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DIFFERENT STORY, DIFFERENT STRATEGY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACHEBE'S STYLE(S) IN *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE* AND *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

OYENIYI OKUNOYE – AKIN ODEBUNMI*

1) *Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria*
2) *English Unit, General Studies Department, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

Literary style, the meeting point between literary criticism and linguistic analysis, is the focus of this paper. The study demonstrates the viability of collaboration between principles of the two approaches. Focusing on two novels of the world-acclaimed African novelist, Chinua Achebe, the paper suggests that even when a writer's stylistic inclinations are recognizable, each literary work is at the same time a product of peculiar thematic, social and discursive situations, which are inevitably reflected in its stylistic features. It concentrates on such levels of linguistic analysis as lexis, semantics and graphology, while privileging allusion, setting and symbolism as elements of literary explication relevant to the comparative study of Achebe's style(s) in the novels.

1. Introduction

There is no denying the fact that time, place and the linguistic environment that generate a text determine, to a very large extent, the linguistic choices available to a writer. This hints at the correlation between a people's culture (including the languages spoken) and the literary works emerging from the society. In this regard, African writers can be said to be confronted with a great task in representing in English, experiences and realities that are peculiar to Africa given the complex linguistic milieu in which they operate. Emmanuel Ngara's (1982: 19) view in this regard is relevant. He maintains that "[t]he African writer's position is a complex one. His chosen tongue is not his own, neither is it his own people's language. His society has its own linguistic system with its own prejudices and world views while his chosen language reflects those of its native speakers."

Chinua Achebe is a foremost Nigerian writer. He has, to date, published five novels, namely *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1988). Both *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are set in the past. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents a balanced picture of the traditional Igbo Society (and that of Africa by extension). The picture, according to Ernest Emenyonu (1978: xvii)

> shows a vigorous society that encourages living sportsmanship, diligence and integrity. But it is also an aggressive society, self-centred and excessively individualistic.

Arrow of God flashes back to *Things Fall Apart.* It deals with a period in Igbo history when the old and new values existed co-existed. *No Longer at Ease* is set in the period immediately preceding pre-independence in Africa. It reflects a stage in Igbo society when progress was measured by Christianity and Western education, and value was placed on the occupation of positions vacated by whitemen as independence drew near. Achebe portrays in the novel a society that is "infused by its multiplicity of races and of values, and by the bewildering search for a workable compromise" (Emenyonu 1987: xix). *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, that are studied in this paper, are set in post-independence Africa.

Achebe's writings bear traits of his society while still communicating in a second language. The experiences he reflects relate to the customary practices of his people, the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. The immediate exigencies of intelligibility and realistic representation would therefore determine the language he adopts. A multilingual context often demands the integration of languages or dialects. It is natural then that Igbo, the mother tongue of the writer and that of most of his characters, should feature in Achebe's texts, especially when such traditional practices as story-telling, as we have in *Anthills*, are to be encountered. Proverbs, communal properties in traditional African societies, equally condition the communicative process in this context.

When Achebe reports life in Igbo society, he integrates into English the Igbo similes, wise sayings, proverbs, riddles, songs and other traditional art features. Proverbs, in particular, constitute the spine of language use in (traditional) Igbo society. The Igbo describe it as 'the palm oil with which words are eaten'. In the words of Ernest Emenyonu (1987: 156), the proverb "serves to emphasize and deepen the force of what is said ... and [also] allows intent to emerge without having to resort to bare and blunt words". For the Igbo man, it is absolutely impossible to display wit, wisdom and skills in language use without a good knowledge of proverbs. The linguistic situation is further complicated by the existence of Pidgin English which a large number of people in the society adopts.

While the cultural context provides a broad location of the texts, the context of situation has the value of reflecting the immediate field of discourse. This is relevant to our comparative analysis. Because politics is central to the concern of the two texts, the language of politics becomes inevitable in both. Invariably, we would discover varying emphases in the texts due to differences arising from their specific orientations. *A Man of the People* is Achebe's fourth novel which reveals much about the experiences in the period immediately following the attainment of independence in Nigeria. The novel reveals the writer's disenchantment with the political climate of the country, drawing attention to the tribalism, corruption and greed that characterize post-independence politics in Africa. With regard to his motive for writing the novel, Achebe (cited in Ojinma 1990: 75) says: "This is the beginning of a phase for me in which I intend to take a hard look at what we in Africa are making of independence – but using Nigeria which I know best". Achebe succeeds in doing this by reflecting the political climate of the said period by using a hero-narrator, Odili. Chief Nanga, a typical politician of this era seems to be the main focus of the novel as most issues related to the politics of this period are revealed through his activities. The choice of Odili, a university graduate, as the narrator is very effective as it lends immediacy and credibility to the story through his consistent first-person narrative voice. Because he closely mirrors the activities of the politicians, their weaknesses are revealed. The story concludes on a note anticipating the overthrow of the politicians, but the disillusionment of the author is reflected in the fact that even Max and Odili are not presented as better than those they tended to react to. Nevertheless, Gakwandi (1977: 71) says: "The main limitation of *A Man of the People* is that we are only allowed to see the events of the story through the eyes of the narrator – an adolescent, self-deceiving, self-indulgent and native anti-hero."

Anthills of the Savannah provides a logical sequel to *A Man* because it focuses on a phase in the political development of Africa when politicians had been replaced by 'corrective' military regimes. It explores the climate of misgovernance, opportunism and alienation which marks this phase, using the fictitious West African state of Kangan as the focus. It also prescribes radical reformism. The story is told by multiple narrative voices, ranging from the first-person point of view of Chris and Ikem to the third-person point of view. Consequently, there is an inconsistency that hinders comprehension on the part of the reader. The story begins on the note that a military government assumes power following a coup in Kangan. Sam, as the Head of the State is called, then becomes the leader while also assuming the title of president. He surrounds himself with schoolmates and friends. But he soon begins to suspect them and this degenerates into a chaotic situation. Like any typical African leader, he sets the security machinery in motion to apprehend the 'subversive elements' in the midst of growing social discontent and mounting tension among the radical stu-

dent-activists. The positive portrait of women in the story aligns with the radical inclination of Achebe in the novel.

It is possible to establish a link between Achebe's concerns in the two novels. While *A Man* mirrors the disappointment of the period immediately after independence, which necessitated the intervention of the military, *Anthills* carries this indictment to the present by denouncing the failure of the military which has been aided by the self-seeking, educated elite. What we therefore have in his latest novel is merely a reiteration of an old problem. If *A Man* adopts a recognizable setting, *Anthills* is set in a fictitious West African state. This makes the relevance of the story transcend a particular socio-political environment as it depicts the dilemma of emergent African states in general. Ojinma (1990: 90) suggests that "Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* scrutinises what the military in power in the new nations of Africa, who came ostensibly to correct the political excesses and muddles of the civilian politicians ... to clear up the men left behind by the corrupt civilian government that preceded them, are making of their intervention". It has been necessary to establish this link between the texts because they were written at different times. This could then be sufficient background insight into the texts as we proceed to provide some information on linguistic stylistics.

2. Linguistic stylistics

As the name goes, linguistic stylistics deals with style in relation to language usage. It studies literary language with the aim of relating it to its artistic functions. It manifests in five classes namely: traditional stylistics, pragmatic stylistics, textlinguistic stylistics, sociolinguistic stylistics and interactional stylistics. Traditional stylistics concerns itself with stylistic features of a language, and analyses styles of literary texts, using structural methods. Pragmatic stylistics considers the choice of speech acts in terms of frequency or otherwise in relation to particular speech situations. In this regard, curious interest is shown in the preference for any of explicit performatives, implicit performatives and indirect speech acts in discourse. Textlinguistic stylistics studies, within particular texts, word choice, sentence structures and sentence linkages. It also describes and compares the 'stylistic conventions of text types' (Sandig and Selting 1997: 144). Sociolinguistic stylistics explores style in relation to social categories. Style is here perceived in the light of alternates and ethnographic approaches. From the alternates' perspective, style and register, considered in relation to sociolinguistics, study all available possibilities of expressing a single idea in a dialect. Style in the ethnographic approach focuses on uniqueness, as sociolinguistics is here viewed as concerning "the cultural distinctiveness of speech functions" (1997: 144). Interactional stylistics covers the aspects of politeness and vagueness in people's interaction, and equally considers contextualisation cues which include prosody, code-switching and alternation of style. These exert impacts on the way people's intents in communication are interpreted. Our conception of linguistic stylistics, that is, stylolinguistics (as our analysis later reveals) in this paper covers aspects of traditional stylistics, textlinguistic stylistics, sociolinguistic stylistics and interactional stylistics. We presently turn to our stylolinguistic analysis of Achebe's *A Man* and *Anthills*.

3. Stylo-linguistic analysis

3.1. Graphological features

Achebe makes distinct use of special print marks in his writings like some other African and non-African writers. Italicization, punctuation and capitalization are important in this respect. Statistical representations of these graphological features appear in the table that follows:

Table 1. Graphology in *A Man* and *Anthills*

Text	Italitization	Punctuation				Capitalization	
	Italics	Interrogative	Ellipsis	Dash	Exclamation	Acronyms	High-cases
A Man	41	114	98	169	324	22	04
Anthills	235	579	209	109	199	22	07

3.1.1. Italicization

The 41 as against 235 instances of italicization in *A Man* and *Anthills* respectively cannot be explained away only by difference in page lengths. The multiple narratorship of *Anthills*, together with the social placement of characters in the novel is contributory to the greater occurrence of italics in it. Characters in *Anthills* are also sufficiently versatile in oral expression to be able to switch easily between the formal and informal varieties of English. The prodigious number of foreign words in *Anthills* could also be traced to the western training the key characters received. In the two texts, italicization is used to indicate:

1) Indigenous language, pidgin and foreign words
2) Emphasis
3) Contrast
4) Names of texts, dailies and magazines
5) Songs and poems
6) Quotes, inscriptions, mottos and slogans
7) Nigerianisms and other non-standard English usage.

It often happens that when certain indigenous language words, together with certain Pidgin and foreign words are italicized, they have the effect of foregrounding the lexical items involved. Some examples are shown in the table below:

Table 2. Italicized indigenous language, pidgin and foreign words/expressions

Group	Text	
	A MAN	*ANTHILLS*
Indigenous language words	*anikilija* p. 13	*gbaligbali* p. 135 *danshiki* p. 4 *wahala* p. 53 *Ozo* p. 103 *inyanga* p. 132
Pidgin words	*lappa* p. 37	*How-for-do* p. 88 *krim* p. 135 *They carry their nonsense come your house* p. 18
Foreign words	*volte-face* p. 134	*Eine kleine Nachtmusik* p. 49 *coup d'etats* p. 153 *esprit de corps* p. 21 *petit bourgeois* p. 38

Italicization becomes necessary in these cases to indicate interference that is often necessitated by contextual exigencies like emotional outburst, exchange variety, humour, and the unrealizability of the selected lexical item in English language. 'Lappa' is however not italicized in *Anthills* because it features as a loan word.

Sometimes words are italicized in the two texts to approximate emphasis and to achieve focus in the speeches of the characters. The writer often italicizes words within sentences which are supposed to be given emphasis in dialogue. By this, a sense of immediacy is created so that a reader is made to feel the impact of an utterance as if it were in real life. In *Anthills* personal pronouns, nouns, verbs and adjectives are used to achieve this, while in *A Man*, personal pronouns, adjectives and prepositions are employed. No nouns or verbs in *A Man* are used for this effect. While discussing with Professor Okong in *Anthills*, His Excellency is reported to have said:

> You see if Entebbe happens here it's *me* the world will laugh at (p. 15).

That 'me' is italicized indicates emphasis, thus personalizing the responsibility of the chaos that may ensue. We find a similar example in *A Man* in Odili's narrative:

> Had Mama not intervened he probably would have pronounced a curse on me. As it was, he satisfied himself by merely vowing never to touch a penny of mine since he must not stir up trouble for *me* (p. 31).

The two texts differ a little in their use of pronouns. *A Man* diversifies with personal and indefinite pronouns (e.g. p. 18). *Anthills* restricts itself to personal pronouns. But the two agree in their use of italicized adjectives. See, for instance, '*authentic* Africans' (*A Man*, p. 51). Anything *inconvenient* (*Anthills*, p. 61). The two texts also use italics for contrast. Chapter Two of *A Man* for example, opens with:

> A common saying in the country after independence was that it didn't matter *what* you knew but *who* you knew (p. 17).

The contrast between knowledge (or high qualification),'what', and Godfatherism, 'who', is used to emphasize how social mobility and undue aristocratic indulgence have replaced merit. "*Appearing* ... and ... *not appearing*" (p. 147) in *Anthills* are contrasted to play up His Excellency's decision process on Chris' Commissionership.

There is an elaborate use of italics in both texts to mark names of texts, dailies and magazines. Examples include: *Daily Chronicle*, (p. 4), *She* (p. 40), *Sorrows of Satan* (p. 40), *Speeches*: *How to make them* (p. 40), etc. (*A Man*); *Reject* (p. 58), *Guinness Book of Records* (p. 10), *National Gazette* (p. 11), etc. (*Anthills*). Included among italicized items are songs and poems which are often identified to mark them off from the narrative print marks. Pages 66, 68, etc. (*Anthills*) and page 22 (*A Man*) are important in this respect.

Scattered across the horizontal and vertical spread of the two texts are italicizations of quotes, inscriptions, mottos and slogans. For example, words capturing stream of thought of Christopher Oriko's co-ministers are rendered in italics: "*Well, this is going to be another of those days*" (*Anthills*, p. 2). *A Man*, perhaps for its partisan political theme italicises a lot of inscriptions, mottos and slogans. Common in this respect are: *Not what I have but what I do is my kingdom* (Inscription, p. 3), *Do the right thing and shame the devil* (motto, p. 22). It is however important to note that some items which are ordinarily italicized in *Anthills* are put in inverted commas in *A Man*. The exclamation on page 6 of *A Man* for example is important in this respect: "The public gallery yelled down

its abuses. 'Traitor', 'Coward', 'Doctor of fuck your Mother'." Such statements are ordinarily foregrounded in *Anthills* through italics.

It is also significant that Nigerianisms and other non-standard English usages are italicized in the two texts to tap their actual colloquial flavour. In *A Man*, 'Permanent Secretary' is clipped to produce *pem* (p. 18); *countryman* parodied as 'kontriman' (p. 230), and 'helmet' as *helment* (p. 16). *Kontriman* is a demonstration of the user's (character's) indigenization of the English diphthong /au/ as /ɔ(n)/ and in *helment*, a kiddy – ignorant rendition is played up. Perhaps for the overseas training and high proficiency level of characters in *Anthills*, non-standard usage is almost non-existent. The only obvious instance of italicized Nigerianism is *luxurious* (p. 201), which is transplanted from its colloquial context into the world of *Anthills*.

It must be said that long passages of (or sentences indicating) authorial comment are italicized in *Anthills* occasionally to indicate the intervention of the author, though the story is narrated mainly by different characters. Examples abound in pages 126, 127, etc. These are absent in *A Man*.

3.1.2. Capitalization

In discussing the use of capitalization in the two texts, we consider acronyms and high-case words. *A Man* and *Anthills* contain 22 instances each of acronyms. One would normally expect *Anthills*, which is more voluminous to contain more, but the fact remains that, its short length notwithstanding, *A Man* is set in a civilian administrative context and naturally draws a lot of acronyms from names of political parties, titles and slogans. Examples of acronyms in the two texts include: M.P. (p. 19), P.O.P. (p. 3), B.A. (p. 11), etc (*A Man*); SRC (p. 14), GTC (p. 43), MM (p. 58), etc. (*Anthills*).

There are few instances of high-case words in the two texts (4 in *A Man*, 7 in *Anthills*). The instances in *A Man* appear as a piece of advertisement (p. 64), a slogan (p. 113), English alphabets (p. 139) and the title of a book (p. 44), while those in *Anthills* are a poem (p. 55), an inscription (p. 56) and the name of a place (p. 111).

3.1.3. Punctuation

The punctuation marks that attract stylistic attention in the two texts are interrogatives, ellipses, dashes and exclamations. *A Man* contains about 114 instances of interrogatives, while *Anthills* has about 579 instances. No doubt, the multiple narrative nature of *Anthills*, coupled with the intellectual level of characters with radical minds in a dictatorial polity surely demands the huge employment of interrogatives. Perhaps, the single-narrator technique adopted in *A Man*, together with personality cult and sycophantic tendencies characteristic of typical African politics, accounts for the fewer interrogatives in the text.

The two texts also differ widely in their uses of ellipses. The 98 as against 209 instances of ellipses point to the difference between an autocratic and a democratic set up. A lot of utterances are not completed in *Anthills* perhaps to reflect the psychological burden of autocracy which relies on the ability of just an individual, as against the situation in a democracy as seen in *A Man*. However, there are more dashes and exclamations in *A Man* than in *Anthills*. The 169 instances of dashes in *A Man* show informal bracket (e.g. p. 11), mark hesitation in speech (e.g., p. 62), replace commas in a subordinate clause (e.g. p. 2), and serve as informal colon (e.g., p. 7). Only two of these functions are observed in the 109 instances of dashes in *Anthills:* to serve as informal bracket (e.g. p. 14) and to mark hesitation in speech (e.g., p. 6). It is not surprising that there are more exclamations in *A Man* than in *Anthills*. Politicians, as evident in *A Man*, often blow ordinary situations beyond proportion and make louder alarm than necessary. Military men on the other hand, are more precise.

3.2. Lexico-semantic and discourse features

Apart from the special insight that a graphological analysis offers into the style of Achebe, we need to emphasize that a greater measure of his style is reflected both in his handling of lexemes and meaning and in his management of discourse within the two texts. In this connection, our analysis at this level will cover vocabulary, allusion and discourse stylistic variation.

3.2.1. Vocabulary

Perhaps the most striking insight we gain about the two novels comes from the recurrent words in each of them. It is interesting that *A Man*, for instance, has words like 'swindling' (p. 123), 'corruption' (p. 123), 'thugs', 'election' (p. 134) and 'constituency' (p. 101) recurring. They reflect the chaos and decadence perceptible in the society, at which the satirical indictment of Achebe is targeted. In *Anthills* however, a military dictatorship is suggested by a recurrence of such authority-imbued words as 'kabisa' (p. 7), ranks like 'colonel' (p. 171), 'Major' (p. 162), and vehicles like 'Jeep' (p. 192). *Anthills* is also distinguished by its prescriptive tone which is defined by such words as 'exploitative', 'struggle' (p. 120), 'marxist' (p. 153), 'radicalism' (p. 158), all of which convey the idea of radical social transformation that is central to the concern of the novel.

Part of the vocabulary success of the two texts is the elaborate use of compounding. The compounds employed in the texts are both simple and complex; simple in the sense of a two-word combination, and complex in the sense of a convergence of many words. *A Man* has the following: 'mid-rib' (p. 2) 'hard-won' (p. 6), 'shop-and-bar' (p. 20), 'free-for-all market-places' (p. 201), 'always-taken-in-vain reality' (p. 204), 'the-one-who-walks-into abundance' (p. 217), etc.

It is important that while these compounds could be said to achieve specificity of reference, they are sometimes used as devices of humour. An example is when Chief Nanga's guard, Dogo, in *A Man* is described as 'one-eyed'. Compounding proves especially valuable in *Anthills* as the writer uses it to conceptualize, most especially when words so formed have a measure of freshness and appropriateness. It should also be added that compounding is used in both texts to generate adjectives and nouns; e.g. in *A Man*, we have: 'back-bench hounds' (p. 5) (adjective), 'traveller-to-distant-places' (p. 1) (noun). Examples in *Anthills* include 'dirt-and-sweat-tarnished jumper' (p. 227) (adjective), 'The-one-who -walks-into-abundance' (p. 217) (noun).

Apart from compounding, proverbs are also used in both texts. As Oyeleye (1995: 370) has rightly remarked, Achebe's proverbs do three things: "add (...) colour to the conversation of his characters, advance the themes of his novels and also help in character differentiation". In line with this view, elderly characters in the two novels use proverbs in their speeches. In a bid to castigate Odili for his attitude to Chief Nanga, Odili's father in *A Man* strengthens his argument by adopting a proverb which suggests that Odili's act is disgraceful to him too:

> When a madman walks naked, it is his kinsmen who feel shame, not himself (p. 118).

A similar example is found in *Anthills* in which Professor Okong resorts to using a proverb to explain the cause of the people of Abazon's protest:

> But today's incident has shown that *a man must not swallow His cough because he fears to disturb others* (p. 19).

Generally, the choice of words, including drawing on proverbial resources, in *A Man* betrays its diagnostic concern. *Anthills* is then a logical follow-up to *A Man*. Thus, Achebe's vocabulary in *A Man* serves the purpose of revealing the perceived disgust in the society, while his proposal for a total reformation may be sensed in the diction of *Anthills*.

3.2.2. Allusion

Achebe makes allusion to diverse human experiences. In *Anthills*, he makes literary, political, biblical and historical allusions. Reference is made to Shakespeare's 'Desdemona' in *Othello*, 'Chielo' in *Things Fall Apart* and 'Henderson' in Ngugi and Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi.* Reference is made to Adolf Hitler of Germany and Jesus in the Bible. The 'Entebbe Raid', as an Ugandan example, is of particular importance in its serving as a veiled reference to the dictatorial reign of Idi Amin. It therefore helps to contextualize the story as one of immediate relevance to Africa. Allusion does not constitute a significant aspect of *A Man*. Allusions serve as a psycholinguistic bridge between the text and larger life, and with them, comparative images that aid appreciation are evoked.

3.2.3. Discourse Stylistic Variation

The discourse of the two texts is varied stylistically in line with context. Translation, transliteration, code-mixing and dialectal switches are important in this respect. In a bid to capture the actual cultural and pragmatic colour of an expression, Achebe in both *A Man* and *Anthills* employs translation and transliteration. In *Anthills* we have such examples as "fish-women" (p. 31) and "palm-oil women" as opposed to fish sellers and palm-oil sellers respectively. In a conversation with Nanga in *A Man*, Odili says with regard to Edna:

> She doesn't know as much book as you (p. 87).

This is an apparent reference to the relative brilliance of Edna. In the same text, an elderly man remarks, after hearing Max's speech:

> I want to thank the young man for his beautiful words. Every one of them has entered my ear (p. 125).

He only means to say that he enjoyed and understood what Max Kelamo said. A similar example in *Anthills* is found where Elewa's uncle prays for the new baby. As a way of saying that she would have a good life, he says: "May her path be straight ..." (p. 228). The last three instances are obvious cases of lexico-semantic interference. Their deviation from the standard norm notwithstanding, they are stylistically effective. They help to transmit the details as conceived in the mind of the characters. Sometimes, characters' level of education is shown by their use of lexico-semantic interference. Across the two texts, codes, usually English, pidgin, Latin and Igbo are mixed in discourse, narrative or conversation. Latin, French and other foreign phrases such as "par excellence", "volte-face", etc are mixed with English ones to delineate the high level of education of the characters in the texts.

Another stylistic feature in the two texts is dialectal switch. It is common that Characters switch from standard to informal English, or vice-versa as the situation demands. Their level of education notwithstanding, Beatrice, Ikem, Chris, Professor Okong (in *Anthills*) Chief Nanga, Odili, etc (in *A Man*) switch to Pidgin either when conversing with less educated people or when a mood of relaxation is being forged. In an attempt to convince Elewa that he has only been suspended and not sacked from *National Gazette*, Ikem says, "Never mind, my dear. You see I still de alive and well" (*Anthills* p. 149). When in *A Man* Mrs. John fairly seriously tries to dissuade Odili from getting closer to Chief Nanga, the latter replies:

> Eleanor, why you wan disgrace me and spoil my name so for public for nothing sake. Wetin I do you. Everybody here sabi say me na good Christian. No be so James? (p. 18).

Even in a Cabinet meeting, the Commissioner for Education, creating fun from Professor Okong's pretended religiosity says, "Ah Professor done come-o" (*Anthills*, p. 7). The less educated characters speak pidgin to depict their social status in the two texts. Sometimes, pidgin is inserted into the conversation between educated characters to whip up sentiment and possibly buy conviction. In *Anthills*, for example, when asked to advise His Excellency on the burning Abazonian issue, Professor Okong says:

> And now they have the audacity to write Your Excellency to visit their province and before you can even reply to their invitation they *carry their nonsense come your house* (p. 18).

4. Conclusion

Our analyses at the various levels have revealed that Achebe's styles in the two texts are conditioned by the demands of context. The study establishes that while the two texts of Achebe are products of the same location (Nigeria and Africa in general), his graphological, lexico-semantic and discourse stylistic choices are skillfully managed to reflect different thematic preoccupations, characters and temporal frames. Each level of the analysis thus aids the interpretation of the texts. At the graphological level, all instances of italicization, capitalization and punctuation are largely used to portray setting and characters. Italicized indigenous language words and Nigerianisms, with acronyms, ellipses and dashes, to a large extent, denote spatial, temporal and thematic setting, while italicized pidgin, foreign language and grammatical words delineate characters. At the lexico-semantic and discourse feature levels, Achebe portrays theme through the vocabulary items and allusions selected. These items immediately separate *A Man* from *Anthills* in terms of thematic preoccupations. All the instances of discourse stylistic variety are used to mark characterization. But, there are, expectedly, overlaps of functions between the levels. Sometimes, some of the graphological features, explicitly italicized content words, acronyms, ellipses and dashes portray theme, and lexico-semantic discourse features such as proverbs delineate characters.

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