

1           **Schematic Structure and Pragmatic Texture of**  
2           **Humorous Metaphors in Nigerian Stand-Up**  
3           **Comedies: An Example from Lagos @50**

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5    *This paper reports an investigation of schematic recurrence and pragmatic imports of humorous*  
6    *metaphors in selected Nigerian stand-up comedies – an area that has not been given much attention in*  
7    *the linguistic literature. The paper ultimately aims to analyse how Nigerian stand-up comedians use*  
8    *pragmatic elements to comment on social cum political issues and how they use different image schemas*  
9    *to pass these messages across to their audience. The paper adopts the critical metaphor approach by*  
10    *Charteris-Black (2004) as the theoretical framework and brings elements of pragmatics to bear on the*  
11    *data. The data was drawn from Lagos @ 50, a fifty day long programme organized to celebrate the 50th*  
12    *year of the state’s creation, which took place between April 8, and May 27, 2017. A specific comedy*  
13    *video clip was purposively selected and analysed. From the analysis, it was found that the comedians use*  
14    *pragmatic presupposition, inference and mutual contextual beliefs in their comedies. It was also found*  
15    *that the comedians use some image schemas like containment schema, movement schema, financial*  
16    *schema, etc. to drive home their points. The paper concludes that Nigerian stand-up comedians do not*  
17    *only make people laugh, but also comment on certain societal maladies. Beyond this, such comedians*  
18    *also use certain image schemas in the process of meaning generation and association between them and*  
19    *their audience.*

1

**Introduction**

2

3 Humour is an inseparable part of human existence. As close as it is to human  
4 existence, however, it has been greatly neglected in the literature, most especially  
5 in the Nigerian context. Therefore, it is important for scholars and researchers to  
6 conduct some studies on humour. In view of the foregoing, this paper has  
7 considered the issue of humour in Nigeria, choosing a specific stand-up comedy  
8 performance as the data and applying metaphorical and pragmatic tools to  
9 analyse the data. The chosen data is a video clip from Lagos @ 50, a programme  
10 used to celebrate the existence of the state for fifty years. The paper starts with a  
11 brief discussion of what humour is, considering the perspectives of some scholars.  
12 It goes ahead to discuss the relationship between humour and pragmatics before  
13 explaining what metaphor is. Image schema is a prominent concept in metaphor  
14 studies. There are different types of image schema, and the identified types in the  
15 selected data will be discussed later. The theoretical framework for the study is  
16 also discussed, mainly from the perspective of Chartaris-Black (2004), who is the  
17 proponent of the theory. The analysis follows, and it is divided into two parts.  
18 The first part brings out the metaphorical tools, i.e. image schemas in the data.  
19 Some of the image schemas found in the data are containment schema, movement  
20 schema, and financial schema. The second part considers the pragmatic imports

1 of the data, and it is discovered that the data contains presupposition, mutual  
2 contextual beliefs, shared linguistic knowledge, etc.

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### Humour

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7 Comedy can be referred to as any literary work, stage performance, audio  
8 recording or any other piece that has humorous effects or which induces laughter  
9 from the audience. This can be in form of theatre performance, television or film  
10 show, stand-up comedy, magazine or newspaper write-up, cartoon presentation  
11 or any other form that performs the function of laughter inducement. The above  
12 assertion indicates that humour is subsumed under comedy. In the light of the  
13 foregoing, Gulas and Weinberger (2006) perceive humour as any informal speech  
14 or writing with the aim of amusing or arousing laughter in either the hearer or  
15 the reader. Similarly, Adedimeji (2002, p.365) asserts that 'the effect of jokes is  
16 humour attained through the understanding of their meanings.' Therefore,  
17 humour has not been attained until the listeners understand and appreciate what  
18 has been said. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, stand-up comedy as a means of presenting  
19 humour has gained a lot of patronage among people of different cultures.

20 Humour performs a lot of roles in human society. According to Katayama  
21 (2009, p.125), "humor brings people together under shared laughter". This

1 indicates that as opposed to being an individualized phenomenon, humour is a  
2 collective phenomenon. This means that it functions as a means of uniting people.  
3 Besides this, humour also has some sociological roles (Campisano, 2016).  
4 Friedman and Kuipers (2013, p.181) submit that “there is no complete sociological  
5 consensus” regarding the sociological roles of humour. Be that as it may, humour  
6 performs the function of promoting social inclusion and exclusion. It also reduces  
7 and reinforces status differences as well as strengthens the feeling of  
8 connectedness (Alatalo & Poutiainen, 2016).

9 Roux (2008, p.89) opines that humour is triggered by particular mechanisms,  
10 which “can be grouped into three main categories; namely the cognitive theory,  
11 the superiority theory, and the relief theory”. Similar to Roux’s assertion,  
12 Campisano (2016) also identifies cognitive, superiority and relief theories of  
13 humour. The difference is just that while Roux refers to them as mechanisms that  
14 trigger humour, Campisano calls them the primary sociological theories of  
15 humour. Therefore, this study agrees that there are three theories of humour and  
16 they will be briefly explained.

17 Cognitive mechanism or cognitive theory of humour deals with the structure  
18 of the message as formed on the listener’s or reader’s mind and how this  
19 formation constrains interpretation. According to Campisano (2016, p.27), from  
20 the cognitive perspective, humour “relies on contradictions and incongruences in  
21 both the content and subject matter of the humorous message as well as the

1 means by which that message is communicated to an audience.” Thus, the way  
2 the humorous message is formed on the listener’s or reader’s mind will determine  
3 whether the message will induce laughter or not.

4 The second theory, which is the superiority theory or mechanism of humour,  
5 focuses attention on the social function or relevance of humour (Gulas &  
6 Weinberger, 2006). Whatever will be humorous must have superior comic effect  
7 on the listener’s or reader’s mind before it can be effective. This means that what  
8 will be considered humorous must have the capacity to induce laughter from the  
9 audience. It has been asserted that “the superiority theory can be clarified in  
10 terms of superiority, aggression, hostility, ridicule or even degradation.  
11 Superiority seems to be present even in humour that appears to be harmless”  
12 (Roux, 2008, p.90). This shows that the theory identifies some elements which can  
13 make expressions, situations, etc. humorous.

14 Relief mechanism deals with how humour helps to diffuse tension, especially  
15 when people are apprehensive about certain things that have made them feel  
16 uncomfortable. In addition to the above, Campisano (2016, p.27) submits that the  
17 relief theory of humour suggests that “humor is drawn from the build-up and  
18 release of tension, often as a defense mechanism, in order for a speaker to vent or  
19 explore deeper feelings they might not otherwise be willing to address.” This  
20 shows that in addition to relieving tension, humour is a means of concealing the  
21 speaker’s or societal identity while passing across an intended message. It should

1 be noted that this theory has a close bearing with the sociological function or role  
2 of humour as it can perform some corrective functions in the society.

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### **Humour and Pragmatics**

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7 According to Yule (1996, p.3), pragmatics refers to “meaning as  
8 communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)”.  
9 This implies that what someone communicates may be different from what the  
10 other party will interpret. Thus, both the speaker (or writer) and the listener (or  
11 reader) must have a meeting point before meaning will be adequately conveyed  
12 pragmatically. Some elements of pragmatics must be present before humour can  
13 be successfully created. This explains why it has been asserted that “a speaker can  
14 only say a joke when s/he is aware that the addressees are aware of the  
15 underlying background assumptions that are needed for the interpretation of the  
16 joke. These background assumptions include the belief that the addressees will  
17 not take the joke at face value, and the belief that the situation of interaction  
18 permits her/him to tell a joke” (Filani, 2016, p.8). Therefore, the mutual contextual  
19 belief (MCB) must be in force before humour can be created. Other elements of  
20 pragmatics that may be present before humour can be negotiated include shared

1 cultural knowledge, shared situational knowledge, shared linguistic knowledge,  
2 reference, inference, presupposition, etc.

3       These pragmatic elements will be briefly explained from the perspectives of  
4 scholars like Schiffrin (1994), Grundy (2000), Osisanwo (2003), Black (2006), etc.  
5 Although some of the scholars have different perceptions of the elements, the core  
6 of the elements will be referred to in this work without taking sides. Shared  
7 cultural knowledge deals with understanding of the cultural nuances that guide  
8 utterance generation and interpretation as shared by both the speaker and the  
9 hearer. Similarly, shared situational knowledge is the possession of the  
10 knowledge about the situation by the discourse participants while shared  
11 linguistic knowledge deals with linguistic competence shared by the discourse  
12 participants. Presupposition happens when a speaker takes it for granted that the  
13 hearer has certain background information about the subject being discussed.  
14 Implicature is the intended meaning of an utterance but which is not encoded in  
15 the linguistic structure of the utterance but can be 'read between the lines'.  
16 Inference happens when a speaker or writer employs language to connect prior  
17 knowledge to present utterance to create meaning beyond what is directly or  
18 overtly expressed by the speaker or the writer. Reference deals with the speaker's  
19 or writer's use of language in such a way that it facilitates the understanding of a  
20 particular message by the hearer or reader.

1       The relationship between context and text is also important in the study of  
2 pragmatics, and it can be applicable to how humour is created. Text, which  
3 Schiffrin (1996, p. 51) refers to as “how what is said conveys what is done”, is one  
4 of the essential elements. Text can simply be referred to as the linguistic elements  
5 used to realise a particular meaning. This means that text can be written or oral,  
6 depending on the medium of communication adopted by the interlocutors.  
7 Closely associated with text is the idea of context. Context deals with those  
8 conditions that do not only make an utterance true but also make such an  
9 utterance appropriate. Context can be referred to as the backbone of meaning  
10 because it determines what meaning will be given to a particular utterance  
11 (Odebunmi, 2002).

12       According to Osisanwo (2003), context can be classified or divided into  
13 physical, socio-cultural, psychological, and linguistic contexts. The physical  
14 context deals with the geographical location or environment within which an  
15 utterance is made. This includes participants, the surroundings, the time,  
16 activities taking place there and any other thing that can be associated with the  
17 physical environment. Socio-cultural context covers the speech community which  
18 the discourse participants belong to. Under this sub-type of context are issues like  
19 the people’s cultural backgrounds, belief system, habits, religion and value  
20 system among others. Psychological context describes the state of mind of the  
21 discourse participants. It deals with whether the participants are happy or sad,



1 whether both the speaker and the hearer are interested in the conversation or not,  
2 whether their mindset is the same or not, etc. Linguistic context deals with co-  
3 occurrence of linguistic items used in the utterance as well as the meaning of  
4 individual lexical items.

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### Review on Metaphor

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9 According to Danesi (2004, p.116), metaphor can be traditionally defined as  
10 “the use of a word or phrase denoting one kind of idea in place of another word  
11 or phrase for the purpose of suggesting a likeness between the two.” Similar to  
12 this is Punter’s assertion that (2007, p.12), metaphor deals with “giving the thing a  
13 name that belongs to something else”. Considering these two definitions, the  
14 basic thing about metaphor is transfer of meaning. This meaning is expected to be  
15 transferred from a unit or entity to another. It may be transferred from the  
16 specific type of an item to its general type or vice versa. Metaphor often has a  
17 connection with the context within which it occurs and “it potentially has  
18 linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive characteristics” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.21).  
19 There is usually a shift in the use of a word or phrase from a particular context to  
20 another before it can be referred to as metaphorical. However, there must be an  
21 entry point before the shift can occur. Rather than being limited to a word or

1 phrase, metaphor may also include a shift in meaning of an entire clause or  
2 sentence.

3       There should also be two domains applicable before one can refer to a word,  
4 phrase or any other expression as a metaphor. Thus, there will be a switch  
5 between the expected domain and the unexpected domain. If this switch does not  
6 take place, then a metaphor has not been used. This is why it has been asserted  
7 that metaphor is a “process of mapping between two different conceptual  
8 domains. The different domains are known as the *target* domain and the *source*  
9 domain (Simpson, 2004, p.41).

10       Metaphors can be categorised in different ways but for this study, the  
11 categorisation by Kovecses (2010) will be used because it is based on the different  
12 functions metaphor performs in cognition process. Thus, there are structural,  
13 ontological and orientational metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kovecses, 2010,  
14 p.37). Structural metaphors deal with understanding a target concept through a  
15 source concept. According to Geeraerts (2009, p.207), “structural metaphors are  
16 based on mappings to provide a rich structure of correspondences between the  
17 domains.” It should be noted that the correspondence can only be partial, not  
18 complete or total (Kovecses, 2010, p.38). Ontological metaphors deal with the  
19 tendency of transforming processes into things. However, “this abstraction is  
20 grounded in the body, which is its necessary starting-point” (Lecerle, 2006,  
21 p.177).

1           Orientational metaphor deals with a spatial orientation of concepts or ideas  
2 by structuring ideas, concepts, etc. vertically. According to Geeraerts (2009,  
3 p.207), "Orientational metaphors are of the MORE IS UP type: they apply a  
4 spatial or sensorimotor image schema (like vertical orientation) to an abstract  
5 domain." Considering the way they operate, ideas or concepts are placed in  
6 opposite direction spatially with the positive ones given the label UP, FRONT,  
7 FORWARD, BALANCE, etc., and the negative ones given the label DOWN,  
8 BACK, BACKWARD, IMBALANCE, etc. respectively. Orientational metaphors  
9 can apply to non-living things or abstract ideas. For instance, it may be said that  
10 the security of a country has stepped up, to indicate improvement in security.

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### **Metaphor and Image Schema**

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15           In their explanation of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1980 & 2003) propose  
16 the concept of image schema. According to Geeraerts (2009, p.207), "an image  
17 schema is a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor  
18 programmes that gives coherence and structure to our experience." This is made  
19 possible by our constant experience based on our interactions with our  
20 environment. Image schemas can also be defined as "largely unconscious mental  
21 outlines of recurrent shapes, actions, dimensions, etc., that derive from perception

1 and sensation" (Danesi, 2004, p.68). In other words, image schemas are mental  
2 impressions of our experiences of locations, movements, weight, shapes, sizes,  
3 colours, numbers, feelings, opinions, etc. (Atolagbe, 2014). As listeners, they help  
4 us to understand better what experience the speaker is trying to pass across to us;  
5 and as speakers, they help us to pass our thoughts and intentions across to our  
6 listeners better. When these schemas are used, they help us to concretise our  
7 experiences as language users.

8 According to Gärdenfors (2007, p.2), image schemas "constitute the form of  
9 representation that is common to perception, memory, and semantic meaning."  
10 Kovecses (2010, p.43), observes that "image-schemas are not limited to spatial  
11 relations, such as "in-out." There are many other "schemas" that play a role in  
12 our metaphorical understanding of the world". Image schemas also point to our  
13 basic activities as well as how we relate with our environment on daily basis. In  
14 essence, a lot of our daily activities which stem from our relationship with our  
15 environment can serve as image schemas.

16 Danesi (2004, p.69) opines that there are "three basic types of image schemas  
17 (although a number of others have since been discovered)" and they are  
18 orientational schema, ontological thinking and structural direction. Apart from  
19 the types of image schemas identified above, Saeed (2009) and Muller (2008),  
20 among others, have also identified other ones like containment schema, path

1 schema, force schema, scale schema, balance schema, position schema, etc. All of  
2 these appropriate our perception and interaction with our environment.

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### Theoretical Framework

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7 The theoretical framework for this study is critical metaphor (CM), which  
8 was developed by Charteris-Black (2004). According to Guo (2013, p.476) "With  
9 the development of Cognitive Linguistics (especially metaphor study), more and  
10 more scholars begin to integrate CDA with CMT, giving birth to a new research  
11 field – Critical Metaphor Analysis." Based on the above assertion, it is safe to  
12 opine that CM is an offshoot of metaphor theory. Therefore, its components are  
13 not a complete departure from those of metaphor theory.

14 Li (2016, p.93) submits that "CMA, as an approach to metaphor analysis that  
15 aims to reveal the covert (and possibly unconscious) intentions of language users"  
16 and does not deny the conceptual nature of metaphor. Just like most metaphor  
17 theories, critical metaphor is also based on the claim that metaphor governs  
18 conception between the speaker and the hearer. Hence, Charteris-Black (2004, p.  
19 17) affirms that "a metaphor is conventionalised to the extent that it is automatic,  
20 effortless and generally established as a mode of thought among members of a  
21 linguistic community." This means that it is based on the general context in which

1 the language users find themselves. When metaphor is critical, it 'critically'  
2 examines the contextual implications of the utterances used for meaning  
3 conveyance.

4 In his critical metaphor research, Charteris-Black (2004) adopts a tripartite  
5 approach, which follows the order of identification, interpretation and  
6 explanation of metaphoric ideas. Identification deals with a close reading of the  
7 utterances under discussion, which may be taken from the linguistic, pragmatic  
8 or even cognitive perspectives. Interpretation deals with determining whether the  
9 utterances have metaphorical characteristics or not. If the utterances do not have  
10 metaphorical characteristics, then they will be ignored. If the utterances have  
11 metaphorical characteristics, then the characteristics will be explained. This level  
12 of explanation completes the process of CMA.

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### 15 ***Lagos @ 50: An Overview of the Scenery***

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17 The great city of Lagos turned 50 in 2017. Lagos is the most vibrant city in  
18 Nigeria, known as the financial hub of Africa with exciting non-stop nightlife.  
19 "Lasgidi" or "Eko" as it is fondly called is already showing signs of becoming a  
20 24hours city. Lagos never sleeps is in the same bracket as cities such as New York,  
21 Paris, Las Vegas, and Mumbai. The long awaited celebration of *Lagos @ 50*, meant

1 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the state's creation kicked off on April 8, 2017.  
2 According to the Planning Committee of *Lagos @ 50*, the events lined up for the  
3 celebration have been carefully selected to capture the journey of the state from  
4 1967 till date. Prior to the celebration, the state was decorated with billboards of  
5 notable personalities such as Aliko Dangote, Wole Soyinka, Sunny Iabor, Banky  
6 W., Joke Silva and the incumbent governor of Lagos, Mr Akinwunmi Ambode to  
7 highlight the contributions of the city of Lagos to their success story.

8 The celebration of *Lagos @ 50* started with the Waaka Musical held at Muson  
9 Centre on 8th April, 2017. Following this, there was Fela Concert on the 13th of  
10 April and a boat regatta parade that displayed the culture and tradition of Lagos  
11 on the 15th of April. Several other events were also presented during the fifty day  
12 celebration.

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### Data Analysis

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17 The data analysis for this study is divided into two parts. The first part deals  
18 with the image schemas found in the data, referred to as the schematic structure  
19 of Nigerian stand-up comedy. The second part is the pragmatic imports of  
20 Nigerian stand-up comedy.

21

## 1 Schematic Structure of the Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

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3 The image schemas found in the data are as follows: containment schema,  
4 movement schema, financial schema, property/food schema, and political and  
5 socio-economic schema. Each of them will be discussed in turn.

6 **Containment schema:** Containment schema deals with how an object is  
7 perceived as a container for some items. Naturally, it is generated from the  
8 perception that the human body serves as a container for different parts of the  
9 body. Containment schema in the data is found in the expression: "...our stomach  
10 infrastructure programme..." The expression gives the impression that the  
11 stomach, which 'houses' food in human beings and animals, needs to be filled.  
12 The container has not performed its function until it has been filled with the  
13 appropriate content. Thus, the infrastructure being referred to here is food.

14 **Movement schema:** Movement schema deals with how human beings  
15 perceive themselves, others and any other object to be in motion as well as how  
16 this determines their reaction to those movements. Movement schemas are found  
17 in expressions like: "My people, you see, it is clear that *as we proceed* with our  
18 stomach infrastructure programme, *we need speedy action*. Yes, because of that, I  
19 have budgeted for the purchase of a bombardier." The two instances of  
20 movement schema in the excerpt above are put in italics. The first example  
21 represents, in addition to being a movement schema, forward movement. This is



1 because 'to proceed' has a different position from 'to reverse'. Therefore, the first  
 2 example of movement schema projects the notion of onward movement. The  
 3 second example does not only express onward movement but also represents the  
 4 importance of swift movement. Therefore, it is expected of the people to move  
 5 forward; and move quickly too.

6 **Financial schema:** This goes in the direction of expenditure. It is represented  
 7 with the expression: "Yes, because of that, I have budgeted for the purchase of a  
 8 bombardier." This helps the listeners to understand the concept of money-making  
 9 and money-spending. Although money-spending is the one directly mentioned,  
 10 money-making is implied because money is spent after it has been made.

11 **Measurement schema:** Measurement schema gives us the impression that  
 12 something can be measured/counted or that it is being measured/counted. This  
 13 can be found in the musical interlude used in the data. Although just a phrase,  
 14 which is repeated in the musical interlude, contains the indication of  
 15 measurement schema, the entire expression has to be considered for full  
 16 understanding because the phrase alone does not yield complete meaning. The  
 17 expression that contains measurement schema is as follows:

18

19 *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe ji, (How many, how many do you want to steal)*

20 *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe je (How many, how many do you want to eat/consume)"*

21

1           The measurement schema found in the data indicates, literally, that the  
2 people in question have been taking much more than they can eat or consume.  
3 Therefore, the measurement schema shows that the people's desire to continue to  
4 amass the 'food' amounts to wastage. Beyond the literal meaning, however, the  
5 measurement schema satirizes the Nigerian politicians' attitude to amassing  
6 wealth at the expense of the people's welfare.

7           **Property/food schema:** The property/food schema is used to indicate the  
8 presence or acquisition of property/food by the characters mentioned.  
9 Property/food schema is represented by the following expressions:

10

11           *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe ji,* (How many, how many do you want to steal)

12           *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe je* (How many, how many do you want to eat/consume).

13           Similar to what is found in measurement schema, property/food schema is also used  
14 by the comedian to comment on the acquisition of wealth or property by members of  
15 the political class in Nigeria. They are indirectly accused of having an insatiable  
16 desire for amassing wealth that does not belong to them.

17

18                           Pragmatic Texture of the Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

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20           From the pragmatic viewpoint, it is clear that the presenters of the short  
21 dramatic performance use it to satirise the life of an average Nigerian politician as

1 well as the Nigerian people generally. This is hinged on the fact that the musical  
2 interlude given clearly indicates how badly the Nigerian economy is being  
3 continuously looted by the political class. In fact, it seems as if the major  
4 competition among them is that of 'who can loot best'. The following pragmatic  
5 elements have been identified in the data: presupposition, mutual contextual  
6 belief, shared linguistic knowledge, shared cultural knowledge, shared situational  
7 knowledge

8 **Presupposition:** In their presentation, the presenters make use of a popular  
9 Nigerian hip-hop track titled "Melo-melo" by Olamide. Olamide has been one of  
10 the most prominent Nigerian hip-hop singers since 2014 or thereabouts. The track  
11 talks about the numerous bad experiences of the singer while he was growing up,  
12 especially how his family was battered by poverty. The rhythm of the track is  
13 now employed by the comedians to pass across their message.

14 The presenters take it for granted that members of the audience know and  
15 understand the musical track and its message. By using the rhythm of the track,  
16 the comedians presuppose that members of the audience do not only know the  
17 musical track but also have a thorough understanding of the Nigerian political  
18 situations and how the political class has always looted the country's economy on  
19 numerous counts. Thus, the comedians do not need to mention the political actors  
20 either by name or by political party but only use the dress type of a typical  
21 Nigerian politician to symbolise the class of people that are looting the economy.

1 Using the rhythm of the track, the lyric supplied by the comedians is as  
2 follows: “How many, how many do you want to steal... How many, how many  
3 do you want to eat/consume”. By repeating the expression “how many, how  
4 many”, indicating the countless number of difficult times faced by the musician,  
5 as found in the track; the comedians also portray the countless number of times  
6 the politicians have looted.

7 **Mutual contextual belief:** As found in the data, mutual contextual belief  
8 deals what both the speakers and the hearers know or understand about the  
9 context of communication. This affords the speakers to build on what the hearers  
10 already know so as to pass information across without too much explanation. The  
11 speakers take it for granted that the hearers also understand the message  
12 contained in the playlet.

13 One of the instances of mutual contextual belief is the conviction by the  
14 speakers that the hearers understand the dress pattern of an average Nigerian  
15 politician. Most Nigerian businessmen, either in corporate organisations or small  
16 and medium scale enterprises do not often wear ‘agbada’. Thus, it is believed that  
17 the main speaker is a politician. Another contextual clue is the speaker’s  
18 expression, which contains the word ‘budget’. This is a popular word in politics,  
19 and it has to do with how money is allocated to different things. In this case, the  
20 money is meant to purchase a ‘bombardier’, which may not be relevant to what  
21 people need.

1       **Shared linguistic knowledge:** Both the speakers and the hearers share the  
2 same linguistic code. Although members of the audience may consist of people of  
3 different tribes in the country, the medium of expression is English, which is  
4 Nigeria's lingua franca. Although there is occasional use of Yoruba words, this  
5 does not impede the overall negotiation of the meaning of the playlet even by the  
6 non-Yoruba segments of the audience.

7       A valid reason why the presenters code-mix their expressions with some  
8 Yoruba words is because Lagos has often been referred to as "no-man's land".  
9 Therefore, people of different tribes and cultures of the country live and work in  
10 Lagos. Majority of such people, due to long stay or to the fact that they were born  
11 there understand Yoruba to a large extent. Thus, the mixture of English and  
12 Yoruba does not impede communication because there is shared linguistic  
13 knowledge between the speakers and the listeners.

14       **Shared cultural knowledge:** Both the presenters (i.e. speakers) and the  
15 hearers (i.e. members of the audience) share the same or similar culture, which is  
16 the Nigerian culture. In this cultural space, there exists the political culture of  
17 embezzlement coupled with other national and civil anomalies, which are  
18 understood clearly by the discourse participants.

19       For example, the phrase "stomach infrastructure" originated from Ekiti State,  
20 one of the south-western states of the country. Shortly before the 2014 election in  
21 the state, the incumbent government was accused of borrowing money to develop

1 infrastructure while the people of the state lacked food. This made the opposition  
2 party to promise the people of the state 'stomach infrastructure'. Based on the  
3 promise, coupled with how the opposition was able to provide food for some  
4 people before the election, the opposition party won the election. Since then, the  
5 phrase 'stomach infrastructure' has been in use among Nigerians generally. Thus,  
6 one can talk about the culture of 'stomach infrastructure'. This makes the  
7 expression to become meaningful to both the speakers and the hearers within the  
8 socio-political terrain of the country. Therefore, neither the speakers nor the  
9 hearers need anybody to offer further explanation of the expression to them.

10 **Shared situational knowledge:** The situation is clearly a comic scene,  
11 presented at the occasion of *Lagos @ 50*. It is obvious that both the speakers and  
12 the hearers are aware of this situation and know that whatever the comedians say  
13 is not meant to be quoted or taken as an authoritative claim. Therefore, the  
14 situation is a means of shielding the identity of the speakers as this gives them the  
15 opportunity to comment freely on political cum economic matters without any  
16 fear of molestation.

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**Summary of the Findings**

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3 This paper has found out that Nigerian stand-up comedians use a number of  
4 schematic structures in their attempt to pass across certain meanings, messages or  
5 ideas to the audience. Such schematic structures include containment schema,  
6 movement schema, financial schema, property schema, etc. In addition to this and  
7 apart from amusing the audience or creating humour, stand-up comedians often  
8 use their position to make strong and powerful statements about political issues  
9 without being really held responsible for whatever they say. This is because they  
10 'impersonate' different characters on the stage who are completely different from  
11 such comedians. Therefore, their presentation, in addition to creating humour,  
12 also satirises both political and economic situations of the country.

13 It has also been found out that from the pragmatic viewpoint, a lot of  
14 pragmatic strategies are used by the stand-up comedians in Nigeria. Some of  
15 them are presupposition, shared cultural knowledge, shared situational  
16 knowledge and many more. For instance, it is presupposed that members of the  
17 audience are aware of latest musical tracks and they understand the link between  
18 such tracks and the political situations of the country. Apart from this, it is  
19 culturally shared by both the comedians and their audience that the expression  
20 "stomach infrastructure" is a political strategy used to hijack the electorates'  
21 attention and ensure political success. In addition to this, the comedians ride on

1 the platform of shared linguistic knowledge to enact their illocutions more  
2 effectively, most especially by co-opting a local language that is taken to be  
3 understood by all residents of Lagos, i.e. Yoruba, as a spice in the course of their  
4 comic delivery.

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### Conclusion

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9 This study has considered the Nigerian stand-up comedy from the  
10 perspectives of image schema and pragmatics. The findings have revealed that  
11 some image schemas and some elements of pragmatics are employed by Nigerian  
12 stand-up comedians. For instance, image schemas that convey people's everyday  
13 experiences are easily identified and used by the comedians, and people do not  
14 have any problem interpreting such schemas. Similarly, the pragmatic texture in  
15 the selected data indicates a lot of the people's experiences are expressed by  
16 Nigerian stand-up comedians without inhibition. The paper, therefore, concludes  
17 that an examination of the schematic structure and pragmatic texture of  
18 humorous metaphors in Nigerian stand-up comedies yields a lot of insight into  
19 what people may engage in as a means of voicing their observations and  
20 reservations, especially when they are not getting enough from the government.

21



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**Appendix**

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**3Main Speaker** (Wearing agbada and dressed like a typical Nigerian politician with a native  
4 cap on his head and beads round his neck): “My people, you see, it is clear that as we  
5 proceed with our stomach infrastructure programme, we need speedy action. Yes,  
6 because of that, I have budgeted for the purchase of a bombardier.”

**7Supporting Voice:** Yea! A bomber what?

**8Another Voice:** Illiteracy.

**9Main Speaker:** “My people, you see, it is clear that as we proceed with our stomach  
10 infrastructure programme, we need speedy action. Yes, because of that, I have budgeted  
11 for the purchase of a bombardier”

**12Supporting Voice:** Yea! A bomber what?

**13Another Male voice:** (Calls somebody who looks like a lecturer to come up stage) SMP Mr.  
14 Orisemasetan (Who comes upstage immediately)  
15 (There is a musical interlude before his speech)

**16Singers’ Voices:** (In unision) *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe ji*, (How many, how many do you want  
17 to steal)

18 *Melo-melo, Melo-melolefe je* (How many, how many do you want to eat/consume) {It the  
19 rhythm of a popular Nigerian hip hop track by Olamide titled “Melo-melo”}

**20Lecturer’s Voice:** GPN

**21Chorus:** Wagbayi

**22Lecturer’s Voice:** ... yes has taken both the political and socio-economical stage by storm

**23Chorus:** Yes!

**Lecturer's Voice:** A conocopius apologia must be tendered by SFP when we save our great

2 State of Savannah from becoming a cakisto-opokistrocacy

**Different Voices:** Professor! Professor! Funke! Funke! (All at the same time. One of the

4 characters on the stage, named Funke, faints at the same time. We do not know whether

5 character later wakes up or not.)

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