

The Pragmatics of Humour and Satire in Kevinblak's Comedy Skits

Ekene Stella Odikpo-Okafor Ph.D

Abstract

Humour is more than laughter. It is a subtle weapon of resistance. This paper investigates the pragmatic functions of humour and satire in the comedy skits of Kevinblak, a Nigerian skit maker. Anchored on speech act theory, Herbert Paul Grice's cooperative principles, and politeness theory, the study examines how humour is represented and how it reflects wider societal concerns. Eight skits were purposively selected from social media and transcribed verbatim. The data were qualitatively analyzed to reveal the pragmatic strategies underlying Kevinblak's performances. The findings show that Kevinblak creates humour by flouting conversational maxims, using indirect speech acts, and threatening the face of those in power. It also reveals that humour transcends entertainment by functioning as a tool for exposing corruption, the hypocrisy of religious leaders, and social pretense. Finally, Kevinblak connects with his audience by showcasing their daily experiences while creating laughter. His comedies represent a form of comic resistance where laughter becomes a tool for social criticism.

Keywords: *humour, satire, speech act, pragmatics, Kevinblak*

Introduction

In recent times, online platforms have become potent avenues for the expression of beliefs, thoughts, ideologies, and emotions. A new wave of this development is reflected in the rise of skit makers who use platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, X, and TikTok to present comedies that harmonise humour, satire, and social commentary. Often presented as short video clips, these skits often capture the everyday experiences of Nigerians while simultaneously addressing broader societal concerns. Skit makers in Nigeria creatively deploy humour to reach wide audiences for entertainment, while also provoking critical reflection on social realities.

Prominent Nigerian skit makers include Alibaba, Basket Mouth, AY, I Go Die, Broda Shaggi, Brain Jotter, Taaooma, Mr Macaroni, Kevinblak, among others. This paper focuses on the comedy skits of Kevin Chinedu Arua, professionally known as Kevinblak. Kevinblak is a Nigerian skit maker from Enugu State, widely recognised for his satirical portrayals of political figures, cultural practices, poor governance, and administrative shortcomings. His comedy resonates strongly with Nigerian audiences due to its relatability and the distinctive way he fuses humour with social critique.

Accordingly, this research examines Kevinblak's comedic style and the pragmatic strategies he employs in deploying humour and satire as tools of entertainment and social commentary. The study adopts the following research questions as a guide;

1. What pragmatic strategies does Kevinblak employ to generate humour?

2. How does satire function as a form of social criticism in his comedy skits?
3. What pragmatic effect do his skits have on the audience?

Humour, Satire, and Comedy

Humour is a universal concept that permeates virtually every aspect of human experience. It is generally considered as undefinable as well as difficult to subcategorise (Attardo, 1994: 3; Escarpit, 1960:5-7). Nonetheless, scholars, especially linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists, conceive of humour as an all-encompassing category that covers any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is perceived to be funny (Attardo, 1994: 3-4; Martin, 2006:5). Walker (1998: 3), submits that “humour is the ability to smile and laugh, and to make others do so... humour takes many forms, ranging from the casual level of the joke told to friends to the sophistication of a Shakespearean comedy”. It comes in various modes, like media, which includes radio, television, newspapers, comedy movies, humorous books, speeches and lectures (Martin, 2006:10). Humour is an effective tool for critiquing social institutions or social policies and also an indispensable avenue for ridiculing those who commit crimes like corruption or any act that contravenes the laws of any nation (Singh, 2012:69; Martin, 2006:13). Humour serves not only for entertainment, but also as a communicative tool in pragmatics by drawing on context, implicature, and presupposition. On this premise, satire and comedy become a fertile ground in which humour thrives.

Satire, in particular, is a tool that serves as a corrective measure, exposing social ills, political excesses, and human frailties. It operates as a corrective measure by employing irony, parody, exaggeration, and ridicule while simultaneously amusing and unsettling audiences (Griffin, 1994; Knight, 2004). Through rhetorical indirection, satire strikes a delicate balance: it entertains by exaggerating societal realities, yet it also unsettles by revealing uncomfortable truths. In this sense, humour and satire meet as tools for both amusement and social criticism.

Within the Nigerian context, humour manifests in diverse forms such as situation comedies, stand-up performances, and more recently, digital skits infiltrating online platforms. These forms perform dual functions: they entertain audiences while functioning as social commentary on politics, culture, and everyday experiences. Nigerian comedians often exploit linguistic creativity such as code-switching, proverbs, puns, pidgin and hyperbole to situate humour within relatable socio-cultural frames. Thus, humour and satire have become integral forms of entertainment as well as in shaping public opinion and questioning socio-political realities. Humour becomes a pragmatic device that facilitates or calms the satiric illocutionary forces of criticism, ridicule or warning. It functions as a politeness strategy, softening face-threatening acts or building rapport (Dyner, 2009). In this sense, humour and satire are considered pragmatic because they rely on the speaker's intention, and the negotiation of meaning in a specific context, such as comedy skits, which mingle laughter with critique.

A considerable body of research has examined humour pragmatically in comedy skits, underscoring its relevance to this

study. For instance, Ajao and Oladosu (2024), drawing on incongruity and impoliteness theories, examined humour strategies and functions in the YouTube comedy skits of Mr. Macaroni and Honourable Zaddy. Their findings reveal that Mr. Macaroni frequently exploits exaggeration and humorous catchphrases to generate laughter, while Honourable Zaddy relies on code-switching and situational irony. Using Mey's pragmatic act theory, Nurudeen (2023) explored the pragmatic acts of humour in a series of Helen Paul's "Alhaja Danjasi" comedy skits. The study focused on textual pragmeme and related contextual variation in Nigerian comedy skit discourse vis-à-vis the strategies of linguistic coding. Sunday and Bamgbose (2021), anchored on Ulpeper's impoliteness theory, studied the pragmatics of humour strategies and function in Jenifa's Diary and Professor JohnBull; they sought to account for the manifestation of humour in their comedies. Adopting Attardo and Raskin's general theory of verbal humour, Osisanwo and Ilesanmi (2022) examined how gender, ethnicity and class are reflected in the stand-up performances of Bovi, Akpororo, Basket Mouth and Kenny Blaq on the Tube channel. Similarly, anchoring on Jacob Mey's pragmatic acts theory, Osisanwo et al (2024) investigated humour in family discourse in Maryann Apaokagi's comedy skits. Their findings revealed that pragmatic acts exist in four interlocutory contexts among family members, while Okhuosi (2022), combining Chomsky and Halle's distinctive features with McGraw and Warren's benign violation theory, analysed the phonological jokes in the same comedian skits. Other scholars (Adetunji, 2013; Herawati, 2015; Ibraheem and Abbas, 2016)

have also approached humour pragmatically across different contexts.

Despite these contributions to the pragmatic study of comedy skits, Kevinblak's comedy performances have received scant attention. This study, therefore, examines the pragmatic strategies of humour and satire in Kevinblak's performances, thereby filling the existing research gap.

Theoretical Review

Many theories have been used to analyse humour, like the incongruity theory, the superiority theory, and psycholinguistic theories, among others. The study hinges on pragmatic frameworks like the speech acts theory, the cooperative principles, and the politeness theory due to their focus on the intended meaning of utterances and the interpretative patterns of the audience. Hence, these theories are impactful because humour and satire derive their effect from the manipulation of language in context.

Speech Act Theory

The speech acts theory was proposed by John L. Austin in his posthumous book, "How to Do Things with Words" (1962). It explores the pragmatic function of utterances by studying the performative function of language as performing an action beyond conveying meaning. Whenever we are stating a fact, performing or denying something, making a prediction, thanking, or giving a piece of advice, we are engaged in speech acts. Our utterances could either describe situations, events, and states of affairs (constatives) (Osisanwo, 2003: 60). Kevinblak's performances are deeply rooted in the use of illocutionary acts of

ridicule, exaggeration, and parody, which in turn make them humorous without being offensive. Concurrently, he equally uses indirect speech acts, which makes his literal utterances differ greatly from his audience-generated meaning, consequently, triggering laughter. Speech acts are categorised into three, namely locutionary speech acts, illocutionary speech acts and perlocutionary speech acts.

Locutionary Speech Acts- This is making utterances with meaning and truth value. This becomes possible when speakers have the intention of saying something meaningful and truthful (Ezeifeke, 2018; Osisanwo, 2003).

Illocutionary Speech Acts- This is the non-linguistic act performed through a linguistic or locutionary act. It becomes effective through performative sentences even when there is no clear-cut performative verb (Osisanwo, 2003). The performatives are verdictives, commissives, behabitives and expositives.

Perlocutionary Speech Acts- This is the effect of the utterance on the listener.

Cooperative Principles

This is also known as the conversational maxims. It was proposed by the renowned philosopher, Paul Herbert Grice, in 1975. He argues that when interlocutors communicate, they consciously or unconsciously adhere to certain principles. These principles are premised on four maxims: quantity (be informative; do not give too little or more information than required); quality (be truthful

and avoid saying what you lack evidence for); relation (be relevant); and manner (be clear, brief and orderly and avoid ambiguity). The principle explains how humour is created through the violation or flouting of the conversational maxims (Attardo, 2001). Kevinblak consciously and unconsciously creates humour in the way he flouts the conversational maxims in his performances.

Politeness Theory

This is an important theory in pragmatics propounded by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). The theory, as a pragmatic approach, is based on how politeness is expressed to protect participants' face. Face is the positive public self-image that every member wants to be associated with. They agreed that face could be portrayed as positive (need to be liked or admired) or negative (need for autonomy or freedom). They developed a concept known as the face-threatening act, which covers any act that threatens the face. They further emphasised four politeness strategies like bald on record (blunt or direct communication with little or no regard for self-image); positive politeness (showing friendliness, solidarity or common ground; negative politeness (minimising imposition); and off record (using indirectness). Certain speech acts, like criticisms, requests, and commands, threaten the face. Hence, Kevinblak comedy performances often employ indirectness, irony, and exaggeration to produce humour and ultimately satirise without mentioning names or directly critiquing the person.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive, qualitative research design. Data were sourced from Kevinblak's skits on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Eight video clips were purposively selected and transcribed verbatim to facilitate analysis. The data collected were analysed pragmatically using speech act theory, politeness theory, and the cooperative principles, considering their functional role in extended meaning production.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected were subjected to pragmatic analysis. Each selected skit was examined to identify instances of humour and satire with keen attention to the speech acts employed, the politeness strategy adopted and the observance or flouting of the cooperative principles.

Excerpt 1

President (Kevinblak): I hope the citizens are okay.

Citizen: What do you mean, okay? So many lives were lost, Mr President!

President (Kevinblak): I did not mean the ordinary citizens. I mean the senior citizens. I hope nobody was hurt. Them nor know say C- na cow, say the P wey dey our party na protein and A-na animal.

Speech Act Analysis

- **The president's** first utterance (*I hope the citizens are okay?*) is an expressive act showing supposed concern. But when he explains the supposed citizen, he means in

his second utterance, the speech act fails or misfires because it no longer shows concern.

Conversational Maxim Analysis

- The maxim of relevance was flouted. The citizen talks about lost lives, while the president talks about ‘senior citizens,’ which is irrelevant to the discussion.
- The maxim of quantity was violated. The president did not give serious or ample information about the situation. These violations create incongruity, and the aftermath is hilarious.
- The maxim of manners was violated. The President employs the ambiguity of the word ‘citizen’ for humour.

Politeness Theory Analysis

- The citizen’s reply (“*So many lives were lost, Mr President!*”) is a face-threatening act (FTA) by pointing out the number of deaths. The president is supposed to assuage the citizens’ anger by showing concern or empathy (positive politeness). Instead, he worsens the situation by giving an insensitive answer that totally defies politeness.

Humour and Social Criticisms

The humour arises from his unexpected twist in the meaning of ‘citizen’. Kevinblak code switches to pidgin to play on the party’s slogan (*Them nor know say C- na cow, say the P wey dey our party na protein and A-na animal*). This too is humorous, and it

is a subtle mockery of our political leaders and how insensitive they are to the constant killings and insecurity that have led to the loss of many lives in Nigeria.

Excerpt 2- Clowns in Agbada

Female Honourable Member: Thank goodness, you are here! Honourable Members, I came to seek approval for a project for my constituency, and the senator here trieto molest me.

Senate President (Kevinblak): That’s a lie! Are you going to believe her? Do you know I’m a reputable man and I’m happily married and can’t ...?

Honourable Members: But, Senate President, you’re holding an obvious evidence (a female pair of pants).

Senate President (Kevinblak): oooo! (squeezing the pants) Since you people want to know the truth, because I was trying to cover the honorable member up. You see, she came to me this morning and said, “Senator, that she bought a new pair of pants and that I should help her wear it; that she’s having a new waistline”. I said, “How? From where to where?” She said, “You are rigid and not flexible” and that I should sometimes play with my honourable members. I said, “no problem”.” Let me help her. I brought myself low to help her. The moment I bent down to help her do what I know how to do, guess what? Here we are!

Senate President (Kevinblak): (facing the female honourable member) So you planted these people to make me look like I’m the evil one? (talking to the honourable

members) Those who are in support to suspending Senator Salaye should say “I”, then, the “eyes” have it.

Speech Act Analysis

- The female Honourable Member made an assertive speech act by accusing the Senate President of molestation.
- In the first utterance of the Senate President, he blatantly denied the assertion made by the female Honourable Member, which is a counter-assertive speech act.
- In the second utterance, the Senate President performs an assertive speech act by justifying his actions as well as shifting the blame to the female Honourable Member.
- The final utterance of the Senate President is a directive speech act (“say I”). Humour arises when he was seen holding an indicting evidence, but he kept denying it and claiming to be happily married.

Conversational Maxim Analysis

- The maxim of quality, which borders on truthfulness and the avoidance of uttering what one lacks evidence for, was greatly flouted. The Senate President claims to be honest and innocent of molesting the honourable female member, but all the evidence presented points to him committing the crime. He presents a fabricated and illogical story to cover his crime.
- Maxim of quantity: The Senate President gives unnecessary narrative (waistline, new pants, flexibility) to cover up his ignoble action.

- Maxim of relevance: The Senate President deviates from the issue of molestation to comic storytelling.
- The maxim of manners was also flouted. The Senate President uses exaggeration and ambiguity to shield the truth. Humour is created in this excerpt through irony and the flouting of the maxim of quality.

Politeness Theory Analysis

- The female honourable member's utterance (“...*I came to seek approval for a project for my constituency and the senator here tried to molest me*”) threatens the face of the Senate President by bluntly and directly (bald on record) accusing him.
- The Senate President's first, second, and third speeches deny the accusation because he was trying to restore his positive face. Despite his denial, the evidence of his molesting the female senator is glaring. He uses his authority as the Senate President to silence dissent with a vote.

Humour and Social Criticisms

Humour comes from the incongruity and absurdity in the Senate President's ridiculous narrative of how noble he was while holding a female pant in his hands. Humour is created through irony and the flouting of the maxims.

Satire

It shows the hypocrisy of politicians and how they mask scandals with obvious lies. It also ridicules how people in authority use their position to evade accountability.

Excerpt 3

Dr. Uchenna Versus Governor Amuneke

Dr. Uchenna: (On National TV) You see, the little opportunity given to a monkey to wear clothes does not guarantee he's going to join the dining table. Governor Amuneke has already failed. People know him for who he is, and he's incompetent and incapacitated. A governor who scored F9 in all his subjects and managed to get a D7 only in biology. Come the 2027 election, we will see the tree that this monkey will jump from.

Gov. Amuneke (Kevinblak): I, Governor Amuneke, am here to flag off the multi-million dollar stadium (people cheering).

Dr. Uchenna: Ah! Governor Amuneke! (His building was selected for the multi-million dollar project and is being demolished by the governor.) This is an injustice and appalling! But you know what? I will go to court.

Gov. Amuneke (Kevinblak): Our own court! Come there now. Na we dey, na we dey here o!

Speech Act Analysis

- Dr Uchenna makes an expressive speech act by accusing Governor Amuneke of being incompetent as well as tagging him as a dullard who failed all his subjects. Governor Amuneke performs a declarative speech act when he commissions his multi-million-dollar project.

Cooperative Principles Analysis

- Dr Uchenna flouts the maxim of quality by not providing adequate information on who he metaphorically classifies as “a monkey to wear clothes”. Again, Governor Amuneke did not provide ample information on how the court was their own.
- The maxim of relation was flouted by Governor Amuneke. His response was not relevant to what Dr Uchenna asserted; he simply ignored his insults.

Politeness Strategies

- Dr Uchenna uses his expressive speech act to threaten the face of Governor Amuneke (bald on record).
- Governor Amuneke uses positive politeness to align with the cheering crowd.
- Governor Amuneke uses the threatening device of in-group solidarity by resorting to pidgin.

Humour and Social Commentary

- The metaphorical classification of Governor Amuneke as a monkey that wears clothes is humorous. It is also humorous the way Kevinblak infuses pidgin into his conversation to ease the tension of the situation.

Satire

It mocks how Nigerian political leaders witch hunt people who openly criticise their programmes and policies, which are not socially and economically impactful to the people.

Excerpt 4

Newscaster: Governor Amuneke has embarked on a diplomatic tour to help strengthen the economic value and also attract foreign investors.

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): (in a swimming pool with young girls clad in bikinis frolicking all around him. A bottle of champagne in one hand and a piece of fried chicken in the other hand. One of the girls is holding his phone to his left ear.) Yes, I'm in a meeting with the ministers. We're working on foreign investment. Your governor is busy. I'll call you back. (to the girls in the pool). I hope you guys are having fun.

Girls: Yes, your excellency.

Speech Act Analysis

- The newscaster makes a commissive speech act by presenting the governor as a studious and conscientious leader who is committed to national progress.
- The governor performs a deceptive assertive speech act by claiming to be in a meeting, whereas he is busy frolicking with young girls.
- The girls' response is an expressive speech act.

Cooperative Principles Analysis

- The governor flouts the maxim of quality by lying about being in a meeting.
- He flouts the maxim of relevance because his actual activity contrasts terribly with the official duty reported by the newscaster.

Politeness Strategies

- The Governor uses negative politeness to minimise imposition in his utterance (*I'll call you back*).
- He uses positive politeness to ensure rapport with the girls in the pool (*Hope you guys are having fun*).

Humour and Social Commentary

The incongruity between what the newscaster says and what the governor does elicits laughter.

Satire

This skit makes fun of how political leaders misuse the time and resources of their people for their personal gratification.

Excerpt 5

Religious Leaders Versus Worshippers

Poor Worshipper: Pastor, I need your help. I'm in danger. Some people tried to attack me last night. Pastor, please, I need your prayers.

Pastor (Kevinblak): (in his car with a loaded gun and three armed military officers) Fear not! The Lord has remembered you. This sticker (handing the worshipper a sticker and a bottle of oil) is called "ozigbo ozigbo Jesus". Paste it in front of your door. Rub this oil from Mount Sinai, rub it on your forehead before you sleep. And all the afflictions will be over. The enemies shall bow. You should

sow a seed of #50,000 and it's well with you. (The poor worshipper hands him the #50,000 seed.)

Pastor (Kevinblak): (collects the seed.) May you be blessed. May you be blessed. Glory, glory! (he shoves the money in his pigeon hole and drives away.)

Speech Act Analysis

- The worshipper performs a directive speech act by requesting prayers.
- The pastor's response is an expressive speech act. He makes a directive speech act when he requests seed.

Cooperative Principle Analysis

- Pastor violates the maxim of quality by attaching spiritual protection to money.
- He further breaks the maxim of relevance when he mixes armed protection with divine assurance.

Politeness Strategies

- The pastor threatens the face of the poor worshipper (bald on record) by demanding the sum of fifty thousand naira (seed money).

Humour and Social Commentary

- The pastor creates humour by presenting money as a divine solution.

- It is also humorous in the way he focuses on stickers, oil, and seed money rather than on the worshipper's worrisome danger.
- Humour is also seen in the incongruous way the pastor goes about with a loaded gun and with some military escort for protection, while he assures the poor worshipper of protection through prayers.

Satire

- It satirises religious exploitation of some gullible worshippers in real life.
- It parodies the hypocrisy of religious leaders who would move about fully armed for protection while their gullible members are given mere lip assurance of God's protection.
- It laughs at some worshippers who believe that their blessings are tied to their seed money.

Excerpt 6

Fake Pastor: Your man will call you in one week and propose to you.

Girl: You're sure he will marry me?

Fake Pastor: I am not here to talk too much. All you need to do is sow a seed that will provoke my door.

Girl: Okay, I'll give you my life savings. I have 500 thousand naira to send.

Fake Pastor: ah-ya-ya-ya! You're not giving me money. I don't take money. You're sowing into the church's account. You're going to wire to the church account, and it will go straight to God.

Speech Act Analysis

- The fake pastor makes a predictive speech act by telling the girl that her man will call her in one week and propose to her.
- The girl seeks assurance of his promise by questioning him.
- The fake pastor performs a directive speech act by telling her to sow a seed.
- The girl makes a commissive speech by agreeing to offer her life savings.

Cooperative Principles Analysis

- The maxim of quality- the fake pastor was not truthful and does not evidence that the man would propose to her.
- Maxim of relation- the fake pastor diverts the topic of marriage to seed money.
- Maxim of manner-the fake pastor deliberately obscures his instructions to sound spiritual.
- Maxim of quantity-he does not give ample information on his prophecies but insists on sowing a seed.

Politeness Strategies

- Positive politeness- the fake pastor tries to align with God as being trustworthy.

Humour and Social Commentary

- Irony is used to create humour. Prophecy becomes a means for financial exploitation: the use of spiritual language to achieve selfish interests is funny.

Satire

- It satirises the exploitation of people's predicament by some religious leaders for personal gain.

Excerpt 7

Kevinblak: (Running after a girl) Pino, Pino! Excuse me, excuse me.

Girl: (Stops) What is it? What is it? See, I can't give you my number. You're not in my class, you're not in my level.

Kevinblak: (Raises girl's arm and sprays cologne under her armpit) I know o. Who dey class of pigs? Try dey use perfume. You wan use smell finish us for this street (he runs away).

Speech Acts Analysis

- Kevin makes a directive speech act by trying to get the girl's attention
- The girl's response is an assertive speech act of rejection
- Kevin replies to her with an expressive (insult) and a directive speech act.

Cooperative Principle Analysis

- Maxim of relation- Kevinblak diverts the topic of giving a phone number to the girl's hygiene.
- Maxim of manner-Kevinblak exaggerates the situation by metaphorically referring to her as a pig instead of being clear in expression.

Politeness Theory Analysis

- The girl threatens Kevinblak's positive face by using demeaning language (*You're not in my clas; you're not on my level*).
- He saves his face by retaliating with ridicule by calling her smelly and comparing her to pigs.
- He threatens the girl's negative face by raising her arm and spraying cologne under her armpit.

Humour and Social Commentary

- The incongruous act of spraying cologne under a girl's armpit is humorous. Again, the way Kevinblak changes the superiority notion of her class to a less noble class of pigs is hilarious.

Satire

- It mocks witty conversation or social banter where insults are used to reassert one's dominance after rejection(s).

Excerpt 8

Governor Amuneke versus Bureau De Change

Alhaji: Kai! Dollars! Straight from containers... this one smell loot, loot. Where you bring this one? Na project money?

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): That's my hard-earned money.

Alhaji: Commot there! (Cursing words in Hausa).

Alhaji: Na me she go give you #1500 = 1 dollar.

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): What do you mean #1000 = 1 dollar?

Alhaji: Ask around, na # 1500 = 1 dollar.

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): Go to the internet and check. It is # 1600 = I dollar.

Alhaji: Your Excellency, na me she nor go shit for you ba? Online na # 1500, na fake life dem dey do there. Por real life na 1000. Por online, people nor think say na you na good governor? But for real life, you na kparawo.

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): (Snatches his bag and threatens to see another bureau de change).

Alhaji: (Picks up his phone and dials, puts it on loudspeaker) Call the EFCC Chairman: Hello o...

Governor Amuneke (Kevinblak): (He pleadingly calls Alhaji and hands him the bag).

Speech Acts Analysis

- Alhaji makes an expressive speech act by questioning the source of money
- Governor Amuneke performs an assertive speech act to defend the origin of his money.
- Again, Alhaji makes an assertive speech act by asserting the authenticity of his exchange rates.
- Governor Amuneke snatching his bag is a performative act of using a non-linguistic act to decline Alhaji's offer.
- Governor Amuneke's pleading indicates submission to Alhaji's terms.

Cooperative Principle Analysis

- Maxim of quality-Governor Amuneke was not truthful about the origin of his money.
- Maxim of relevance- Alhaji's initial outburst on the origin of the money is not relevant to the exchange rate.
- Maxim of manner-Alhaji uses figurative language "*fake life online and kparawo*" to insult Governor Amuneke.

Politeness Theory

- Alhaji threatens the positive face of Governor Amuneke by accusing him of corruption and embezzlement.
- Governor Amuneke threatens Alhaji's negative face by snatching his bag.
- Governor Amuneke's pleading at the end is a face-saving strategy.

- Politeness strategies were totally ignored as they both insult and mock each other.

Humour and Social Commentary

- It is humorous how a governor lost his power before a bureau de change personnel and was begging an Alhaji over corrupt money exchange. It ironically shows a reversal of power.
- The use of pidgin and infusing Hausa words in the skit is humorous.

Satire

- The skit satirises the corruption of political leaders and how they embezzle public funds for personal gratification.
- It also mocks the absurdity of naira-dollar exchange rates in the parallel market.

Pragmatic Functions of Kevinblak's Humour and Satire

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that Kevinblak's skits perform crucial pragmatic functions. His skits, through the speech acts employed, entertain the audience. He uses relatable everyday language by code-switching to pidgin and sometimes infuses some indigenous words to make his skits funny. Again, by flouting the maxims and threatening the face of elites, his performances indirectly challenge and expose social vices like corruption, embezzlement, hypocrisy, and social flaws without being confrontational or mentioning the names of those his skits may point to. His satire creates solidarity with his audience in the way he addresses sensitive topics. Kevinblak's performances are

playful but potent tools for social criticism and indirect correction.

Conclusion

Kevinblak's comedy skits make us laugh while simultaneously prompting deeper reflection than ever envisaged. His performances achieve crucial pragmatic functions through the strategic use of speech acts, maxim flouting, and face-threatening acts. In his satire, hypocrisy; corruption; and ;social pretence are consistently exposed in ways that resonate with his audience. Ultimately, his comedy operates as a form of comic resistance by using laughter not only for entertainment but also as a subtle instrument of social criticism and correction.

References

- Adetunji, A. (2013). The interactional context of humour in Nigerian stand-up comedy. *Pragmatics: Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (PrA)*, 23(1), 1-2.
- Ajao, A.F., & Oladosu, O.O. (2024). A pragmatic analysis of humour strategies and functions in "Mr Macaroni" and "Honourable Zaddy" comedy skits on YouTube. *Journal of English and Communication in Africa*, 7(1-2), 109-121.
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humour*. De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/97831/0219029>

- Attardo, S. (2001). *Humour and irony in interaction from mode adoption to failure of detection*. IOS Press.
- Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levison, S.C. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, (pp. 56-311). Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levison, S.C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dynel, M. (2009). Beyond a joke: Types of conversational humour. *Language and Linguistic Compass*, 3 (5), 1284-1299. [Http://doi.org/10.1111/ji.17849-818x.2009.00152.x](http://doi.org/10.1111/ji.17849-818x.2009.00152.x)
- Escarpit, R. (1960). *Le'humour*. De l'Université de France Presses.
- Ezeifeke, C.R. (2018). *Discourse analysis concepts and approaches*. Patrobas.
- Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts* (pp 41-58). Academic Press.
- Griffin, D. (1994). *Satire: A critical re-introduction*. University Press of Kentucky.

- Herawati, N. (2015). *A pragmatic analysis of humour expressed by Aladeen in the "Dictator movie"* (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). (Yogyakarta State University).
- Ibraheem, S.D., & Abbas, N.F. (2016). *A pragmatic study of humour and advances in language and literary studies*, 7 (1). Australian International Academic Centre.
- Kevinblak. (2025a, July 3). *Clowns in agbada* (Video). Youtube. <Http://www.youtube.com.watch?>
- Kevinblak. (2025b, March 17). *Dr Uchenna versus Governor Amuneke* (Video). (TikTok). <Http://www.tiktok.com.watch>.
- Kevinblak. (2025c, July 10). *Religious leaders versus worshippers* (Video). Facebook. <Http://www.facebook.com.watch>.
- Kevinblak. (2025d, March 10). *Just doing good around* (Video). Tiktok. <Http://www.tiktok.com.watch>.
- Kevinblak. (2025e, June 8). *Governor Amuneke versus bureau de change* (Video). Facebook. <Http://www.facebook.com.watch>.
- Knight, C.A. (2024). *The literature of satire*. Cambridge University Press.
- Martin, R. (2006). *The psychology of humour: An integrate approach*. Elsevier Academic Press. <Http://978000804659199>.

- Nurudeen, M.A. (2023). *Pragmatic acts of humour in selected series of Helen Paul's Alhaja Donjasi comedy skits*. *Humour Theory and Stylistic Enquiry*, 303-319.
- Okhuosi, R.E. (2023). An exploration of phonological jokes in Maryann Apaokagi's selected comedy skits. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 10 (4), 38-56. <https://doi.org/10.7592/EJHR.2022.10.4.700>.
- Osisanwo, W. (2003). *Introduction to discourse analysis and pragmatics*. Femolus Fetop Publishers.
- Osisanwo, A., & Ilesanmi, O. (2022). Gender, ethnic and class as humour strategies in stand-up comedy of Bovi, Kenny Blaq, Akpororo and Basket Mouth. *Comedy Studies*, 14 (1), 1-6. Doi:10.1080/2040610x.2023.2149207.
- Osisanwo, A., Atoloye, L., & Akintaro, S. (2024). Pragmatic acts of humour in family discourse in selected Maryann Apaokagi's comedy skits. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 12 (2), 53-73. <https://doi.org/10.7592/EJHR.2024.12.2843>.
- Singh, R.K. (2012). Humour, irony, and satire in literature. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 65-72.
- Sunday, A.B., & Bamgbose, G.A. (2021). Pragmatic analysis of humour strategies and functions in Jenifa's Diary and Professor JohnBull. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 9 (4), 20-34. <https://dx.doi.org/10.7592/EJHR.2021.9.4.564>.

Walker, N.A. (1998). What's so funny? *Humour in American Culture*. Rowman.

Ekene Stella Odikpo-Okafor, PhD is of the Department of English and Communication Studies, Shanahan University, Onitsha; email: odikpookaforekene@gmail.com / ifeatuekenestella@yahoo.com