

Linguistic Features of Humour in Nigerian Stand-Up Comedies: A GTVH Approach

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Abstract

Humour is a statement, action, or behaviour that can make people laugh. However, in some cases, humours attract the opposition reaction, whereby the targets of jokes react negatively as a result of the negative emotions elicited by the comedians. The aim of this study, therefore, is to identify the linguistic strategies used in Nigerian stand-up comedies to evoke laughter. Data were collected from four Nigerian stand-up comedies and analysed qualitatively through the lens of Attardo and Raskin's (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humour. Findings reveal the use of figurative expressions, especially simile, metaphors, hyperbole, personification, irony and synecdoche, simple, descriptive and active language, as well as slang to construct humour. It was further discovered that the comedians create incongruity, which triggers laughter and douse tension and further used indirect way of attacking their targets. The study concludes that the comedians prevented negative reactions because they did not make the targets of their jokes feel directly attacked. This research provides an insight into the use of humour in the right context to evoke appropriate emotions without triggering the wrong reactions from the audience.

Keywords: humour, language, general theory of verbal humour, stand-up comedy

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Introduction

Language is a device that was invented primarily by humans for communicative purposes. However, its communicative tendency enables it to perform other functions, which include transmitting cultures, influencing and persuading others, as well as changing people's realities and statuses. Another important communicative function performed by language is that it enables its users to express their feelings and emotions. This function enables the establishment of cordial relationship between people because humans are known to reciprocate emotions. In other words, when people express their emotions towards something or somebody, they tend to receive emotional reactions from the audience. The ability of language to trigger emotional reaction further captures another critical functions it performs in social environment. This specific function is being harvested by comedians, especially stand-up comedians, who use verbal humour, which is created with language alone, to entertain their guests. Stand-up comedy refers to the type of comedic shows, where comedians perform live in front of an audience with an intention of entertaining and making them laugh (Romansyah et al., 2020). It is an age long art that is still in practice in contemporary society. Here, the organizers invite comedians to present their verbal gimmicks on stage, whereby they (the comedians) entertain guests with original jokes (Mulyadi et al., 2021). This means that the humour used to evoke laughter in the audience are spontaneous and have never been said before. Nevertheless, these jokes successfully achieve their purposes if they make the audience laugh

For the audience to find it entertaining, they have to understand what is communicated in addition to finding it amusing. However, the ability of language to elicit emotions makes it volatile in certain situations because its usage can trigger unexpected emotional reactions. Put differently, language users may erroneously and unknowingly trigger the wrong emotions in their listeners during conversations or in comedy shows and, as a result, elicit unexpected reactions from them. Such situation has also been experienced in cases of stand-up comedies, where jokes from the comedians induce negative reactions from their audience (Ozolina et al., 2018). Nevertheless, many of them have mastered the art of creating spontaneous humours successfully with language and triggering desired emotions in

their audience. However, there enough scholarly attention has not been given to the linguistic features of humour in Nigerian stand-up comedies to identify how the device is successfully used in spontaneous conversations within the Nigerian context to evoke the desired emotions and reactions from the audience. The aim of this study is to conduct a linguistic analysis of the language of Nigerian stand-up comedies in order to discover the linguistic strategies used by the comedians to create humour. Specifically, the objective of the study is to identify the linguistic features of the humour punch lines and how they successfully triggered laughter in the audience. This helps the study discover how language can be used to evoke desired emotions during conversations.

Conceptualizing Humour

Humour is generally referred to as something that evokes laughter and amusement (Adetunji et al., 2013; Adetuyi et al., 2018). According to (Adetuyi et al., 2018), any act or statement that does not evoke laughter even if it was meant to do so should not be regarded as humour. However, (Firjatullah et al., 2021) explain that it is difficult to define humour because what is considered amusing by one party may fail to elicit laughter in another as a result of several factors, which include the emotional states of the concerned parties. Nevertheless, (Mulyadi et al., 2021) emphasise that if an act or a statement contains stimuli that can trigger laughter in anyone, irrespective of the number of the affected, it should be identified as humour. This study, therefore, adopts the description of humour by Mulyadi et al (2021), by which it perceives the concept as an act or expression that possesses the ability to elicit laughter or create amusement in the recipient.

Humour has many features, one of which is the ability to trigger laughter. But in addition to this, it can appeal to people's mental power because it depends on people's ability to use their mental power or intelligence to identify and react to humour (Ruch et al., 2018). Humour is also observed to depend on contradicting people's socio-cultural practices and values to evoke laughter (Skalicky, 2016; Morreal, 2020). This latter feature has caused scholars to perceive humour as a social phenomenon (Ruch et al., 2018). Other features of humour are found in its ability to offer a sense of superiority to the audience, who laugh at the target because they find themselves at a place of advantage and the target at a disadvantageous position (Morreal, 2020). Humour also reduces tension and negative energy (Ruch et al., 2018; Morreal, 2020) and is created through several mediums, such as actions, behaviours, and expressions (Ruch et al., 2018). However, this study is more concerned with verbal humours, which is constructed with language. As mentioned above, one of major ways of creating humour is through the use of language. This involves using words, phrases, and sentences to create humour (Bamgbose, 2019). In some instances, the meaning of what is said provokes laughter (Kamel, 2020) and in other instances, laughter is evoked by figurative effects and rhetorical devices used in the language of humour (Mulyadi et al., 2021). However, above all these, as Badara (2018) states, the language used in constructing humour can only achieve its effect if it is able to communicate successfully to the target audience.

Previous Studies on the Use of Language in Stand-Up Comedies

The linguistic features of stand-up comedies have attracted the interest of many scholars, who examine them to discover how the comedians use language effectively to create humour. Among these scholars are Cela et al. (2024), who examined the linguistic dimensions in comedy ratings. Their objectives were to discover how language the language used by the comedians influence the ratings they received from their audience. Findings revealed that the comedians, who elicited negative emotions, received poor ratings while their counterparts that evoked positive emotions scored higher ratings. The study captured the impact of language of humour on the audience emotions and decisions but it did not

capture the linguistic features that influenced such behaviours and states of mind. Gerwin (2025) on the other hand, examined the use of dialects in creating humour to identify how such linguistic strategy influences the audience reception of the humour and the comedian. He discovered that when comedians used dialects of the audience in their shows, their viewers tend to identify with them (the comedians) and further establish a rapport with them. As a result, the audience find their jokes very humorous.

In their study, Ogheneakpobor and Mowarin (2024) examined the linguistic features of Nigerian stand-up comedies to discover how the comedians successfully communicate with their audience despite the multilingual nature of the country. Their analysis of four stand-up comedians from the southern part of the country revealed that Nigerian Pidgin is the predominant language they used to create humour. They also discovered that the comedians code-switched in English, Nigerian Pidgin, and indigenous languages as well as use other linguistic features, such as parallelism, repetition, metaphors, imageries, semantic extension, lexical cushioning, anaphora, and rhetorical devices to create humour. This study captures the linguistic features of stand-up comedies but did not do so through Attardo and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour. Turano and Strapparava (2022) argue that language alone does not enable the creation of humour in stand-up comedy without the ability of the comedian. After analysing the language of unspecified stand-up comedy, they discovered the great use of antonyms, repetition, ambiguity, and incongruity in the comedies. They also discovered the use of phonetic features, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and stop consonants as linguistic features of the punch lines. These features were artistically combined by these comedians to create their humorous effects.

Mulyadi et al. (2021) explored the semantic features of verbal humours in Indonesian stand-up comedies. They examined five video recordings of these shows through the lens of Attardor and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour and discovered that the use of false analogy, absurd neologisms, repetition of words, and fallacious reasoning as the linguistic strategies used to create humour. They also discovered the use of simple narrative, dialogue, and self-targeting as other strategies that enabled humorous constructions. The study concluded that the linguistic strategies prevented the audience from feeling targeted, which enabled the comedians to appear humorous. These studies captured the use of language to create humour in stand-up comedies. Their in-depth exploration informs this study and forms a path through which it further examines humour in selected stand-up comedies to discover how language is used to entertain and educate at the same time. Nevertheless, in this study, focus is on using Attardor and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour to examine the language of humour constructed by Nigerian stand-up comedians.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Attardo and Raskin's (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) because its focus is on the linguistic features of humours created by Nigerian stand-up comedians. Attardo and Raskin propound this theory as a model for studying verbal humours (Firjatullah et al., 2021; Attardo, 2017). They propose six parameters, known as knowledge resources, for building the framework for analysing and identifying the linguistic components in humour punch lines. These resources are script opposition (SO), language (LA), narrative strategy (NS), target (TA), situation (SI), and logical mechanism (LM). Script opposition provides the lens for identifying any contradictions used to create the punch line that evoked laughter while language is used to examine the language choices that helped in creating the humour. The narrative strategy examines how humour is presented, target identifies the individual the joke is directed at, situation discovers the context of the joke, and logical mechanism

focuses on how the script opposition is resolved with language. These six parameters provide this study with the framework for identifying, categorizing, and describing the language of humour.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected from four stand-up comedy shows that were obtained from YouTube. These shows were presented by Francis Agoda (I Go Dye), Okechukwu Anthony Onugbular (Okey Bakassi), Gift Loveday Igbomgbo (MC Aproko), and Oghenekowhoyan Onaibe Desmond Oghenebrorhie (De Stalker). Purposive sampling method was used to select these samples because the shows were performed by Nigerian popular stand-up comedians and were presented in Nigerian Pidgin, which is a language that is widely used across the country. In addition, the selected shows are available and published by the producers and performers on different social media platforms and are open for public consumption. In other words, their usage in this study will not attract any copyright infringement litigation. Nevertheless, the study duly references each of the performances and cites their links in the appendix page. The recordings of the live performance of their shows were downloaded from YouTube channels and the audios of their punch lines transcribed into the texts. The punch lines are determined by the sharp eruption of laughter in the audience. The extracted humors were qualitatively analyzed through the lens of Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humor. The six parameters for analyzing the language of humor provided by the theory formed the theoretical framework for identifying, categorizing, and describing the linguistic components of the selected punch lines.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysis is segmented into four subcategories to capture the linguistic features of some of the humour punch lines found in the selected stand-up comedies. Each subsection is coded with the stage names of the comedians and three transcripts are extracted from each of them. The tabular analysis reflects the categorization of the linguistic features in accordance with the six parameters projected by Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humour.

Linguistic Features of Humour in I Go Dye: The comedian, Francis Agoda, popularly known as I Go Dye, used his comedic stunts to address certain issues in Nigeria in a humorous manner. Tables 1 to 3 capture how he successfully used language to achieve these feats.

Table 1: I Go Dye Talks about the Nigerian Police

Transcript	<i>People were telling comedians for back, saying, “Today, you guys are l The number one man in Delta State Police is sitting there. The best thin guys need to do, is to go there, tell them, tell him, let him know what v facing. Tell him. Everybody dey come out, “Oga for police, oga for pc Oga for police, look at me o. Na me wear white and white. I no talk an go una side. The people wey dey send us message, make una come talk.</i>
SO	What he said contradicts audience’s expectations
LM	Synecdoche, irony
KR	SI The intimidation of the Nigerian police force
TA	The Nigerian Police Force, the comedian
NS	Conversation
LA	Simple and active words

I Go Dye uses this joke to address the intimidation of Nigerian police and the fear their actions cause. He used synecdoche to deliver the humour because he used the term “Oga for police” to refer to all

the police men and women across the country. He also employed irony to say the opposite of what he meant. Though the joke is originally directed at the Nigerian Police Force, the comedian redirected the attention of the audience to himself by revealing that he cowers before the police. This sharp contradiction erupts laughter in the audience.

Table 2: I Go Dye Throws a Joke at the Area Commander

Transcript	<i>Na you be the area command? Na you be the area command? Oga, plea and talk to...Oga, your hand come be like handcuff o. You know say this you shake me, e take me two minutes. I think say you pin something j hand.</i>	
SO	Comparing the palm of the police Area Commander to a handcuff	
LM	Simile	
KR	SI	Showing the strength of a police officer
	TA	The police Area Commander
	NS	Conversation
	LA	Active and simple words commonly found in security discourse. Descriptive language that creates mind pictures.

The punch line of the joke was created by comparing the palm of the target to that of a handcuff. It is delivered with a simile that is constructed with active and simple words. The language is also descriptive and can help the audience imagine how the officer's hand can become a handcuff.

Table 3: I Go Dye Throws a Joke at a Member of the Audience

Transcript	<i>My brother, hustle o. Money get power o. Money get power o. As Bash black, girls dey tell me say, "Who is that fair guy?"</i>	
SO	Contradiction was created because the addressee is very dark in complexion	
LM	Irony and personification	
KR	SI	The need to work hard and become successful
	TA	Bash Oloye
	NS	Conversation
	LA	The comedian used slang (hustle) as well as simple and active words

The comedian used this joke to encourage the audience to work hard. He used irony and personification to create the joke and evoke laughter. The irony was displayed when he said that the target, who was very dark in complexion, was described as fair because he was rich. He used personification by saying "Money has power". Furthermore, he uses active and simple terms, including slang, to create and deliver the joke.

Linguistic Features of Humour in Okey Bakassi

Tables 4 to 6 capture the use of language to create humour in the stand-up comedy show of Okechukwu Anthony Onugbular, popular called Okey Bakassi. The comedian also uses his shows to address certain issues in the community.

Table 4: Okey Bakassi Addresses Women

Transcript	<i>Look, seriously, time done pass wey women go wear something we revealing na me go dey shame. It's not gonna happen again. If you naked, naked, I go look. That is what the eyes are for.</i>
SO	He contradicted the expectation of the audience by saying he will stare at a naked woman.

KR	LM	Metaphor. He compared women that dress scantily as being naked.
	SI	He addressed indecent dressing
	TA	Women that dress indecently
	NS	Conversation
	LA	Simple and active words

The comedian creates a punch line when he said he will “look” at a naked woman without remorse. The statement contradicts the expectation of the audience and the norms of the Nigerian society because it is expected that people should do something contrary to what the comedian advocates. He uses this joke to target women that dress indecently but it is could not be verified whether there are women that dressed in the described manner at the venue.

Table 5: Okey Bakassi Mocks Politicians

Transcript		<i>If you see politicians, honourables o, anyone o, excellencies o, wey siren, no dey envy dem o. E no easy. You think say all those police will, you, SSS go follow you, MOPOL follow you na bigmanism? That thing i punishment... sometimes, you see one fine girl, you want collect numb four SSS dey here, two MOPOL dey here, only you go dey look an ordinary eye, say, “Nawa o, see as this fine girl done pass now.”</i>
	SO	He contradicted the beliefs of the audience about the affluence of politi
	LM	He used irony to deliver the joke.
KR	SI	The futility in the affluent but restricted lives of politicians
	TA	Politicians in general, including the ones at the show
	NS	Conversational
	LA	Active words that are commonly used in security and conventional disco a new word (<i>bigmanism</i>), and commonly used acronyms for naming se outfits (SSS and MOPOL).

The comedian uses this joke to reveal the negative side of affluence. He creates a new word, “bigmanism” to reveal the targets of the joke. However, he uses irony to deliver the joke so that its effects is subtle. In addition, he employs conventional, simple, active and descriptive words that can help the audience understand and develop a mind picture of what he is saying. The contrast in the situation triggers laughter.

Table 6: Okey Bakassi Addresses Married Women

Transcript		<i>E no dey una body to give. That is why you see a man go dey provide woman for six years, no complain. When the thing reverse, the woman p for six months, ahhh, “Onuku, you no get up go work? sidon here dey TV, dey watch me and de children. Oya call me now, this night, I g whether you go touch me.”</i>
	SO	There is no contradiction in this case
	LM	Euphemism was used for the second punch line.
KR	SI	The situation of non-supportive wives
	TA	Women in the audience
	NS	Conversational
	LA	Active and simple words as well as code-mixing (onuku)

The humour presented on table 6 targets women that do not support their husbands financially. However, the comedian employs euphemism to create the punch line, which helps in evoking laughter instead of a negative reaction. Furthermore, he employs conversational narrative strategy to create the illusion that the interaction is real and not fictitiously created to be offensive. The language of the humour is also simple and active to ensure comprehension. The code-mix further lightens the mood and helps to create humour.

Linguistic Features of Humour in MC Aproko

MC Aproko is the stage name of Gift Loveday Igbomgbo, a Nigerian popular stand-up comedian. His use of language to create humour in the selected stand-up comedy show is presented on tables 7 to 9.

Table 7. MC Aproko Mocks the Ignorance of the Audience

Transcript		<i>Our teacher do me well, well na. She just hate me for, for no reason. So, dem do be say, dem dey purposely ask hard questions so that when I fa fit flog me. Just like that. Me and one of my friends, dem dey always dis us from Monday to, to Friday. Every time na so dem just dey do us. So just come class come ask us say, "Who can tell me the name of the wife vice president of Rwanda?" And everybody now, the way, as una no know now, na so all of us dey, dey, dey keep our hand down.</i>
	SO	He compared the ignorance of the audience to that of school children.
	LM	Simile
KR	SI	The situation he created shows that shows little is known about Rw politics.
	TA	The audience and the comedian
	NS	Simple narrative
	LA	Simple and active words

Table 7 captures how the comedian creates a joke by reminding the audience that they do not know the wife of the Vice President of Rwanda. He uses simile to deliver the punch line by comparing the audience with young secondary students, who do not have the knowledge. He uses simple words that are found in daily conversations among Nigerian Pidgin users, which ensures that his humour is comprehended. He also narrated the joke with a simple narrative style that is used in storytelling. However, MC Aproko evoked laughter by making himself and the audience the target of the joke.

Table 8: MC Aproko Throws a Joke on the Church Founder

Transcript		<i>Daddy, thank you. Sir, thank you. Thank you very much sir. Please, pu hands together for this wonderful man. E dey hard to see pastors like this days. This one humble. He's a very humble man. Eh... So, when I even sef, I no know say na em get the church. When I first see am, na me con advise am say, "Oga no worry, life go better ooo. Forget say you be us here today, tomorrow you go see wetin God go do." I no know say dey... na em be the pastor o. O God, na very humble man.</i>
	SO	The comedian referred to the founder of the church as the usher, who help.
KR	LM	Euphemism, metaphor, and irony
	SI	The comedian created a situation to show the virtue of humility and its effect on the humble.

TA	The founder of the church
NS	Conversation
LA	Simple and active words found in Christian religion

On this table, the joke the comedian made about the founder of the church was analysed. He employed euphemism and metaphor to provoke laughter when he compared the founder to the ushers of the church. He also used simple language, though a religious undertone and delivered the joke as a conversation he, the comedian, was having with his audience. The comedian employed euphemism to show that the church founder cannot be differentiated from the rest of the audience. Metaphor was used to compare the founder to the users. Irony is also present in the humour because the comedian shows that he does not know what the audience already knows (that is the identity of the founder). The logical mechanism provides the trigger that erupts laughter in the audience.

Table 9: MC Aproko Throws a Joke on the Youths

Transcript	<i>You see am? And na dem just give their life to Christ. Daddy, na you for to dem by yourself o. You see am now. They done dey choke now. Una never give something finish. Una go always remain small for una self. S now.</i>
SO	Described the targets as new converts, who are choking.
LM	Synecdoche and exaggeration
KR	SI Admonishing youths
TA	The youths that threw jabs at him.
NS	He used conversational narrative style for the joke.
LA	Simple, active, and slangy terms.

The comedian uses this humour to respond to some youths that joked responded to his previous joke with the slangy expression, “E choke.” As a result, he uses the punch thrown at him to recreate a joke. He also uses the slangy term, “e choke” to respond to them even though the joke was created with active and simple terms. The comedian used synecdoche (Christ for Christianity) and exaggeration (to choke) to deliver this joke. The sharp contrast in the script opposition (new converts and choking for air) creates the shock that evokes laughter.

Linguistic Features of Humour in De Stalker

Tables 10 to 12 present the analysis of the linguistic features of the humour language in the comedy show delivered by Oghenekowhoyan Onaibe Desmond Oghenebrorhie, popular called De Stalker. He also used his show to address some of the ills in the country in a humorous manner.

Table 10. De Stalker Addresses Nigerian Police

Transcript	<i>The day wey I fear Warri police na the day them stop who dey trek. “Park there!” The guy say, “I no drive!” Dem say, “Park your leg!” ... The police ask the boy, “Who are you?” The boy say, “I am a human being.” Dem ask am, “Where are you going to?” The boy say, “I want to see my friend.” E ask am, “Who is this your friend?” Em answer, “He stays with his friend”</i>
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Na em police ask, "What do you have in that bag?"
The boy say, "Nothing".
Dem say, "Open am."
E open am and true, true, nothing dey inside.
The police say, "You're under arrest."
The boy say, "For what?"
They say, "For you to carry empty bag. You have the intention to steal something."

	SO	Police does not ask people trekking to "park" their legs or arrest them for carrying empty bags. So the joke contradicts the audience's expectation.
KR	LM	Hyperbole
	SI	The unprofessionalism of Nigerian police
	TA	The Nigerian police
	NS	Dialogue
	LA	Simple and active terms that characterise the discourse found at Nigerian police check points.

De Stalker creates this joke to reveal the unprofessional manner by which the Nigerian police address and handle issues. He employs the words they (the police officers) use at check points to create a scene of their 'stop-and-search' procedure. The joke is delivered as a dialogue between a police officer and a young Nigerian man, who is represented as experiencing hardship due to the economic situation of the country. The target of this humour is the Nigerian police, whose corrupt practices are captured in the story. The language of the humour is simple and active and its register can be understood by every Nigerian because it comprises words commonly used at Nigerian police checkpoints. Nevertheless, the logical mechanism is hyperbole, which is a figurative expression that can create humour by exaggerating.

Table 11: De Stalker Throws a Joke at a Member of the Audience

	Transcript	<i>If I come yab this oga now and this other oga come dey laugh, e no go vex me o. E go dey vex for you wey dey laugh. Na you e go dey vex for. "W you laugh? Is it funny?"</i>
	SO	The audience expects him to bear the impact of his jokes.
	LM	No figurative language was used here.
KR	SI	Transferred aggression that may exist in the crowd
	TA	A member of the audience
	NS	Conversational
	LA	Simple and active words as well as Nigerian Pidgin slang (yab)

The comedian used this humour to reveal that he will not be the person to receive the impacts of his jokes and to prepare the audience for his performance. He used a member of the audience, a man, as a target to cite the example in the joke. His language is simple and active and also comprise a common Nigerian Pidgin slang. However, he shocks the audience into laughter by making an unexpected person the target of his joke.

Table 12: De Stalker Throws a Joke at a Young Man

	Transcript	<i>Hello, are you ok? You're ok? Apart from stealing, what do you do?</i>
	SO	The joke created a contradiction between the exchange of pleasantries and a question.

KR	LM	Innuendo
	SI	To address how Nigerians stereotype young rich men as engaging in businesses.
	TA	A young man
	NS	Rhetorical question
	LA	Active and simple words.

This joke was delivered as an innuendo, which, the researcher believes, was meant to address and tackle one of the negative stereotypes Nigerians have about rich young men. However, the comedian made a young man the target of the humour. He also delivers the joke in a simple active language, using rhetorical question as his narrative strategy. The contrast in the script opposition causes the shock that erupts laughter in the audience.

Discussion of Findings: The analysis the selected stand-up comedies reveals that the comedians utilized different linguistic devices to construct humour. Among these devices are figurative expressions, especially hyperbole, irony, and euphemism, which help the comedians create incongruity and an indirect manner of delivering jokes without directly attacking the targets. The laughter triggered by these devices further help to douse any tension that would have erupted by the jokes.

In addition, the comedians used active and simple language while creating their jokes, so it is easy to comprehend what they said. They also adopted descriptive language that can create mind images in the audience and give a clearer picture of an occurrence. The comedians also employed appropriate terms, including slang, which is found in the described context to give their jokes the illusion of reality. These strategies aid them to prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation of their jokes. In other words, they helped in the prevention of negative reception and reactions to their humour.

Conclusion

Humour refers to any statement, behaviour, or actions that entertain and make people laugh. In some instances, statements that are designed to be humorous fail to do so and may further evoke negative reactions from the listener. However, this study discovered that humour was successfully delivered in the examined stand-up comedies without eliciting any negative reactions from the audience. The analysis of the linguistic components of the language used to create jokes in the comedy shows reveals that the comedians employed different linguistic devices that aided the successful creation of their arts. The linguistic examination of the language of the selected stand-up comedies reveals the use of figurative expressions to speak indirectly to the target of the joke. In addition, the comedians adopted simple and active language patterns to ensure effective comprehension of their messages and further used descriptive language to create mind images in their listeners. Furthermore, the use of conversational and dialogue narrative strategy helps them depict their jokes as events that occurred in reality while the incongruity they achieved through sharp contrast of people's expectations enables them to shock their audience into laughter. Nevertheless, the comedians successfully delivered their jokes without eliciting negative reactions because they did not make the targets of their humours feel directly attacked.

Limitation of Study: The data for this study are collected from only four stand-up Nigerian comedy shows, where were performed by popular comedians. As a result, the findings of the study may fail to capture the linguistic features of humour in stand-up comedies of upcoming artists, who may use language in ways that could evoke unintended emotions and reactions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Considering the limitations of this study, the following suggestions are made:

1. Researchers should examine the use of language in the stand-up comedy of non-popular and upcoming Nigerian comedians to identify how they achieve humour with language.
2. There should be studies on the impact of the language of humour on the audience by interacting directly with the audience.

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Appendix

Links of Selected Videos

- Agoda, F. [I Go Dye]. (2020, November 17). *I Go Dye one on one message to Area Commander #EndPoliceBrutality* [Video]. YouTube.
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- Igbomgbo, G. L. [MC Aproko]. (2021, July 19). *MC Aproko revealed how his life changed after winning N5 million at His Treasure House, Abuja* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bgO0FtoTK8>
- Oghenebrorhie, O. O. D. [De Stalker]. (2021, January 15). *De Stalker – A night of endless laughter* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEKxl4OW-qM>
- Onugbular, O. A. [Okey Bakassi]. (2018, July 16). *Okey Bakassi killing me with laugh* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZiOAwyq5k>