies that the culture of a particular society consists of whatever one has to know or believe in order to operate in an acceptable way to the member of the society. When some cultures communicate to each other, they learn others’ product of thought and behavior.

3. Speech Community and Language Varieties

The term “speech community” is widely used by sociolinguist to refer to a community based on language, but linguistic community is also used with the same meaning (Hudson, 1980: 25). The simplest definition of “speech community” is that of John Lyons (1970: 326): speech community refers to all the people who use a given language (or dialect). Based on this definition, speech communities may overlap (where there are bilingual individuals) and need not have any social or cultural unity. Labov’s definition in Wardhaugh (1992: 118) defines “speech community” as follows: the speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participations in a set of shared norms which may be observed in overt types of evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variations which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage.

Moreover, Wardhaugh (1992: 125) states that each individual is a member of many different speech communities. People always want to identify themselves on one occasion as members of one community and on another as members of another. This concept implies that there can be some language varieties in the society.

Holmes (2001: 6) says that the reasons for the choice of one dialect rather than another involve the same kind of social considerations—the participants, social setting, and topic or purpose of the interaction. Variety or code is a sociolinguistic term referring to language in context. The varieties are also distinguishable by the way they are used. A standard variety of language is called “better” only in social sense. All varieties of particular language are equal. They have a preferred status, give those who use it certain social advantages (Wardhaugh, 1992: 326). There is no major difference in the complexity of all varieties of linguistic structure. People from different social classes speak in different ways. The pattern of social interaction also determines the choice of language variety.

4. Intercultural Communication

In a multicultural society, it is possible to have communication among cultures. It is called as intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is a communication between people whose cultural perception and symbol system are distinct enough (Samoval et al., 1998: 48). It is more complex than communication between persons of the same culture because some different cultures often have very different behavior.

Therefore, the differences in culture are an obstacle to intercultural communication (Novinger, 2001: 4).

Jokinen in *Contextual Inferences in Intercultural Communication* (1994: 1) mentions that intercultural communication happens as the result of different contact and social aspect and has a connection with social roles. In an intercultural communication, someone should consider social roles as well. The social roles will teach people the way to communicate to each other and help someone to understand and learn other cultures. The discussion of intercultural communication in multicultural society cannot be separated from the explanation about culture itself. The communicative event begins with the description of the components which are likely to be salient (Coupland and Jaworski, 1997: 142-143), they are:

- a. Genre or types of event, for example, joke, greeting, lecture, conversation;
- b. The topic or referential focus;
- c. The purpose or the function both of the events in general and in term of the interaction goal of individual participant;
- d. The setting, including location, time of the day, season of the year, and physical aspect of the situation (e.g. the size of room, the arrangement of the furniture);
- e. The key or emotional tone of the event (e.g. serious, sarcastic, jocular);

- f. The participants, including their age, sex, ethnicity, social status, or the other relevant categories, and their relationship to one another;
- g. The message form, including both vocal and non-vocal channel, and the nature of the code which is used (e.g. long and its variety);
- h. The message content of surface level denoting references, what is communicated about;
- i. The act sequence, or order of communicative speech act, including turn-taking and overlap phenomena;
- j. The rules for interaction, or what properties should be observed; and
- k. The norms of interpretation, including the common knowledge, the relevant cultural, presupposition, or shared understanding, which allows particular inferences to be drawn about what is to be taken literally, what discounters. etc.

5. Social Factors

Language is strongly influenced by social factors. They are the participants or the users of language: who are speaking and who they are speaking to; the setting or social context of the interaction, which is related to its users: where they are speaking; the topic, which deals with what is being talked about; and the function of the interaction, which deals with why they are speaking (Holmes, 2001: 8).

a. Participants of the interaction

People generally talk differently to children and to adults although some adjust their speech style or “accommodate” more than others (Holmes, 2001: 225). The differences are based on the background of the speaker such as, social identity, age, sex, and personal characteristics. In communicating one big issue, participants become the easiest to identify. There are many kinds of participant, for example family participants (father-daughter), job participants (boss-employee), and social participants (friend-friend). The participant or speaker may have influence to the language used. Other speakers may have different ways to talk about one topic or issue.

b. Setting or social context of the interaction

There are many aspects of the social context that can contribute to deciding which linguistic variety is to be employed on a particular setting (Trudgill, 1974: 106). Every speech community has different varieties from which people select according to the context in which their members are communicating. In talking about one issue or topic, people need to be acquainted with the meaning of their words in the cultural contexts in which they are normally used. The speech of individuals varies in the code according to the occasion or social context in which they are speaking. Speakers have to collect an appropriate style in giving

utterances determined by the social context. They should know the different styles of language and the situation in which the style is proper.

However, different aspects of the social identity of a person are also relevant in determining his/her different setting or social context. People need to be concerned with the meaning of their words in the cultural context in which they are normally used. It involves the understanding of the cultural and social situations in which the speakers are communicating.

c. Topic of the interaction

Holmes (2001: 25) argues that people may select a particular variety or code because it makes them easier to discuss a particular topic, regardless of where they are speaking. Each participant of the interaction may have different views from the others concerning with what exactly is being talked about. They can link utterances together thematically, syntactically, or logically. In this case, feedback indicates the continuation of a topic in conversation (Wardhaugh, 1992: 301-2). Particular topic may be discussed in one code rather than another, regardless of the setting or addressee. People somehow attempt to establish one main topic so that the communication runs well.

d. Function of the interaction

Holmes (2001: 259-260) offers a number of ways of categorizing the function of speech. They are: expressive (to express the speaker's feelings), directive (an attempt to get someone to do something), referential (to provide information), metalinguistic (to comment on language itself), poetic (focused on aesthetic features of a language), and phatic (to express solidarity and empathy with others). Function or goal of the interaction is the language being used for. It is molded by the force of a complex social and cultural system (Clark and Clark, 1977: 515).

The discussion of the ways in which speech functions are expressed in different contexts involve considerations of politeness. Being polite is so important to understand language as well as social and cultural values of the community.

6. Social Dimensions

In an intercultural communication, more specific social factors often need to be included, and a range of social dimensions may need to be considered too (Holmes, 2001: 26). They are social distance or solidarity scale which deals with the relationship between the participants, status or power scale which deals with the participants' social status, formality scale which is related to the type of the interaction and two functional scales: referential and affective which are related to the purpose of the interaction (Holmes, 2001: 9).

a. Solidarity or social distance scale

The speaker may be judged to speak “better” or “worse” than other speakers who have much the same background (Wardhaugh, 1992: 49). Moreover, Holmes (2001: 175) adds that when they belong to the same group, people often speak similarly. However, there are many different groups in a community, and so any individual may share linguistic features with a range of other speakers. The communication between people with high solidarity often reflects the regular interactions they have. People use more standard forms to those they do not know well, and use more vernacular forms to their intimates. Solidarity even can be proved by reducing privacy to show the degree of friendship (Holmes, 2001: 275). Social distance can make a payment to creating and maintaining distinct dialects. It enables the speakers of particular varieties to distinguish themselves from the speakers of other varieties.

b. Status or Power Scale

This scale points to be relevance or relative status in some linguistic choice (Holmes, 2001: 9). Furthermore, Holmes (2001: 135) adds that class divisions may be based on some status differences such as social prestige, wealth, and education. In western society, a status generally derives from the material resources a person can command, such as family background,

independently of wealth, and educational level. Those who are superior have a high status and those who are subordinate have a low status. Social role is often a factor contributing to status differences between people. Status refers to the respect people give to someone.

Races can also be thought as a label for groups of people who share a similar economic and social status. The social status or power is reflected in speaking and it signals that people want to construct their social identity in a community. It indicates the relationship with others who have a different social status.

c. Formality scale

A very formal setting, such as a law court, also will influence language choice regardless of the personal relationship between the speakers (Holmes, 2001: 9). People may also try to relate the level of formality chosen to a variety of factors: the kinds of occasions, various social backgrounds, and emotional involvement of one or more of the participants (Wardhaugh, 1992: 48). People can speak very formally or very informally and their choice is determined by the circumstances. According to the situation, the speakers may change their style of speaking to increase the formality of the context within a particular setting.

Formal styles of speech can be differentiated by its distinctive pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary (Holmes, 2001: 375). In

the process of communication, interactions with acquaintances may be relatively formal. Then, interactions with someone who people know well may be relatively informal in many contexts.

d. Functional scale: referential and affective

Language can convey objective information of a reference; and it can also express someone's feeling (Holmes, 2001: 10). In referential scale, there are high information content and low information content. In affective scale, there are low affective content and high affective content. However, interactions that are more concerned with expressing feelings often have little in the way of communicating new information. All speech communities have linguistic means of expressing basic speech function. Every language provides the means of expressing social as well as referential meaning, and the choice between the alternative ways of saying the same thing frequently involves a consideration of these dimensions. Different cultural groups may emphasize affective functions in contexts where others consider referential information as the primary focus (Holmes, 2001: 376).

7. Racism in the United States of America

In everyday language, the term *race* has a number of different meanings. Basically, it is applied to groups which have some characteristics in common. To scientist, the term *race* has a more precise meaning: the physical characteristics which the members of the group

have in common, which are genetically determined. It completely excludes the consideration of any characteristics which are entirely the results of external environment that influences such as geographical factor, weather and temperatures; and not the consequence of heredity (International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 263). Fought (2006: 10) also states that race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflict and interest by referring to different types of human bodies.

Racism, according to Virgil Elizondo, an anthropologist, in *Analysis of Racism*, is defined as the assumption that psychocultural traits and capacities are determined by biological race and that races differ from one another. It is usually coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race and its rights to dominate over others (in Concilium, 1993: 52). In *The Ideology of Racism*, Alan Davies emphasizes that racism is not only about biological matter but also about the rationalization of irrational power structure in which one race instrumentalizes, exploits and sometimes even annihilates others (in Concilium, 1982: 11).

Different from Davies and Elizondo, Anthony H. Richmond in his book, *The Color Problem*, emphasizes that racism is derived from the wrong assumption that certain genetical factors and cultural background can determine people's position in the society. He states that it is a common fallacy to assume that the people of the world can be divided into two or three clearly defined racial groups on the basis of skin color alone. The simple dichotomy of "white and "coloured", and the threefold

classification into Black or Negroid, White or Caucasoid, and Yellow or Mongoloid, have assumed a certain social significance, but they do not correspond with genetics' understanding of racial differences.

The United States of America is a nation where many people from different cultural backgrounds can be found. Racism in America has been dominated by a settler society of religiously and ethnically diverse Whites. The heaviest burdens of racism in the country have historically fallen upon Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Latin Americans, American Jews, Irish American and some other immigrant group and their descendants. White Americans occasionally do experience racial discrimination since other groups have less economic and social power. It is uncommon that such discrimination has the power to seriously harm whites.

Racism in the United States became a crucial issue since slave and colonial era. Before the Revolution, human slaves were bought and sold in all American colonies. Society distinguished races in different ways. They were separated in education, public facilities, employments, governments, housing, and so on. They were also judged by others by their color of skin, wealth, and physical appearance. In Long Beach, California, there is also a racism issue that became a crucial problem in the neighborhoods especially in the school. There are many gangs from different races which have conflicts. It is because they have a different perception about their

America and they also have a negative perspective about white people as the superior race.

8. Film

Film is considered by many people to be an important art form. Films entertain, educate, enlighten, and inspire audiences. Bordwell and Thomson (1997: 3) state that films are like buildings, book and symphonize artifact made by human for human purpose. It means that film reflects desires, needs, fears, and aspirations of a society at a given time. Therefore, films can help the audience to know and see the phenomena that occur in society.

Thus, film is a kind of entertainment medium that is made based on the social phenomena, social interests and cultural values for human purpose. Movie or film is a cultural artifact created by specific culture which reflects those cultures and affect them. They are considered to be important at form, sources of popular entertainment and powerful method to educate human for human purpose.

Films are produced by recording acts. Any film can become a worldwide attraction especially with the addition of dubbing or subtitle that translates the dialogue. Films as the product of society reflect many things that occur in the society. It can be seen in the phenomenon inside of the films.

Film refers to motion picture as an individual project and to the field in general. Munn (1969: 502) states that films are the parts of audio visual,

most of which also emphasize mobility and temporal sequence. They are also considered as an important art form and powerful method for educating citizens. The visual element of cinema given motion film a universal power of communication.

As an artwork, a film has some significance. Films portray the society and the life surrounding them. By mirroring human life, films stand for the characteristics of the social life itself. Popular phenomena, like racism can be analyzed in the films as a reflection of the real society which has many different characteristics of human beings.

9. Summary of *Freedom Writers*

The story takes place in 1994, beginning with scenes from the 1992 Los Angeles riots. The story is about Erin Gruwell (acted by Hillary Swank), a new, excited schoolteacher who leaves the safety of her hometown, Newport Beach, to teach at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, a formerly high achieving school which has recently put an integration plan in place. Her enthusiasm is rapidly challenged when she realizes that her class are all "at-risk" high school students, also known as "unteachables", and not the eager college students she was expecting. The high school students assimilate into racial groups in the classroom, fights break out, and eventually most of the high school students stop attending class. Not only does Gruwell meet opposition from her high school students, but she also has a difficult time with her department head, who refuses to let her teach her high school students with books in case they get

damaged and lost, and instead tells her to focus on training them discipline and obedience.

One night, two high school students, Eva (April Lee Hernández), a Hispanic girl and narrator for much of the film, and a Cambodian refugee, Cindy (Jaclyn Ngan) are in the same store. An additional student, Grant Rice (Armand Jones) is frustrated at losing an arcade game and demands a refund from the owner. When he storms out, Eva's boyfriend attempts a drive-by shooting, intending to kill Grant but misses, accidentally killing Cindy's boyfriend. As a witness, Eva must testify at court; she intends to guard "her own" in her testimony.

At school, Gruwell intercepts a racist drawing by one of her high school students and utilizes it to teach them about the Holocaust. She gradually begins to earn their trust and buys them composition books to record their diaries, in which they talk about their experiences of being abused, seeing their friends die, and being evicted. Determined to reform her high school students, Gruwell takes on two part-time jobs to pay for more books and spends a lot more time at school, to the disappointment of her husband (Patrick Dempsey). Her students start to behave with respect and discover a lot more. A transformation is specifically visible in one student, Marcus (Jason Finn). Gruwell invites various Jewish Holocaust survivors to talk with her class about their experiences and requires the students to attend a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance. Meanwhile, her

unorthodox training methods are scorned by her colleagues and department chair Margaret Campbell (Imelda Staunton).

The following year comes, and Gruwell teaches her class again for its sophomore (second) year. In class, when reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, they invite Miep Gies (Pat Carroll), the woman who sheltered Anne Frank from the German soldiers to talk to them. After they raise the money to bring her over, Miep shares her experiences hiding Anne Frank. When Marcus tells her that she is his hero, she denies it, claiming she was merely doing the right thing. Her denial leads to Eva to rethink her plan to lie during her testimony. When she testifies, she finally breaks down and tells the truth, much to some of her family members' dismay and to her own risk.

Meanwhile, Gruwell asks her students to write their diaries in book form. She compiles the entries and names it *The Freedom Writers Diary*. Her husband divorces her and Margaret tells her she cannot teach her kids for their junior year. Gruwell fights this decision, eventually convincing the superintendent to permit her to teach her kids' junior and senior year. The film ends with a note that Gruwell successfully prepared numerous high school students to graduate high school and attend university.

10. Previous Research

A study that deals with social factors and social dimensions was conducted by Megasari. Her thesis entitled *The Influence of Social Factors and Social Dimensions on the Characters' Language in the Script of*

Titanic: (A Sociolinguistic Study) described the social factors and social dimensions in *Titanic*. She revealed the influence of social factors and social dimensions by analyzing language features reflecting the social life in Great Britain society in the late nineteenth century. In her research, she dealt with some upper groups and lower groups. Megasari used the theory from Holmes and Wardhaugh to answer the first and the second objectives. Besides, she explored social life in Great Britain to answer the third objective.

Compared to the previous research, this research is quite similar, but different in particular aspects. This research has only two objectives; describing social factors and social dimensions which represent racism in the United States of America. This study does not include the social conditions of the society because the researcher specifies her research into social factors and dimensions on characters' language which represent racism issue in the United States.

The researcher also uses both theories from Holmes and Wardhaugh to answer the research objectives, but this research has a different object from the previous research. This research describes the phenomena of social factors and social dimensions in Freedom Writers which tells about racism issue. This research also considers the concept of racism between white and colored people in Long Beach, America.

B. Conceptual Framework and Analytical Construct

1. Conceptual Framework

Society and language cannot be separated in human life. Language has an important role in the society as a means of communication. However, there are many cultures which exist in the society which influence the language itself. This phenomenon leads to an intercultural communication which also involves racism issue.

Racism is a crucial issue in the United States. It is portrayed in *Freedom Writers* movie. In this movie, there are many characters' utterances which represent racism. However, racism as a big issue spreads in all kinds of communication. It can be analyzed by looking at the social factors and social dimensions.

Considering this problem, this research has two objectives which are related to racism issue which happens in this film. The first purpose is to describe the social factors and the second purpose is to describe the social dimensions shaping in this movie.

In this researchs sociolinguistics is used as the approach of study to analyze the two problems. Sociolinguistics is appropriate since it studies the relationship between language and society. In accordance with the topic, the researcher also gives a brief explanation about racism issue in the United States of America as the background. The main source of this research is *Freedom Writers*. In this movie, the researcher analyzed the social factors and social dimensions in the characters' language which are

reflecting racism issues. Theories of social factors and social dimensions by Holmes are used to describe the social factors of racism represented in the characters' utterances.

2. Analytical Construct

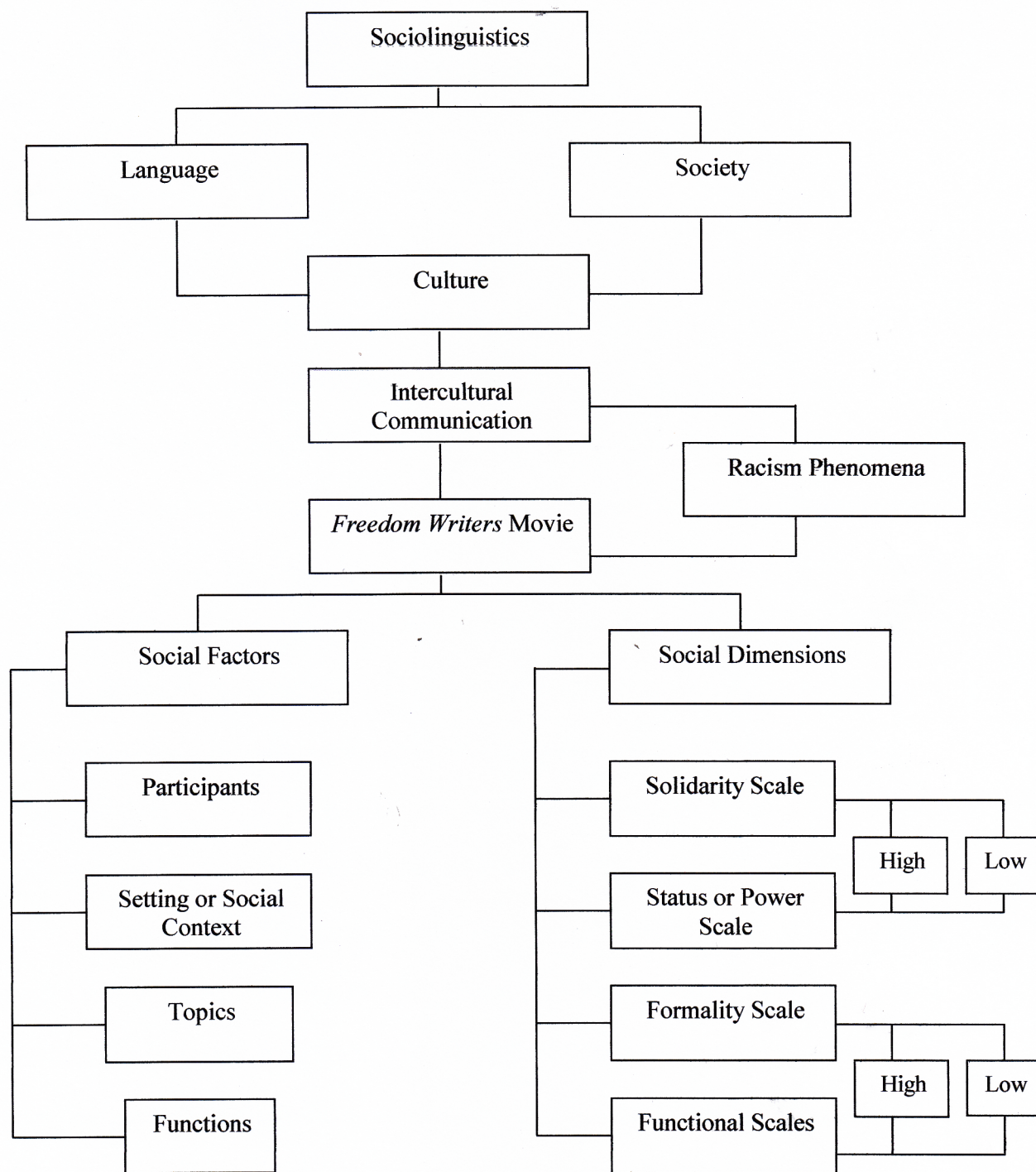


Figure 1. Analytical Construct of Social Factors and Social Dimensions in the Language of Freedom Writers' Characters Reflecting Racism in the United States of America.