

Verisimilitude in Editorial Cartoons from *Punch* Newspaper: A Pragmatics Analysis

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Abstract

In recent times, the use of cartoons in the newspaper discourse has been a means of presenting the corruption, violence, marginalization and other social vices present in any society. In this vein, this paper assesses the verisimilitude of editorial cartoons in *Punch* newspaper. To assess the verisimilitude of the selected editorial cartoons and attempt their pragmatic analysis, nine editorial cartoons from the *Punch* newspaper website: www.punchng.com was analyzed using Grice's Conversational Implicature as its theoretical framework. The contexts surrounding these cartoons are prevalent issues in the Nigerian society. The analyses reveal that there are cases where by Grice's Co-operative principles were observed, flouted, violated and suspended. It also reveals that the observance of Grice's co-operative principles and the knowledge of the contextual factors surrounding the selected editorial cartoons help in proving their verisimilitude. It is believed that this paper will aid further studies in pragmatic analysis of editorial cartoons and make individuals develop more interest in reading and conducting more scholarly works on editorial cartoons.

Keywords: verisimilitude, cartoons, editorial cartoons, caricature, pragmatics, implicature, co-operative principles.

1.0. Background to the Study

In Nigeria, the use of cartoon in the media discourse was established as a vital force within the political struggle to liberate Nigeria from British colonization. Cartoons unveil serious ideas through the use of satire, humor, contrast, surprise and most importantly the use of caricature. In Nigeria, this aim has been achieved as the use of cartoons in Nigerian newspapers has been a means of presenting the social ills and many abnormalities present in the society.

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In addition to the fore mentioned, the media in Nigeria have proven to be representatives of ordinary citizens. They have used cartoons in newspaper publications to show ordinary citizens that they frown at every form of corruption, violence, marginalization and oppression of the masses and other forms of injustice inherent in the Nigerian society. To achieve this, humor is one of the major styles and techniques used by cartoonists to present these messages to their readers. Issues discussed in the cartoon column of *Punch* newspapers are similar to this as they range from bribery and corruption in electioneering, society and manners, foreign affairs, life with the upper crust which include the country house unlucky speeches, ill-considered utterances, things one could wish to have expressed otherwise, arts and culture, church and university affairs, urban life, fads and fashions, sports and other outdoor leisure activities among others. All these facts help in proving the verisimilitude of editorial cartoons and gave an insight that a research can be conducted on the verisimilitude of editorial cartoons.

Besides the fore mentioned, observation has shown that little attention has been given to the notion of verisimilitude in Pragmatic studies dealing with the analysis of editorial cartoons. Therefore, as a practical test of the authenticity or verisimilitude of editorial cartoons, this paper attempts a pragmatic analysis of selected editorial cartoons in *Punch* newspapers which is one of Nigerians prominent newspapers.

2.0 Methodology

A total number of nine (9) editorial cartoons were selected from the editorial column of the *Punch* newspaper online: www.punchng.com and analyzed using the Pragmatic theory as its theoretical framework with special focus on Grice's Conversational Implicature. These cartoons were analyzed within the context of social ills ranging from corruption, abuse of public office, insecurity, violence, poverty, scarcity of essential commodities and other social vices prevalent in the Nigerian society by making reference to some Nigeria dailies in order to give an explanation of the context surrounding them and prove their verisimilitude. The editorial cartoons selected have a little linguistic data and these linguistic data made the analysis of the cartoons easier. These cartoons are numbered from 1-9 and included as appendices at the end of this paper.

3.0 Review of Literature

This section discusses topics such as previous researches related to editorial cartoons, the concept of implicature and Grice's conversational implicature/co-operative principles.

3.1 Previous Research Works Related to Editorial Cartoons

Cartoons are found in the media discourse and media discourse can be located in newspaper publications. Media discourse is a broad term which can refer to the totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper. Montgomery (2011) observes that two main traditions can be discerned in the study of media discourse: they are ones that deals mostly with newspapers and the structure of news in written text, while the second deals with the broadcast news interview as spoken discourse and a form of social interaction. According to him, the first approach expresses a long-standing concern with newspapers as the embodiment of forms of ideology under late capitalism. The second approach has been particularly concerned with issues of power and control as they are reflected in the engagement between public figures and news organizations.

Bitner, (2003, p. 306) defines cartoons as “comic strip characters that represent observable characters in a society”. According to Adejuwon & Alimi, (2009), cartoon refers to metaphorical codification, and a satirical or humorous genre, through which an artist subtly informs, educates and entertains his viewers. To them, the sternest yet satirical forms of communicating in modern times is cartoon and the cartoon has a pedagogical function that has proven a valuable instrument and avenue to educate readers in any publication where it appears. Cartoons are sometimes satirical and humorous in subject and inevitably elicit readers' participation. However, the major function performed by cartoons in newspaper publications is to amuse the reader by disseminating messages in a humorous manner. Osho, (2008, p. 238-239) confirms this by stating that cartoons perform a lot of functions which include:

- i) Informing;
- ii) Educating;
- iii) Entertaining;
- iv) Amusing;

- v) Disseminating serious information in a funny way;
- vi) Recording event in a memorable way;
- vii) Discussing serious national issues in comical parlance;
- viii) Reflecting current issues by projecting personalities through graphics;
- ix) Inspiring the readers to buy a newspaper or magazine regularly “as it soothes their aching nerves”.

Adejuwon & Shina Alimi, (2009), identifies two types of cartoons: cartoons of opinion and cartoons of jokes. According to them, cartoons of opinion focus on domestic politics, social themes and foreign affairs while cartoons of jokes are designed to communicate humor. The cartoon of opinion is synonymous to an editorial or political cartoon. An editorial cartoon can be defined as an illustration containing a commentary that usually relates to current events or personalities. This type of cartoon serves as a visual commentary on current events. Editorial cartoons are usually satirical rather than merely humorous in nature as they may communicate the political viewpoint of the cartoonist or add depth to an editorial opinion article in a newspaper or magazine. As observed by Diamond (2002), political or editorial cartoons are important mode of communication worthy of increased academic attention. He observes that these types of cartoons provide alternative perspectives at a glance because they are visual and vivid and often seem to communicate a clear or obvious message to their readers. Editorial cartoons often use caricature, which is a deliberate distortion or exaggeration of a person's features in order to make fun of well-known figures who are often politicians. They typically combine artistic skill, hyperbole and biting humor in order to question authority and draw attention to corruption and other social ills in the society. The presentation of editorial cartoons in this manner is an avenue for cartoonists to effectively express their thoughts about any event in the society in a comical manner.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Pragmatics with specific reference to Grice's Conversational Implicature. Pragmatics is a sub-field of language which studies how a language user makes use of the knowledge of the structure of language to achieve a particular communication purpose in a particular communicative situation. In simple terms, it can be defined as the study of how contextual factors interact with linguistic meaning in the

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interpretation of utterances. Kempson (1986) defines pragmatics as the study of the general cognitive principles involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance. Levinson (1983) defines it as the study of those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing of grammars. Leech and Short (1987) sees it as the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. Yule (1996) defines it as the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener or reader. According to Mey (2001) Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of the society. From these definitions, it can be inferred that the situation of things in a context determine the way language is used.

To expatiate further the importance of context in pragmatics, there is still a need to examine more definitions of pragmatics. According to Odebunmi (2006), Pragmatics is the study of how speakers and hearers interpret meaning in a particular context by taking account of the physical and social situation, knowledge of each other's background and cultural conventions. Wilson (2006) observes that when we communicate through language we often mean more than we say and there is often a gap between the speaker meaning and sentence meaning. He explains further that pragmatic theories attempt to explain this knowledge by seeing communication as a process of rational and reasoned interpretation, which draws not only on linguistic structure but also on shared world knowledge, cultural norms, and individual components of specific interactional contexts of language use. To affirm this, many research works have shown that Pragmatics exposes one to interesting insights on the actual functions of language in social interactions because it accounts for social meanings based on context. Osisanwo (2003) observes this by stressing the fact that pragmatics involve the message being communicated, the participants involved in the message, the knowledge of the world in which they share, the deductions that can be made from the text on the basis of context, the implication of what is said or left unsaid and the impact of nonverbal aspect of interaction on meaning.

All these definitions hinge on the fact that pragmatics identify the situation or context of an utterance before concluding what its meaning is and that different contexts or situations attract different interpretations or meanings from the same utterance. Also, the scholars cited agree that

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pragmatics is the study of meaning from the point of view of the language user, showing what choice he or she makes and how these choices capture his/her intentions in different contexts.

The implication of these definitions is that in pragmatics, it should be noted that context plays a very prominent role in the interpretation of any text. Its knowledge makes it easier to make deductions as it does in the analysis of all the cartoons used in this paper. As noted by Odebunmi (2006), context is the spine of meaning. It covers the social and psychological world in which users operate at any given time, provides the background from which the meaning of a word springs and determines what can be said and cannot be said. Context does not only refer to the physical context, but to everything that surrounds the making of an utterance. These include the activities going on in the place where the utterance is made, the knowledge of the speaker and the addressee of the culture in which they are operating (cultural context), knowledge of the expectations and discursive practices of the people among whom the utterance is being made, especially as it relates to the social roles and relationships (social context)

3.2.1 The Concept of Implicature

Implicature is an important concept in Pragmatics. It enables the hearer explain the speaker's communicative behaviour by identifying his or her underlying intention. As observed by Yus (2006), implicature is a typically human form of mind-reading activity due to the fact that the listener can infer or attach different meanings to a speaker's utterance. According to Laurencer (2004), implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said. This notion implies that what a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what he or she directly expresses as different meanings or interpretations may be given to the speaker or writer's utterance or written text.

A pragmatic knowledge is needed to interpret what speakers say correctly due to the sharp contrast between what is said and what is meant and derivatively between the said and the implicated (the meant-but-unsaid.) Thus, speakers implicate, while hearers infer. It should be noted that successful communication commonly relies on implicature as what a speaker implicates is often quite distinct from what his or her words imply or from what a hearer may be

expected to take from them. Grice (1975) uses the term implicature to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. The observance of Cooperative Principle allows for the possibility of implicature. Implicature is subdivided into Conventional Implicature and Conversational Implicature. According to Grice (1975) Conventional Implicature is determined by the conventional meaning of the words used. It refers to the inference a hearer makes about a speaker's intended meaning that arises from their use of the literal words. Odebunmi (2006) notes that conventional implicature tilts towards grammatical meaning.

Conversational implicature on the other hand is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers normally obey. Grice (1975) discusses this in respect of the Co-operative principle. In Grice's view, conversation works on the principle that participants co-operate with each other in interactions. The governing dictums for this according to Grice's Cooperative Principles are: conversational conventions, or maxims. They are as follows:

Relation: This maxim suggests that information must be relevant to the discourse in which it is discussed. This maxim expects participants to concentrate on the subject being handled at a particular stage and not introduce extraneous items into the conversation.

Quantity: This involves making contribution as informative as required especially for the current purposes of the exchange. To observe this maxim, the speaker avoids giving unnecessary information. This maxim implies that participants' contribution should be brief as possible. It makes language users go straight to the point by providing only the necessary information in an utterance or text in order not to discourage their listeners or readers. Within the conversational context, the maxim of Quantity requires that the speaker should not claim to know more than he or she does so as not to mislead co-participants. As observed by Odebunmi (2006) this maxim can be realized both within and without the conversational situation.

Quality: This maxim requires that what is believed to be false should not be uttered in a communicative discourse. It implies that the speaker must not say that which he or she lack adequate evidence for or is false.

Manner: This maxim states that the speaker must be perspicuous, avoid obscurity of expression, ambiguity and be brief and orderly. This maxim is one of the ways people collaborate to build an intelligible conversation. This implies that utterances must not be obscure and as much as possible their meaning should not be hidden to the extent that the addressee would not be able to decode it. To observe this maxim, ambiguous statements are always avoided as it could be frustrating listening to people whose utterances are full of ambiguous expressions and it is important for speakers' utterances to be brief and orderly.

Levinson (1983) cited in Odebunmi (2006) indicates that Grice's maxims clearly spell out the way conversations can be carried out effectively, rationally and co-operatively. He notes that in conversations or speech events, the maxims might be observed, flouted, violated, in fringed or suspended. To further prove this point, Thomas (1995) cited in Odebunmi (2006), says the maxim of quality is flouted when the truth is not said or when the utterance cannot be adequately proved. Flouting the maxim of quantity occurs when a speaker gives more or less than the required information in particular situations. Odebunmi notes that a maxim is violated when the non-observance of the maxim is unostentatious and can mislead. Paltridge (2006) observes that, on some occasions, speakers flout the cooperative principle and intend their hearers to understand this. He explains further that a maxim is flouted by a speaker if the maxim is not observed but with no intention of deceiving or misleading the other person.

Thus, a maxim is violated if there is likelihood that they are liable to mislead the other person. A person infringes a maxim when they fail to observe a maxim with no intention to deceive such as where a speaker does not have the linguistic capacity to answer a question. Odebunmi (2006) citing Thomas (1995) says infringing a maxim involves a non-observance which stems from imperfect linguistic performance rather than from any desire to generate a Conversational Implicature. Odebunmi states that a maxim can be infringed as a result of incompetence in language, psychosocial impairment, cognitive impairment or inability to speak clearly. He states further that opting out of a maxim means the speaker is not willing to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. To him, this usually occurs in real life situations as sometimes, lawyers, priests, counsellors, police officers, journalists or doctors do not co-operate as required for legal or ethical reasons. Another reason for this is that speakers may not want to generate a false implicature or appear uncooperative. A maxim is suspended when the non-fulfillment of a

maxim is expected by participants and therefore does not generate any implicature. The suspension of a maxim might occur due to cultural specifications or might be necessitated by certain exigencies.

4.0 Data Analysis

This section discusses the contextual factors and other factors that aid the verisimilitude of the selected cartoons. It also presents a pragmatic analysis of the selected cartoons using Grice's co-operative principles.

4.1 Verisimilitude of the Selected Editorial Cartoons

In all the cartoons analyzed in this paper, the cartoonists represent the speaker(s), while viewers/readers of the cartoons represent the audience. The messages or issues presented in the cartoons are meant to reach the audience and they have an effect on them. Not only is that, readers of these cartoons are likely to give different interpretations to the cartoons due to the fact that they have different perspective on them. The effect of the cartoons on them might be that of anger, amusement, excitement and pity among others. The message(s) communicated in the cartoons selected for analysis in this paper range from corruption, insecurity, scarcity of essential commodity and over importation of foreign products into the country among others. Deductions made from these cartoons are based on incidents that relate to socio political events in Nigeria which educated and enlightened Nigerians are aware of as news and editorials have been written on them in various local and international newspapers. The implication of these cartoons is that they expose the social ills prevalent in the Nigerian society and inform readers that the media is not unaware of the socio political problems inherent in the society. Not only that, all the selected cartoons for analysis elicit or evoke emotions of fear and anger in readers and show the position taken by the media on issues that affects the masses in the society. They reflect issues recurrent in the Nigerian society and show the media's coverage of these issues. The mode of communication employed by the cartoonists in presenting the issues discussed in the selected cartoons is the verbal and non-verbal means of communication. The caricatures form the nonverbal means of communication as their action communicate a lot to readers while the

written words uttered by the caricature represented in the cartoons form the verbal means of communication.

Readers of these cartoons will find humor in them as they are caricature of certain set of people that can be easily identified in the Nigerian society. In the analyzed cartoons, caricature of the masses are found in cartoon 1 and 7, that of an immigration officer and a frustrated Nigerian in cartoon 2, that of the Nigerian Central bank Governor- Sanusi Lamido and Nigerian lawmakers in cartoon 3, police officers, airline officials and custom officers in Cartoon 4, that of Olabode George, Bola Tinubu and his associate in cartoon 5, that of concerned Nigerians and a giant representing a symbol of oppression in cartoon 6, that of 7 is elected public officers and the masses in cartoon 7, that of I.P.M.A.N., N.N.P.C officials and President Goodluck Jonathan in cartoon 8 and that of President Goodluck Jonathan and his personal assistant is in cartoon 9. These features make the selected cartoons observe the maxim of Relation as this information is relevant to the media discourse. Apart from the humor found in these cartoons, they evoke a feeling of anger in readers due to the unusual and abnormal situations in Nigeria portrayed in them.

All the cartoons analyzed in this paper are reactions to incidents that occurred in the Nigerian society and reported in various national newspapers. It is observed that the stories or incidents reported in some Nigeria newspapers are the major context surrounding these cartoons. These contexts make them observe the feature of verisimilitude. The context surrounding cartoon 1, and 2 are those of the series of bombings that have shaken the country's security most especially during the last presidential elections to date. Some of the stories related to these are reported in *All Africa.com*, *BBC news Africa.com*, *press T.V.com*, *punchng.com*, *234 next.com* website newspapers among others. That of cartoon 3 is the revelation of the fact that 25 percent of the overhead federal government revenue goes to the National Assembly by Lamido Sanusi who is Nigeria's Central bank Governor during a convocation lecture at Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State. The cartoonist uses the caricature to give readers an idea of what the lawmakers' reaction to this will be. The context surrounding cartoon 4 is that of the missing 20 Direct Data Capture (DDC) machine on December 9, 2010 at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos and the barring of journalists from covering the trial of the four people allegedly involved in the theft of these machines. That of cartoon 5 is the reaction of Nigerians which is anger and

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revulsion over the conduct of a thanksgiving service by the former chairman of the Nigerian Ports Authority, Olabode George, who was sentenced to a two years imprisonment for fraud, recently released and given a rapturous welcome by his family members and political associates. Information relevant to this was found on the web site of *Next* newspapers. That of cartoon 6 is of the fact that Nigeria has become a dumping ground for all manner of foreign goods. The *Nigerian Pilot* daily newspaper, *the Nation* newspaper and other newspapers have commented on this as unnecessary products like plastic waste disposal bins are planned to be imported into the country. The context of cartoon 7 is that of the high rate of corruption prevalent in the country. Stories related to this were found in www.onlinenigeria.com, *Vanguard*, *Sahara Reporters* and the *Nigeria Masterweb* blog of 1st February 2010 among others. The context surrounding cartoon 8 is that of kerosene scarcity experienced by the masses in the country beginning from March, 2011 as the organizations (Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria I.P.M.A.N. and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation N.N.P.C) responsible for its equal distribution to the public refuse to take measures to ensure this. Stories related to this were found in <http://www.nigeriannewsservice.com/index.php>, <http://allafrica.com/>, *Punch* newspaper, *Sun* newspaper among others. Cartoon 9 is about the speculations and indications of Nigerians that four years might be a short time for President Goodluck Jonathan to realize his proposed transformation agenda. Headlines or stories related to this were found in <http://allafrica.com/>, <http://saharareporters.com/> among others.

4.2 Analysis of the Editorial Cartoons Using Grice's Cooperative Principles

As stated earlier, the knowledge of the context surrounding these cartoons makes it easy for readers to deduce different meanings from them. In addition to this, it shows the verisimilitude of these cartoons. The implied meaning deduced from cartoon 1 is that Nigeria is unsafe because of the series of bomb blast that occurs there. The implied meaning of cartoon 2 is that Nigeria is not a favorable place for the masses. The cartoonist makes it obvious that the Nigerian seeking asylum in another country is doing so due the unbearable situation of things in his country. An inference drawn from cartoon 3 is that Nigerian lawmakers are displeased with Governor Sanusi's revelation of the huge allowances collected by them. It could be deduced from cartoon 4 that the three officials been interrogated do not have a genuine excuse for the disappearance of the missing D.D.C machines. With a close reading and look at cartoon 6, it can be inferred

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that Nigeria is a dumping ground for all manner of foreign goods. In cartoon 7, the meaning implied is that elected public officers are insensitive to the plight of the masses by embezzling the fund or resources meant for them. The inference drawn from cartoon 8 is that I.P.M.A.N and N.N.P.C officials together with President Jonathan are insensitive to the plight of the masses while that drawn from cartoon 9 is that President Goodluck Jonathan will not be committed to the realization of his transformation agenda during his tenure in office.

All the nine (9) editorial cartoons analyzed in this paper observe the maxim of Quality and Relation as headlines and news found in Nigerian newspapers relates to them. Some also observe the maxim of Quantity and Manner because of the context surrounding them, readers' familiarity with stories surrounding the cartoons and the unambiguous nature of the caricatures used by the cartoonists. All these observations are explained further in this section.

Cartoon 1 observes the maxim of Quality and Relation when compared to the story in the headline of newspapers like *All Africa.com* titled *Nigeria: Bomb Blasts and 2011 Election that in Next newspaper titled: Three killed in explosion at PDP rally*. The caption on the cartoon and the utterance of the head of the household observes this maxim because what they have said is the truth. His friend's reaction is probably his own manner of asking the question 'where are you and your family heading to'.

Cartoon 2 which is captioned: *Our economy is in trouble* presents the caricature of an immigration officer interrogating a Nigerian who seeks asylum in his country. The Nigerian in frustration responds that he is tired of suicide bombing, kerosene scarcity, epileptic power supply, inflation, joblessness, presence of deceitful politicians and hunger prevalent in the Nigerian society. Its utterance obeys the maxim of Quality and Relation. The caption: *Our economy is in trouble* in cartoon 2 observes the maxim of relation. Analyzing the cartoon within the context of the recent bombing in different parts of the country, it could be said that it observes the maxim of Quantity, Quality and Relation. The immigration officer's question to the Nigerian seeking asylum in his country also obeys the maxim of Quantity and Relation. The question is relevant to the circumstances surrounding him and the Nigerian and the lexis of the question are not irrelevant or unnecessary.

Cartoon 3 which presents and describes the relationship between the Central bank Governor and Nigerian law makers observes the maxims of Quality and Relation as the Central bank Governor of Nigeria actually revealed to the public that 25 percent of the government revenue goes to the National assembly. The caricatures' utterances obey the maxim of Relation too as their responses are relevant to the utterance of the first caricature presented in the cartoon.

The caption for cartoon 4: *Stolen DDC machines, customs, airline officials quizzed* observe the maxim of Relation, Quality and Quantity. It observes these maxims as it relates to the stolen DDC machines at the Muritala International Airport on December 9, 2010. The caption of the cartoon is not composed with unnecessary words. The policeman's interrogation observes the maxim of Quantity and Quality as it is true, straight forward and direct to the point. These features are also observed in cartoon 5 which shows a caricature of Olabode George in his lodge probably drunk as many bottles of alcoholic drinks were seen with him. A caricature of Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu and his associate probably Layi Muhammed exits his lodge in shock as a reaction to his utterance: *Ah Asiwaju see me o! I'm only enjoying fresh air here. Don't go and report me that I've not learnt a lesson from my prison experience o!* The entire cartoon obeys the maxim of Quality as Olabode George was imprisoned and celebrated his release from prison in a thanksgiving service. Olabode George's utterance also obeys the maxim of Quality as he was imprisoned and recently released from prison. However, his utterance *Ah Asiwaju see me o! I'm only enjoying fresh air here. Don't go and report me that I've not learnt a lesson from my prison experience o!* flouts the maxim of Quality and Quantity as the bottle of alcohol on the stool beside him and the empty bottles of alcoholic drinks surrounding him portrays him as an alcoholic. This shows the falsity of his utterance because normally, a drunken man cannot talk sensibly. The reaction of Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu and that of his associate support the fact that Bode George's utterance flouts the maxim of Quality and Quantity as his utterance is not true and unnecessary. Not only that, his conduct of thanksgiving in a church after his release further shows the falsity of his utterance.

Cartoon 6 which has the caption: *Nigeria: The highest consumer of foreign goods* observes the maxim of Quality as Nigeria is really a dumping ground for foreign goods. It also observes the maxim of Quantity due to the fact that it is brief and straight to the point. The utterance of the first caricature represented in the cartoon observes the maxim of Relation because it is relevant

to the sight of the giant before him who is undoubtedly carrying more than enough loads on his back. The giant's response to the first caricature's utterance: *20 tonnes of toothpicks* observes the maxim of Quality as it is obvious that the giant is not satisfied with the big load of foreign goods on his back. From the utterances of the caricature represented in this cartoon, it is noticed that Nigeria will continue to be a dumping ground for foreign products.

In cartoon 7, the caricature representing the masses observes the maxim of Quality as its sight and size portrays this and many elected public officers in Nigeria have been arrested for various scam. Some of those public officers are: the former Nigerian Deputy Speaker Nafada, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha the former governor of Bayelsa State and Olabode George among others. The utterance of the caricature represented observes the maxim of Quality and Quantity in this respect because his sobs and small stature is probably as a result of the oppression suffered by him. The caricature of the elected public officer shows a nonchalant attitude to the masses plight by not responding to him. His nonchalant attitude can be considered his response and it obeys the maxim of Quality due to the fact that, Nigerian elected public officers embezzle the money meant for the masses without any consideration for them.

Cartoon 8 observes the maxims of Quality and Relation most especially when analyzed within the context of kerosene scarcity experienced by the masses in the Nigeria. In cartoon 9, the maxim of Quality is observed as the inscription/tags on President Goodluck Jonathan's table are indications of the fact that his four year term is too short to achieve his transformation agenda.

All the analyzed cartoons in this paper obey the Manner maxim as the caricatures used by the cartoonists do not make the message of the cartoons obscure or ambiguous to readers. They observe the maxim of Manner because there are contextual factors that made them appear so real in the Nigerian context and aid their interpretation. The observance of the maxim of Manner makes only a few of the cartoons flout a few maxims. For instance, cartoon 8 did not flout the maxim of Quality as the caricature of the I.P.M.A.N official carrying a gallon of kerosene, that of Goodluck Jonathan with a bottle of wine laughing, that of the N.N.P.C official's readiness to get hold of the gallon of kerosene before the masses is a proof that IPMAN hoards this commodity and are not ready to release it for the consumption of the general public. However, all the cartoons analyzed in this paper flouts the maxim of Quantity as the utterances of the

caricatures represented are not enough to give readers most especially non-Nigerian ones idea of the problems or social ills prevalent in the country.

Cartoon 2 flouts the maxim of Quantity as it did not give readers adequate information on the country the Nigerian is trying to seek asylum to. The Nigerian's response to the immigration officer's question: "*Ah Boko Haram, kerosene scarcity, epileptic power supply, inflation, joblessness, lying politicians, hunger...please let me go, I'm tired Sir*" flouts the maxim of Quantity as this response is not brief and he did not begin the response to the question as expected. The ellipsis after his response is an indication that he has violated the maxim of Quantity by saying more than is expected of him. Not only that, the utterance ...*Please let me go* flouts this maxim because it has not answered the immigration officer's question.

The conversational discourse of Cartoon 3 is a caricature of Sanusi Lamido (Nigerian Central bank Governor) who stands aloof while six Nigerian law makers were busy expressing their displeasure over his revelation of the huge allowance received by them. In cartoon 3, despite the fact that, all the caricatures represented in the cartoon have the same background knowledge of the conversation, they still flout some of the maxims. For instance, one of the caricatures informs readers of Nigerian lawmakers' displeasure over the Central bank Governor's revelation of the jumbo pay received by them. The entire cartoon flouts the maxim of Relation because there is no evidence to prove the fact that the discussion actually took place. The utterance of the first caricature represented in the cartoon flouts the maxim of Quantity due to the fact that it did not give readers adequate information on how their huge allowance have been exposed to the general public.

Instances of infringement, suspension and opting out of the maxims are not noticeable in all the cartoons analyzed in this paper. This is due to the fact that all these usually occur in real life situations. This is in line with the view of Odebunmi (2006) that infringement of a maxim occurs as a result of incompetence in language, psychosocial impairment, cognitive impairment or inability to speak clearly while opting out of a maxim occurs when the speaker is not willing to cooperate in the way the maxim requires.

5.0 Conclusion

The messages portrayed in these cartoons are reflections of recurrent issues in Nigeria. The background knowledge of the context surrounding these cartoons aid their interpretation and analyses. These contextual factors together with the use of caricatures help in proving the verisimilitude of these cartoons and inferences were easily deduced from them due to the fact that the message(s) of the cartoonists were easily understood. In the analyses, it was discovered that there are instances where Grice's Co-operative principles were observed or flouted. These cartoons are proofs that the media do not present socio political issues in a vacuum but rely on prevalent issues in the society to pass their message across to readers.

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Figures of editorial cartoons used

All these editorial cartoons were downloaded from the *Punch* Newspaper website: www.punchng.com.

Cartoon 1



Cartoon 2



Cartoon 3



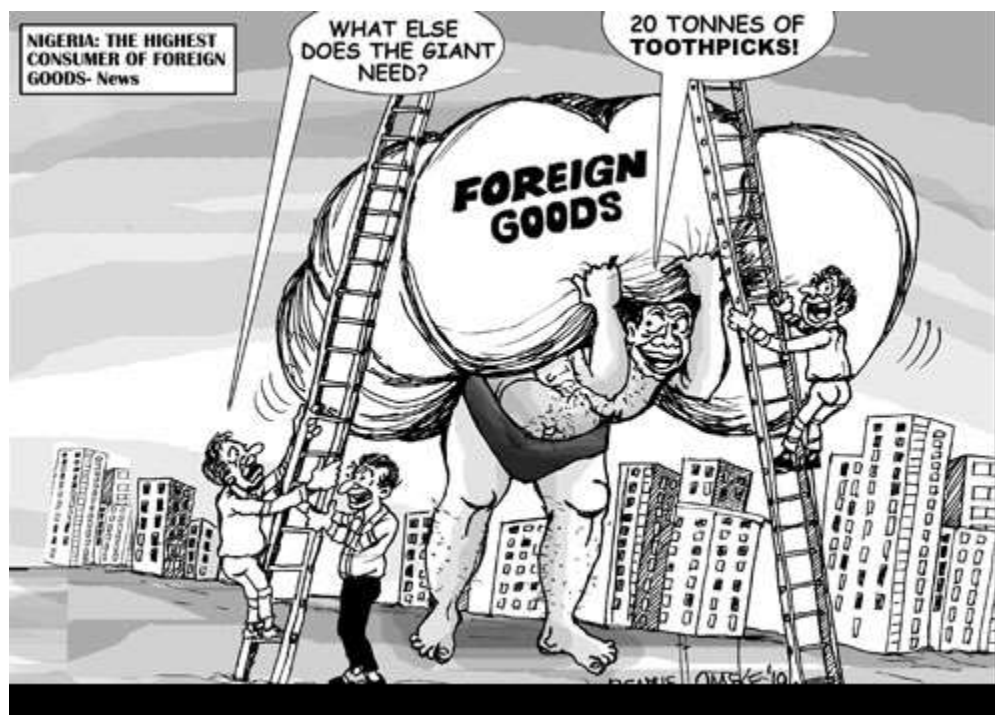
Cartoon 4



Cartoon 5



Cartoon 6



Cartoon 7



Allocation of 10,000MT of kerosene to IPMAN by NNPC: IPMAN denies receipt -News

Four-year-term is too short-Jonathan

FIND SOMEWHERE TO KEEP THEM. I'M STILL ATTENDING TO CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES!

HIGH COST OF KEROSENE
INSECURITY
ELECTRICITY
INFLATION

HOW TO SATISFY YOUR POLITICAL ASSOCIATES

BEANE/Coverly

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