

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CARTOONS OF THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA

Nelson Orkaan Alyebo & Meshach Terfa Zayol
Department of English, Benue State University, Makurdi

Abstract

Linguistic studies have shown that meaning is derived from utterances through cartoons. Before and during the 2023 presidential elections, the internet and public space were inundated with cartoons intended by the cartoonists to satirize targeted presidential aspirants. The leading contenders in the elections were Asiwaju Bola Ahmad Tinubu, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi. They were heavily cartooned. While Tinubu led with *Emi Lokan (my turn)*, *Batist*, *Batified*, and *Batism*; Atiku Abubakar with *Articulated*, Peter Obi did with *Obident Movement*. Both of these politicians were represented through cartoons, by those against their candidatures or just cartoon enthusiasts. There are cartoonists who represented them in a manner, tone, and language that made them appear not to be worth heaping even with cow dung. This study therefore analyses the different functions of these cartoons in relation to context, cartoon characters, intentions, world knowledge, implicatures, and mutual contextual beliefs. This study analyses the online cartoons through the lenses of Pragma-crafting Theory as a broad and systematic instrument for the explicit and valid pragmatic analysis of texts. The findings of the study reveal that there are latent meanings in the cartoons which transcend sentence meanings and sketched images. The findings also reveal that the intentions, attitudes, expectations, the context in which the cartoons are used and the targets cartooned leave definite impressions on the minds of the readers and viewers.

Key Words: Pragmatics, Cartoons, Context, Pragma-crafting

Introduction

Linguistic evidences abound that proof the impossibility of human beings not to talk to each other or to one another, whether it be via verbal or non-verbal communication. This is because, and as Akmajian et al, put it, "...the most pervasive characteristic of human social interaction, so pervasive that we hardly find it remarkable, is that we talk. Sometimes we talk to particular persons, sometimes to anyone who will listen; and when we cannot find anyone to listen, we talk to ourselves" (364). The same is the case with the Nigerian situation: they talk, and do so through many channels that are available to them. Talks and discussions rise to a crescendo especially during general elections in the country: from Facebook to Twitter through Instagram and WhatsApp, Nigerians are known for the use of cartoons, slogans, and coinages to drive home salient points, ideologies, show support or express vehement disapprovals at any general elections taking place in the country.

The 2023 general elections were not an exception, and the most saturated of them all was the presidential election. The three major contenders in the presidential elections were at the centre of these representations. Bola Ahmed Tinubu – former Lagos State Governor and the All Progressive Congress (APC) Presidential Candidate, was adorned with slogans and adverbial coinages such as "Batist", "Batified", and "Batism", which were coined from his initials and nominalised with suffixes "-ist", "-fied", and "-ism". As is evident, his supporters used these to identify with him, and sooner the terms became symbols of loyalty to him.

Atiku Abubakar – the former Vice President, was also adorned with the slogan and adverbial coinage "Artikulated", shortly after emerging as the presidential candidate of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party at the party's national convention in Port Harcourt in 2018 ahead of the 2019 general elections and later the 2023 general elections as well. Coined from his name

“Atiku”, the slogan became a hashtag #*artikulated*.

The same was the case with Peter Obi – the former Governor of Anambra State, who was the running mate of the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar during the 2019 general elections. He became identified with the hashtag #*obidient* when he withdrew from the last PDP presidential primary and defected to the Labour Party (LP) whose presidential ticket he conveniently won. With large numbers of Nigerian youths passionately volunteering and rooting for him, the slogan “Obidient” was coined from his surname “Obi” while using it to identify with him and promote him as well.

Across the Nigerian cyber platforms, especially Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, the hashtags #*Emi Lokan*, #*Batist*, #*Batified*, #*Batism*; #*Articulated*, #*Obidient* became campaign slogans for the APC, PDP, and LP presidential standard bearers and their supporters. Both of these politicians were heavily cartooned by those against their candidatures, or just cartoon enthusiasts. There are cartoonists who represented them in a manner, tone, and language that made them appear not to be worth heaping even with cow dung. The messages enshrined in cartoons trend both off and online, and even in the political circle; this shows how vital a research on it is to the academic community. This study therefore analyses the different functions of these cartoons in relation to context, cartoon characters, intentions, world knowledge, implicatures, and mutual contextual beliefs. It is in response to the aforementioned calls that this study analyses the online cartoons about the 2023 presidential general election in Nigeria through the lenses of Pragmatic-crafting Theory.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, termed Conceptual Framework, the various concepts in relation to and relevant to the research topic as well as need of the study would be conceptualised through the review. Such concepts as pragmatics, cartoons, context, and the Pragmatic-crafting Theory which form the bases for the analysis of data for this study are reviewed hereunder.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that deals with the study of how language is used as a

social phenomenon which functions in practical social situations. Contrary to the widely-held view, it is not a mere cognitive skill that should be studied from a formal structuralist point of view. It is studied as linguistic feature that attempts to show how speakers and writers make language choices to achieve their intentions. And this they (speakers/writers) do effectively because the context guides them to encode and interpret meanings beyond words or grammatical structures. It exposes language users to the crucial notion of speaker/writer’s (contextual) intended meaning-making process and not just head knowledge but also impacts practically on language performances in general.

There are many views about pragmatics; while some are too broad, some appear to directly link it to language use and context. Explaining thus succinctly, Adrian Akmajian, et al, posit that: “[w]hen Charles Morris proposed his famous trichotomy of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, he defined [pragmatics] as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters”... but he generalized this to “the relation of signs to their users...” (463). They immediately add that: [o]ne year later Rudolf Carnap proposed to “call *pragmatics* the field of all those investigations which take into consideration ... the action, state, and environment of a man who speaks or hears [a linguistic sign]” (463). In lending their voice in disagreement to the aforementioned, they emphasise that:

However, this characterization of pragmatics [stated above] is so broad that it includes all studies of language users, from neurolinguistics to sociolinguistics, and would preclude the possibility of formulating contentful general pragmatic principles. Therefore, we will take the term pragmatics to cover the study of language use, and in particular the study of linguistic communication, in relation to language structure and context of utterance. (463)

The implication of their position above is that pragmatics deals with meaning and it involves the fundamental approach to viewing meaning and its

relationship with reality; as it is for the related theories of meaning that view language itself as systematic to designate many specific things and its symbols.

According to Crystal, “pragmatics deals with the factors that manage the language for what we want to choose within the pool of language that could satisfy whenever it is used within a social interaction and its effects on others” (62-3). Pragmatics is closely related to semantics which “...is the study of the literal meaning towards the speaker or a writer that establishes a relationship with linguistic form and is connected to the individual and the outer world things” (Yule, 96).

According to Etsuko Oishi, “...it has been generally assumed that we have to understand two types of meaning to understand what the speaker means by uttering a sentence.... A sentence expresses a more or less complete propositional content, which is semantic meaning, and extra pragmatic meaning comes from a particular context in which the sentence is uttered” (47). Jean Aitchison shares a similar experience when he posits that: “...word meanings are like stretchy pullovers, whose outline contour is visible, but whose detailed shape varies with use: the proper meaning of a word...is never something upon which the word sits like a gull on a stone; it is something over which the word hovers like a gull over a ship’s stern” (13).

The implication of their submissions above is that words have different meanings in different contexts, and that in looking at the meaning of an expression, we should focus more on the use than on the meaning enshrined in either the words or the expression in general.

Context

Context is the place, time, common ground or shared knowledge and the participants in a conversation or speech situation. It is very important in pragmatic analysis because the meanings of certain expressions are determined by their context of usage. In order to grasp the messages of utterances, one needs to understand the context in which the words are uttered. Hymes (1974) proposed the speaking model of speech analysis which explains this assertion better. According to Hymes:

...in order to speak a language

correctly, one does not only need to learn its vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which words are used. In the speaking model aspects of the linguistic situation are considered and applied to various components of a discourse sample or a communicated message. (65)

In elaborate details, Hymes (1974, 65-66) presents a “SPEAKING model of speech analysis”, revealing the importance of context in understanding language use. His model succinctly explains in elaborate details, setting and scene, participants, ends, act sequence, key, norms, and genre, which for want of space cannot be quoted here.

Cartoons

Etymologically, the word *cartoon* is derived from the Italian word “cartone”, meaning *paper*. A quick dive into the sand of history reveals that painters used cartoons for preliminary draws on which were then transferred either through tracing or punching on to a surface which could be a ceiling or wall. “Cartoon”, as consented to by Agu Margret Nonyere, “certainly ranks among the oldest core content of mass media of communication” (107). The researchers of this study agree with Agu’s submission above considering that pictorial form of communication is as old as man himself; evidences abound of proofs of drawings, paintings, and engraving as cartoon precursors.

According to Agu, “[c]artoon communication most often carries more messages than the spoken and written language. The visual mode of communication in cartoon is given more prominence at the expenses of the verbal, non-verbal and the written mode of communication” (116). This study therefore examines critically and attempts to analyse the pragmatic features in the cartoons about the leading contenders of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. In elaborate details, Aarti Robert, as quoted in Agu, opines that:

Cartoons are visual communication images that contain pragmatic meanings most often satirical in nature while entertaining the reader. It is important to note that only serious minds probe into the

pragmatic content of a cartoon. Some readers may simply end at the entertainment level thus [losing] the pragmatics of the text. (108)

The implication of the submission above is that cartoons are serious methods of communication as they create strong effects on the readers and viewers. This study therefore attempts a pragmatic analysis of online cartoons about the leading contenders in the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Methodology

The data for this study is drawn from online cartoons about the leading contenders in the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria. The researchers adopt the purposive sampling techniques while selecting fifteen political cartoons out of the corpus of the 2023 general elections from online posts. The choice of this sampling technique is deliberate because it aided the selection of the pragma-crafting features that fulfil certain criteria critical to the research purpose.

Pragma-crafting Theory

Pragmatics deals with the analysis of language, discourses, or conversations above the sentence level. While there are many pragmatic theories, this study adopts Pragma-crafting Theory for the analysis of the data collated, and therefore explains only the theory here. According to Emike, John Acheoah and Gbenga Ibileye, "...the focus of pragmatic theories from classical to contemporary times includes speech acts, contexts, shared knowledge and meaning (implicatures and presuppositions)" (1). They further explain that "[a]s a reaction to the state of the literature of

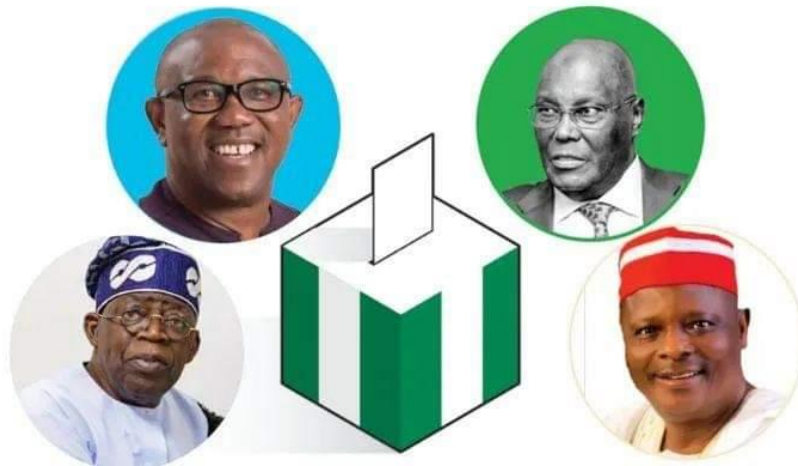
pragmatics, the Pragma-crafting theory attempts to elucidate novel concepts and issues in human communication across genres. The theory is both an improvement and an extension of Mey..." (2). This theory, like other frameworks developed for the pragmatic analysis of discourse, is a product of interdisciplinary research, and thus a suitable choice for this study.

According to Peter Grundy, "Pragmatics remains the study of contextual nuances which determine the use and interpretation of discourse", (267). Consenting to Grundy's position above, Gazdar Gerald opines that "...as long as communicative competence remains the core of pragmatics, a theoretical framework that underscores acts performed in discourse is not only necessary but also non-negotiable" (56).

The pragma-crafting features instrumental to understanding interlocutory roles of interactive participants in discourse or text, and which are used for analysis are explained here. They include: inference, indexical, shared macro-knowledge, shared contextual knowledge, shared knowledge of emergent context, geoimplicatures, linguistic implicature, behavioural implicature, contextual presupposition, pragma-deviant, object referred and operative language. Inference has to do with making logical deductions from available linguistic and extra-linguistic data. Indexicals are grammatical categories that have the potential to establish the relationship between language and context. Shared contextual knowledge is the available pieces of information which only participants of the present discourse have for the communication to thrive.

Data Analysis

TEXT 1



Text 1 shows the leading four contenders in the 2023 presidential elections. They are, as earlier mentioned elsewhere in this study, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi, and Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso. Strategically positioned in their centre is a box, designed in form of a ballot box with a white paper on which a voter casts his or her vote. The colour of the box is green white green, symbolising the Nigerian flag, hence the contestant are called party flag-bearers. The researchers

have chosen to begin the analysis with this so as to bring the reader up to speed of the cartoon analysis that follow.

TEXT 2



Previous antecedents have shown that successors have always promised to step into the shoes of their predecessors, especially during campaigns. In this cartoon, the driver asks former President Buhari about Tinubu's whereabouts and his reply confirms the above assertion. Hear him: "BUT, BABA, NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW WHERE OGA TINUBU IS", and Buhari replies: "DIDN'T HE PROMISE TO STEP INTO MY SHOES?" Besides being sarcasm, this makes caricature of the whole situation. The deadening problems that appear to have forced Nigeria into a hangman's noose seem to swallow Tinubu hence he can't be

seen. Former President Buhari is seen in a Truck hauling and evacuating his goods to Daura, his hometown; the Truck is named "DAURA HAULAGE". Inside the Truck is a bag which, in TEXT 7, was used to package Nigeria's debt of #77 Trillion. The pragma-crafting features of participants, time, place, shared knowledge, shared context, and intentions have been clearly embedded in this cartoon.

TEXT 3

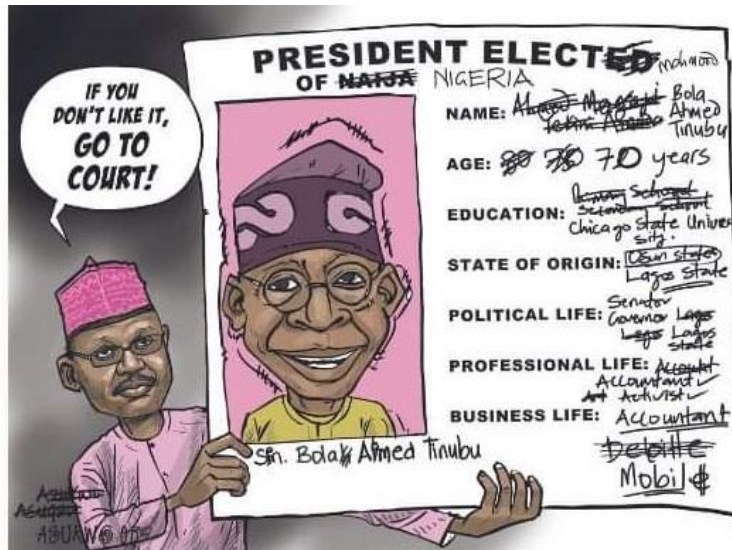


Text 3 contains the APC Jagaban, Bola Ahmed Tinubu being held up to the podium/stand by a beast with the engraving “CORRUPTION” to deliver a speech through recorded channels. Though no name is written in the cartoon, we know it is Tinubu due to his cap. He tells the audience: “I WILL FIGHT CORRUPTION”. The cartoonists appear to show how the incumbent president is installed through and by corruption, or why else would corruption be the one lifting him up to deliver his address? Corruption even makes mockery of him by laughing cynically.

TEXT 4

This Text unveils the controversies that surrounded the declaration of His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

In this Text, the cartoonist cartooned Professor Mahmood Yakubu, raising into clear view, the picture of President Bola Tinubu detailing a brief bio-sketch of the president. However, the critical information informing his details have been cancelled, albeit, like deleted tracked wording. A statement is attributed to the INEC Chairman – Prof. Mahmood Yakubu saying “IF YOU DON’T LIKE IT, GO TO COURT!” The pragma-crafting features of participants are here identified as Yakubu and Tinubu, while aggrieved parties are oppositions and concerned Nigerians. Prof. Yakubu, being fully aware of the irregularities pervading the whole system, tells whoever cares to listen to go to court if s/he does not like the declaration. There are also pragma-crafting features of victory and defeat.



TEXT 5



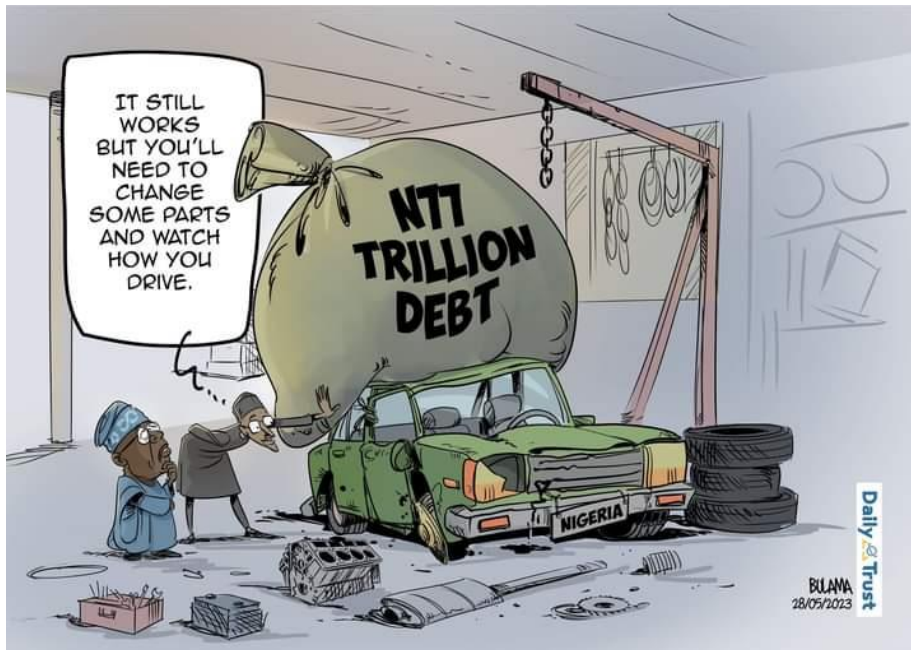
The viciousness and notoriety of the youths termed “obidients” drumming support for the Labour Party Presidential candidate Mr Peter Obi looms too large to go unnoticed. They were so obsessed about Obi emerging victories at the polls that *Obidient Movement* were conducted in almost, if not all the states in Nigeria. In this text, the participant is seen dragging a big bag and saying: “On my way to Peter Obi’s house make he rule only me”. This shows how he feels Obi’s mandate is stolen, and that regardless of whoever is the president, he considers Peter Obi as his president.

TEXT 6



This text contains three participants: Tinubu, Kwankwaso, and Atiku. While Tinubu and Kwankwaso aboard a boat tagged “POLITICAL RELEVANCE”, Atiku is left behind in the ocean. He says: “HELLO... HELLO... PLEASE INFORM HIM THAT IT’S UNFAIR I WAS LEFT BEHIND”. During the presidential electioneering campaigns, aspirants travelled far and wide for consultations and debates to win votes for themselves. Hence, they say *it is said, if you snooze, you lose*.

TEXT 7



Text 7 holds two participants: Former President Muhammadu Buhari and the current president Bola Ahmed Tinubu, both examining a parked vehicle almost breaking out with cold sweat under the heavy weight of a money bag tagged #77 TRILLION DEBT. Tinubu appears to be at a loss as to the status of the vehicle, which in reality, is the country he is now constitutionally tasked to govern; he tilts his head while his right holds onto his chin. President Buhari bends and inspects the vehicle he

has just driven to a halt, and whose condition appears to be in comatose. He tells Tinubu thus: "IT STILL WORKS BUT YOU'LL NEED TO CHANGE SOME PARTS AND WATCH HOW YOU DRIVE". This is a clear mockery of the present state of the nation as Nigeria is plunged into insecurity, fuel hike, hunger, poverty, unemployment, just to mention but a few. The same way things are not functioning in the country is the same way the major car parts are not functional on the vehicle as orchestrated by heavy borrowing and debt profile.

TEXT 8



Text 8 shows Peter Obi on the phone with an imaginary receiver, presumed to be Bishop Oyedepo, the founder/General Overseer of the Living Faith Church Worldwide. In the build-up of the presidential election, Peter Gregory Obi, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party came under fire, a burning inferno of criticisms heaped on him for declaring the 2023 presidential election a religious war. In a viral leaked audio released by People's Gazette, Peter Obi is heard begging Bishop David Oyedepo to help spread the message to his followers in the southwest and north-central states of Nigeria. This confirms how elections in Nigeria are considered *do or die*

affairs. In the text, the cartoonist writes in capital letters to convey the seriousness of the message even as he uses ellipsis, showing how very attentive the speaker was after saying "HELLO...DADDY...THEY SAID THEY HAVE ANOTHER AUDIO...HELLO...DADDY...DADDY ARE YOU THERE?" Graphologically, the text shows the mood, mode, tone, and respect attached to the receiver of the call by the caller. In fact, the caller would simply have sat down while making the call, however, he chooses to stand and firmly grips the

bedpost with his left hand for rigidity, obviously out of respect

TEXT 9



This cartoon portrays a Nigerian situation where two presidential aspirants or just maybe an APC and PDP supporter, in a boat christened “NIGERIA” with the masses, seen here three in number. The ship is sinking as water is seen invading it. The PDP man points his accusing finger at the APC man, saying: “IT’S HIS FAULT!” The cartoonist demonstrates exceptional talent and illustrative proficiency with calligraphic style of presenting the PDP man holding a chisel, while the APC man holds a chisel

slightly down and his hammer raises up. The pictorial illustrations reveal a hole from whence water is seen gushing out, consequently sinking the boat. Typical of Nigeria politicians, both parties result to blame-game. The sinking of the boat symbolises collapse of the country’s leadership, security architecture, economic, educational, and social development just to mention but a few. As Nigerians are known for revolutionary reactions and aggressive protest tendencies, they shout: “WILL YOU KEEP KWAYEET?!”

TEXT 10



Text 10, though very scary and pitiable, is hilarious. The pictorial representation shows former president Buhari bending over, and mockingly, telling the victims breaking out with cold sweat under the assault of a gigantic beast named “INSECURITY”, while crying for “HELP”. Having already overpowered and killed some, in large numbers, the two victims, though very nearly almost

killed themselves, stretch out their hands begging Mr. President to help. With their mouths wide open in shouts of bewilderment, they spit out the word “HELP!”, and the best they get is: “VOTE APC AGAIN IN 2023 FOR CONTINUITY”. This cartoon satirizes the present Nigerian security situation where lives and properties are constantly lost left right and centre, from bandits, armed robbers, terrorists, Boko Haram, farmers/herders clashes, communal clashes, political thuggery and rivalries, to mention a few. These issues are further complicated by poverty, unemployment, hunger and deprivation.

TEXT 11

Text 11 shows the tradition where contestants are subjected to a thorough screening before being pronounced eligible to contest. This even comes after INEC’s initial call to political parties to screen their candidates before presenting them to the election umpire.



In this cartoon, it can be seen how the candidate of the Labour, Peter Obi is being subjected to heavy scrutiny or through a rigorous retune of screening. The cartoonist, however, appears to be an #obidient (a strong supporter of Peter Obi) as this is done to attract the pity and sympathy of the audience. Even though a woman is a member of/in the screening panel, he is

almost completely stripped naked as we can see his underwear, his bare skin-chest, and bare feet. Though in broad day light, torchlights are being flashed on his bare skin to spot anything that will have him disqualified. Just beside them is seated a man, presumed to be the chairman of the screening committee; hence his desk is christened: “NIGERIA 23 SPECIAL SCREENING POINT”. He is seeing/heard screaming: “NEXT CANDIDATE, PLEASE! NEXT!!! NNNEEEEEEEEET!!!” The structure, texture, repetition and pronouncement by him shows how inappropriate and unfair he feels the candidate is being treated. Instead of screening his original certificates/credentials, his body-parts are being screened.



TEXT 12

Text 12 contains four known Actors and what appears to be a monster shielded in a black veil, brandishing a sword in the air as revealed by its right hand. On one hand, there is Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, on the other, you have Bola Tinubu and Rabi'u Kwankwaso. While the duo of Atiku and Obi suggest exposing the shielded monster to light thus: "WE SHOULD EXPOSE IT TO LIGHT!"; the duo of Tinubu and Kwankwaso decline, shouting "NOOO! WE PREFER DAEKNNESS!" Through this pictorial representation, the cartoonist is conscientizing the electorate to make a wise choice of a candidate, and in doing this, he projects

Tinubu and Kwankwaso in bad light. The audience are already aware that light chases out darkness; and where you have a choice of choosing between light and darkness, you should choose light. This is the cartoonist indirect way of campaigning for his candidates against their opponents.

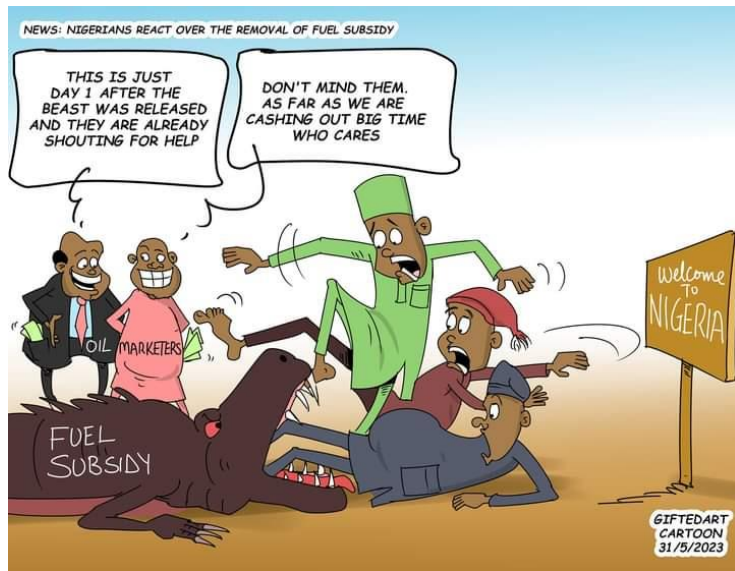
TEXT 13



As is ideal in Pragma-crafting theoretical underpinning, two participants featured in this text are identified and they are former president Buhari and current president Tinubu. The Actor holds a form and directly unveils it into clear view for the Goal to see. Accompanying them is a giant container nailed into an assemblage of a roller-coaster package and is here named "NIGERIA". The Actor then tells the Goal: "I HAVE DELIVERED AS AGREED, PLEASE, SIGN HERE.. 'ORIGINAL WAHALA RECEIVED BY ME'". When one pays a close linguistic attention to

the cartoon, one will understand what the Actor describes as "original wahala", as in the container, giant snakes push out their heads with deadly engravings on them such as "debt", "death", "hate", "anger", "hunger", "poverty", and "insecurity". The Goal, who here is Bola Ahmed Tinubu, is seen signing to receive Nigeria, and is now under his ruler-ship and leadership. It must be said that what the cartoonist cartooned in the box is a true picture of Nigeria, hence the "wahalas" contained in the container are, as they then were, still staring us in the eye.

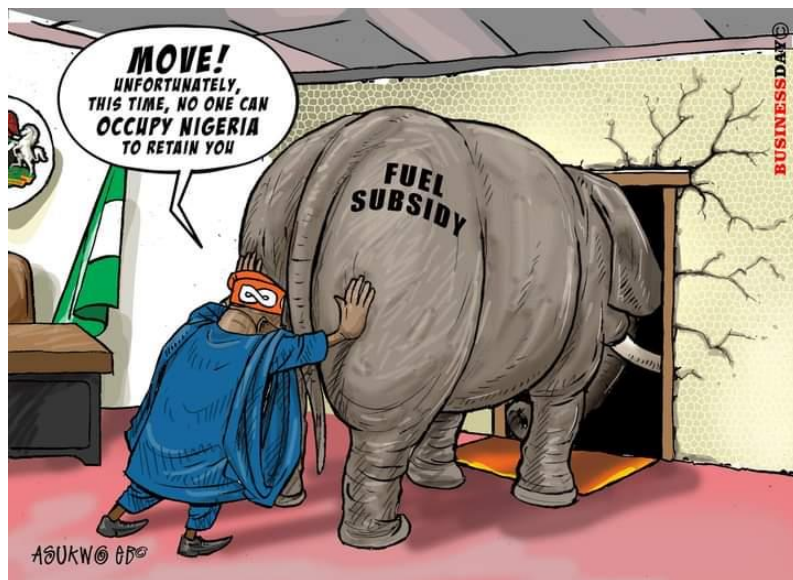
TEXT 14



The kind of scenario cartooned in Text 14 is sort of played out here, though with different participants and pictorial representation in words. In Text 10, we noticed it to be very scary and pitiable but equally quite hilarious at the same time. While the pictorial representation in Text 10 shows former president Buhari bending over, and mockingly, telling the victims breaking out with cold sweat under the assault of a gigantic beast named “INSECURITY”, and crying for “HELP”, in Text 12, “OIL MARKETERS” are doing the mocking even as the victims are being swallowed by the beast named “FUEL SUBSIDY”. The victims, in their falling positions, are tilted towards a big signpost with the engraving:

“Welcome to NIGERIA”. In mocking ululation, the first Oil Marketer says: “THIS IS JUST DAY 1 AFTER THE BEAST WAS RELEASED AND THEY ARE ALREADY SHOUTING FOR HELP”, and his partner in crime concords: “DON’T MIND THEM. AS FAR AS WE ARE CASHING OUT BIG TIME WHO CARES”. This ideology reminds one of how Point of Sale (POS) owners treated Nigerians during the cashless policy in the build up to the 2023 general elections. POS users heavily extorted people as they had increased transaction charges due to the scarcity of the new naira notes. Nigerians then faced unpalatable dilemma: to endure a huge throng of cues in banking halls or pay horrendously high transaction fees to POS operators as some charged N3,000 for N5,000. In most instances, money was way-billed to relatives living in other locations and states. This shows how Nigerians use every opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow human beings, as is the cash in the present subsidy removal.

TEXT 15



Text 15 shows Bola Ahmed Tinubu pushing a giant elephant into a door too tiny to allow it passage. As the cracks from the door-surrounding walls reveal, the gigantic nature of the elephant’s bones and head cannot exit. On the elephant is the engraving – FUEL SUBSIDY, boldly written in upper case letters. Graphologically, this is deliberately done to convey the seriousness of the problem generated by fuel subsidy which must now be flushed out of the country, and who else legitimately constituted to do this but Tinubu. Atop his head is the expression cartooned to be coming from Tinubu: MOVE! UNFORTUNATELY, THIS TIME, NO ONE CAN OCCUPY

NIGERIA TO RETURN YOU.

In this text, the pragma-crafting elements of *war* and *defeat* stand out prominently. Pushing the elephant out of the country is indeed a war, but the needle-like nature of the channel presupposes defeat as re-echoed by sarcasm and mockery.

Conclusion

From the forgoing prognosis, it is apt to posit that there are many ways in which meaning can be communicated through language. The major thrust of this study, as demonstrated through the data analysis, is examining cartoon communication which has become a sensitive tool used by animation experts to send serious messages to their readers and viewers. The study has shown that cartoons are embodiment of serious messages meant to entertain, enlighten, mock, satirize, and most importantly, educate the reading population. The cartoons selected and analysed here are specifically political and they carry or convey strong political messages. Consequently, the pragma-crafting features of the cartoons should be given close linguistic attention and interpretations rather than seen as mere mimics, humour, or comedies. The study conclude that the latent meanings in the cartoons which transcend sentence meanings and sketched images have revealed the intentions, attitudes, expectations, the context in which the cartoons are used and the targets cartooned left definite impressions on the minds of the readers and viewers about Asiwaju Bola Ahmad Tinubu, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, who were the leading contenders in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

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