

## **Stylo-Contrastive Analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun***

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### **Abstract**

This study presents a comparative stylistic analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, focusing on how generational, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors inform their respective literary styles. Anchored on Robert Lado's contrastive analysis theory and situated within the framework of stylistic criticism, the research examines how both authors utilise language not only as a medium of communication but also as a cultural instrument. Through a close textual analysis, the study identifies six key stylistic devices—code-mixing, transliteration, use of Nigerian Pidgin, proverbs, humour, and vulgar expressions—and investigates their deployment across the two novels. Findings reveal that while both authors share a commitment to integrating indigenous language features into English narratives, they diverge significantly in frequency, function, and tone. Achebe, writing in the late twentieth century, demonstrates a strong attachment to oral tradition and communal voice through his extensive use of proverbs, Pidgin, and satire. Adichie, by contrast, writing in a postmodern, globalised context, adopts a more intimate and contemporary style, marked by transliteration, emotional immediacy, and candid engagement with taboo subjects. Notably, Achebe maintains linguistic decorum, while Adichie's unflinching depictions of war and interpersonal conflict justify the inclusion of vulgar or explicit language. The study concludes that the stylistic differences between Achebe and Adichie are primarily occasioned by a generational shift and evolving literary norms, yet there exists a continuum in their use of language to construct cultural authenticity. The findings contribute to the scholarship on African literature by highlighting the stylistic evolution from postcolonial narrative strategies to contemporary realist aesthetics. Ultimately, this paper affirms that both Achebe and Adichie, despite their differing approaches, succeed in asserting a distinctly Nigerian literary voice within the scope of Anglophone literature.

**Keywords:** Contrastive Stylistics; African Literature; Code-mixing; Chinua Achebe; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

## Introduction

In the canon of modern African literature, Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stand out as influential voices from different generations. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) are seminal Nigerian novels that, while distinct in historical context, invite comparison in terms of language and style. Both works explore Nigeria's socio-political challenges – Achebe's novel critiques post-colonial dictatorship in an imaginary 1980s African nation, while Adichie's novel examines the human costs of the 1960s Biafran War. Beyond their thematic concerns, the novels offer a rich terrain for stylistic analysis. This study aims to compare the linguistic and stylistic choices of Achebe and Adichie, in order to understand how each author's background and era shape their narrative voice. A contrastive stylistic analysis is pertinent because Achebe, often termed the "father" of African literature, and Adichie, a leading voice of a younger generation, both write in English inflected with Igbo and other local languages. By examining elements such as code-mixing (the blending of Igbo and English), transliteration of Igbo idioms, use of Nigerian Pidgin, integration of proverbs, humour, and even vulgar or taboo language, we can discern patterns that reflect each author's stylistic identity. The research question guiding this analysis is: *How do Achebe's and Adichie's stylistic techniques converge and diverge, and what do these similarities and differences reveal about the evolution of Nigerian literary style across generations?*

This article is situated within the field of linguistic stylistics, which considers how language usage contributes to literary effect and meaning. It adopts Robert Lado's concept of contrastive analysis as a framework to systematically compare the two authors' language use. By doing so, the study contributes to understanding the stylistic continuity and change in Nigerian literature, highlighting how Adichie's work builds upon yet distinctively departs from Achebe's stylistic legacy. Ultimately, this comparative approach will illuminate the extent to which generational and cultural contexts influence literary style, thereby filling a gap in the scholarship on Achebe and Adichie, which has often focused on themes and historical commentary rather than on detailed stylistic comparison.

## Theoretical Framework

A stylistic analysis requires clarity on what "style" entails. Linguists and literary theorists have offered various definitions of style. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (1981) describe style broadly as "the way in which language is used in a given context by a given person, for a given purpose" (Leech and Short 10). In other words, style encompasses the distinctive linguistic choices an author makes (diction, syntax, figurative language, etc.) in a particular text. Style is not limited to literary language; as Roger Fowler (1971) notes, style is a property of all texts and is manifested through the manipulation of linguistic options (Fowler 15). Similarly, M. H. Abrams defines style as essentially the manner of expression: it is "how speakers or writers say what it is that they say" in prose or verse (Abrams 303). These definitions underscore that an author's style is an identifying imprint—a combination of habitual language choices and strategies that distinguish one writer's voice from another's.

In comparative studies, differences in style can often be attributed to differing contexts or backgrounds. This study employs contrastive analysis theory, as formulated by Robert Lado (1957), to frame the comparison between Achebe and Adichie. Lado's contrastive analysis was originally developed in linguistics to compare two languages in order to identify differences and similarities; here, the concept is adapted to compare two authors' language use. According to Lado, systematic comparison can reveal how distinct systems—or in this case, distinct authorial styles—correspond or diverge. While Lado focused on language learning (positing that learners tend to transfer elements from their native language to a new language, with differences causing learning difficulties), the underlying principle is useful for literary comparison: examining *differences* can highlight unique stylistic innovations, and examining *similarities* can reveal shared techniques or influences. Applying this framework, we treat each author's body of stylistic habits almost as different "languages" or at least different idiolects within the same language (English). By contrasting these, we hope to understand how Achebe's and Adichie's choices function within their narratives and what their choices imply about their literary intentions and contexts.

An important aspect of stylistic theory relevant to this study is the notion of literary generations and linguistic background. Achebe and Adichie write about different time periods, but more significantly, they write *in* different time periods. Achebe's generation of writers, emerging in the post-colonial 1960s-1980s, often felt a compulsion to "Africanize" English, blending local proverbs and speech rhythms into the colonial language to assert cultural identity. Adichie, writing in the 21st century, inherits the path carved by writers like Achebe but also writes for a global audience attuned to a contemporary literary style. The theoretical premise is that the generational gap between the two authors may result in observable stylistic shifts. As Lado's framework would predict, *differences* between their styles could "promote new knowledge" by highlighting how Nigerian literature has evolved, whereas *similarities* might "solidify and refresh existing knowledge" by showing continuity in literary tradition. In sum, the theoretical foundation for this study merges stylistic analysis (grounded in definitions by Leech & Short, Fowler, Abrams, and others) with contrastive analysis (after Lado). This combined approach allows us to systematically compare Achebe's and Adichie's stylistic devices and to interpret the significance of our findings in light of their differing authorial contexts.

## Literature Review

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* have each been the subject of extensive critical study, though mostly in isolation and often with thematic or sociopolitical emphasis rather than direct stylistic comparison. Placing our work in context, this section reviews a few representative studies on each author and highlights the gap in comparative stylistic analysis.

Chinua Achebe's works, including *Anthills of the Savannah*, have elicited numerous analyses focusing on themes of leadership, post-colonial critique, and the use of oral traditions. For instance, *Anthills* has been examined through the lens of leadership and gender: Ezenwa-Ohaeto and Asuzu (2020) analyse "women and leadership in modern African literature" with a focus on *Anthills of the Savannah*, concluding that Achebe portrays female characters like Beatrice as vital moral compasses in a male-dominated political landscape. Michael J. C. Echeruo (1998) explores Achebe's use of *biblical allusions and symbols* in *Anthills*, investigating how Achebe critiques national narratives and leadership models through scripture-inspired imagery. These studies situate *Anthills* within discussions of political power and mythology, demonstrating Achebe's layered thematic approach. However, they do not directly dissect Achebe's linguistic style beyond noting his incorporation of proverbs or allegorical language.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, being a war novel, has been studied for its historical and psychological themes. Nwanyanwu and Anasiudu (2019) apply trauma theory to the novel, showing how Adichie narrates the suffering of the Igbo people during the Biafran War and distinguishing between characters traumatized by direct experience of violence versus those traumatized by hearing of others' suffering. Their analysis highlights the emotional impact of Adichie's narrative but does not focus on her stylistic techniques. Tembo (2012) offers a post-colonial reading in "Ethnic Conflict and the Politics of Greed: Rethinking *Half of a Yellow Sun*," arguing that Adichie portrays the war as fuelled both by colonial legacies and the avarice of Nigerian leaders. Feghabo (2022) examines the novel from a feminist perspective, finding that Adichie valorises educated women (Olanna, Kainene, Miss Adebayo) and suggesting that intellectual empowerment is key to gender equality. These works, while illuminating Adichie's themes of trauma, ethnic politics, and feminism, again give limited attention to matters of language and style.

Notably, both Achebe and Adichie are often discussed in terms of their socio-cultural impact and narrative content, rather than their formal stylistic choices. Very few scholars have directly compared the two authors. One relevant comparative angle is found in Ogbodo (2014), who studied transliteration and code-switching in Nigerian novels and noted that many Nigerian writers blend English with indigenous languages as a deliberate stylistic strategy. Such observations imply that both Achebe and Adichie partake in a broader literary practice of linguistic hybridization. However, no prior study, to the best of our knowledge, has undertaken a focused *stylo-contrastive analysis* of Achebe and Adichie. As Achebe is a pioneer

Nigerian novelist and Adichie an acclaimed contemporary novelist often seen as a literary “descendant” of Achebe, a direct comparison of their stylistic techniques is a natural and needed extension of existing scholarship.

In summary, previous research provides rich insights into the themes and context of *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, but a gap remains in examining how these authors’ styles compare. This study addresses that gap by analysing specific linguistic devices in both novels side by side. By moving beyond thematic analysis to the level of diction, syntax, and narrative voice, we offer a deeper understanding of each author’s craft and how it reflects their respective eras. This comparative stylistic perspective will shed light on the evolution of Nigerian literary expression from Achebe’s time to Adichie’s, thereby contributing a new dimension to the critical discourse on their work.

### **Background: Synopsis of the Novels**

In order to appreciate the stylistic choices in *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, it is useful to briefly summarize the context and storyline of each novel. This background will provide a foundation for understanding how each author’s style operates within the narrative.

#### *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)

Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* is set in the fictional West African country of Kangan, a post-colonial society under military dictatorship. The novel centers on three characters who are close friends: Chris Oriko, the Commissioner for Information in the regime; Ikem Osodi, an outspoken newspaper editor; and Beatrice Okoh, an official in the Finance Ministry and Chris’s girlfriend. Kangan’s ruler, known only as His Excellency (Sam), is a Sandhurst-trained army officer who has seized power in a coup. The plot chronicles the tension and eventual breakdown of this regime. As Sam grows increasingly authoritarian and paranoid, Ikem’s critical writings make him a target; he is assassinated for speaking truth to power. Chris eventually becomes a fugitive after resisting Sam’s orders, and he too meets a tragic end at the hands of a trigger-happy police officer. The novel concludes on a cautiously hopeful note: in the aftermath of the regime’s collapse, Beatrice leads a naming ceremony for Elewa and Ikem’s infant daughter, symbolically bringing together characters of different backgrounds. *Anthills of the Savannah* is a political allegory that examines corruption, the clash between rulers and the ruled, and the role of storytellers in society. Importantly for this study, the novel’s language mixes high formal English with African proverbs, folklore, and Pidgin, reflecting Achebe’s commitment to infusing English with African speech patterns.

#### *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006)

Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a historical novel that dramatizes the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) through the lives of its characters. The narrative is set mainly in the late 1960s and follows an ensemble cast: Olanna and Kainene, twin sisters from a wealthy Igbo family; Odenigbo, Olanna’s lover, a radical mathematics lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Ugwu, Odenigbo’s teenage houseboy who comes from a rural village; and Richard, an English expatriate writer who is Kainene’s boyfriend. The novel’s first part depicts the early 1960s, a period of relative peace: Olanna and Odenigbo live together in Nsukka, where intellectuals gather at Odenigbo’s house for lively debates about Nigeria’s future. Tensions mount as ethnic and political rifts deepen in Nigeria. A major turning point occurs with the 1966 massacres of Igbo people in the Northern region, which Adichie portrays through Olanna’s harrowing witness of her aunt and uncle’s slaughter. As the Eastern Region (Biafra) declares independence, war erupts. The characters’ lives are plunged into chaos: they flee from town to town (Nsukka to Abba to Umuahia to Orlu) as Nigerian federal troops advance. During the war, shortages of food and medicine, constant air raids, and personal losses besiege them. Olanna and Odenigbo struggle to survive with their adopted daughter (Baby), while Kainene runs a refugee camp. The novel vividly depicts wartime trauma, including scenes of desperation that lead to moral compromises. Through it all, Adichie highlights personal bonds—Ugwu’s loyalty, Olanna’s resilience, Kainene’s courage. The war ends with Biafra’s

defeat, but on a tragic personal note: Kainene disappears while trading across enemy lines and does not return. *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores themes of love, loyalty, and betrayal amid catastrophe. From a stylistic perspective, Adichie's writing is accessible and contemporary, yet she weaves in Igbo phrases, Nigerian English idioms, and even vulgar slang to render the reality of the period. The dialogue often shifts between standard English and Igbo (or Igbo-accented English), mirroring the bilingual environment of her characters.

With these synopses in mind, we turn to a detailed examination of the stylistic devices employed in the two novels. By analysing how Achebe and Adichie use language to shape their narratives, we can better understand the interplay between their stylistic choices and the stories they tell.

## Stylistic Analysis and Discussion

Both *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* are rich in stylistic features that give each work its distinctive voice. In this section, we compare six prominent stylistic devices and techniques found in the novels: code-mixing, transliteration, use of Pidgin English, proverbs, humour, and vulgar expressions. For each category, we examine how Achebe and Adichie deploy these devices, providing examples from the texts and interpreting their significance. Through this comparative lens, we will see where Achebe's and Adichie's styles converge and where they diverge, yielding insight into their narrative strategies and the influence of their different time periods.

### Code-Mixing (English and Indigenous Language)

One salient feature of Nigerian literature in English is code-mixing: the blending of English with indigenous languages within a text. Both Achebe and Adichie engage in code-mixing, inserting Igbo (and other local language) words or phrases into their English prose and dialogue. This device serves to authenticate the cultural setting and express concepts for which English alone may not suffice. However, the extent and manner of code-mixing differ between the two authors.

In Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, code-mixing is often used to portray dialogue that feels natural for Nigerian characters and to convey local flavour. Achebe does not shy away from including whole phrases in Igbo (or other African languages) without immediate translation, trusting the reader to glean meaning from context or from a later explanation. For example, in one scene a public sign is described: "*The one at the back of the bus, written in the indigenous language of Bassa... said simply: Ife onye metalu*" (Achebe 202). Only afterward is the meaning given ("What a man commits"), but Achebe first presents the Igbo phrase directly. By doing so, he momentarily immerses the reader in the linguistic environment of Kangan, emphasizing that not all messages in that world are in English. In another instance, Achebe writes a line of dialogue: "*Agatha is roasting corn and ube. Would you like some?*" (Achebe 94). Here, the Igbo word ube (meaning pear, a type of tropical pear/dacryodes fruit) is seamlessly woven into an English sentence. The narrator or characters do not translate "ube" within the dialogue; instead, an explanatory aside in the narration notes that "'ube' means pear". This technique highlights the everyday nature of bilingual speech—characters switch to a local word for a local item—while keeping the narrative primarily in English. A further example occurs during a naming ceremony: "*May this child be the daughter of all of us.*" "*Ise!*" (Achebe 228). Ise, borrowed from the Yoruba language, is equivalent to "Amen," affirming a prayer or statement. By using *Ise* instead of "Amen," Achebe grounds the scene in a specifically West African context (since Yoruba participants would respond with their own term). Across these instances, Achebe's code-mixing functions to foreground the linguistic habits of his characters' world. It signals that Kangan's citizens are multilingual and that certain ideas carry more resonance in the mother tongue. Stylistically, it lends authenticity and can also serve as a subtle form of resistance—validating indigenous language within an English narrative.

In Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, code-mixing is likewise present, though Adichie tends to provide translation or clarity within the dialogue more consistently, reflecting perhaps a

contemporary authorial approach aimed at an international audience. Still, she uses Igbo phrases to capture realistic interactions, particularly in family or intimate settings. For example, when Ugwu's village relatives speak, Adichie writes their Igbo greetings and then offers the translation as part of the dialogue: "'You are the one that is Ugwu? How are you?' Master's mother said, patting his shoulder. 'Fine, Mama. Did your journey go well?' 'Yes, Chukwu du anyi. God led us.'" (Adichie 107). Here "Chukwu du anyi" is immediately followed by its English gloss "God led us," embedded in the same line of dialogue. By placing the translation in apposition, Adichie ensures that readers understand the Igbo phrase even if they do not speak Igbo. This approach maintains authenticity (the character truly would say the phrase in Igbo) while also keeping the text accessible. In another scene, Ugwu, who often mixes languages, says of Baby's hair, "Onwere igwu. I found lice eggs in her hair this morning" (Adichie 319). The narrative then clarifies, "The code-switched utterance *onwere igwu* has the direct English translation of 'he has lice (in her hair)'" (Adichie 319). Adichie sometimes italicizes Igbo expressions (in the novel's print version) and provides translations either through a responding character or narration. For example: "'Unu anọkwa ọfuma?' Did you stay well?" (Adichie 255), meaning "I hope you are well," is translated in the text immediately after the Igbo question. This pattern suggests that Adichie uses code-mixing to add realism and depth to conversations (we hear the *actual* words characters would use among themselves), but she also swiftly guides the reader to understanding.

Interpretation: For both authors, code-mixing serves to embed cultural context into the fabric of the novel. Achebe, writing at a time when asserting African identity in literature was paramount, occasionally leaves non-English terms untranslated to assert the presence and validity of indigenous languages in his text. This can create a momentary sense of estrangement for non-Igbo readers, which Achebe perhaps uses to position them as outsiders looking into a different culture—a reversal of the colonial language hierarchy. Adichie, a generation later, writes in a literary environment where such code-mixing is expected and celebrated, yet she also takes care to bridge languages smoothly, reflecting both the bilingual reality of her characters and the expectations of a global readership. Thematically, both authors use code-mixing to underscore characters' identities. When characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* switch to Igbo (for comfort, intimacy, or emphasis in emotion), it mirrors how real people alternate languages for personal expression. In *Anthills*, code-mixing often appears in proverbial or communal sayings (like *Ise!*), highlighting Achebe's integration of oral tradition. In sum, Achebe and Adichie share a stylistic similarity in employing code-mixed Igbo-English as a narrative device, affirming their common Nigerian heritage in writing. The difference lies in degree and method: Achebe's usage can be more opaque and rooted in communal voice, whereas Adichie's is typically followed by clarification, aligning with a more modern, narrator-facilitated style. Despite these differences, in both novels code-mixing richly conveys local flavour and signals that English alone cannot carry the full weight of the characters' experiences.

#### Transliteration (Literal Translation of Indigenous Expressions)

Transliteration, in the context of stylistics, refers to the direct translation of an expression from one language into another in a way that retains the original language's structure or idiom. This often results in slightly unorthodox phrasing in the target language, because the syntax or metaphor is carried over from the source language. In literature, authors might transliterate indigenous sayings or thought-patterns into English to preserve their cultural nuance. Adichie makes notable use of transliteration in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, whereas Achebe's use of this device in *Anthills of the Savannah* is relatively limited.

In Adichie's novel, transliteration is a subtle but powerful stylistic tool to convey how characters think in Igbo even as they speak in English. Adichie sometimes crafts English dialogue that mirrors Igbo syntax or idiomatic usage, resulting in lines that sound slightly unusual in English but make perfect sense if one imagines the Igbo original. For example, Olanna's houseboy Ugwu, whose internal monologue often reflects his Igbo background, says of a malicious rumour: "*She wants to divide you and Master*" (Adichie 120). This phrasing is a transliteration of an Igbo idiom; in standard English one would say "She wants to come between you and Master" or "separate you and Master." The novel explains that "She wants

to divide you and master” has the English equivalent of “She wants to separate you and master”. The choice of “divide” echoes the Igbo way of expressing the concept of driving a wedge between two people. By using “divide,” Adichie retains the flavour of the original Igbo thought. Another instance: “He always visits at mealtime and then said ‘oh! oh!’ in exaggerated surprise when Olanna asked him to join them in touching their hands to their mouths” (Adichie 225). The phrase “touching their hands to their mouths” is a literal rendering of an Igbo expression for eating. In Igbo culture, one might say someone is “putting hand in mouth” to mean they are eating (especially when sharing food). Adichie follows the line with an explanation that this means “join them in eating”. Similarly, a character remarks, “I think she was throwing words at me and wanted to see if I could throw back at her” (Adichie 254), which is a direct translation of an Igbo idiom for speaking indirectly or making insinuations (akin to “casting words”). The novel clarifies that this implies the woman was speaking figuratively to provoke a response. In these examples, Adichie’s transliterations give English dialogues a distinctly Igbo rhythm and imagery, thus preserving the cultural mind-set. The reader can sense the shape of the Igbo language behind the English words.

In Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*, instances of transliteration are rarer. Achebe tends to either state things in English or quote the original Igbo proverb directly rather than translate it literally. For example, instead of transliterating an Igbo saying into awkward English, Achebe often simply inserts the Igbo proverb (as in the code-mixing examples) and then provides an English explanation in a more standard form. The *Anthills* analysis in the original manuscript even notes that Achebe made scarce use of transliteration because most of his characters in that novel are educated elites who would naturally speak standard English most of the time. Unlike Adichie’s Ugwu or village characters, Achebe’s protagonists (Chris, Ikem, Beatrice) articulate themselves in polished English or in code-switching to Igbo for proverbs, but they seldom speak English that is structured in an Igbo way. Thus, one might say transliteration is not a prominent feature of Achebe’s style in *Anthills*—he is more inclined to use direct Igbo or direct English, rather than a calqued English.

Interpretation: Adichie’s use of transliteration highlights a stylistic difference stemming from the narrative focus of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Much of Adichie’s story is filtered through characters who straddle cultures and languages: for instance, Ugwu learns English over the course of the story, and even the educated characters occasionally revert to Igbo modes of expression in moments of intimacy or strong emotion. By transliterating Igbo idioms, Adichie allows readers to *think* in Igbo while reading English, thereby bringing them closer to the characters’ psychological reality. It adds a layer of depth to characterization—showing, for example, Ugwu’s village worldview or Olanna’s mother’s indirect way of chiding her daughter. It can also introduce gentle humour or poignancy, as the slight “off-ness” of the English phrasing signals a cultural translation at work. Achebe’s minimal use of transliteration in *Anthills* suggests that his characters operate more fully in either one language or the other. This could reflect the setting—much of *Anthills* takes place in urban, official contexts where English dominates, or in storytelling moments where Igbo proverbs are delivered in Igbo. Thus, Achebe’s style in this regard is a bit more diglossic (switching entirely between languages) as opposed to Adichie’s more blended approach. Where transliteration appears in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, it often emphasizes generational or educational contrasts: an educated character might notice the unvarnished literalness of a less-educated character’s English and find it endearing or amusing. In the end, transliteration in Adichie’s work underscores the theme that language carries culture; even when speaking English, her characters’ mother tongue influences how they frame their thoughts. Achebe’s approach, by contrast, keeps the two languages somewhat more compartmentalized in the text, perhaps as a deliberate stylistic choice to signal when we are hearing the voice of the traditional culture (through untranslated Igbo) versus the voice of the modern state or educated class (through Queen’s English). Both techniques are valid; they simply illustrate different strategies of bilingual expression in literature.

### Use of Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin (often just called “Pidgin” or “Naija”) is an English-based creole language widely spoken across Nigeria, especially in informal contexts and among people of different

ethnic groups. It has a distinct grammar and vocabulary that mix English with indigenous languages. In literary works, including those by Achebe and Adichie, Pidgin is often used to depict the speech of certain characters (usually working class, soldiers, traders, or others in informal settings) and to lend authenticity to dialogue. In comparing *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, we find that Achebe makes notable use of Pidgin, whereas Adichie employs it sparingly or not at all in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

In Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Pidgin appears as a vibrant element of dialogue among characters of the lower socio-economic stratum or when depicting unofficial, candid conversations. Because *Anthills* deals with a wide spectrum of society—from the Head of State and intellectuals down to taxi drivers and market people—Achebe uses Pidgin to realistically portray the speech of ordinary Nigerians. For instance, Ikem interacts with a taxi driver or villagers, and their speech is rendered in Pidgin: “*You explained what? I beg no make me vex... imagine, hm, but woman don chop sand for this world.*” (Achebe, *Anthills* 35). In standard English that line might be “Please, don’t make me angry... just imagine, hm, women have suffered a lot in this world,” but the Pidgin (*I beg no make me vex*, literally “Please don’t make me angry,” and *woman don chop sand for this world*, literally “woman has eaten sand in this world,” a figurative way to say women have endured hardship) carries a raw, colloquial force. Another character says, “*The woman dem massacre for motor park last week na you kill am*” (Achebe 35), which in Pidgin means “The woman they massacred at the motor park last week, was it you who killed her?”. The structure “na you kill am” is classic Pidgin (using *na* for emphasis and *am* for the object “her”). Yet another line: “*Driver, kick moto make we de go, I beg you*” (Achebe 37), which translates to “Driver, start the car so we can go, please.” Here we see Pidgin’s influence (*kick moto* for “start the car,” and *make we de go* for “let’s be going”). Achebe uses these Pidgin dialogues to reflect how everyday people in Kangan speak, especially when they are not highly educated or when they choose a more casual register. It adds realism and also can inject humour or earthiness into the narrative. Notably, Pidgin in *Anthills* often conveys frankness and camaraderie; for example, the Abazon elder’s speeches to common people might slip into Pidgin forms to rally them, or a frustrated character might resort to Pidgin insults or exclamations that feel more visceral.

In Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, by contrast, Pidgin is almost absent. The novel’s main characters are university-educated and, during the course of the story, they mainly interact with others of similar background or speak in Igbo/English rather than Pidgin. Adichie does not depict many scenarios where strangers from different ethnic groups must use Pidgin to communicate. The setting (university life, then Igbo refugee communities during the war) meant most characters share Igbo as a common language for informal speech, or they use English formally. For instance, Ugwu, who is of humble origin, learns standard English rather than Pidgin when he comes to Odenigbo’s house, because Odenigbo speaks standard English or Igbo with him, not Pidgin. There are soldiers and refugees in the novel, but Adichie often renders their speech in either English or Igbo-accented English, not full Pidgin. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Adichie did not employ pidgin as a stylistic device. The novel is set at the University and all the characters are adjudged educated.. Indeed, the absence of Pidgin could be a deliberate stylistic choice to reflect that context. During the Biafran war, the lingua franca among Biafrans (predominantly Igbo and southern minorities) would have been a mix of Igbo and standard English, rather than Nigerian Pidgin which has more prevalence in peacetime inter-ethnic trade and city life. Therefore, Adichie’s narrative simply didn’t call for Pidgin usage, and she avoids it.

Interpretation: The use (or non-use) of Pidgin in these novels highlights a stylistic divergence rooted in character demographics and setting. Achebe’s *Anthills* is deliberately broad in scope: it aims to capture the voice of the nation across social classes. Including Pidgin is part of that mission, as Pidgin is a language of the streets and a symbol of pan-ethnic communication in Nigeria. Stylistically, Achebe’s inclusion of Pidgin phrases adds a polyphonic quality to the novel; multiple registers of English (high, standard, broken, Pidgin) coexist, reflecting the complex linguistic ecology of Nigeria. It also adds realism and colour—readers can almost hear the distinct cadence of a taxi driver or a market woman when Achebe writes their speech in Pidgin. Moreover, Pidgin often injects humour or sarcasm, serving Achebe’s satirical edge in portraying the government and society. For example, the phrase “*woman don chop sand*”

(woman has eaten sand) is a figurative, somewhat humorous way to say “women have it hard,” which carries local flavor that straight English lacks.

On the other hand, Adichie’s choice to exclude Pidgin in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is equally telling. It reflects the insular world of Biafra and the class perspective through which the story is told. The central characters are from the educated class or become integrated into it (even Ugwu adapts to his educated employers’ speech patterns). They either speak English or Igbo among themselves. If Adichie had introduced Pidgin, it might have been in scenes with Nigerian (non-Biafran) soldiers or perhaps in market scenes, but the novel’s focus never shifts to a context where Pidgin would naturally emerge. This absence can be interpreted as a stylistic consistency: Adichie keeps the linguistic palette narrower to maintain the novel’s tone and focus. One might also see it as reflecting the tragedy and gravity of the war setting—perhaps she avoids Pidgin because it might inject a comedic or less formal tone that could jar with the serious narrative of war.

In summary, Achebe utilizes Pidgin to capture the diversity of Nigerian speech and to add authenticity and satire to his portrayal of society, whereas Adichie’s narrative confines itself to English and Igbo, reflecting the particular social milieu of her characters. This difference underscores how each author’s stylistic choices are guided by the story’s needs: Achebe’s broader social canvas versus Adichie’s more intimate, faction-specific world. From a contrastive viewpoint, the presence vs. absence of Pidgin is a clear stylistic difference that marks the generational and contextual shift between Achebe’s and Adichie’s storytelling.

### Proverbs and Idioms

Proverbs hold a special place in African literature, particularly in Achebe’s works. They are concise sayings that convey wisdom, cultural values, and communal philosophy. Achebe famously wrote in an earlier novel that proverbs are “the palm-oil with which words are eaten,” underscoring their importance in Igbo communication. Adichie, coming from the same culture, is also familiar with Igbo proverbs, but her deployment of them in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is far more restrained. In this section, we explore Achebe’s extensive use of proverbs in *Anthills of the Savannah* and contrast it with Adichie’s minimal use of traditional proverbs in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. We also consider how each author uses idiomatic expressions to similar effect.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe’s characters—especially those rooted in traditional backgrounds—frequently speak in proverbs or proverbial phrases, which enrich the narrative with layers of meaning. The use of proverbs often occurs in dialogue, marking a character as wise, rooted in folk tradition, or attempting to persuade others by invoking shared cultural knowledge. For example, when an old village elder from Abazon addresses an assembly (including Ikem and Beatrice), he uses a proverb to chide the youth: “*You young people... What you will bring in this world is pregnant and nursing a baby at the same time*” (Achebe 226). This colourful imagery is a proverb suggesting that the younger generation attempts to do too many things hastily or simultaneously, like trying to conceive the future before nurturing the present (the idea of being both pregnant and breastfeeding). The narrator explains that the elder uses this proverb to express his disappointment upon arriving to find the baby already named without his input. Another proverb appears when an older character feels cheated: “*Whom evil spirit is now chasing, ‘you will return my bottle of schnapps and fowl,’ she said to him*” (Achebe 226). Elewa’s mother essentially says to her brother-in-law (the failed “medicine man”) that “*you will refund what I gave you,*” using a proverbial tone to show her displeasure. Perhaps one of the more striking ones is delivered by the leader of the Abazon delegation praising Ikem: “*Our people say that an animal whose name is famous doesn’t fill the hunter’s basket*” (Achebe 121). This proverb implies that a creature known by reputation may not be physically large or materially impressive – a metaphor for Ikem’s small stature despite his great influence. Achebe usually provides enough context or a follow-up explanation to make the meaning clear: the text notes that this proverb implies “the size of a man doesn’t determine his capabilities”, directly tying it to Ikem’s character (a small man with big ideas and impact). Through such examples, we see Achebe’s stylistic hallmark: weaving indigenous proverbs into English narration and dialogue. These proverbs serve multiple purposes: they

lend authenticity to characters (that elder from Abazon *speaks* like a traditional elder, full of metaphorical wisdom), they underscore themes (the wisdom or folly of leadership, the clash between tradition and modernity), and they act as a narrative device for commentary (often a proverb will succinctly deliver a verdict or moral on the situation at hand).

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's use of proverbs is markedly limited. The novel does not foreground traditional Igbo proverbs in the way Achebe's work does. There are a few proverbial expressions or folktale references (for example, Ugwu recalls village stories or we might hear a casual idiom), but they are not emphasized as a stylistic feature. Adichie made scarce use of proverbs as a stylistic device in *Half of a Yellow Sun* owing to the fact that she belongs to [a] different linguistic background. This "different linguistic background" can be interpreted to mean a different generation not as immersed in the daily use of proverbs, or simply a different stylistic approach. Adichie's characters, being largely urban and educated, do not pepper their speech with the old sayings as Achebe's village elders do. Olanna and Kainene, for instance, speak in modern idioms rather than ancient proverbs. One could argue that the absence of proverbs itself highlights a generational shift: the educated elite in the 1960s might not converse with proverbs as their parents or grandparents did. If any proverbs appear, they might come from older characters like Odenigbo's mother or in moments where an Igbo expression is translated (transliterated) as discussed earlier (which are more idiomatic phrases than full-fledged proverbs). Overall, Adichie's narrative voice leans more toward straightforward, contemporary language with only occasional inflections of folklore.

Interpretation: Achebe's rich tapestry of proverbs in *Anthills of the Savannah* is a deliberate stylistic choice rooted in his mission to infuse English fiction with African orature. Proverbs in his novel are not merely decorative; they carry authority and insight. They also often signal *community values*—for example, when a proverb is introduced with "our people say...", it invokes collective wisdom rather than an individual opinion. This device strengthens the communal voice in the narrative and reminds readers of the cultural lens through which events are being interpreted by some characters. Stylistically, the use of proverbs gives Achebe's text a lyrical and philosophical tone; readers are invited to pause and consider the maxim and how it applies to the story.

Adichie's sparse use of proverbs could be seen as reflective of a more secular, individualistic narrative style prevalent in contemporary fiction. Instead of proverbs, Adichie might use individual metaphors or direct emotional description to convey what an Achebe character might have conveyed with a proverb. The *scarcity of proverbs* in *Half of a Yellow Sun* may also illustrate the erosion of traditional modes of speech under the pressures of war and modern life. During the Biafran War, people might have less inclination to speak in proverbs when facing immediate existential threats—pragmatic speech might override the poetic. In a sense, Adichie's style here signals the modernization of communication: the focus is on the immediate and personal rather than the timeless and communal. This is not to say proverbs vanished from usage in the 1960s, but within the educated milieu of her protagonists, their absence feels natural.

Interestingly, while Adichie doesn't employ formal proverbs often, she does create *new* idiomatic sayings and allows characters to use wry, short statements that function like proverbs in context. For instance, Kainene's sharp tongue yields lines that could almost be quoted as epigrams ("If God will listen to anybody's prayers, it will be mine" she says sardonically at one point, which is more of a personal quip than a proverb). Also, the title "Half of a Yellow Sun" itself comes from Biafra's flag and becomes a kind of symbolic reference throughout the novel, though not a proverb, it's a culturally loaded image that characters refer to with reverence or irony.

In sum, Achebe's style is strongly marked by the integration of proverbs, giving his narrative a multi-layered resonance and anchoring it in Igbo oral tradition. Adichie's style largely forgoes traditional proverbs, which may reflect both a generational shift in speech patterns and a narrative decision to focus on direct, personal expression. This difference illustrates how the role of inherited wisdom in language can change over time: Achebe's generation valorised and preserved it in literature, whereas Adichie's generation, while aware of it, might use it

more sparingly, preferring other ways to convey meaning. Despite this, both authors succeed in imparting profound insights—Achebe through the voice of the ancestors in proverbs, and Adichie through the intense lived experiences of her characters.

## Humour and Satire

Humour is a universal element of storytelling, but its deployment can vary widely between authors and contexts. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe uses humour extensively, often in the form of satire, irony, and witty anecdotes, as a means of critiquing society and lightening the tone of political commentary. Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, while not devoid of humour, is generally a more sober narrative given its wartime setting; moments of levity are fewer and often more subdued. Here, we compare Achebe's rich use of humor in *Anthills* with Adichie's restrained use of humour in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, analysing how each serves the authors' purposes.

Achebe's humour in *Anthills of the Savannah* is frequently sharp and satirical, targeting the foibles of leaders and the ironies of Nigerian socio-political life. He injects humour through character dialogue and folktale-like anecdotes that carry underlying criticism. A significant portion of the humour comes from the character Ikem and the Abazon elder, who both use wit to speak truth to power. For instance, the Abazon elder's speeches are laced with humorous folk wisdom. In one speech, he recounts a "dancing masquerade in my town [that] used to say: 'It is true I don't hear English but when they say catch am nobody tells me to take off as fast as I can'" (Achebe 127). This anecdote draws laughter but also makes a point about understanding action over language – a sly reference perhaps to common sense versus empty rhetoric. Another humorous segment from the elder: "Some time ago we were told that the big chief himself was planning to visit our village... Then we were told he was not coming because he remembered we said no to him two years ago. So we said, if he will not come, let us go and visit him... It is proper that a beggar should visit a king... When a rich man is sick the beggar goes to say sorry. When the beggar is sick, he waits to recover and then goes to tell the rich man that he had been sick" (Achebe 127). This extended ironic parable uses the tone of a jesting storyteller to critique the "big chief" (the dictator Sam) and highlight the injustice of the powerful vs. the poor. Listeners in the novel find it humorous, but the satire is evident: it underscores the arrogance of the ruler and the perseverance of the common folk. Ikem, as a journalist, also uses biting humour in his editorials and speech. At one point, Ikem humorously self-deprecates or mocks the regime with sarcasm, which Achebe quotes through dialogue. Additionally, everyday banter between characters like Beatrice and Chris contains lighter humour, showing personal warmth (e.g., teasing each other with intellectual jokes). The presence of Nigerian Pidgin also adds comedic effect – as Pidgin expressions can be inherently lively or cheeky. For example, Ikem's driver uses a humorous Pidgin exclamation like "I beg, no make me vex" ("please don't annoy me") in a huffy, exaggerated manner, which provides comic relief.

The effect of Achebe's humour is multifaceted. It humanizes the characters (even in hardship, people joke and laugh), it provides relief in a narrative dealing with serious corruption and tragedy, and it serves as a vehicle for satire—laughing at the absurdity of dictatorship and bureaucracy. By making readers smile or laugh, Achebe also ingratiate them to the culture being depicted; the humour often arises from specifically Nigerian contexts, inviting readers (Nigerian or otherwise) to appreciate the wit embedded in everyday language and attitudes. From a stylistic viewpoint, Achebe's adept use of humour enlivens his prose and prevents the novel from becoming a grim political tract; instead it becomes a vibrant social commentary.

Adichie's humour in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, given the grave subject matter, is understandably more restrained. The novel does have lighter moments, especially in the early sections set in the university environment and in domestic scenes. Ugwu's perspective as a naive houseboy sometimes introduces gentle humour—such as his initial misunderstandings of university life or his secret culinary experiments to please Odenigbo. For instance, when Ugwu first encounters some of Odenigbo's radical friends, he has an internal commentary that can be amusing due to his innocence or surprise. Or when Olanna's aunt sarcastically advises her about men, there's humour in the older woman's frankness. Adichie's humour is often conversational and arises from character interactions: e.g., the playful teasing between Olanna

and her lover Odenigbo, or Kainene's dry, cutting wit. Kainene, in particular, provides moments of dark humour with her acerbic one-liners; her cynicism about the corruption or incompetence around her can be grimly funny. However, once the war intensifies, humour becomes scarce. The tone shifts to one of tension and loss, where characters are preoccupied with survival. There are still flickers of comic relief—like the scene where refugees in the bunker make wry jokes to cope with air raids—but these are brief. One example: during an air raid, a character might quip about the Biafran homemade rockets or about eating “water soup” (soup that's basically just water, in the depth of starvation) as a dark joke about their condition. Adichie uses such gallows humour sparingly, to illustrate how people in dire situations still use laughter as medicine. Ugwu's character provides a bit of humour even in war, as he observes military officers or camps with a critical eye that can note absurdities (e.g., the pompous behaviour of a Biafran commander that others quietly ridicule).

The effect of Adichie's limited humour is to maintain the novel's sombre, serious atmosphere, while still reflecting real life where even in tragedy people find brief moments to laugh. It is a compassionate humour that never undermines the suffering depicted. Compared to Achebe, Adichie's humour is less satirical (she is not overtly mocking the war or the cause—if anything, her stance is earnest and mournful about Biafra's fate) and more about intimate human moments. For instance, the humorous recollections of a character's romantic misadventures before the war, shared among friends, serve to deepen character development rather than to critique society.

Comparative insight: The divergence in the use of humour highlights how context shapes style. Achebe's Nigeria in *Anthills* is at peace (albeit under dictatorship), allowing characters the liberty to critique and joke about their leaders and conditions. Adichie's Biafra is at war, which imposes a certain solemnity; humour exists but is subdued by omnipresent danger. Stylistically, Achebe's greater reliance on humour also ties to the oral tradition—storytelling in many African cultures often mixes the serious with the comic, engaging listeners fully. Achebe, as a master storyteller, carries that tradition by ensuring the narrative has lively swings between irony and gravity. Adichie's style is more aligned with contemporary literary realism, which might see overt humour as potentially tonally disruptive in a war narrative. Instead, she opts for realism with a compassionate but largely grave tone.

In terms of narrative voice, Achebe's sometimes omniscient narrator even relays events with a tongue-in-cheek tone on occasion, whereas Adichie's third-person narration is closely tied to character perspectives and stays earnest when they are afraid or suffering. Therefore, the humour in *Half of a Yellow Sun* surfaces mostly in safer moments or in flashbacks to earlier, better times, underscoring by contrast how those days have faded. Ultimately, the use of humour by both authors underscores their skill in reflecting human resilience. Achebe's more abundant humour stands as an act of defiance against tyranny—laughter as resistance—while Adichie's subtle humour amidst war stands as a testament to hope and normalcy desperately clung to. Each approach is effective for the story they tell, demonstrating that stylistic choices about humour must harmonize with thematic content and desired emotional impact.

### Vulgar and Explicit Language

A noticeable stylistic difference between Achebe's and Adichie's novels lies in the handling of vulgar language and sexual explicitness. Vulgarism refers to the use of coarse or obscene language—terms that are considered crude or offensive in polite discourse. Such language can be used in literature for realism, shock value, emphasis, or to reveal character. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe's use of vulgar or sexually explicit language is very minimal and mostly euphemistic, in line with the norms of his time and his generally measured tone. In contrast, *Half of a Yellow Sun* contains some frank depictions of sexual situations and uses blunt language for body parts and acts, reflecting a more contemporary openness and the novel's context of war (which often breaks social taboos).

Achebe's approach in *Anthills of the Savannah* is quite conservative regarding vulgarity. The novel was published in the late 1980s, and Achebe, as a writer of an earlier generation,

typically maintains a certain decorum in language. Even when dealing with themes of corruption or sexual politics, Achebe tends to imply rather than explicitly describe. For example, intimate scenes between Chris and Beatrice are handled with subtlety and metaphor rather than graphic detail. If a character is angry, Achebe might resort to sharp satire or civilized insult rather than raw expletives. The language remains within a register that would not offend a broad readership. That is not to say there are no strong words at all—characters might say “bastard” or use mild curses in frustration, but outright profanity (four-letter words, etc.) is virtually absent. In the entire text of *Anthills*, one would struggle to find a direct mention of sexual organs or explicit descriptions of sexual acts. Achebe largely leaves such matters off-page or described in tasteful allusion. This aligns with the general publishing standards of his era and also with his stylistic choice to focus on intellectual and moral challenges rather than intimate physical details.

Adichie’s approach in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is more explicit, as she does not shy away from describing sexual encounters or using realistic dialogue that includes vulgar terms, especially when such usage characterizes individuals or intense emotions. For instance, the novel frankly discusses Odenigbo’s infidelity (his affair resulting in a village girl’s pregnancy) and Olanna’s momentary revenge liaison with Richard. While these scenes are not pornographic, Adichie describes the physical acts and emotional responses without euphemism. More striking is the inclusion of crude language in dialogues—particularly by female characters in private conversations, which actually serves to break stereotypes by showing women frankly discussing sexual matters. Auntie Ifeka, advising Olanna after Odenigbo’s betrayal, says: “Odenigbo has done what all men do and has inserted his penis in the first hole he could find *when you were away*” (Adichie 259). This sentence is startling in its bluntness—using the word “penis” and referring to the sexual act unflinchingly. In the context of the story, Auntie Ifeka is trying to jolt Olanna out of despair by normalizing (albeit crudely) what happened, essentially saying “men will be men, he just had sex opportunistically.” The language here is deliberately vulgar, reflecting the older woman’s no-nonsense view of sex. Another example is Kainene’s outburst about Odenigbo: “His rotten penis will fall off soon” (Adichie 258), Kainene says angrily to comfort Olanna, calling Odenigbo a “wild man” and cursing his genitals. This kind of talk is raw but realistic in an intimate sisterly conversation fueled by anger and hurt. Later, when Olanna confronts Odenigbo, she uses biting words: “*Did your mother pull out your penis and insert it into Amala as well?*” (Adichie 277). This rhetorical question by Olanna is laced with fury and sarcasm, explicitly referencing the sexual act to make Odenigbo feel the full weight of his responsibility (since he had tried to blame his mother’s meddling for his actions). The repeated use of the word “penis” and direct sexual references in these scenes show Adichie’s willingness to use language that Achebe likely would never pen in his novels. Additionally, Adichie includes allusions to transactional sex and wartime sexual exploitation (e.g., young girls exchanging sex for food with soldiers), and while these are not described graphically, the novel’s dialogue among soldiers or camp followers can be coarse, implying the crude bargaining happening (“*comot your pant make I give you milk*” might be the kind of Pidginized crudeness one could imagine, though Adichie mostly spares the reader literal transcription of such).

Interpretation: The use of vulgar language in *Half of a Yellow Sun* serves several purposes. It heightens the realism, as real people (especially in distress or anger) do sometimes speak in very blunt terms. It reveals character: Auntie Ifeka’s earthy wisdom, Kainene’s scornful tongue, Olanna’s breaking point—each of these is illuminated by their willingness to use previously “unspeakable” words when pushed to emotional extremes. It also reflects a shift in literary conventions from Achebe’s time to Adichie’s. By the mid-2000s, literature (especially by a younger generation of writers) had become more forthright about sexual matters and profanity; there was less self-censorship about propriety, provided it served the story. The war context in Adichie’s novel somewhat necessitates it too: war often entails a breakdown of social niceties, with stress and trauma leading to raw expression. Also, Adichie might be consciously pushing against conservative norms to give voice to women’s anger and sexuality in a way that earlier authors rarely did. The women in *Half of a Yellow Sun* speak about men’s bodies and sexual acts with a candidness that feels liberating and also thematically appropriate (as the novel is partly about reclaiming personal agency amid chaos).

Achebe's avoidance of vulgarity, on the other hand, doesn't mean his world is devoid of lust or crudity; it simply means it's not expressed on the page. For example, *Anthills* alludes to His Excellency Sam's womanizing and a rape scene (the tragedy of Elewa's being nearly assaulted by government thugs after a party is implied), but Achebe describes these in oblique or restrained ways. One might argue Achebe didn't need graphic language to convey those evils; his focus was more on political evil than on sexual. Adichie, covering the personal intimate betrayals and violence of war (including rape used as a weapon), brings some of that to the surface.

This difference also aligns with gender and perspective: Achebe, a male author of mid-20th century, may have felt decorum or simply had less interest in detailing sexual matters. Adichie, a female author at the turn of the 21st century, might deliberately use explicit language to break silence on what women discuss and experience (like infidelity's emotional toll, or the indignities of war on female bodies). In summary, Achebe's style is circumspect and avoids explicit vulgarity, whereas Adichie's style is unflinching and realistic, including vulgar language when appropriate to character and context. This can be seen as a reflection of changing times, audiences, and authorial priorities. Adichie's inclusion of explicit content gives *Half of a Yellow Sun* a visceral power and immediacy, driving home the physical reality of her characters' lives. Achebe's restraint gives *Anthills of the Savannah* a certain classical elegance and keeps the satirical tone sharp without delving into the profane. Each approach is effective for their narrative goals: Achebe's to provoke thought about governance and morality (without distracting with shock value), and Adichie's to lay bare the human condition in love and war (even if it means using language that shocks or discomforts).

#### Summary of Stylistic Differences and Similarities

Reviewing the above comparative analysis, we can distil the findings regarding Achebe's and Adichie's stylistic choices:

**Language Mixing:** Both authors blend English with Igbo, but Achebe sometimes leaves Igbo phrases untranslated for effect, whereas Adichie usually provides immediate translation or context. Both use code-mixing to enrich the cultural texture of their narratives, a similarity bridging their generational gap. Notably, both highlight the use of Igbo terms of address (like "Mama") and interjections (like "Ise" or "Chukwu du anyi") to convey respect for native speech rhythms.

**Transliteration:** Achebe uses it minimally; Adichie uses it to convey Igbo idioms through English, reflecting characters' thought patterns. This indicates Adichie's deeper exploration of bilingual cognition within her characters, whereas Achebe compartmentalizes languages more (preferring direct proverbs in Igbo rather than awkward English translations of them).

**Pidgin:** Achebe incorporates Nigerian Pidgin to portray lower-class or casual speech, adding realism and humour. Adichie virtually omits Pidgin, likely due to her characters' context (mostly Igbo speakers among themselves) and perhaps because the presence of Igbo and English was already a complex bilingual interplay. This difference highlights how setting and social scope influence language use—Achebe's broader societal canvas includes Pidgin, Adichie's narrower focus on Igbo community does not require it.

**Proverbs:** Achebe extensively uses Igbo proverbs as a stylistic signature, imbuing his narrative with traditional wisdom and poetic metaphor. Adichie rarely uses proverbs, aligning with a modern, individualistic narrative style. This shows a shift in how authors pay homage to oral tradition: Achebe foregrounds it, Adichie largely leaves it in the background, perhaps reflecting that by the 1960s a western-educated elite might not converse in proverbs much, or simply reflecting her stylistic preference.

Humour: Achebe's tone frequently embraces humour and satire, even on serious topics, staying true to a tradition of using wit to cope with and critique life's troubles. Adichie's novel, while it has moments of humour (especially early on), is predominantly serious due to the gravity of war. Both do show that Nigerians can find humour even in adversity, but Achebe's work is overall more *satirical*, whereas Adichie's is *dramatic* with only occasional comic relief.

Vulgarity and Explicitness: Achebe maintains linguistic decorum with little explicit content, whereas Adichie includes frank descriptions of sex and uses vulgar language in dialogue when it suits the character and situation. This divergence underscores changes in societal norms and narrative frankness from the 1980s to the 2000s and also highlights Adichie's commitment to unfiltered realism concerning gender and war.

Narrative Voice and Clarity: Both authors write in clear, accessible English, but Achebe's narrative voice sometimes steps back into a storyteller/essayist mode (especially in commentary or aphoristic lines), while Adichie's stays tightly aligned with characters' perspectives (reflecting the influence of modern fiction's focus on *showing* rather than *telling*). Coherence and structure are strong in both novels: each has a well-defined introduction of characters and a conclusive resolution (Achebe's ending with a symbolic naming ceremony, Adichie's ending with the war's end and personal losses accounted).

In effect, our contrastive stylistic analysis reveals that Achebe and Adichie share a commitment to language as a vehicle of cultural expression—they both infuse English with local flavour and reject a completely Eurocentric idiom—yet they do so in distinct ways shaped by their context. Achebe's style is emblematic of the first-generation postcolonial writer: consciously blending oral tradition and Queen's English, sometimes formal, sometimes earthy, pedagogical yet entertaining, aiming to capture a nation's voice. Adichie's style represents a new generation: confident in blending languages but with a more *internalized* approach (the language mix happens organically through characters' bilingual minds), unafraid of breaking taboos in service of authenticity, and focusing on individual experience within the collective history.

Despite the differences, there is an "interconnectedness" in their stylistic approaches, as our analysis shows. Both authors, in their best moments, achieve clarity and power: Achebe through elegantly simple yet profound passages, and Adichie through vivid, emotionally resonant scenes. Both write in a way that is highly readable and engages both local and international audiences—Achebe did this by explaining Africa to the world (sometimes through proverbs and parables), Adichie does it by placing the reader directly in the emotional world of her African characters with immediacy. Thus, stylistically, they each bridge cultures in their own fashion.

## Findings and Conclusion

Through this stylo-contrastive analysis, we have explored how Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie each craft a unique literary voice, even as they share certain techniques and influences. The findings of this comparative study can be summarized as follows:

Both Achebe and Adichie employ a dual-language technique, mixing English with Igbo (and occasionally other Nigerian languages), which highlights a continuity in Nigerian writers' efforts to indigenize English. This results in authentic dialogue and narrative texture in both *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. For example, each author uses code-mixed Igbo exclamations (Achebe's "*Ife onye metalu*", Adichie's "*Chukwu du anyi*") to root their stories in the linguistic reality of Nigeria. This similarity underscores a shared cultural grounding and suggests that, despite generational differences, Nigerian authors have maintained certain stylistic traditions, especially in portraying bilingual discourse.

Achebe and Adichie diverge in how they incorporate traditional elements and tone. Achebe's style is steeped in the oral tradition: extensive use of proverbs, storytelling wit, and satirical humor. Adichie's style, while aware of that tradition, gravitates towards a more direct, modern realist mode: minimal proverb use, a generally serious tone, and candid depiction of intimate life and wartime horrors. This indicates a *stylistic shift across generations*: Achebe's writing reflects communal, proverbial wisdom ("the voice of the elders"), whereas Adichie's reflects individual, psychological depth and a candid confrontation with topics that earlier authors handled delicately (such as sexuality and trauma). The shift does not imply a loss of heritage, but rather an adaptation—Adichie's work still conveys Igbo cultural perspectives (e.g., attitudes toward infidelity or marriage) but through the lens of personal narratives rather than aphorism.

In terms of stylistic effect, Achebe's language tends to maintain a certain formality or *literary distance* at times (suited to his allegorical and didactic aims), while Adichie's is more *immersive and intimate*. Readers of *Anthills* are often made aware of the act of storytelling (through the presence of folktales, songs, narrators addressing an audience), whereas readers of *Half of a Yellow Sun* are plunged directly into experiential scenes where the narration closely follows characters' feelings. This difference in narrative technique shows how Adichie builds upon the foundation laid by authors like Achebe to create narratives that fulfil contemporary literary expectations for character-driven stories.

A key finding is that the generational gap has indeed produced a stylistic shift, which aligns with Robert Lado's theoretical premise that differences (in background, era, audience) lead to new linguistic expressions. Achebe, writing when English in African literature was still being negotiated, purposefully balanced English and Igbo elements to validate the African voice within the colonial language. Adichie, coming decades later, writes with the confidence of one who assumes that voice as given, and thus experiments and pushes boundaries in content more than in form. Yet, importantly, the study also found continuities: both authors value clarity, rich characterization, and moral engagement with Nigeria's issues. They both write in English that is accessible but layered with meaning—Achebe through allegory and symbol, Adichie through emotional nuance and irony.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that while Achebe and Adichie each have distinct stylistic signatures reflective of their times and personalities, they are united by an underlying goal: to tell Nigerian stories in a language (English) made truly their own. Achebe's style can be seen as paving the way—establishing the legitimacy of African thought patterns, idioms, and voices in the novel form. Adichie's style both inherits and adapts that legacy—using the tools Achebe and his peers forged, not to repeat the same approach, but to capture different facets of Nigerian life (especially the intimate and the harrowing) with a fresh, unflinching eye.

The stylistic shifts observed (from formal to intimate, from reserved to explicit) are occasioned by a "generational gap" in a broad sense: changes in the socio-cultural environment, in audience (a more global and contemporary readership), and in literary trends. Yet, the study finds that this shift is not a break but a *continuum*. Achebe and Adichie's works, when placed side by side, reveal an ongoing dialogue in Nigerian literature between past and present, tradition and innovation, collective and individual voices.

In the end, both *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* achieve a compelling fusion of content and style—each novel's stylistic choices serve its story's needs. Achebe's comparative restraint and reliance on allegory perfectly suit his political fable of power and the "story" (as a concept) in nation-building. Adichie's vivid realism and willingness to "say it as it is" suit her aim of making readers feel the human cost of war and the complexities of love and betrayal. There is, as Achebe might put it, no absolute yardstick for style; rather, style bends to the purpose of the storytelling.

This analysis not only illuminates the specific devices used by Achebe and Adichie but also exemplifies how literary style evolves while maintaining threads of continuity. Future research could extend this contrastive approach to other African writers or to further linguistic aspects (such as syntax, narrative structure, or point of view). For now, having closely examined language use, we conclude that Achebe and Adichie, despite writing in different eras, are both masters of stylistic adaptation, employing language—whether proverbial or unvarnished—to reflect the realities and truths of their respective worlds.

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