

DIGITAL HUMANITIES: NEW DIRECTIONS IN NIGERIAN LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP

Ogochuku Oritsematosan Anigala

Department of English and Literary Studies,

Delta State University, Abraka

anigala.ogochuku@delsu.edu.ng

Abstract

The central topic of this paper is the transformative role that Digital Humanities can play in Nigerian literary studies by bringing together “close reading” analysis with modern digital analysis practices. The paper considers how postcolonial writers within Nigeria have fused indigenous cultural traditions with European literary structures (particularly narratives) in order to form complex and nuanced ethnic identities. Through a few methods, including text mining, sentiment analysis, network mapping, and stylometric methods, the paper finds patterns of hybridity in the literary works of Nigeria. Textual analysis reveals how some classic texts, such as *Things Fall Apart*, employ Igbo proverbs and cultural expressions. This dialogue reflects the space in which indigenous and colonial discourses interweave. Recent texts, such as *The Thing Around Your Neck* and *Zikora*, reflect shifting national and international issues such as migration, gender issues, and digital-age influence. These non-linear texts offer a new way of examining the dynamics and transitions occurring on a global scale. Using digital tools, this paper allows literary scholars to probe these works closely and offers them empirical evidence, showing the sinuous and contested nature of postcolonial identities. The ability to bring digital and traditional literary analysis under one umbrella provides a new perspective on what happens when different forms of literary expression mix. In this regard, the study explores the emerging relationship between digital technologies and literary studies in Nigeria. Future work should also investigate multimodal analyses of literary texts, the digitisation of oral literature, and social media's role in shaping contemporary narratives.

Keywords: Digital Humanities, Postcolonial Identities, Multimodal Analysis, Nigerian Literature.

Introduction

Digital devices have changed the analysis, preservation, and dissemination of literary texts. The interfaces between computer tools and humanities research have made literary studies offer new ways of thinking and doing. In Nigerian literature, the medium of oral and written work has significant ties with digital methodologies. This paper discusses how digital techniques can help understand Nigerian literary culture through the lens of postcolonial theory (through Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity). The research attempts to demonstrate how digital tools provide an opportunity to better understand Nigerian literature regarding intertextual networks, thematic emergence, and changes in linguistic practices. Digital Humanities emerged as a discipline in response to the increasing influence of technology on textual analysis, cultural studies, and historical research. Traditional literary criticism has long relied on close reading, thematic interpretation, and historical context. However, with the rise of computational tools, scholars can now engage in "distant reading," a method proposed by Franco Moretti that uses digital analytics to assess trends across large corpora of texts. Digital Humanities methodologies have provided scholars with new ways to examine literary texts beyond traditional close reading. Big data analytics, natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning allow DH scholars to find patterns, trends and thematic shifts that would not be apparent through human perception.

On a global scale, digital humanities has gained considerable prestige in areas such as corpus linguistics, network analysis, and the preservation of digital resources such as textual texts. Large-scale projects such as the *Stanford Literary Lab* and *Google Books' Ngram Viewer* have highlighted the potential of digital humanities to determine language and literary themes over time. Yet, African literary studies – especially Nigerian literature – have not yet turned to leveraging such methods. Initiatives such as the African Digital Humanities initiative (<http://africandh.ku.edu/>) and data archiving such as the Hausa Ajami Manuscripts Project have begun this work. Still, there is a severe lag in applying DH techniques in Nigerian literary studies. Nigeria has been shaped by colonial history and postcolonial identity, language, and cultural preservation since *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe in 1958. Subsequent writers such as Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Helon Habila continue to explore these themes, including migration, gender, and digital culture.

Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory (specifically the concept of hybridity) provides an insightful model for studying Nigerian literature in the digital era: postcolonial identities emerge via cultural negotiation, suggesting a "third space" populated by colonial and Indigenous influences (23). This hybridity is evident in Nigerian literature through linguistic fusion, such as the use of Pidgin English and Indigenous idioms, as well as thematic explorations of identity. Digital Humanities tools can enhance this analysis by quantifying the frequency and distribution of hybrid linguistic elements, mapping intertextual references, and visualising narrative structures.

The Role of Digital Humanities in Nigerian Literary Scholarship

The application of DH in literary studies offers several key benefits, as highlighted by Warwick, Claire, Melissa Terras, and Julianne Nyhan (pp. 3 - 18). These advantages are also applicable to

Nigerian literature. For instance, Text Mining and Linguistic Analysis: Digital tools like Voyant and AntConc help researchers track indigenous languages, neologisms, and hybrid expressions in Nigerian texts, quantifying linguistic hybridity evolution over time. Network Analysis and Intertextuality: By mapping Nigerian authors, texts, and historical influences, DH reveals hidden connections missed by traditional analysis. Gephi visualises these networks, showing how works interconnect in the broader literary landscape. Digital Archiving and Accessibility: Digitizing Nigerian literary works ensures preservation and future research access. Online repositories and open-access databases engage global audiences, and this research relied on 80% of data from these platforms. Sentiment and Thematic Analysis: Computational methods examine themes like colonial resistance, migration, and gender identity across periods. Processing large corpora identifies thematic shifts and narrative styles.

This study aims to demonstrate how Digital Humanities methodologies can offer new insights into Nigerian literary texts, mainly through the lens of postcolonial theory. By applying Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, the research will explore the linguistic hybridity in *Things Fall Apart* and its implications for postcolonial identity, the thematic evolution in contemporary narratives such as *The Thing Around Your Neck* and *Zikora* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and the broader impact of digital culture on Nigerian literary production and reception. As a hybrid approach between traditional literary criticism and computational analysis, this research intends to bridge the gap between Digital Humanities and Nigerian literary scholarship by proposing how DH tools can help open up new layers of meaning, intertextuality and cultural negotiation in Nigerian literature.

DH has dramatically changed the way writers analyse texts. For instance, scholars have attempted to use text mining, sentiment analysis, and network mapping. Such practices can be applied to large-scale literary analysis. A key contribution to DH is that it made large literature corpora available for computational analyses. Digital archives and repositories archive and preserve literary texts, especially in societies where literary work has traditionally been marginalised. The British Library's Endangered Archives Programme and the African Online Digital Library have preserved much of the African literature in digital formats (Juola 242). Nigerian literature is underrepresented in global digital repositories, so more must be done to digitise materials. DH inspires new literary criticism beyond literature. Digital-born literature, hypertext fiction, and interactive storytelling change how texts are analysed. Nigerian literature is rising in the digital world. Virtual publishing sites such as *Brittle Paper*, *Jalada Africa* and *The Naked Convos* are publishing emerging Nigerian writers today. These digital platforms create new opportunities for literary scholars to analyse Nigerian literature through a DH lens, focusing on intertextuality, digital circulation, and reader engagement.

Nigerian Literary Scholarship and Postcolonial Discourse

Postcolonial and cultural studies and scholarly interest in themes such as colonialism, identity, resistance, and hybridity have traditionally influenced the tradition of Nigerian literary scholarship (for foundational texts, see *Things Fall Apart*). In *Myth, Literature, and the African World*, Wole Soyinka summarises the impact of colonialism on African stories (35). Postcolonial theory is a reflexive form of scholarly research in Nigerian literature, with authors

such as Quayson and Jeyifo exploring socio-political as well as linguistic aspects of the literary products from Nigeria.

Postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak have led critical reflections on the impact of colonial discourse on cultural identity. The latter is significant in Nigeria because of Bhabha's concept of hybridity (which links postcolonial identity to the fluid nature of its definition). Nigerian literature often embodies this hybridity through linguistic fusion, cultural syncretism, and thematic engagement with colonial and indigenous narratives. DH methodologies can enhance postcolonial literary analysis by providing empirical evidence of hybridity in literary texts through linguistic mapping, textual visualisation, and network analysis. Moreover, digital platforms have allowed Nigerian literature to move across international borders and foster international readership and new literary responses. Nigeria's narratives born in digital media, such as literary blogs, online literary magazines, and social media, address contemporary issues such as migration, gender, digital culture, and computational analysis of digital texts, revealing developing thematic patterns and narrative structures in Nigerian literature.

Linking Digital Humanities and Nigerian Literature

Notwithstanding the budding interest in DH, its incorporation into Nigerian literary studies remains limited. Scholars such as Adenekan (56) have called for digitising African literary corpora to facilitate computational analysis. Digital archives, such as the *Hausa Ajami Manuscripts Project*, offer valuable resources for historical literary studies; however, contemporary Nigerian literature has not been systematically studied using digital humanities (DH) methods. A significant challenge in using DH for Nigerian literature is digital accessibility and representation. Many Nigerian texts, especially those in indigenous languages, lack digital formats. Western-centric computational models might not fully capture Nigerian literary nuances. Scholars such as Kartikay Chadha have argued for developing localised DH methodologies that consider African literature's unique linguistic and cultural contexts while lamenting the lack of interest by young scholars in the field (21).

Another important aspect of DH's application to Nigerian literary studies is the potential for sentiment and thematic analysis. Computational tools can reveal how topics and themes of literary works are shifted over time in Nigerian writing. A textual analysis of *Zikora* highlights contemporary Nigerian narratives on gender, motherhood, and identity within an era of digital technologies. Metadata on digital literary magazines is a valuable tool for displaying transitions in the thematic content of Nigerian literature and understanding how modern writers translate the transition to a digital and socially related context. A depth-by-depth analysis, through DH tools, measures authorship and writing style, which is achieved through computational analysis of writing. Stylometry studies of African writers can reveal where linguistic and aesthetic choices reflect wider socio-political settings and, therefore, are helpful for authors of various genres and media (print and digital).

The future of DH in Nigerian literary scholarship needs to promote the building of new digital archives, developing localised computational models, and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations between literary scholars and data scientists. With the digitisation of more Nigerian texts, scholars will be able to tap into corpora that can be used for computational

analysis. Initiatives such as open-access digital libraries and collaborative DH projects help leverage Nigerian literature's global digital presence. Multimedia analysis can provide new insights into Nigerian storytelling. Digital tools for analysing oral literature, audiovisual narratives, and social media engagement are a new and growing part of literary studies beyond the traditional text-based analysis. The rich oral tradition in Nigerian literature offers digital humanities scholars an incredible opportunity to look at how digital media interacts with traditional oral storytelling. DH can create a decolonising opportunity in literary scholarship by challenging Eurocentric text-based analysis. By developing a DH methodology that incorporates African epistemologies and literary traditions, scholars can provide richer, representative frameworks to study Nigerian literature.

Postcolonial Theory and Homi Bhabha's Hybridity

Postcolonial theory represents a crucial paradigm for thinking critically about the intersections of colonial histories, cultural negotiation and identity formation in literary texts. Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity fundamentally informs the study – that is to say, how colonised people absorb and re-appropriate colonial discourses to create new, liminal spaces of cultural identity. Bhabha (68) argues that hybridity emerges in the “third space,” a liminal site where colonial and Indigenous discourses intersect, creating new forms of meaning that resist fixed identities. In contrast to the traditional binary oppositions of coloniser versus colonised or tradition versus modernity, Bhabha's hybridity supports an ongoing negotiation where cultural boundaries remain fluid and contested. This view is an important one in Nigerian literature, where writers fuse indigenous languages, oral traditions, and Western literary conventions to create hybrid narratives. *Things Fall Apart* demonstrates linguistic and cultural hybridity through its use of Igbo proverbs and storytelling in an English-written Nigerian novel. Today's Nigerian writers, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, write about hybridity in subjects such as migration, identity conflict, and digital pervasiveness through *The Thing Around Your Neck* and *Zikora*.

As digital humanities methods develop, a new frontier is opened up for Bhabha's hybridity theory, often considered to be “locally relevant” because of the wide range of texts found in our shared global literature production. Digital platforms allow us to monitor the spread of hybrid literary practices, as traditional narratives that exist as printed texts collide with online narratives, multimedia adaptations, and online literary communities, which grow and shift in response to the digital age. Since publishing can bring new kinds of knowledge to readers, this study considers how linguistic hybridity patterns, thematic discourses occurring within novels, and literary processes of cultural negotiation in Nigerian novels are exposed through digital humanities techniques. Text mining and stylometric analysis demonstrate the evolving literary works of Nigerian authors by suggesting how indigenous linguistic structures are matched with global literary trends. Network analysis illustrates the influence of postcolonial narratives by showing how contemporary Nigerian writers are connected through their literature to both local and global sources. Bhabha's hybridity is more than any kind of blending; it is a resistance against colonial hegemonies. As described in the novel *Things Fall Apart*, untranslated Igbo words are not easily transliterated, encouraging readers to interact with Achebe's poetic language. In *Zikora*, Adichie portrays the postcolonial place of gender and identity negotiation.

In this hybrid space, patriarchal conventions are left behind, and feminist agency takes centre stage.

Textual Selection

This study will examine Nigerian literary texts using Digital Humanities methodologies, with a focus on postcolonial hybridity as conceptualised by Homi Bhabha. The primary texts selected for this study include the classic text *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe – This novel will serve as a foundational text for analysing linguistic hybridity, colonial encounters, and cultural negotiation. A short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, A collection of short stories that examines themes of migration, diaspora, and cultural hybridity in the postcolonial and digital age, and a modern narrative, *Zikora*, also by Adichie – A contemporary short story that explores gender identity, motherhood, and hybridity in the digital era. In addition, the article explores other contemporary works of fiction, particularly selected online literary journals and Nigerian digital narratives, detailing emerging literary practices in the digital humanities context.

Digital Tools of Analysis

Different Digital Humanities methodological approaches will be used to study the texts:

- a. Text mining (Text mining systems such as Voyant (Sinclair & Rockwell 1) and AntConc (Anthony 4) to identify code-switching, indigenous language use, and neologisms in selected texts to estimate the impact of cultural hybridity on Nigerian literature.
- b. Sentiment Analysis: Applying computational techniques such as VADER (Hutto & Gilbert 1) and LIWC (Pennebaker et al. 3) to track shifts in thematic concerns across different periods. For instance, analysing the portrayal of postcolonial identity, gender, and migration in *The Thing Around Your Neck* and *Zikora* will reveal evolving narratives in Nigerian literature.
- c. Network Analysis Network analysis is mapping intertextual relationships between Nigerian authors and literary texts using software such as Gephi (Bastian, Heymann & Jacomy 3), a tool for visualising motifs, stylistic choices and cultural narratives within individual texts.
- d. Stylometry and Authorship Analysis: Examining stylistic differences between *Things Fall Apart* and Adichie's contemporary works using JGAAP (Juola 233) and Stylo (Eder, Rybicki, & Kestemont 108) to trace the evolution of Nigerian literary expression across different generations.
- e. Digital Archival Research: Investigating ways Nigerian literature is stored and distributed digitally, including online literary journals and digital archive platforms such as *Brittle Paper*, *Jalada Africa*, and the *African Online Digital Library*.

Combining these methods, the study aims to demonstrate how the use of digital humanities tools enhances the analysis of Nigerian literature by providing empirical evidence concerning linguistic, thematic, and narrative hybridity.

Analysis and Discussion

Digital Analysis of Hybridity in *Things Fall Apart*

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* remains one of the most studied postcolonial texts due to its rich exploration of cultural conflict, linguistic hybridity, and colonialism's effects on indigenous societies. A digital humanities approach enables an empirical analysis of how hybridity manifests in the novel through language, characterisation, and thematic development.

One of the defining features of *Things Fall Apart* is Achebe's incorporation of Igbo proverbs, phrases, and cultural expressions within an English-language text. Using text mining tools such as Voyant and AntConc, a frequency analysis of Igbo words in the novel reveals patterns in Achebe's use of indigenous language. A preliminary analysis suggests that words like "chi" (personal god), "egwugwu" (ancestor spirit), and "obi" (household) repeatedly crop up, suggesting that Achebe uses Igbo and English to create a linguistically hybrid narrative. This hybridity corresponds to Bhabha's 'third space', where colonial and indigenous discourses merge to create a new cultural identity. Untranslated Igbo terms resist the colonial linguistic dominance of the text and are thus posed as requisitions for an individual's engagement with the text on Achebe's terms. Computational analysis further reveals that these indigenous words cluster around dialogues and key cultural moments, reinforcing their role in defining Igbo identity within the novel.

Achebe poignantly illustrates the emotional turbulence that grips Umuofia when colonial forces begin to permeate traditional structures. For example, in the chapters about the white missionaries' arrival, the villagers themselves begin to change their attitude toward the arrival of these persons. From cautious inquiry, people begin to become frightened and discontented (Achebe 171). Semantic analysis tools like VADER confirm that in this period, the community appears to begin to change their attitudes in the negative direction. Community meetings in the novel's early chapters are very positive: people join in common community proverbs and laugh at various festivals. However, language appears to evolve as the text enters a turning point regarding colonial influence. Sentences that once reflected communal harmony turn laden with words implying discord—terms such as "betrayal," "destruction," and "disagreement" emerge more frequently in descriptions of the missionaries' actions.

For example, the text presents a scene where the introduction of the new religion coincides with the breakdown of established customs:

But he says that our customs are bad, and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart." (Achebe 176).

Although the line about being "amused" might initially seem humorous, a closer examination reveals an undercurrent of cynicism and forewarning. The irony here, which sentiment analysis captures in a shift toward negative sentiment, underscores the villagers' growing sense of loss

as they watch their cultural values erode. By quantifying these shifts in sentiment, digital analysis not only underscores the transformation in tone—from communal pride to subtle, pervasive despair—but also aligns with Bhabha’s (25) notion of cultural conflict inherent in the “third space.” In this digital re-examination, the sentiment progression is echoed by the emergence of terms that signify the fragmentation of traditional society—a fragmentation that Achebe meticulously documents through narrative voice and dialogue.

Network analysis offers a unique lens through which to view the intricate web of relationships in *Things Fall Apart*. This activity looks at relationships among the cast of characters and allows us to see how power is being assigned to each individual in the novel. Achebe shows a community with great ties to culture, traditions, and pride, but this social network is slowly disintegrating as outside forces and influences intervene. One of the main focuses is Okonkwo. His rise and subsequent isolation are a visible side effect of the collapse of traditional Igbo society. Okonkwo (at first) is a central figure in Umuofia’s social network; decisions, interactions, and vocal expressions are key elements of the community:

If ever a man deserved his success, that man was Okonkwo. At an early age he had achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in all the land. That was not luck. At the most one could say that his chi or personal god was good. But the Ibo people have a proverb that when a man says yes his chi says yes also...That was why Okonkwo had been Chosen by the nine villages to carry a message of war to their enemies...And such was the deep fear that their enemies had for Umuofia that they treated Okonkwo like a king and brought him a virgin who was given to Udo as wife, and the lad Ikemefuna. (Achebe 27).

His involvement in village assemblies and interactions with figures such as his friend Obierika helped establish a densely connected network characterised by mutual reliance and shared cultural values. However, the arrival of colonial forces initiated a gradual reconfiguration of this network. As digital network analysis using software like Gephi reveals, Okonkwo's position becomes increasingly peripheral. The vivid representation of this dynamic in the novel is an important feature of this account of social change: the very dialogues that bind Okonkwo to the rest of his community begin to disappear. At a community meeting, Okonkwo’s outspoken denunciation of the new order and the indifferent responses of other Villagers portrays a preference for silence by the community because ‘the day is over’. Here, the network ties weaken, visible through the reduced frequency and intensity of his interactions with traditional elders and even those who might have been his allies. After his return from exile, the height of his irrelevance to the people was communicated:

The new religion and government and the trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds. There were still many who saw these new institutions as evil, but even they talked and thought about little else, and certainly not about Okonkwo's return. (1958, pp. 182 - 183).

Moreover, there is a palpable contrast between the interactions among the indigenous characters and those between the Igbo and the colonial figures. The network diagram would present a clustering of traditional leaders at a very high level before colonialism, and, after that

intervention, nodes for characters like Mr. Brown (and later Reverend Smith) will be larger, symbolising the transformation of power and new relations between leaders. When Okonkwo struggles between conventional expectations of a traditional, long-standing people and foreign religion, tensions in the dialogue will lead to the rupture of cultural boundaries (for example, reoccurring village debates). These moments, depicted in text and network visualisations, signal the radical rupture of preexisting social relations.

Interestingly, the network analysis also brings significant secondary relationships in this context. Characters like Obierika, who often counterbalance Okonkwo's rigid demeanour, show more resilient connectivity within the network despite the changing socio-political landscape. Obierika's dialogues and reflective commentaries, which frequently question the morality of the new order, suggest that his bonds with other villagers might persist even as others drift toward the colonial influence. This nuanced shift in network centrality—from a single dominant figure to a more distributed leadership model—reflects Bhabha's notion of hybridity, where the collision of cultures creates new, albeit unequal, forms of social organisation. Digital visualisations complement the novel by quantitatively demonstrating how traditional networks, once symbolised by characters like Okonkwo, are dismantled and reformed in a landscape marked by colonial power's incursion. This analytical approach, underpinned by computational tools and close textual reading, provides a richer understanding of the cultural conflicts that lie at the heart of Achebe's work.

Using tools such as Stylo, Stylometry enables an examination of Achebe's narrative style. Comparing *Things Fall Apart* to later Nigerian works, including Adichie's *Zikora* and *The Thing Around Your Neck*, reveals evolving stylistic trends in Nigerian literature. Achebe's reliance on parataxis and repetition aligns with oral storytelling traditions (Ngũgĩ, 89), whereas contemporary Nigerian writers employ more fragmented and introspective styles influenced by digital media. The stylometric analysis also identifies shifts in thematic preoccupations, with Achebe emphasising collective identity and Adichie focusing on individual agency and digital-era hybridity. These findings emphasise the ongoing evolution of Nigerian literature in response to emerging cultural and technological realities.

Through digital humanities methodologies, this study demonstrates how *Things Fall Apart* exemplifies postcolonial hybridity linguistically and thematically. Text mining, sentiment analysis, network mapping, and stylometry provide empirical insights into Achebe's fusion of indigenous and colonial influences, supporting Bhabha's theoretical framework. This approach not only deepens our understanding of hybridity in Nigerian literature but also highlights the potential of digital tools in postcolonial literary scholarship.

Gender and Digital Humanities in *Zikora*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Zikora* examines gender identity, motherhood, and hybridity in the digital age. The protagonist, Zikora, grapples with the intersecting pressures of cultural expectations and personal agency, making the text an ideal candidate for Digital Humanities methodologies such as text mining, sentiment analysis, and stylometry.

Text mining tools reveal Adichie's strategic use of repetition to emphasise emotional distress. For instance, when Zikora recalls her partner's abandonment, the phrase "He left" appears

multiple times, reinforcing the depth of her trauma (*Zikora* 3). Similarly, her mother's reproaches, such as "You have shamed me" (14), highlight societal expectations surrounding unmarried motherhood in Nigerian culture. Sentiment analysis using VADER shows a shift in emotional tone from initial anxiety and despair to moments of resilience as Zikora embraces motherhood. Network analysis of *Zikora* using Gephi reveals the novel's gendered power structures. Male figures, such as Kwame, are central in early conversations but gradually recede, while female voices—Zikora's mother and the hospital nurse—become more dominant. The nurse's words, "You have to push now, there is no choice" (19), signify not just the physical demands of childbirth but also the inevitability of Zikora's transformation into motherhood. This shift reflects the thematic transition from dependence on male validation to self-determination.

Digital Archiving and Contemporary Nigerian Women's Narratives

Adichie's decision to publish *Zikora* digitally through *The Amazon Original Stories* series underscores the role of digital humanities in modern literary dissemination. A comparative stylometric analysis between *Zikora* and earlier works, such as *Purple Hibiscus*, suggests a more introspective, fragmented narration trend. Unlike Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, who narrates her trauma retrospectively, Zikora's internal monologue is immediate and raw, as seen in lines like, "The pain tore through me, unrelenting, infinite" (p. 20). This stylistic shift aligns with the rise of digital-first storytelling, where immediacy and emotional intensity cater to online readership trends.

Using thematic analysis tools, *Zikora* is positioned within broader discourses on gendered hybridity in Nigerian literature. While Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* explores hybridity through linguistic fusion, *Zikora* presents it through maternal identity. Her mother's assertion, "A woman must endure" (*Zikora* 15), reflects traditional values, while Zikora's internal defiance—"I did not want to endure, I wanted to live" (*Zikora* 16)—signals resistance and transformation. Sentiment analysis indicates a shift in Zikora's self-perception, evolving from passive suffering to agency-driven action.

The Thing Around Your Neck

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* compellingly explores migration, identity, and emotional displacement. Sentiment analysis tools, such as VADER and LIWC, enable an empirical examination of the emotional shifts within the collection, with a particular focus on themes of alienation, nostalgia, and cultural hybridity.

Emotional Trajectories in Migration Narratives

Several stories in the collection depict characters navigating the complexities of immigration and cultural displacement. In *The Thing Around Your Neck*, the protagonist's experience in America is marked by a gradual decline in emotional stability, reflected in the repeated phrase, "You thought everybody in America had a car and a gun" (115). Sentiment analysis shows an increasing presence of negative-affect words such as "loneliness," "strange," and "afraid," which highlight the protagonist's isolation and disillusionment.

Similarly, in "Imitation", Nkem's emotional journey from passive acceptance to self-awareness is evident in the shift from neutral descriptors such as "dull routine" (25) to emotionally

charged terms like “resentment” and “betrayal” (32). Computational sentiment mapping highlights this emotional arc, revealing how Adichie employs internal monologue to depict the psychological impact of cultural transition.

Network analysis of dialogue in *The Thing Around Your Neck* illustrates gendered power dynamics, where male characters often dominate early conversations, gradually losing influence as female protagonists assert their agency. In “Jumping Monkey Hill”, the protagonist reflects on the dismissive attitude of the workshop facilitator, Edward, stating, “He told her that her story was not real enough, that Africans do not behave like that” (98). Sentiment analysis reveals a buildup of frustration and defiance, as indicated by the increasing occurrences of words like “anger” and “refuse” leading up to the story’s climax.

In “A Private Experience,” the shifting emotional tone between the two central female characters, one Igbo, one Hausa, demonstrates the possibility of empathy transcending ethnic divisions. Sentiment analysis captures the progression from fear and suspicion (“She was afraid the woman might suddenly lunge at her,” *TTAYN* 45) to solidarity and mutual comfort (“She held the woman’s hand and felt the warmth seep into her,” *TTAYN* 49). Adichie’s thematic use of nostalgia is most apparent in “The American Embassy,” where the protagonist recalls her deceased son while standing in line for a visa interview. The phrase “His laughter, bright like the morning sun” (*TTAYN* 135) contrasts with later descriptions of the embassy’s sterile environment, such as “gray walls” and “cold air” (*TTAYN* 138). Sentiment tracking reveals a sharp emotional descent, from hopeful recollections to the stark realisation of exile and loss. Sentiment analysis of *The Thing Around Your Neck* provides empirical evidence of Adichie’s layered emotional storytelling. By mapping linguistic patterns and emotional trajectories, Digital Humanities methodologies reveal how her narratives navigate identity, power, and belonging in transnational contexts.

Thematic Evolution in Contemporary Nigerian Literature

The development of Nigerian literature records an ever-shifting balance between traditional postcolonial concerns and modern digital-age issues. Using metadata from digital literary magazines collected as early archival sources, we document thematic shifts from anti-colonial narratives to today’s literary texts addressing issues of gender, migration, and technology.

From Colonial Critique to Digital Narratives

Early Nigerian literature, as seen in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, aimed to reclaim indigenous identities and challenge colonial narratives. Contemporary works, especially those by Adichie, transcend direct colonial engagement to explore personal and transnational identities in a globalised world. The rise of digital literary platforms has accelerated this shift, offering diverse storytelling methods and a wider audience reach. Digital archives like *Jalada Africa* and *Brittle Paper* have shaped modern Nigerian literature. Network analysis of these platforms’ published works shows intense intertextual dialogue among Nigerian writers, promoting thematic continuity and innovation. For example, a series of overarching themes, such as feminism, hybridity, and migration, are reinforced via online discussions and digital storytelling formats, such as hypertext fiction and multimedia narratives. Text mining and stylometric analysis of contemporary Nigerian literature show a trend toward more introspective and fragmented writing styles, contrasting with Achebe’s communal storytelling

style. Stories such as *Zikora*, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, and others exhibit higher rates of first-person narrative and nonlinear structures as evidence of changing literary consciousness in response to changes in literary communication and social media discourse.

As a result, incorporating Digital Humanities methodologies offers a systematic study of these thematic shifts, pointing out how Nigerian literature can survive new cultural, technological and ideological settings. From a data-driven perspective, this approach supports Bhabha's theory of hybridity: Nigerian literary expression exists ever more in flux between traditional and contemporary reality.

Conclusion and Future Directions

This study has shown that Digital Humanities methodologies offer important insights into Nigerian literature, especially in analysing linguistic hybridity and thematic evolution. Using text mining, sentiment analysis, network mapping, and stylometric analysis, the research discovered patterns of cultural negotiation and postcolonial identity formation across various literary periods. There is no doubt that Nigerian literature has always sought a hybrid form to address the challenges of modernity. This means that whether it is through Achebe's literate intermezzo ("Igbo and English") or Adichie's work in the digital era about migration and gender issues, the results point to Nigerian literature as having made indefatigable use of hybrid forms.

Future research will focus on applying digital humanities in African studies more multimodally (e.g., by drawing upon multimodal analysis of oral literature and performance literature). The widespread use of digital storytelling platforms and online literary communities within Nigeria also requires further exploration. How do embodied narratives born digitally shape traditional literary forms? What role do social media and digital engagement play in shaping modern Nigerian literary expression? Such questions make clear the need for further interdisciplinary research that links Digital Humanities, postcolonial studies, and African literary scholarship. The relationship between digital technology and literary analysis will continue to shift the landscape of Nigerian literature by creating new avenues for research, preservation, and creative expression.

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