
Pragmeme of political humour in selected political cartoons in Nigerian newspapers

Oluwatomi Adeoti^{1*}

¹Department of English and Linguistics, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. oluwatomiadeoti@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Received: 05 May 2023 | Accepted: 17 June 2023 | Published: 30 June 2023

Abstract: Several studies have been conducted regarding the object of humour based research but few attention has been given Cartoon Motivated humour (CMH) in Nigerian discourse. Thus, this study explores a pragmatic study of political humour in selected political cartoons. It investigates humour that reflect the corruption, embezzlement, economic and health challenges in Nigeria shared through the selected political cartoons. The theoretical framework adopted is Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory. A total of Twelve (12) data were purposively selected from three different newspapers (*The Punch, The Daily Trust and The Vanguard*). The paper found out that the humour in political cartoon is to evoke laughter with the intention to correct the societal ills of the political leaders. This is achieved through the practs of informing, castigating, ridiculing, exposing, blaming, etc. The paper also revealed that pragmatic elements such as inference, (INF), Relevance (REL), Reference (REF) and Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) were used to expose the hidden messages in the selected political cartoons. The study also examines the use of language in political humour and the study employs qualitative method of research. The study reveals the inference, reference, inferred alongside the Shared Situational Knowledge meaning of the data used which played a crucial role in understanding the interpretation of the pract performed in political cartoon. The paper concludes that the humour in political cartoon doesn't only evoke laughter but correct societal ills and the way language is used by political leaders in Nigeria.

Keywords: Humour, Political cartoon, Practs, Pragmatic acts

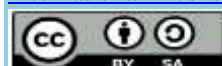
Biographical notes: Dr Oluwatomi Adeoti holds a Phd Degree in English Language from the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. She is a Senior Lecturer and Currently PG Coordinator in the Department of English, Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Humour, a natural phenomenon in human society, is as old as the use of language communication in its different forms of verbal and non-verbal expressions; humour has its potential to consciously or unconsciously evoke laughter from audience. According to Ross (1998: 2), "humour is capable of creating an atmosphere of relief from anxiety, anger and pain; its profile is high in the society", as it performs a lot of roles in human society. Katayama (2009:125), posits that 'humour brings people together under shared laughter'. This indicates that as opposed to being an individualised phenomenon, humour is a collective phenomenon. This means that it functions as a means of uniting people. Besides this, humour also has some sociological roles (Campisano, 2016). Friedman and Kuipers (2013: 181) submit that, 'there is no complete sociological consensus regarding the sociological roles of humour. Be that as it may, humour performs the function of promoting social inclusion and exclusion'.

Political humour includes any humorous text that not only makes reference to politics, but achieves the goal of politics by dealing with political issues, people, processes, events, or institutions. It is known to be a communicative resource for spotting, highlighting, and attacking incongruities originating in political discourse and action (Popa, 2011). These incongruities are those political shortcomings that constitute a deviation from political norms, and consequently, in view of this nonconformity, become undoubtedly source material for the media. Political humour informs its audience about this political reality, and points out that this is, in fact, an incongruous reality (Tsakona & Popa, 2011). It commonly evolves into jokes or satirical verbal and non-verbal genres that accompany political commentary, comic sketches aiming to ridicule the blunders of politicians ruling the country: their decisions,

Research Article: This article is published by *Jozac Publishers* in the *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies (JLLS)*. This article is distributed under a Creative Common [Attribution \(CC BY-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) International License. **Conflict of Interest:** The author/s declared no conflict of interest.



behaviour, or attitudes (Poprawa, n.d.); which could be in the forms of incompetence, recklessness, or corruption, among others.

However, the study of cartooning in a communicative context was legitimized by artists whose sketched lines summarised complicated events, articulating messages which painstakingly encapsulate those metaphorical 1,000 words into a single picture” (Davies, 2004). The humorous, cultural and societal outrage such forms generate highlights the cartoon’s capacity to act as barometers of political freedom in societies (Sandbrook, 2010), reflecting “cultural attitudes and values, and record and perpetuate many commonly held beliefs” (Mazid, 2008). These visual artifacts can generate brief barbs of criticism which emphasise the weaknesses of their chosen subjects, frequently outpacing news articles which articulate similar commentary. Hence, cartoons have over the years become a major feature of newspaper and magazine curtain in Nigeria. A panoramic observation would reveal the most daily newspaper and weekly magazines publish various cartoons and comics strips. Most Nigerian newspapers published cartoon and comics strips on social, political and economic affairs of the country or as illustrations of some editorial matter.

Political cartoons is one of the powerful virtual communication in Nigeria Newspaper.it serves as a medium through which people are informed, educated and entertained by presenting societal happenings in hilarious manner. Political cartoons are therefore embedded in history and are particularly constructed for a specific viewership in a very specific context (Walker, 2003). These cartoons reflect the popular culture. They provide an insight into the social trends and account for how particular events make particular shared meanings for a specific social group (Rosa, 2012). They are the storehouse of the collectively shared meanings. One particular aspect of the political cartoons is that they are almost satirical. They amuse their viewers through humour that can easily be accepted without resistance; impacting the audience due to the spontaneous manner in which the message is delivered (Walker, 2003). Most of the time, these cartoons ridicule the public figures and the parties, highlighting the difference between the privileged and the less privileged of the society. Their unsubstantiated allegations serve to reflect the irony, illogicality or inadequacy of situations. Therefore, cartoons and humour are media reverse that have immemorially maintained an undeniable presence and influence in the communication of the old social institution known as politics. Cartoon humour are based on several societal ills either bad or good. Humour are not only done for political but also in economics affairs such as Fashion, Entertainments, Schools, Infrastructural facilities and so on. One linguistic tool that reveals the intention of images such as cartoons is pragmatics.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that is focused on how words are used to perform various acts, how meaning is negotiated between speaker and hearer, and the pivotal role context plays in the interpretation of an utterance as well as to explain aspects of meaning which cannot be found in the plain sense of words or structures. According to Mey (2007: 6), “pragmatic studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society”. Generally, it is concerned with the way we convey meaning in any given social context through the medium of language. This meaning includes verbal as well as non-verbal meanings and it varies depending on the context, the relationship between interlocutors, and many other social factors. One of the background knowledge of pragmatics helps one to contextualise and interpret the intended meaning inherent in a political interview. This study therefore embarks on a pragmatic study of selected political humour in order to explore how politicians use language to perform several acts, say one thing and mean another and the pivotal role that context plays in meaning explication. It is against this backdrop this paper attempts to study a pragmatic study of selected political humour in Nigerian Newspapers.

2. Review of Related Concepts

Cartoon

A cartoon is a type of illustration that is typically drawn, sometimes animated, in an unrealistic or semi realistic style. The specific meaning has evolved over time, but the modern usage usually refers to either: an image or series of images intended for satire, caricature, or humor; or a motion picture that relies on a sequence of illustrations for its animation. Someone who creates cartoons in the first sense is called a *cartoonist*, and in the second sense they are usually called an *animator*. (Miriam Webster Dictionary, 2022). In print media, a cartoon is an illustration or series of illustrations, usually humorous in intent. This usage dates from 1843, when *Punch* magazine applied the term to satirical drawings in its pages, particularly sketches by John Leech. (Adler & Hill 2008). The first of these parodied the preparatory cartoons for grand historical frescoes in the then-new Palace of Westminster. The original title for these Cartoons can be divided into gag cartoons, which include editorial cartoons, and comic strips. Modern single-panel gag cartoons, found in magazines, generally drawings was *Mr. Punch's face is the letter Q* and the new title "cartoon" was intended to be ironic, a reference to the self-aggrandizing posturing of Westminster politicians. consist of a single drawing with a typeset caption positioned beneath, or—less often—a speech balloon. (Bishop 2009) Newspaper syndicates have also distributed single-panel gag cartoons by Mel Calman, Bill Holman, Gary Larson, George Lichty, Fred Neher and others. Many consider New Yorker cartoonist Peter Arno the father of the modern gag cartoon (Maslin, 2016). The roster of magazine gag cartoonists includes Charles Addams, Charles Barsotti, and Chon Day.

Humour

The study of humour has traditionally been seen as a subpart of the study of aesthetics, and therefore has been of interest primarily to philosophers (Edwards, 1967). It has been studied from as far back as Plato and Aristotle (Attardo, 1994). The first of these two Greek philosophers to have considered the nature of humour and laughter was Plato (Ferrari, 1992). He believed that the absurd was based on an unfortunate lack of self-knowledge, claiming in *Philebus*

that when we laugh at what is ridiculous in others, we are experiencing a combination of both delight and envy, that is, we mix together both pain and pleasure (Plato, 1861). Aristotle also considered the nature of Ludicrous in the second part of *Poetics*. It is held that he also believed the ridiculous a something rather ugly and distorted (Ferrari, 1992; Attardo, 1994). The studies of humour range across academic disciplines from psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, medicine, mathematics and linguistics.

Political humour

Political humour includes any humorous text that not only makes reference to politics, but achieves the goal of politics by dealing with political issues, people, processes, events, or institutions. It is known to be a communicative resource for spotting, highlighting, and attacking incongruities originating in political discourse and action (Tsakona & Popa, 2011; Chun, 2004; Warner, 2007). These incongruities are those political shortcomings that constitute a deviation from political norms, and consequently, in view of this nonconformity, become undoubtedly source material for the media. Political humour informs its audience about this political reality, and points out that this is, in fact, an incongruous reality (Tsakona & Popa, 2011). It commonly evolves into jokes or satirical verbal and non-verbal genres that accompany political commentary, comic sketches aiming to ridicule the blunders of politicians ruling the country: their decisions, behaviour, or attitudes (Poprawa, n.d.); which could be in the forms of incompetence, recklessness, or corruption, among others. Political humour is one of the tasks of political cartoons, and it is prevalent in this media genre (political cartoons) because of its communicative potential without serious fear of reprisal. Although political cartoons may appear to be superficial, there is actually more to their triviality than meets the eyes. For every significant political discourse, cartoonists are able to extract vital news items, and in turn, replicate them with pictorial humorous edges in order to appeal to their readership. Consequently, by distilling political arguments and criticism into clear, easily digestible (and at times grossly caricatured) statements, they have oiled our political debate and helped shape public opinion (Greste, 2015). In a similar manner, they are able to engage their audience in politics and in the reasonableness of political acts and decisions (Tsakona & Popa, 2011). This audience involvement has been affirmed in Greste's (Grest, 2015).

3. Theoretical framework

The study uses Mey Pragmatic Act Theory as its theoretical framework

Pragmatic Acts Theory

Mey's pragmatic act theory is an ambitious approach to explain the way programs are represented in pragmatic act in speech situation. His main criticism against the speech act theory is that in order for speech act to be effective they have to be situated: "they both rely on, and actively create, the situation in which they are realized (Mey, 2001: 218). "In short, there is no speech act but only situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic act as a consequently, the emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act but on characterizing a general situational prototype (what Mey calls a programme) that can be executed in the situation. Thus, a particular pragmeme can be substantiated and realized through individual pragmatic act. In other words, a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context as well as adapting the context to oneself. For instance:

(1). She is after my money

Like I care

"Like I care" is a pragmatic act that expresses the pragmeme "I do not care", which can also be substantiated by several other concrete pragmatic act such as "I do not care", "I do not mind", "it none of my business". and others.

According to Mey (2001), pragmatic act is situation-derived and situation-constrained. There is no one-to-one relationship between speech act and pragmatic act because the later does not necessarily include specific act of speech. For instance:

(2). Mother: -Joshua, what are you doing?

Joshua: -Nothing

Mother: -Will you stop it immediately. (Mey, 2001: 216)

The pragmeme represented by the pragmatic act 'Nothing' can be describe as "trying to get out (opt out) of a conversation" that may lead to far.

Mey's pragmatic act approach his right in a many respects. It is definitely true that speech act never comes alone, but carry always with them several other acts that also contribute to their success in conversation. Some of these other act is strictly-oriented, while other are more general in nature, and may include, besides speech, extra-linguistic aspect of communications such as gestures, intonation, facial mimics, body posture, head movement, laughter, and so on. Besides the role of context is also inevitable. With Mey's words... "No conversational contribution at all can be understood properly unless it is situated within the environment in which it was meant to be understood (Mey, 2001...217). "Mey also understands the dynamic and dialectical nature of conversation when is fixed about the fact that our acting is determined by what the scene can afford, and by what we can afford on the scene, that is to say the scene, not only determines our acting but also our actions determine and reaffirm the existing scene (Mey, 2001...218). Everything looks good with the pragmatic act theory: relationship of pragmemes and pragmatic act, understanding role of content and dynamic and dialectical nature of conversation.

Pragmemes, Practs and Allopract

Pragmatic acts theory is an attempt to explain the way Pragmemes are represented in pragmatic acts in relation to speech situations. The emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act, but on characterising a general situational prototype i.e. a pragmeme that can be executed in the situation. Following the tradition of adopting familiar linguistic terminology terms such as phoneme, morpheme etc. Mey coined the term *pragmeme*. A particular pragmeme can be substantiated and realised through individual pragmatic acts. For Mey it is the activity (interactants) and the textual part (co(n)text) of the pragmeme that defines a pragmatic act. Pragmemes, to be more precise, represent situational prototypes to which there may be several pragmatic access routes (practs).

4. Research methodology

This paper is a pragmatic act analysis of selected Cartoon Motivated Humour in the selected Nigerian newspapers. Twelve (12) using a purposive sampling technique from three Newspapers were selected the study (*The Punch, Daily Trust, The Vanguard*). These Newspapers are widely read across the nation. The data analysed are a creative composition of jokes that reflect Nigerian experiences, perceptions, imaginations and assumptions. They are purposefully composed by Nigerians in order to downplay the effects of the crisis and bring temporary relief to the audience. These humours depict the importance of human lives, health facilities, economic effects, corruption and extortion, political leaders' responsibilities, religious satire, among others. To sustain their originality, the collected jokes were left unedited. The texts were analysed in line with the Mey's (2001) PAT (otherwise known as the pragmeme) was used to identify the pragmatic acts (practs) and the role of contexts in the selected texts.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

Datum 1

Political Cartoon Humour of Corruption and Embezzlement of Public Funds



The Punch, May 24th, 2021

Pract 1; a. My people, I thank you all for electing me to represent you....in just 2 years the benefits have been tremendous.

b. for those of you who may not really recognize me.... I brought this old campaign poster of mine

Pract 2: Visual Act.

Pragmeme: The above pract, caption, and visual is political cartoon humour of an instantiated pragmatic act with the expressive allopract of appreciating and assertive allopract of informing. In the above text is a Nigerian politician (the referent) who on one hand appreciates the masses for electing him to represent them. He also states that the benefit of his post has been tremendous as it can be seen in his stature. On the other hand, the politician however informs the readers that he brought his old campaign poster because of people who may seem not to recognize him because of his new stature. The humour is triggered through the comparison of his old stature to his new stature. The pragmatic metapragmatic joker is therefore metaphorical because there is an obvious difference between the picture in the poster and his new stature. The politician who is now well-fed, robust, and plumb stands firm and holds a poster of himself, and on the poster is the logo of PDP, a political party in Nigeria. It can be inferred (INF) that the politician has been able to embezzle a lot of money since his two years in office through corrupt practices. This is however a normal thing in Nigerian politics. Politicians embezzle a lot of money thus, the country keeps lacking behind in essential areas, and these politicians are however not punished. They live lavishly and the citizens suffer the most. The shared situational knowledge: background knowledge on the corrupt practices by Nigeria politicians. Reference is made to People's Democratic Party (PDP). The Democratic People's Party is a Nigerian political party founded in 2006 by an aggrieved faction of the All Nigeria Peoples Party. The party, which has a broad political base, supports economic deregulation, human rights, and greater funding for health care and education, among other goals. The party has an umbrella as its logo. Although PDP is not written on the poster but the umbrella on the poster symbolizes PDP. However, the cartoonist is biased because corruption is not limited to a particular party alone but to all political parties in Nigeria.

Datum 2



Vanguard, April 17th, 2021

Pract 1, a: Look! Its growing again

b. Yes! It has strong roots and some people water it regularly

Pract 2: Conversational visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the assertive allopract of stating and informing. It states and informs the readers about the rate of corruption in Nigeria. The humour is triggered by the visual and caption in the pictorial strip. In the pictorial strip, two persons are standing before a tree which has been cut down. In the pictorial strip, the tree has started growing. The first man at the front wears a yellow cloth with long trousers, he holds an axe and stretches his hand pointing in the direction of the tree. The second man also wears a shirt, he carries a placard on his right shoulder, and in his left hand, he holds a cutlass. On the placard, it is written that “ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADERS”. This symbolises that they belong to an association that campaigns and fights against corruption and corrupt practices. The two men are seen talking to each other. In the above pictorial strip, it can be inferred (INF) that these two men are amazed and astonished about the growing tree which symbolizes “corruption”. The cutting material they hold illustrates that they are responsible for the cut down of the tree that is, they are responsible for fighting corruption. In the first speaker’s utterance “look! It’s growing again”. The speaker shows a sign of astonishment about the tree (corruption) which has been earlier cut down (curbed). The second speaker however replies with “Yes! It has strong roots and some people water it regularly”. This means that as far as they continue to cut the tree, it will continue to grow because some people have taken the work to water it. This means that the fight against corruption in that country which is Nigeria can never be won. There is shared situational knowledge: background knowledge of the existence of corruption in Nigeria. In the above image, reference (REF) is made to Nigerian politicians who are the root cause of corruption. The locution is relevant (REL) because it reveals to the readers that although some people are trying hard to fight against corruption but yet, the fight against corruption can never be won in Nigeria.

Datum 3



The Vanguard, July 8th, 2021

Pract 1: So the delegates swindled you? Didn't I tell you to bring them here before the primaries?

Pract 2: Visual act

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the expressive allopract of sympathy and disappointment. The herbalist in the pictorial strip shows sympathy for the politician who has been swindled by his delegates. The politician on the other hand shows a sign of disappointment and sadness over the loss of the primary election. The humour is triggered by the treacherous delegates who accepted bribes but yet swindled the politician. It can be inferred (INF) that the two speakers are talking about the primary election whereby only delegates are allowed to vote. The politician pays his delegates to vote for him but they all let him down whereas the herbalist has earlier told him that he should bring those he paid before the primaries to his shrine to swear and vow that they would vote for him but he didn't take to the advice which has now had a terrible effect on his. Based on shared situation knowledge (SSK) delegates are persons selected to represent a group of people in some political assembly and they are also responsible

for voting during the primary election. Most of the delegates however betray politicians during election primaries. The politician in the pictorial strip is disappointed as his delegate betrayed him. It could be inferred that the politician trusted his delegates as he didn't adhere to the herbalist's caution to bring them, this shows that he believed they would support him. The above caption is relevant (REL) as it shows how politicians try to buy votes for themselves during the primary election but most of them got swindled. Reference (REF) is made to the primary election held in Nigeria and the delegates who actually voted. Primary elections, often abbreviated to primaries, are processes by which voters can indicate their preference for their party's candidate, or a candidate in general, in an upcoming general election, local election, or by-election.

Datum 4



Vanguard, June 13th, 2022

Pract 1a: The #100 million for presidential nomination form is still giving me nightmares. I wish the money belongs to me!

1b: You are a true politician. That's the way we think!

Pract 2: Conversational visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the assertive allopract of informing and expressive allopract of praising. The politician informs the other politician about how he wishes that the #100 million nomination form fee belongs to him while the other man praises him and replied that he is a true politician and that's how politicians think. The humour is however triggered by lack of contentment shown by the politician in the pictorial strip. In the pictorial strip, it can be inferred (INF) that the two men are from Nigeria and the nomination form they are talking about is that of a party which is APC. Their presidential nomination form is #100 million. The second politician tells the first speaker that "You are a true politician. That's the way we think!" he implies that Nigerian politicians are known for embezzlement of funds and by thinking he could have the #100 million to himself, then he is a true politician and he should be proud of it. There is shared situational knowledge (SSK) of the fact that Nigerian politicians are known for the embezzlement of public funds. The caption is relevant (REL) because it informs the readers about the ways of the politicians in the country and it also informs the readers about how politicians show lack of contentment despite the huge amount of money they make. Reference (REF) is made to (APC). The All Progressives Congress (APC) is one of the two major contemporary political parties in Nigeria, along with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Founded on 6 February 2013 from a merger of Nigeria's three largest opposition parties, the party came to power following the victory of party candidate Muhammadu Buhari in the 2015 presidential election. This marked the first time in Nigerian history that an opposition party unseated a governing party and power was transferred peacefully.

Political Cartoon Humour of Insurgency and Insecurity

Datum 5



Dailytrust, March 15th, 2020

Pract 1: Insecurity

Pract 2: Visual act

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the assertive allopract of Informing. It informs the readers about the rate of insecurity in Nigeria. In the above datum, there are men, dressed in Nigeria Yoruba attire. This is “agbada” which is usually worn by rich men. They are laughing as they enjoy themselves. They are on both sides and they hold a skipping rope. They all wear caps and on the back of a man in the pictorial strip, the word “politicians” is written which symbolizes that they are Nigerian politicians. In the middle, there is a monster like a man, he has two horns and he is the one skipping. On his body, it is written “insecurity”. The humour is triggered by the satiric representation of Nigerian politicians in the pictorial strip. In the above pictorial strip, it can be deduced that Nigerian politicians are the main source of insecurity. During elections, they armed political thugs who are then sent to assassinate and carry out evil plans. However, after these elections, the thugs become idle so they make use of these weapons to disrupt the peace in the country. It could be inferred (INF) that the politicians are the ones fueling insecurity. As they have the capacity to stop it through the police force or army. Instead, they leave the people doing the atrocities. There is shared situational knowledge (SSK): background knowledge on how politicians are responsible for the insecurity of lives and properties in the country. The above caption is relevant (REL) because it reveals how politicians participates in the insecurity in Nigeria. Reference(REF) is made to Nigeria and politicians in Nigeria.

Datum 6



The Punch, August 17th, 2021

Pract 1,a: Ah! No! No! No! Don't graze on my farm!

b: But what shall it profit a farmer to gain his farm and lose his life?

Pract 2: Conversational Visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the expressive allopract of disapproval and mocking. These practs: caption and visual present a helpless farmer who shows a sign of disapproval to armed herdsmen but then seeks help from the president who then replied in a mockery and satiric way. Thus reply will then instigate more fear in the mind of the farmer and alas he would surrender his farm. In the pictorial strip, there is a typical representation of what Nigerian farmers are going through. Starting from the left is a man in a gown-like clothes, he has a hat on his head and he holds a gun, castles can be seen in the background which simply means he is a Fulani herdsman armed with a weapon. In the middle is a tall man and a helpless farmer who hugs him right in the leg. The man has a cap on his head and shows no effort to rescue the helpless farmer who is been held by the Fulani herdsman. The face of the farmer shows how terrified he is but no one could rescue him. On the right is a man who is short, his hands are at his back and his mouth is opened widely. It could be inferred (INF) that three men are present, the Fulani herdsman serves as a threat to the farm, and since the farmer is helpless, he runs to the president who is in the middle for help. We could deduce this because the man in the middle is the tallest which symbolizes that he has the most power so he is the president. Instead of the president to rescue the farmer, he stood there trying to do nothing. A third party behind then talks to the farmer in a parable that if he wants his farm, he would get it but not as a living being because he would be killed in the process and justice will not be served because these people are from the tribe of the president. There is shared situational knowledge(SSK):background knowledge that although the president is aware of the crisis the farmers are going through in the hands of fulani herdsmen but due to the fact that the president is a Fulani man he can't do anything to his people. The caption is relevant (REL) because it makes it known that these herdsmen are still present in the country so people, especially farmers should be very careful because the president is not ready to do anything. In the pictorial strip, reference (REF) is made to the fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. Fulani herdsmen are believed to be responsible for thousands of death in Nigeria's Middle Belt, mostly in terror attacks committed against Christian farming communities. But the conflict is complicated: While the Fulani are Muslim, religion is only one aspect of the attacks waged in Nigeria in recent years.

Datum 7



The Punch, July 6th, 2021

Practs 1,a: My beloved service chiefs, you are doing very well. The villa is saved.
 Pract 2: Visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the expressive allopract of praising. These practs: caption and visual presents the president of Nigeria praising the men in military attires for their tremendous effort in securing the presidential villa. The humour is triggered by the caption and visual as the president is seen laughing with the military men, this is because although the country is not safe but the president is only concerned about his villa. It can be inferred (INF) that although the country (Nigeria) is not safe, the presidential villa must be safe. It informs the readers about how the president does not care about the security of lives and properties of the people, he only cares about his own interest and that's all which is shown in the diagram above. The locution is relevant (REL) to the people because It informs them about how greedy and selfish the president can be when it comes to protecting his own lives and properties. Reference(REF) is made to the president of Nigeria and his chief staff of army

Datum 8



The Punch, April 10th, 2021

Pract 1: visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a political cartoon humour of instantiated pragmatic act with the allopract of satiring. In the pictorial strip, is the president if Nigeria and Chief justice of Nigeria. The visual act picture the president of Nigeria in a satiric way as he tries to tamper with the law of the country while the Chief Justice tries to balance it as everyone has equal right. The humour is triggered through the visual in the pictorial strip. It could however be inferred (INF) that the president is trying his best to make the law of the country favourable to himself and his people(Fulani) who have been disturbing the peace of the country. The chief Justice on the other hand tries to balance it and they are both seen in the pictorial strip pulling the symbol of justice. There is shared situational knowledge: background knowledge on the fact that Fulani herdsmen are now armed with weapon and since the president is a Fulani man he wants to bend rules for them so if eventually these Herdsmen kill innocent farmers, they wouldn't be killed. Specific reference is made to President Muhammadu Buhari and the Chief Justice of Nigeria. The relevancy (REL) of the visual is that it informs the reader about the imbalances of the rule of law in Nigeria.

**Political Cartoon Motivated Humour of Leadership Responsibility and Dilapidated Health Facilities
Datum 10**



Dailytrust, January 12th, 2021

Pract 1: I love London
Pract 2: Visual Act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humor of an instantiated pragmatic act with the assertive allopract of informing. These pract: caption and visual presents the president of Nigeria who always goes on medical trip to London whereby neglecting the hospitals in his own country (Nigeria). This is because he has not invested anything in the medical sector in the country. He has neglected his responsibility as president. This informs the readers about the failures of the president of Nigeria (Muhammadu Buhari) in the health sector and how he jets out of the country to get treated whenever he is sick. The humour is triggered by the satiric caption and visual in the pictorial strip. The president laughs as he works majestically to the plane and on his suitcase, I love London is written. It can be inferred (INF) that the pictorial strip is a typical representation of the president of Nigeria who seems to have medical issues but because the country is not funding the medical sector which has left the health sector dilapidated and also there is various embezzlement of funds by the people in Government, he finds pleasure in treating his sickness outside the country which is London. During his first tenure, he spent half of the tenure in London treating sickness, this has made fellow Nigerians to have the perception that the president loves London and he doesn't want to come home again. In the pictorial strip, reference is made to London. London is the capital city of England and the United Kingdom, extends over 2000 years. In that time, it has become one of the world's most significant financial and cultural capital cities. It has withstood plague, devastating fire, civil war, aerial bombardment, terrorist attacks, and riots. There is a shared situational knowledge: background knowledge on the dilapidated health facilities in the country.

Datum 11



Daily trust, 27th July 2021

Pract 1: Our responsibility is to secure the country, so....(sic) we have a lot of work to do
Pract 2: visual act

Prageme: This is a political cartoon humour of instantiated pragmatic act with the allopract satiring. These pract: caption and visual presents the picture if the presents. During the first tenure of the president of Nigeria, he is always on medical trip to London but gives orders directly from London. The caption and visual presents the picture of the president in a satiric way in the sense that although he is not on sit but he is still the president. Its informs the readers

about the inconsistency and negligence of the president. It can be inferred (INF) that the caption: Our responsibility is to secure the country, so....(sic) we have a lot of work to do, entails that the president is aware of the insecurity in the country, he therefore states that their main responsibility is to secure the country which means they have a lot of work to do. Since the president is not in the country who then will do these works? The humour is motivated by the visual and caption. Base on the shared situational knowledge(SSK) the Nigerians are mostly aware that the president is always on medical trip during his first tenure., this knowledge will therefore allow them to realize the intended meaning of the a pictorial strip. Reference is made the Nigeria president(Muhammadu Buhari).

Datum 12



The Punch, March 16th, 2021

Pract 1, a: No No No.....You can't bring me here, I'm a politician

b: But it's your project sir

Pract 2: Conversational visual act.

Pragmeme: This is a cartoon humour of an instantiated pragmatic act with the assertive allopracts of disapproval, yelling and stating. These Practs: caption the visual of a man who is ill and brought to the hospital for treatment. The humour is triggered by the visual and caption in the pictorial strips. In the pictorial strips, there is a hut named "General Hospital" and there are two persons who is rushing the patient to the hospital. The man they carried on a stretcher who is on a robe and still on his cap was yelling. The other two persons who carried him with their nose mask on. On other hand, there is a hut where it's named "General Hospital" This symbolises that the man brought in on a stretcher yells that he shouldn't be brought to this kind of hospital while the first speaker says "But it's your project". This means that during coronavirus pandemic, the politician who must have contacted was taken to the general hospital but he yelled that he shouldn't be taken there but the first speaker stating that it is there project so he should use it. In Nigeria, the politicians do not use the hospitals build here but prefer to go outside country for proper medication. It can be inferred (INF) that the pictorial strips are a typical representation of a politician who do not want to be treated in such hospital. The Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) is on the dilapidated health facilities in the country. The above diagram shows reference (REF) made to Nigeria politicians who do not care about the health facilities of their own country.

6. Findings

The paper has revealed that political meanings rely much on the language factors. The linguistic knowledge has adequately provide the proper language used. The language used are fully embedded with hidden meaning. The report is not straightforward and can only be understood when we look at the implicit meaning. The pragmatic act used for the humour has been able to deduce the meaning behind the use of language and the choice of lexical items of these political cartoons analysed. It gives the inference (INF), reference (REF), relevance (REL) and Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK). The inference (INF) allows the reader to know the inferential meaning of the data, for example, the in-depth meaning of the data. The reference (REF) allows the readers to know who or what exactly is been referred to. The Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) is the Shared Situational Knowledge, knowledge among the discourse participants in the practs. SSK allows a reader to have a deep understanding of the situations in the data analysed. Readers can contextually and appropriately interpret the lexical meaning of the language used in political humour.

7. Contribution to Knowledge

The paper has helped in understanding the concept of the humour, and this will help readers detect the hidden meaning and interpret what the humour in the political cartoon is trying to convey. Readers can also understand a particular pictorial strips by having a shared Situational Knowledge, what is been inferred and what been referenced. All these could depict all the meaning behind the political humour.

8. Conclusion

The paper has been able to examine the humour in political cartoon. It has been able to show the common pragmatic act used in the analysed data. This paper has only adopted Mey's pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) in analysing the data. The study shows the humour in political cartoons is to depict the hidden meaning and to correct the societal ills. It also concludes that readers can appropriately interpret the lexical meaning used in political humour.

References

- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistics theory of humor*. Berlin and New York, Mouton de Gruyter.
- Dynel, M. (2013). Humorous phenomena in dramatic discourse: *The European journal of Humour Research* 1(1)22- 60
- Gocek, F. M. (1998). *Political cartoons as a site of representation and resistance in the Middle East*. In F.M. Gocek (Ed.). *Political cartoons in the Middle East* (pp. 1-12). New Jersey, NJ: Princeton Papers.
- Gunter, S. (2014). *Understanding Pragmatics*: Routledge 2, Milton Park, Abingdon Oxen Ox14 4RN p. 1.
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics: Language act and disciplines*. OUP Oxford.
- Kecskes, I. (2010). *Situation- bound utterances as pragmatics act*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics Cambridge*, Cambridge University Press.
- Mazid. (2008). *The Politics of Laughter in Social media age*: Shepherd M Pofu University of Limpopo Polo Keane, South Africa.
- Mey, J. (2001). *Pragmatics: an Introduction*: Oxford Blackwell.
- Mey, J. (2001). *Pragmatics: an introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Osisanwo, W. (2003). *Introduction to discourse analysis and pragmatics*. Femolus- Fetop publishers.
- Osisanwo, W. (2003). *An introductory analytical grammar English*. Lagos: Femolus Fetop publication.
- Popa. (2011). *The palgrave handbook of humour Research*. Elisabeth Vanderheiden, Claude Helene Mayer.
- Poprawa, M. (n.d.). *Polish political humour: An outline of the phenomenon*. Estonia and Poland: Creativity and tradition in cultural communication. *Jokes and Humor* (pp. 89-110).
- Rosa, G. P. (2012). *The Swine flu Pandemic an Portugal through newspaper humour*. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2(7): 735- 747, ISSN 2160-6579
- Ross, A. (1998). *Language of Humour*, London Routledge.
- Searle, J. R. (1983). *"Indirect Speech act" Syntax and Semantics III eds*. P. Cole & J. Morgan, Academic Press
- Taiwo, R. O. (2007). *Satirizing politicians and public officers in Nigerian newspapers*. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*
- Tsakona, V. (2009). *Language and image interaction in cartoons: Towards a multimodal theory of humor*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(6), pp: 1.
- Tsakona, V., & Popa D. E. (2011). *Humour in politics of humour: An introduction*. In V Tsakona & D.E Popa, *Studies in political humour: In between political critique and public entertainment*.
- Virginia, L. (2012). *Pragmatics for language Educators: A socio - linguistics perspective*. NY: Routledge
- Walker, R. (2003). *Political Cartoons: now you see them!* *Canadian Parliamentary Review*: 16-21
- Wilson, D. (2016). *Relevance theory*. In Y. Huang (Ed) *Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Yule. G. (1996). *Pragmatics*, Oxford University Press.

