

A pragmatic analysis of selected ASUU strike memes motivated humour on social media

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ABSTRACT: Memes, as humorous and visually captivating pieces of content, have revolutionized the way people communicate and express themselves on social media platforms. During times of academic unrest caused by the recurring ASUU strikes, these memes have played a pivotal role in providing a creative outlet for expressing frustrations, criticisms, and solidarity among students, educators, and concerned citizens. This paper, therefore, undertook a pragmatic analysis of selected 5 (five) ASUU strike memes sourced from WhatsApp, Facebook, Google, and Twitter aiming to unravel the underlying motivations behind their creation and dissemination, with a particular emphasis on the role of humor as a primary motivator. The used critical qualitative research and purposive sampling technique to select five ASUU memes. Acheoach's Pragma-crafting theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. Findings reveal that the nuanced satirical techniques embedded within the memes, including the use of humorous images, wordplay, and linguistic ambiguities, capture and reflect the sentiments and experience of students and educators during the ASUU strikes. The study revealed the significance of communication acts and non-communication acts features such as indexicals (INDXL), shared macro-knowledge (SMK), shared contextual knowledge (SCK), shared knowledge of emergent context (SKEC), contextual presupposition (CP), geoimplicature (GI), behavioural implicature (BI), pragma-deviant (PD), object referred (OR), operative language (OL), and other discourse components were used by encoders (ENCs) of verbal elements (VEs) and non-verbal elements (NVEs) in understanding the interpretation of the sense of the act in ASUU strike memes. The study concludes that the humorous responses to the ASUU strike on social media shed light on the vigorous mix of words, images, and gestures.

Keywords: ASUU, pragma-crafting, meme, humour, pragmatics.

INTRODUCTION

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is a trade union of university teachers in Nigeria. The union has a history of organising strikes to protest against poor working conditions, inadequate funding of universities, and government neglect of the education sector. Academic strikes are a common occurrence in many countries, and Nigeria is no exception, however, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria has gone on several strikes in recent years, leading to disruptions in the academic calendar and causing frustration among students, teachers, and other stakeholders. The strikes can result in prolonged interruptions of the academic year, leading to delays in degree completion and reduced

educational opportunities for students. The strikes also put a strain on the Nigerian education system, causing financial losses and creating uncertainty for students, teachers, and educational community at large.

In recent years, ASUU strikes have become more frequent, with the latest one starting in February 2022. The just-suspended strike was in protest against the Federal Government's failure to implement agreements reached in previous negotiations, non-payment of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA), and poor funding of universities. The recently suspended ASUU strike lasted for several months, causing widespread frustration among students, parents, and other stakeholders in Nigeria. Averagely,

about 18.44% of every academic year is spent on strike. The strike is anchored on fair wages for the union member, setting up a joint negotiation committee between the federal government and the university staff union, and university autonomy. The above statement explains that strike actions in Nigeria have been a persistent challenge that seems to have defied solution since 1980, regardless of their agitation for the betterment of its members; the federal government has always failed to consider their demand (Ugwuona, 2016).

Tahir (2013) as well as Adamu and Nwogo (2014) reported that trade unions such as ASUU, usually embark on various actions over agitations for the improvement of their welfare, teaching and research facilities, and university autonomy (Monogbe and Monogbe, 2019). Meanwhile, all these industrial actions have disrupted activities in universities, muddled up the academic calendar, and exerted a maximal effect on the affected universities. While other universities not within the jurisdiction of the union, are still in their intact sessions, the affected universities have turned to a constricted academic calendar to account for lost time because of the hassle of incessant strike actions. Edinyang and Ubi (2013), Olusegun (2014) and Adamu and Nwogo (2014) also reported that incessant industrial action of the Academic Staff Union of the University (ASUU) in Nigeria has interrupted the academic calendar of the tertiary institution, elongated the study period and thus discourage the academic interest of student upon resumption.

This ASUU struggle has not in any way helped ASUU, which still cannot communicate effectively to the Nigerian students. Perhaps, students started reacting in several ways to the news with some being very funny in form of memes (images, videos, Gifs) in making caricatures of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) members. During the ASUU strikes, many Nigerians take to social media, especially Twitter and Instagram, to express their frustration and share their experiences using humor and satire. These expressions have taken the form of memes, jokes, and satirical sketches that poke fun at the situation and offer a lighthearted take on the otherwise serious issue.

Memes are a worldwide social phenomenon, it plays a very interesting role that makes them go viral, due to how easily they are passed across uniquely. A simple press of a button allows it to be shown to a wide range of people making them see the other side of the picture, offering a new perspective to a situation and helping them see things from a different angle. This change of perspective makes people change how they see a stressful situation. It does all this efficiently and effectively, they are a source of humorous enlightenment for people. Memes are essentially a language that people use on the internet, and being able to identify and understand the nuances is key to communication between people online, as a language of their own, having this knowledge helps give a fuller understanding of the meaning and insight into the

motivation of why something was shared (Tumir, 2017).

In relation to this, the ASUU strike memes often depict the struggles of students, the apathy of the government, and the various challenges faced by those affected by the strike. Some of the memes poke fun at the long duration of the strikes, the impact on students' academic pursuits, and the general frustration felt by those affected. While the ASUU strike memes offer a form of release and a way for people to cope with the situation, they also serve to bring attention to the issue and put pressure on the government to find a resolution. Through humor and satire, the memes provide a way for people to express their frustration and bring attention to the broader challenges facing the education sector in Nigeria.

To know how memes function on the internet, it is important to examine humor. However, they both share the attributes of humorous enlightenment as a means of communication with people from different cultures. Humor is the tendency of cognitive experience to provoke laughter and provide amusement. It is more than the bare ability to make or perceive jokes, often works through smiling and laughter, and laughter may indeed be produced by and may express joy, merriment, and amusement on the one hand but, on the other hand, also mockery, derision, and scorn. According to Ross (1998, p. 2), "humor is capable of creating an atmosphere of relief from anxiety, anger, and pain; its profile is high in the society".

Humor can be used as a tool of repression and ridicule by the powerful, as a form of resistance by the less powerful, or as an instrument to help galvanise social bonds among disenfranchised groups (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Both memes and humor play an important role in human life by giving people the opportunity to speak about the negative and positive discussion of societal damage trends or event in drawing attention to a particular issue with the influence of social media which serve a significant role through the establishment of technology. In today's life, social media is a web-based online tools that enable people to discover and learn new information, share ideas, and interact with new people and organizations. It has changed the way people live their lives today and made communication much easier. It allows the exchange of user-generated content like data, pictures, and videos.

Social media platforms may come in different forms such as blogs, business forums, podcasts, micro blogs, photo sharing, product/service reviews, weblogs, etc. Ejima (2021) posits that social media is free for all internet-based platforms which enable its users to become publishers by making posts and uploading pictures that are for personal, regional, national, and international internet. The issue of ASUU strike actions with the influence of social media platforms becomes the subject of chuckled among students under the commencement of the ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) strike in Nigeria. Who sees it as a way of releasing attention while they are home and the only language aspect that studies the intended speakers' meaning is pragmatics.

Pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning by, or dependent on, the use of language. It embodies conversational implicature, speech act, presupposition, and deixis. It is a specialised branch of linguistics that is focused on how words are used to perform various acts, how meaning is concerted between speaker and hearer, and the pivotal role context plays in the interpretation of utterances as well as to explain aspects of meaning which cannot be found in the plain sense of words or structures. Well, there are different theoretical approaches under pragmatics, but the one that presents discourse as systematic, predictable able, and understandable with the use of the two main components EVENT and TEXT to account for the dynamics of human communication through various genres: drama, prose, poetry, cartoons, advertisements, sermons, speeches, proverbs, etc. Acheaoh's P- crafting (2015) theory. He opines that P-crafting is a super-ordinate pragmatic act that produces Socio-linguistic, linguistic, and extra-linguistic elements of communication at different stages of how the use of context is being presented at different stages of the communicative event. One of the major knowledge of Pragmatics helps one to contextual and interpret the intended meaning inherent in ASUU strike memes. This study, therefore, embarked on a pragmatic study of Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) strike memes motivated humor on social media to explore how individuals used language to perform different acts, say one thing and mean another and the pivotal role that content plays in meaning explication.

Existing studies highlight linguistic depth in humour and memes, elucidating societal issues and power dynamics. However, a research gap exists in investigating linguistic humour techniques on social media. While humour has been explored in various contexts like computer-mediated communication and stand-up comedy, educative memes like this ASUU strike has been scarcely investigated. Investigating these techniques offers insight into humour's construction and conveyance in visual media. Bridging this gap presents an opportunity to understand how language enhances humour and satire's efficacy in humour, merging linguistics, humour studies, and visual communication.

REVIEW OF RELATED CONCEPTS

Language of social media

The importance of language in our everyday lives cannot be undermined. Wen (2014) agrees that language is what human beings rely on to express themselves, communicate with others, and know the word. Its effectual use has been a blessing in helping human beings in meeting different needs at all times through educating, entertaining, informing, rebuking, or passing down social values within the global world in communicating the intended mind of language users. Kempson (2003) states

that language is what human beings use to do things. Therefore, a language is a form of expression that helps individuals or group to communicate and express their feelings and ideas. When two people meet, it is a particular language that helps them understand each other's views and thoughts. It also informs them about their feelings and what they are expecting or trying to say to each other. Language interacts with every aspect of human life in society, and it can be understood only if it considered in relation to the society. That's it has been a boon in building harmony between individuals in a society.

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. In Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein's definition, social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social Media is the future of communication, a countless array of internet-based tools and platforms that increase and enhance the sharing of information. This new form of media makes the transfer of text, photos, audio, video, and information in general increasingly fluid among internet users. Social media has relevance not only for regular internet users, but for business as well. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Whatsapp have created online communities where people can share as much or as little personal information as they desire with other members. The result is an enormous amount of information that can be easily shared, searched, promoted, disputed, and created. Ejima (2021) posit that "social media is a free for all internet-based platform which enables its users to become publishers by making posts and uploading pictures that are for personal, regional, national, and international internet. Language and social media are deeply intertwined and continue to evolve in response to each other. Language and social. Today are deeply connected in today's digital age. Social media platforms rely on language as the primary means of communication between users, and as such, language plays a crucial role in shaping our online interactions and experiences. Also Social media platforms have allowed language to spread more rapidly and widely than ever before, and as a result, new linguistic features and trends can emerge and gain traction quickly. This has led to the creation of new words and phrases, as well as changes in the way we use existing words and expressions.

Language and social media have had a profound impact on each other. Below are some additional ways in which language and social media intersect:

Globalization of language: Social media has made it possible for people from different parts of the world to connect and communicate with each other in real-time. This has led to the globalization of language, with people using English, Spanish, Mandarin, and other languages to communicate with each other across borders and cultures.

Increased use of abbreviations and acronyms: Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have limited character counts, leading to the use of abbreviations and acronyms to convey complex ideas in a short amount of space. For example, LOL (laugh out loud), BTW (by the way), and YOLO (you only live once) are common internet slang used on social media.

Influencer marketing language: Influencer marketing has become an essential component of social media marketing, leading to the creation of new language and terminology. Terms like "influencer," "brand ambassador," and "sponsored post" have become common terms in the marketing industry.

Social media trolling: Trolling refers to deliberately posting inflammatory or offensive comments on social media platforms with the intention of inciting a reaction from others. This has led to the creation of new trolling language, including phrases like "troll," "flame bait," and "shitposting."

Mememes

Mememes are a way in our society to share thoughts, feelings, humour and ideas overall. We find mememes so intriguing because they are relatable and audiences thrive for things that they can relate to. Mememes are a way of communication in our society and they will continue to grow and become more popular. Mememes has project to wide spread populations of internet ideas has become a current practice in many social media platforms across the globe (Kulkarni, 2017). Social media platforms seems to be one of the fastest way in communicating humorous ways in the world. It is the platform which had an estimated globe use population 180million, has 92.4 million active subscribers. A number of active users on social media sites thrive on the creation and circulation of MEMES. These tends to contain (images, videos, texts and Gifs) projecting cultural symbols or social ideas, which often go viral in the social media platforms.

The term "mememes" is largely attributed to Richard Dawkins-an evolutionary biologist, in his book *Selfish Gene* (1976). But the word "mememes" originate from the Greek word "mimēnia". Dawkins defined mememes as small cultural units of trans-mission, similar to genes that spread from person to person by way of imitation.

Abbreviations as part of informal language are also employed in mememes to convey meaning. Shifman (2013) posits that internet mememes are not single ideas or formulas that spread easily, but rather groups of content items created with awareness of each other and which share common characteristics. Shifman then isolates three possible dimensions that make up mememes and which can potentially be imitated: content (referencing both the ideas and the ideologies conveyed), form (the physical format of

the message perceived through the senses) and stance (ways in which addressers positions themselves in relation to the text, the reader/viewer and other potential speakers). While Shifman speaks about these dimensions in terms of a memetic YouTube video called "Leave Britney Alone", it applies well to mememes in other formats as well and does a good job of explaining the flexibility in how many ways a mememe can be altered without losing the reference to the original.

Empirical review

Studies pertaining to the ASUU strike, ever since its inception, and the role of mememes and humor has been motivated in creating humorous effects on different social media platforms. Thus, each researcher tends to use different disciplines such as pragmatic, stylistic, discourse analysis, socio-linguistic, and semiotics. For instance, Ugwuona (2016) attempted a description of the ASUU strike discourse in Nigeria. The study used the critical discourse analysis of van Dijk's (2001) models as the theoretical framework to trap the gaps between the language of truth and the ideological use of the language in the discourse about the (incessant) ASUU strike. The researcher seeks to identify and analyze the ideological use of language in the 2013 ASUU strike discourse in Nigeria.

Ogbette et al. (2017) did research using a pragmatic analysis of the discourse of humor and irony in selected mememes on social media. He examined how mememes peculiar to Nigerians on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram employ language to convey humor and irony. The study revealed that three guises of humor namely: sarcasm, witticism, and pun were prominent in the reaction to the originating posts with sarcasm constituting the major guise of humor used while posting on social media.

Ogungbe and Omolabi (2020) focused on, the pragmatics of coronavirus-motivated humor on social media. The study was conducted to investigate humor that reflects the social, economic, and health challenges in Nigeria shared through social media to identify CMH as a form of humor through which the real-life experiences of other people can be understood. The theory used to analyze the CHM was Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. The study investigated that the pragmatic relevance of CMH is embedded in its social functions as it serves as an indicator of the sense of citizens' freedom and a practice of warning to the corrupt and inefficient leaders in Nigeria, particularly on health facilities in the country.

Nneji (2013) worked on humor research using a semantic and pragmatics lens. His focus was the perception of Nigerian jokes as humor construction. In the study, he investigated everyday jokes that Nigerian citizens expressed on naira land, a social media platform.

The identity of the users was left anonymous. Drawing on the incongruity theory. Nneji affirmed that jokes depict the socio-cultural life of the Nigerian people.

Mohammed (2016) researched on public discourse of the 2013 university lectures strike in Nigeria. He focuses on the visual language of the discourse by the public to analyze and interrogate the meaning communicated through the semiotic choices made in the discourse. Thus 10 purposively selected visual images circulated on various social media which were downloaded from Google constituted the data while systematic functional multimodal discourse analytics theory was employed as the theoretical framework for data analysis.

Makinde and Mgbodi (2022) investigated the visual representation of the ASUU strike in Nigeria. The study, therefore, analyses how cartoonists manipulate symbols, signs, and other semiotic resources to convey specific meanings through visual and textual representations. Here, metaphorical manipulation and representation of visual elements in the selected cartoons are interrogated. The study adopts a qualitative research design; data comprising cartoons sourced from selected Vanguard Newspapers and websites are analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen's visual semiotics and interpreted from the standpoints of Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach and O'Halloran's position on metaphorical constructions of meaning. Thus, different researchers derived using various disciplines been said above, such as socio-linguistic, critical discourse analysis, semantics, multi-modal and pragmatic in carrying out the analysis of their data. Also, they use the different theoretical framework of scholarly approaches/concepts adopted (Jacob Mey's (2001) allopract, leeches, Austin speech act, etc.). But none of the listed researchers were unable to carry out thorough findings using Acheoah's (2015) pragma-crafting theory as the theoretical framework. However, the pragma-crafting theory is one of the latest, emergent, linguistic theories for the analysis of discourse, which helps in depicting language use, comprehension, and function as conscious, systematic, and people-driven phenomena, likewise the insights of other disciplines and gives a vivid understanding with the two main key's EVENT.

Theoretical framework

The study adopts Acheoah's (2015) Pragma-Crafting Theory, it is an extension of previous profounded theory of pragmatics such as Austin's speech act (1962) and Jacob Mey (2001) pragmatic act. Therefore, this present study attempts to explain what the speaker means by performing linguistic, extralinguistic and psychological acts in discourse. Thus, what a speaker means transcends sentence meaning. For this reason, existing theoretical frameworks do not attempt to resolve the controversy over sentence non-literality and semantic under determination,

which are misconstrued concepts in the literature of pragmatics and speech act study. The Pragma-crafting Theory consists of categories for explaining the speaker's meaning from both sentential and extra-sentential constraints. The theory exposes the strengths and weaknesses of the existing pragmatic theories and methodologies which are applied in the analysis of discourse. That's Pragma-crafting Theory introduces new components for the pragmatic analysis of spoken and written communication. Features of immediate and remote contexts as well as the analysis of latent meanings in communicative events have not been adequately accounted for by the existing pragmatic analytical frameworks.

Acheoah coined the idea of P-crafting from the phrase of "pragmatic crafting". The theory views discourse as a pragmatic crafting activity. Crafting has to do with the discourse strategies which participants employ in the structuring of communications. Utterances are produced through the goal-driven patterning of sentences in particular forms.

It begins from the micro level as a unit of discourse, and extends to the macro level as a body of discourse. For example, conversational turns may be initiated with a topic which generates further topics, and subsequently, more speech acts, presuppositions, coherence and other discourse phenomena become naturally incorporated in the communicative event as participants express ideas meaningfully by exploring contextual nuances. Acheoah (2015) further said that Every Pragma-crafting (P-crafting) involves illocrafting, uptake and sequel. Therefore, P-crafting is a super-ordinate pragmatic act which produces linguistic and extra-linguistic elements of communication. At different stages of a communicative event, there is a candidate for inference. At every such stage, the interactive and non-interactive participants explore P-crafting features (inference features): indexicals (INDXL); shared macro-knowledge (SMK); shared contextual knowledge (SCK); shared knowledge of emergent context (SKEC), geoimplicature (GI); linguistic implicature (LI); contextual presupposition (CP); behavioural implicature (BI), pragmadedeviant (PD), object referred (OR) and operative language (OL) to ascertain messages and sequels. Bosco *et al.* (2006) opine that conversation is a two-fold activity in which the participants form utterances that are products of shared meaning, and such utterances produce felicitous results to the communicative event. The Figure 1 is illustrious:

The P-crafting structure (Figure 1), reveals the two-fold structure of p-crafting: EVENT and TEXT. The EVENT deals with participants of discourse (interactive and non-interactive). It encompasses both for an interactive participation in communicative event, the interactive participants produce linguistic, extra linguistic (being interactive does not necessarily mean producing sounds; silence interacts that is, communicates messages in discourse) and psychological acts. Linguistic act include:

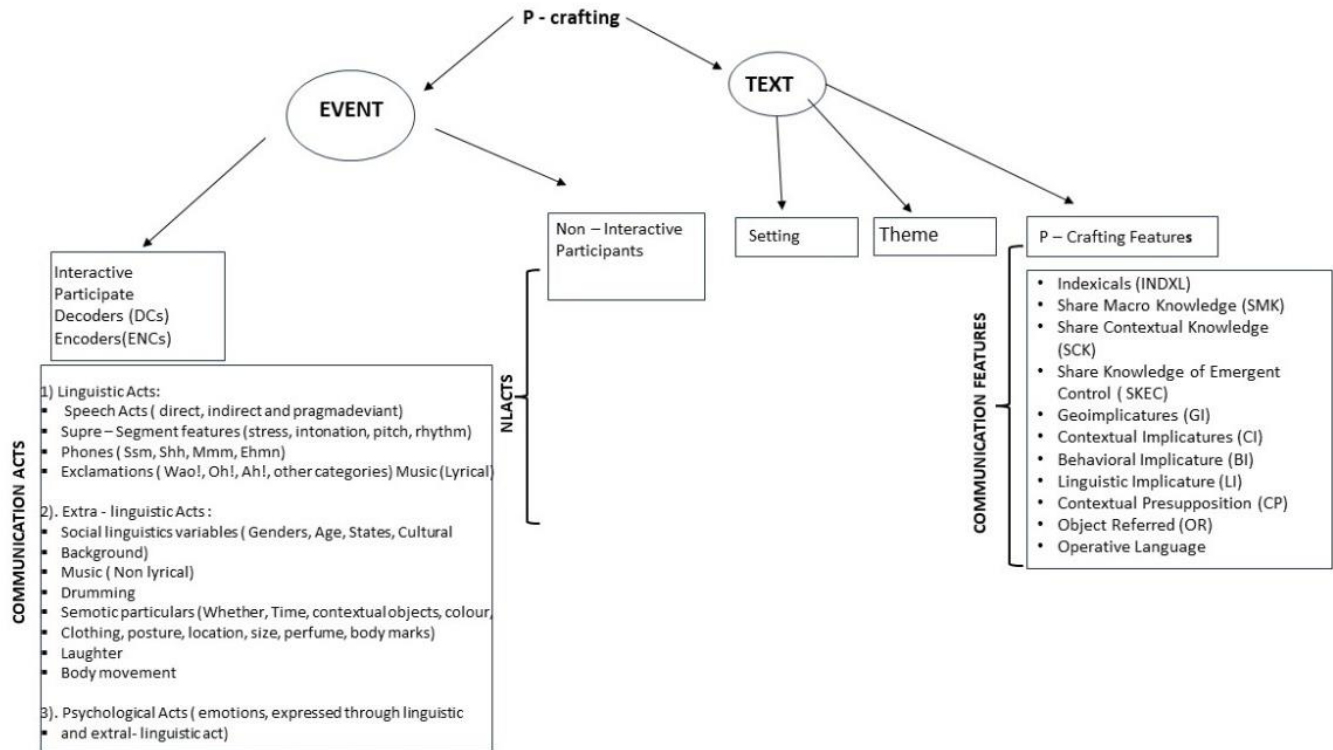


Figure 1. P-crafting structure.

speech act, segmental features, Supra-segmental features, phones, exclamations and lyrical music. Extra-linguistic act include: socio-linguistic particulars (gender, age, status, cultural background); music (non-lyrical); drumming, gesture, dance, semiotic particulars (weather, contextual objects (CO), colour, dressing, location, size, shapes and body marks); and silence. Psychological acts are the discourse emotions express through linguistic and extra linguistic acts. The three major categories of acts of EVENT interpreting the communicative event with participants (interactive and non-interactive). TEXT embodies both SETTING and THEMES each facilitate this process of interpretation. SETTING is used to refer to the physical content revealed by a TEXTs. Thus, it should be known that not all texts are SETTING revealing. While THEMES in the other hand, this is when the messages revealed in TEXT through the topic-suggestive words and p-crafting features. Well, p-crafting theory explains that “indeed” communicative acts (CA) (the term is differentiated from speech acts) used in EVENT relate with “communicative features” (CF). Thus, linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts are “communicative acts” also P-crafting features are “communicative features”.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative study that explores how

ASUU strike memes motivated humor on social media and can be analysed through Acheoah's (2015) P-crafting theory. This provides a distinctive analysis of contextual meaning within all ASUU strike memes on social media on the internet: the text, image combinations and works together to create humorous meaning. The data were in form of images, words or phrases, and sentences, generated from Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, because of the widespread usages from different countries and how fast they go viral with some seconds passing trending issues communicate through memes to create a humorous sense in those platforms. A total of 5 selected ASUU strike memes were purposively selected and used for the data analysis of this study, being cited from each of these social media platforms.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Memes play very interesting roles that makes them go viral, due to how easily they are passed across in a unique way. For this analysis, the branch of language that is concerned with the study of language use in relation to the acts performed, its effect on participants in relation to the context of usage, which is Pragmatics, would be the basis. However, a purely pragmatic analysis can neither explain the concepts of language nor the wide range of contextual factors necessary for a comprehensive understanding of



Text 1. A young boy (Source: Facebook).

memes, particularly in a contemporary and general issue like ASUU strike. Hence, the in-depth pragmatic analysis which explores the direct and indirect linguistic, extralinguistic and psychological acts must systematically explore the pragma crafting features present in the memes and what they allude to – Pragma-Crafting theory, Acheoah (2015).

Text 1

Linguistic Acts:

Speech Act (Direct): Assertive – (Informing, Telling)

Speech Act (Indirect): Expressive – (Delight, Exult)

- **Extralinguistic Acts:**

Sociolinguistic Variable:

- Social status – (Student)

Semiotic Particulars:

Contextual Object – A young boy

Color – Green

Clothing – A school uniform with a school backpack and stocked in school fitting shoes and socks.

Posture – Dancing

Size – Small boy

Laughter: A smile borne out of delight

Body Movement: Dancing

- **Psychological Acts:** Delectation

- **Pragma-Crafting Features:** The shared contextual knowledge running through this visual picture is the direct speech act of informing and telling concerned students of the commencement of the ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) strike in Nigeria (GI), and the indirect speech act of delighting and

exulting, expressive from the psychological acts. The above association began the nationwide strike on February 14, 2022. It is a protest against the government failure to release revitalisation funds for universities, failure to deploy the university transparency accountability system for the payment of salaries and allowances of lecturers. The encoder (OR) can be concluded to be a student affected by the strike action embarked on by the association. The foreground resource is a young boy who appears to be full of life and happy. This kind of image is referred to as an offer image. This is because it draws the attention of the viewers, and it is taken from a medium long shot which makes the image visible from the toe upwards. This is used to connect the viewers to the image. The participants are seen wearing a school uniform, a school backpack and fitted pair of shoes, to show he’s a pupil. This visual picture in relation to the speech attached and a strong base in context, would suppose the young boy to mean a typical Nigerian university student. The participant in this picture although with the situation he is, he is still dancing. This, in close call with the speech attached (LI), and the context of discourse would mean that the students are now well used to the incessant strike action of the association and even now happy that another strike action is being embarked upon, a situation ought to cause despair in the minds of the affected students.

Text 2

- **Linguistic Acts:**

Speech Acts (Direct): Commissive – (Speculating)

- **Extralinguistic Acts:**

Sociolinguistic Variable:



Text 2. A TV News Caster (Source: Tiktok).

- Social status – (Student)

Semiotic Particulars:

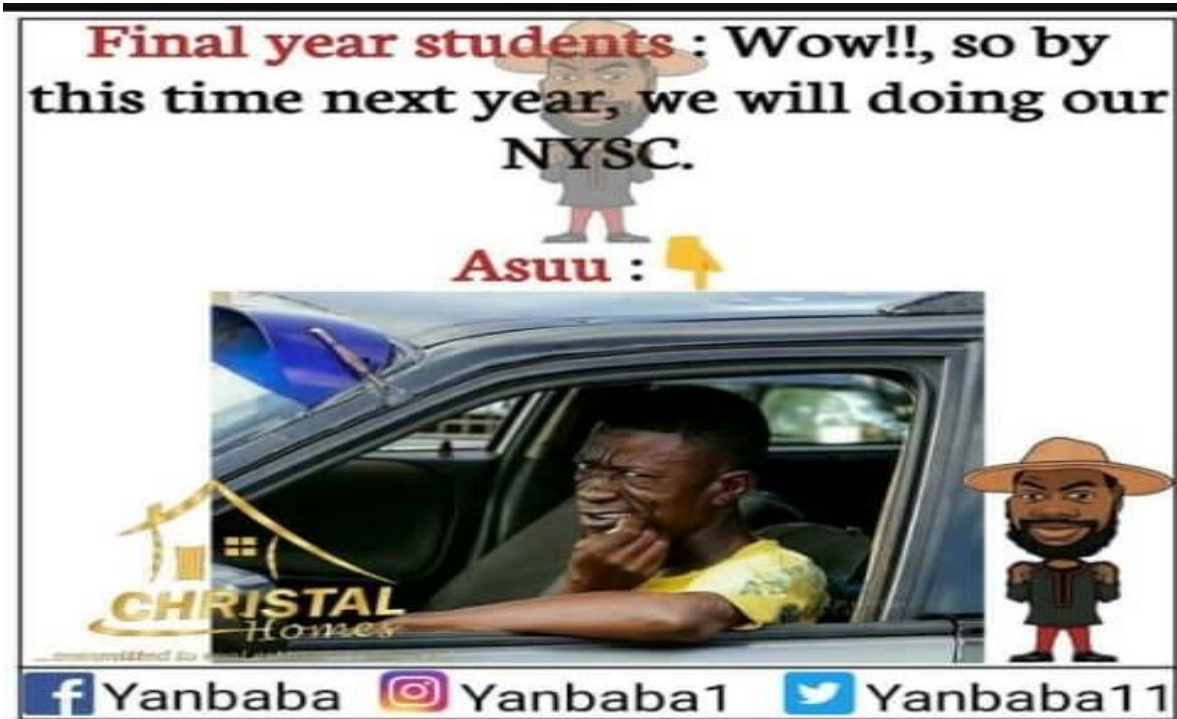
Contextual Object – A TV News Caster
 Color - Black, White, Pink, Green, Blue
 Clothing – A corporate suit with a bow knotted tie
 Posture – Sitting down
 Location – Television Newsroom
 Laughter: A hysterical and intense laughter
 Body movement: The head is tilted down due to intense laughter, which has in turn created a communicative goal.

- **Psychological Acts:** Optimism
- **Pragma-crafting:** In this datum, there is the direct speech act of speculation of the normal time frame to be spent in the university. The encoder can be said to be a student just about entering the 'Nigerian' university and generally educational system. The semiotic particulars however give a relatable reply that can best be understood from the shared contextual knowledge of the discourse (SCK). This is the indefinite strike embarked on by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) dated the 24th day of February 2022. The strike action is a protest against the government failure to release revitalization funds for universities, failure to deploy the university transparency accountability system for the payment of salaries and allowances of lecturers. The contextual object however is the association but presented in this meme as a tv presenter who is engulfed in a deep laughter which is hysterical and best replies the speculation deduced from the linguistic act (CI). The foreground resource is a man who appears to be full of life and happy. This kind of image is referred to as an offer image. This is because it draws the attention of the viewers who share the same contextual

knowledge. The participant is seen wearing a fitted suit with a knotted bow tie to show he's a working class, a specification that fits a corporate association saddled with the responsibilities of putting students welfarism first (ASUU). The background then gives a detailed explanation as to who the participant is – a tv news caster. The participant is seen laughing so hard at the speculation generated from the linguistic act. This, in close relation between the current strike action embarked on by ASUU and the yet apathetic response from the federal government (SCK) would give the response of a speculation '*gone wrong*', and the reason to the hysterical laughter of the object referred (OR) – ASUU.

Text 3

- **Linguistic Acts:**
Speech Acts (Direct): Commissive – (Speculation)
Exclamations (Wow!!): To show excitement
- **Extralinguistic Acts:**
Sociolinguistic Variables:
 - Social Status – (Student)**Semiotic Particulars:**
 Contextual Object – A driver
 Color – Black, Yellow
 Clothing – A round neck t-shirt
 Posture – Sitting down in a car, not moving, and using a toothpick with a hysterical eye facing the reader
 Location – A static car
 Body movement: The head is tilted towards the audience and the cunny look generated from the use of toothpick, which has in turn created a communicative goal.



Text 3. A driver (Source: Facebook).

- **Psychological Acts:** Sanguinity
- **Pragma-Crafting Features:** In this datum, there is the direct speech act of speculation of the time of graduation and eventually serving the nation - Nigeria. The encoder can be said to be a student just entering the final year or in the final year already in a federal government managed university. This assertion is made known by the contextual implicature (CI) of the discourse. The semiotic particulars however give a relatable reply that can best be understood from the shared contextual knowledge of the discourse (SCK). This is the indefinite strike embarked on by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria, dated the 24th day of February 2022. The strike action is a protest against the government failure to release revitalization funds for universities, failure to deploy the university transparency accountability system for the payment of salaries and allowances of lecturers. The contextual object (CO) however is the association aforementioned but presented in this meme as a driver in the act of using a toothpick which has caused him to give an abhor look and best replies the speculation deduced from the Linguistic Act (LI). This kind of image is referred to as an offer image. This is because it draws the attention of the viewers who share the same contextual knowledge. The participant is seen wearing a t shirt and in the driver's seat of a car to show he's a driver – either paid or commercial. The loathe look given by the object in close relation

with the current strike action embarked on by ASUU and the yet apathetic response from the federal government (SCK) would give the response of a misplaced speculation by the encoder of the linguistic act, and the reason to the naughty look of the object referred (OR) – ASUU.

Text 4

- **Linguistic Acts:**

Speech Acts (Direct): Representative – (Assertive, Insisting)

- **Extralinguistic Acts:**

Semiotic Particulars:

Contextual Object – A warrior (ASUU).
 Color – Brown straps around a black man.
 Clothing – Straps mostly worn by warriors.
 Posture – The participant is standing.
 Size – The participant is a huge and hefty man.
 Body Movement: The participant is seen raising his eyebrow and maintaining a stern face like one who is angry and with a opened teeth which shows he is talking. Aside from the communicative effect this gesture has on the discourse, the gesture also tells the psychological state of the contextual object (OR).



Text 4. A warrior (ASUU) (Source: Facebook).

- **Psychological Acts:** Unyielding anger
- **Pragma-Crafting Features:** The shared contextual knowledge (SCK) running through this visual picture is the direct speech act of ASUU, being assertive and insisting on the need to continue the strike action irrespective of the conditions laid down by the federal government already. The semiotic particulars of a man, dressed as a warrior, hefty and strong, with body movements (gestures) that show a stern face with teeth gnashing at one another gives a relatable conception of what the linguistic act posits. It should be noted that ASUU (Academic Staff Union of University) started a nationwide strike on the 24th day of February 2022, following the inability of the federal government to meet their needs - failure to release revitalization funds for universities, failure to deploy the university transparency accountability system for the payment of salaries and allowances of lecturers. However, the union now works in a tight rope as majority of its members from state owned universities are coerced to resume work or risk losing the job. The student national body, NANS (National Association of Nigerian Students), also joined the league of those calling on the members to resume work. Parents of students who have been home for more than 7 months also expressed displeasure on the lingering strike action by the association. Despite the pressure from all angles, the association is still very much reluctant in discontinuing the strike because of three cardinal reasons – salary and welfare issue, adequate funding and provision of facilities and the proliferation of universities by both federal and state governments, which serves as the contextual implicature (CI). The textual part of this image which reads ‘I don’t want

peace, I want war always’, linked to the shared contextual knowledge serves a communicative purpose. The semiotic particulars of the warrior and the gestures also gives a beacon to how ASUU is viewed by the concerned bodies clamoring for a stop in strike.

Text 5

- **Linguistic Acts:**

Speech Acts (Direct): Representative – (Claim).

Speech Acts (Indirect): Expressive – (Lamenting).

- **Extralinguistic Acts:**

Semiotic Particulars:

Contextual Object – A pregnant lady (Nigerian student)

Clothing – The pregnant lady is putting on casual wears, a crop top to show her baby bump, then a pair of night wear

Posture – The pregnant lady is sitting down on a couch with her legs spread wide, just the way a pregnant lady would sit

Body mark – The lady has an expanded tummy that shows that she’s heavy with a baby

- **Psychological Acts:** Hopeless
- **Pragma-Crafting Features:** This is a rare picture that shows the dashed fate of Nigerian students after the long ASUU strike. In this datum, there is the direct speech act of claiming and the indirect expressive act of lamenting. The semiotic particulars of a young lady,



Text 5. A pregnant lady (Nigerian student) (Source: Twitter).

dressed casually in a crop top showing her baby bump and in a pair of night wear (pyjamas) gives a relatable conception of what the linguistic act posits. The shared contextual knowledge also gives the insight of ASUU going on a long nationwide strike due to the inability of the government to meet the needs, inadvertently dashing the hopes of Nigerian students, putting most of the females in the family way at an early stage. The height of the baby bump as shown in the participant visual image gives an insight to how long the strike action has been going on which serves as the contextual implicature (CI). This datum, presented as a humor, best explains the negative effects of the incessant strike action on the students, the parents, and unavoidably the country at large. Learning can only go well when concentration is key and distraction is avoided, but if this be the case, then, there is a looming problem on even the educational system in general. Then the question of the actual fight and claim of ASUU comes to picture - Was the strike action meant to change their personal working conditions or for the interest of the entire students? If it be the latter, then there is an irony sketched already because quietly and gently, the country would be faced with two main stereotypes – *'school na scam'*, *'japa movement'*. In the aftermath, the country would have less qualified personnel and experience a high rate of brain drain due to a step that could have been settled unanimously if the interest of the students (leaders of tomorrow) be put into the main spotlight.

FINDINGS

The P-crafting theory employed for ASUU strike memes has successfully extracted the meaning behind the interaction and non-interaction communication and the selection of direct and indirect act sense from the ASUU

strike memes. The theory provided the key element aspects: Inference (INFR), Shared Contextual Knowledge (SCK), Behavioural implicature (BI), Object Referred (OR) and Operative Language (OL). The Behavioral implicature (BI) plays a crucial role in helping readers extract deeper meanings from each meme. It enables readers to draw inferences or arrive at conclusions about the intentions, attitudes, or character traits of individuals, all based on their observable behaviors. This is achieved by analysing not just the linguistic content of the meme, but also by considering the extra-linguistic cues and psychological aspects embedded within it. These cues include elements like posture, body movements, facial expressions, and emotions portrayed within the meme. By deciphering these non-verbal cues, readers can uncover implied meanings that go beyond the surface, shedding light on the unspoken aspects of the meme creator's intent and the sentiments they aim to convey. The Inference (INFR), on the other hand, empowers readers to engage in a cognitive process of logical deduction. It allows readers to draw conclusions by piecing together available information, evidence, or reasoning. This mental exercise involves utilizing their existing knowledge, observations, or established premises to arrive at new insights that may not be overtly expressed in the meme itself. Essentially, it's about delving into the underlying layers of meaning and grasping the intricacies that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the data presented within the meme. The Operative language (OL) serves as the tool for readers to navigate through the memes and decode their intended messages. It comprises the specific words and phrases that are strategically employed to establish rules, procedures, or instructions within a particular context or domain. This language isn't merely descriptive; it's functional and purpose-driven. It enables readers to grasp the explicit directions or functions outlined within the meme. This type of language is often characterized by its formal or technical nature, ensuring clarity and precision in

conveying the necessary information to the audience.

The study revealed that readers possess the ability to contextualise and accurately interpret the lexical meaning used in selected ASUU strike memes. Understanding the concept of the memes, they are interested in enables readers to detect hidden meanings and interpret the intended message conveyed in the ASUU strike memes. Additionally, readers can comprehend specific pictorial strips by sharing situational knowledge, identifying inferences and shared macro knowledge within the strike memes. All these aspects collectively depict the depth of meaning behind the ASUU strike memes.

Conclusion

The paper has successfully explored the sense of humor in ASUU Strike memes and highlighted the prevalent key elements utilize in the analyzed data. The paper solely employed Pragma-Crafting Theory (P-crafting) for the analysis. It was indicated that the memes in ASUU strike on social media aims to reveal concealed meanings and address societal issues. Moreover, the paper concludes that readers can effectively interpret the lexical meaning employed in ASUU strike memes.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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