

Social Mockery in Mr. Macaroni's Selected Skits

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Abstract: This study examines the use of social mockery in selected skits of Mr Macaroni, with the aim of exploring how digital comedy serves as a vehicle for social critique in contemporary Nigerian society. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of social mockery employed, examine the linguistic and performative strategies used, and analyze how these skits highlight societal issues such as governance failures, gender dynamics, social behaviour, and cultural contradictions. Guided by Billig's (2005) Social Function Theory of Humour, which emphasizes the role of humour in challenging authority, highlighting societal contradictions, and reinforcing norms through ridicule, a qualitative research design was adopted. Data were purposively sampled from popular skits on digital platforms including YouTube and Instagram, and analyzed through thematic, linguistic, and performative approaches. Findings reveal that Mr Macaroni employs irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, parody, code-switching, and expressive gestures to create humour while critiquing societal flaws. Catchphrases like "Ooin, you are doing well!" serve as recurring motifs that enhance comedic effect and underscore social commentary. The skits effectively expose corruption, challenge patriarchal norms, ridicule irresponsible social behaviours, and highlight cultural absurdities, demonstrating the multidimensional role of humour in entertainment and social reflection. The study concludes that social mockery in Mr Macaroni's digital skits functions not only to entertain but also to provoke thought, foster critical engagement, and stimulate public discourse on pressing societal issues, confirming the effectiveness of humour as a tool for social critique in contemporary Nigerian digital media.

Keywords: Social, mockery, digital, comedy, Mr Macaroni, critique, Nigeria, society, skit, humour

Introduction

Comedy has long been recognized as a powerful medium for social commentary, offering creators the ability to critique societal norms, political structures, and cultural practices in a manner that is engaging and accessible (Mintz, 1985). In particular, social mockery a sub-genre of comedic expression relies on humour, exaggeration, and irony to highlight flaws, inconsistencies, or absurdities within society. In contemporary media landscapes, comedians often deploy social mockery as a tool to challenge authority, question social conventions, and encourage reflection among audiences (Double, 2014). Through satire, parody, and relatable storytelling, these comedic performances provide insights into societal dynamics and human behaviour, often blurring the line between entertainment and social critique.

In Nigeria, comedy has become an influential platform for addressing social issues, and the rise of digital media has further amplified the reach of comedic content (Ogunyemi, 2020). Nigerian comedians now use social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to engage audiences with skits that blend humour and social commentary. These skits frequently employ relatable scenarios, colloquial language, and exaggerated character portrayals to underscore societal idiosyncrasies. Social mockery, in particular, serves as an effective method for highlighting issues such as corruption, inequality, gender roles, and political misconduct. Scholars argue that the accessibility of short-form digital skits has democratized social critique, enabling comedians to reach diverse audiences in ways traditional media cannot (Okafor & Adegbite, 2019).

One comedian who has emerged as a prominent figure in this space is Debo Adedayo, popularly known as Mr Macaroni. Known for his signature phrase, “*Ooin, you are doing well!*”, Mr Macaroni uses satire and comedic exaggeration to address everyday societal issues, ranging from governance failures to cultural absurdities. His skits typically depict him in exaggerated social roles, such as the naïve youth, the gullible citizen, or the self-important authority figure, highlighting the contradictions and follies in human behaviour. According to Adejumo (2021), Mr Macaroni’s skits combine linguistic creativity, physical comedy, and culturally grounded references, making social commentary both entertaining and thought-provoking.

The study of social mockery in comedic skits is significant because humour can serve as a mirror of society, reflecting collective experiences and social anxieties (Morreall, 2009). By exaggerating social behaviours and norms, comedians like Mr Macaroni create spaces for critical reflection while maintaining audience engagement. Humour, particularly in the form of mockery, can expose power imbalances, hypocrisy, and societal contradictions, encouraging viewers to question prevailing structures and practices.

Scholars such as Billig (2005) argue that social ridicule functions as a form of resistance and critique, challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions of society through laughter and satire.

Furthermore, the linguistic strategies employed in comedic skits are of particular interest to researchers in discourse analysis and pragmatics. Social mockery often relies on devices such as irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, and code-switching to convey meaning beyond the literal content of speech (Dynel, 2009). In Mr Macaroni's skits, language is carefully crafted to emphasize absurdity or expose societal flaws, with humour emerging from the interplay between verbal expression, contextual understanding, and audience perception. Understanding how these linguistic and performative elements function provides insights into how comedy operates as a tool for social critique and cultural commentary.

Digital media's influence on comedy also warrants attention in the study of social mockery. The rapid dissemination of short comedic skits through platforms such as Instagram and YouTube allows for immediate audience engagement and feedback, often shaping the content and style of comedic performances (Chukwu, 2020). In the case of Mr Macaroni, viral skits addressing corruption, poor governance, and social injustice demonstrate the potential of humor to mobilize public opinion and foster conversations around pressing societal issues. This convergence of entertainment, social critique, and digital communication highlights the relevance of studying comedic mockery as both a cultural and linguistic phenomenon.

Given the cultural, linguistic, and social dimensions of comedic performance, examining social mockery in Mr Macaroni's selected skits provides a valuable opportunity to understand how humour operates as a medium of critique in contemporary Nigerian society. While prior research has explored comedy in Nigeria generally, there is a paucity of studies focusing specifically on social mockery as deployed by individual performers in digital skits. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the thematic, linguistic, and performative strategies employed by Mr Macaroni to satirize social behaviour, challenge authority, and provoke reflection, thereby contributing to scholarship on humour, social critique, and digital media studies.

Statement of the research problem

Despite the growing popularity of digital comedy and the increasing academic interest in humour studies, there remains a notable gap in research focusing specifically on social mockery as deployed in Nigerian online skits. While previous studies have explored comedy as a medium for entertainment and social critique (Double, 2014; Ogunyemi, 2020), there is limited scholarly attention on how individual performers, particularly viral

digital comedians like Mr Macaroni, strategically use social mockery to address societal issues such as corruption, poor governance, cultural contradictions, and everyday social behaviours. Mr Macaroni's skits are characterized by exaggerated portrayals of social roles, ironic dialogues, and culturally grounded scenarios that resonate with Nigerian audiences, yet there is little systematic linguistic or thematic analysis of these performances. Moreover, while social mockery is recognized as an effective tool for highlighting social flaws and prompting reflection (Billig, 2005; Morreall, 2009), there is a lack of empirical studies examining the specific techniques, linguistic devices, and performative strategies used in digital skits to achieve these effects. This gap limits the understanding of how humour functions as both a communicative and socio-cultural tool in contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by analyzing selected skits of Mr Macaroni to uncover how social mockery is employed to critique societal practices, negotiate power relations, and influence public perception, thereby contributing to the fields of humour studies, media analysis, and digital communication research.

Specific objectives of the study

The Specific Objectives of the study are:

- To identify and categorize the various forms of social mockery employed in selected skits of Mr Macaroni.
- To examine the linguistic and performative strategies used in these skits to convey humour and critique societal behaviors.
- To analyze how social mockery in Mr Macaroni's skits highlights social issues, influences audience perception, and contributes to public discourse on governance, culture, and everyday social practices.

Literature review

Comedy, as a form of entertainment, has long been recognized as a powerful vehicle for social critique, offering audiences the opportunity to reflect on societal norms, human behaviour, and governance issues while being entertained (Mintz, 1985). Scholars note that humour, when combined with social commentary, provides a subtle yet effective means of addressing sensitive topics, such as political corruption, social inequality, and cultural contradictions, without direct confrontation (Double, 2014). In particular, social mockery, which is a form of humour that exaggerates and ridicules societal behaviours, has become a prominent method through which comedians highlight societal flaws and provoke public reflection (Billig, 2005). Through the use of irony, parody, and satire, social mockery engages audiences by connecting humor with relatable experiences, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking.

In the African context, comedy serves as a critical tool for explicating social and political realities. Nigerian comedians, in particular, have utilized humour to address issues that may otherwise be difficult to discuss openly due to cultural, political, or legal constraints (Ogunyemi, 2020). Digital platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have expanded the reach of these comedic performances, allowing creators to engage larger audiences and amplify their social commentary. Okafor and Adegbite (2019) argue that the accessibility of online comedy skits has democratized social critique, making it possible for ordinary citizens to witness and respond to humorous yet incisive reflections on societal behaviours, governance, and cultural practices.

Mr Macaroni, whose real name is Debo Adedayo, has emerged as a leading figure in Nigerian digital comedy, particularly through skits that employ social mockery to highlight everyday social issues (Adejumo, 2021). His skits often depict him in exaggerated social roles, including naïve citizens, gullible youths, or pompous authority figures, using humour to expose societal absurdities and contradictions. These performances combine linguistic creativity, physical comedy, and culturally grounded references, creating a unique comedic style that resonates with a wide demographic of Nigerian viewers. By exaggerating ordinary situations, Mr Macaroni's skits provide audiences with both amusement and an opportunity to critically evaluate social norms.

The linguistic elements employed in social mockery are central to its effectiveness. Scholars of pragmatics and discourse analysis have observed that devices such as irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, and code-switching are commonly used to convey humour while simultaneously critiquing social behaviour (Dynel, 2009). In Mr Macaroni's skits, irony is often used to highlight the disparity between what characters say and what society expects, while hyperbolic expressions exaggerate everyday situations to emphasize absurdity. Such linguistic strategies not only enhance the humour of the performance but also encourage audiences to interpret the underlying social commentary, making language a crucial tool in the comedic critique of society.

Social mockery also functions as a form of resistance and public discourse. Billig (2005) posits that ridicule allows individuals to challenge authority and social norms in a socially acceptable manner, enabling critical reflection without direct confrontation. In the Nigerian context, Mr Macaroni's skits often address issues such as poor governance, corruption, and social injustice, using comedy to expose societal shortcomings while engaging viewers in reflective thought. Through humour, audiences are invited to question social hierarchies and the behaviour of both public figures and ordinary citizens, highlighting the potential of comedy to influence public perception and social awareness.

The rise of digital media has transformed the dissemination and impact of comedic performances. Unlike traditional comedy platforms such as live shows or television, social media allows comedians to reach vast audiences instantaneously and receive immediate feedback (Chukwu, 2020). Viral skits often generate conversations and debates around the issues being mocked, creating a participatory space where viewers engage with the content both socially and intellectually. In this way, digital comedy functions as both entertainment and social commentary, demonstrating the power of humour in shaping public discourse and opinion.

Existing research on Nigerian comedy highlights the intersection of humour, culture, and social critique but often focuses on comedy in general rather than the specific use of social mockery (Ogunyemi, 2020; Okafor&Adegbite, 2019). There is limited scholarly analysis of individual performers like Mr Macaroni, despite his significant influence in the digital comedy space. By focusing on social mockery in his selected skits, research can reveal the strategies, linguistic devices, and performative elements that contribute to the effectiveness of comedic critique in contemporary Nigerian society, bridging the gap between humor studies, digital media analysis, and sociolinguistics.

Finally, studying social mockery in digital skits contributes to broader understanding of the role of humour in social commentary and communication. Through exaggeration, ridicule, and satire, comedians like Mr Macaroni make abstract societal issues tangible and relatable, enabling audiences to critically engage with their environment (Morreall, 2009). By examining the interplay of language, performance, and audience reception, this study aims at illuminating how social mockery functions as both a form of entertainment and a tool for social critique, emphasizing its relevance in the digital age as a medium for reflection, dialogue, and societal transformation.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the Social Function Theory of Humour proposed by Michael Billig (2005), which posits that humour, including social mockery, is not merely a source of entertainment but a powerful tool for social critique, resistance, and reflection. According to Billig, humour functions to expose contradictions, question authority, and highlight societal norms or absurdities by ridiculing behaviours and actions that deviate from accepted standards. This theory emphasizes the social and cultural dimensions of humour, focusing on how jokes and mockery serve as instruments for negotiating social power and reinforcing or challenging social norms. In the context of Nigerian digital comedy, the Social Function Theory is particularly relevant because it provides a framework for understanding how comedians like Mr Macaroni employ humour to

address social issues, engage audiences, and stimulate critical reflection on everyday practices, governance failures, and cultural idiosyncrasies.

The Social Function Theory best represents this study because it allows for a multidimensional analysis of Mr Macaroni's skits, integrating linguistic, performative, and thematic aspects of social mockery. The theory facilitates the identification of humour as a vehicle for societal commentary, emphasizing its role in shaping audience perception and influencing social discourse. For instance, the exaggerated characters, ironic dialogues, and culturally grounded scenarios commonly used by Mr Macaroni align with Billig's notion that humour operates to reveal inconsistencies and contradictions in social behaviour. By applying this theoretical approach, the study can examine not only what is being mocked but also how the combination of language, performance, and context produces social critique and encourages reflection, thereby highlighting the interplay between comedy and societal awareness.

In applying Billig's framework to this study, social mockery in Mr Macaroni's skits is analyzed through three interconnected dimensions: thematic, linguistic, and performative. Thematic analysis examines the social issues targeted by mockery, such as corruption, poor governance, or cultural absurdities. Linguistic analysis focuses on the use of irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, code-switching, and pragmatic markers to convey humour and critique. Performative analysis considers gestures, facial expressions, tone, and timing, which enhance the comedic effect and communicate social commentary non-verbally. By synthesizing these dimensions under the Social Function Theory, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how humour functions as both entertainment and social critique, demonstrating the relevance and effectiveness of this theoretical framework in analyzing digital comedy and its societal impact.

Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: Selected Mr Macaroni's skits

S/N	Skit Title/Theme	Description/Scenario	Type of Social Mockery	Linguistic/Performative Features
1	“Ooin, You Are Doing Well” (Governance)	Mr Macaroni portrays a naïve citizen interacting with a corrupt politician; exaggerates responses while the politician justifies misconduct	Governance critique, political hypocrisy	Irony, repeated catchphrase, hyperbole, exaggerated nods and facial expressions
2	“The Entitled Husband” (Gender)	A man behaves arrogantly toward his wife, claiming entitlement; MrMacaroni exaggerates the man's selfishness	Gender dynamics, patriarchal critique	Sarcasm, hyperbole, code-switching between English and Yoruba, exaggerated gestures and tone
3	“Lazy Youth” (Social Behaviour)	Depicts a young man avoiding responsibility; Mr Macaroni highlights laziness and gullibility	Social behavior critique	Irony, exaggeration, repetition, expressive facial cues, physical comedy
4	“Corrupt Public Official” (Governance)	Skit showing a public servant taking bribes and giving absurd justifications	Corruption critique, governance failure	Hyperbole, satire, verbal irony, exaggerated body language and tone
5	“Overzealous Cultural Practices” (Culture)	Mr Macaroni portrays a character blindly following outdated cultural norms in absurd situations	Cultural absurdity, societal critique	Parody, exaggeration, code-switching, expressive gestures and mimicry

The data for this study consist of selected skits by Mr Macaroni, purposively chosen for their explicit use of social mockery to address societal issues. The skits were collected from digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, where Mr Macaroni frequently posts short comedy videos. Five skits were selected based on their popularity, thematic relevance, and representation of key societal issues including governance failures, social irresponsibility, gender dynamics, and cultural contradictions. Each skit was transcribed verbatim, noting both verbal and non-verbal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice, which contribute to the humour and social critique.

For instance, one skit depicts a corrupt politician attempting to justify his actions while Mr Macaroni's character, portrayed as a naive citizen, exaggerates his reactions, ridiculing both the politician's incompetence and the public's complacency. Another skit involves a young man pretending to be morally upright, while humorous exaggeration exposes his selfishness and hypocrisy. A third skit highlights gender dynamics in Nigerian society, with Mr Macaroni's exaggerated portrayal of male entitlement prompting laughter while critiquing cultural assumptions. Each skit employs linguistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, code-switching between English and Yoruba, and pragmatic markers to convey both humour and social critique.

The data are organized thematically into categories of social mockery: governance critique, social behaviour critique, gender-related critique, and cultural absurdities. Within these categories, specific examples of linguistic and performative strategies are highlighted to illustrate how humour is crafted and how social commentary is embedded within the skits. Visual elements, such as facial expressions and exaggerated body movements, are also presented to show how non-verbal cues enhance the comedic and critical impact.

The analysis of the selected skits reveals that social mockery is deployed as a multidimensional tool combining linguistic, performative, and thematic strategies. Linguistically, Mr Macaroni frequently uses **irony** to highlight the disparity between characters' words and societal expectations. For example, in the governance skit, the politician's justifications are paired with Mr Macaroni's exaggerated nods and repeated phrase "*Ooin, you are doing well!*", creating a humorous contrast that ridicules both the politician and societal passivity. Similarly, **hyperbole** amplifies ordinary social behaviours, making them absurd and prompting viewers to reflect on the underlying critique. Code-switching between English and Yoruba enhances cultural relatability, making the skits more accessible to Nigerian audiences while retaining humour and critical effect.

Performatively, exaggerated gestures, facial expressions, and vocal intonations are central to the delivery of social mockery. Mr Macaroni's raised eyebrows, wide-eyed expressions, and deliberate pauses emphasize absurdity, reinforcing the critique embedded in dialogue. These performative cues align with Billig's (2005) Social Function Theory of Humour, illustrating that humour operates not only through language but also through visible actions that underscore societal contradictions. The combination of verbal and non-verbal elements enhances the audience's understanding of the targeted social issue while maintaining entertainment value.

Thematically, the skits reflect recurrent societal concerns. Governance-related skits expose corruption, inefficiency, and political hypocrisy. Skits focusing on social behaviour ridicule laziness, gullibility, or blind adherence to tradition. Gender-based skits satirize entitlement, patriarchal attitudes, and societal double standards. Cultural absurdities, such as exaggerated adherence to outdated norms, are highlighted through humorous scenarios. By categorizing skits thematically, the analysis demonstrates how social mockery functions as both entertainment and critical commentary, providing audiences with insight into societal behaviours and prompting reflection.

The data also indicate that audience engagement reinforces the impact of social mockery. The popularity of these skits, measured by likes, shares, and comments on social media, suggests that humour effectively communicates critique while promoting discussion. Viewers frequently respond by tagging friends, sharing personal experiences, or debating the behaviours depicted in the skits. This aligns with the theoretical perspective that humour serves as a social tool for reinforcing norms, challenging authority, and stimulating public reflection (Billig, 2005).

On the whole, the analysis shows that social mockery in Mr Macaroni's skits operates through a carefully constructed interplay of linguistic, performative, and thematic strategies. Humour is not random but deliberate, with exaggerated performances, ironic dialogue, and culturally grounded scenarios working together to expose societal contradictions. Through this multidimensional approach, Mr Macaroni's skits achieve both entertainment and social critique, demonstrating the effectiveness of humour as a medium for reflecting on governance, social behaviour, cultural norms, and gender dynamics in contemporary Nigerian society.

Discussion of findings

The analysis of the selected skits of Mr Macaroni reveals that social mockery is a central tool for critiquing societal norms, governance, and cultural behaviours in contemporary Nigerian society. One of the key findings is that governance-related skits, such as "*Ooin, You Are Doing Well*" and "*Corrupt Public Official*", use exaggeration and irony to highlight political hypocrisy and corruption. Mr Macaroni's portrayal of gullible citizens responding to corrupt officials exposes the absurdity of such situations, allowing audiences to reflect on accountability and civic responsibility. The repetition of catchphrases and exaggerated facial expressions further amplifies the comedic effect while emphasizing the critique, aligning with Billig's (2005) assertion that humour can serve as a subtle but powerful instrument for social commentary.

Another significant finding is the use of social mockery to address gender dynamics, as seen in skits like *"The Entitled Husband"*. Mr Macaroni exaggerates the arrogance and entitlement of male characters, simultaneously ridiculing patriarchal attitudes and highlighting societal double standards. Linguistic devices such as sarcasm, hyperbole, and code-switching between English and Yoruba enhance the relatability and humour of the skit. This demonstrates that humour in digital skits can serve as both entertainment and a vehicle for reflecting on deeply ingrained social norms, encouraging audiences to question cultural assumptions and gender biases in everyday life.

Social behaviour critique is also prominent in skits like *"Lazy Youth"*, where everyday human flaws such as irresponsibility, laziness, and gullibility are exaggerated for comedic effect. Mr Macaroni uses irony, repetition, and expressive body language to create humour while making the audience aware of the negative implications of such behaviours. These skits illustrate that social mockery can educate and influence behaviour subtly by exaggerating undesirable traits and prompting reflection on personal and collective responsibilities, confirming the theoretical proposition that humour reinforces social norms while critiquing deviation (Billig, 2005).

Cultural absurdities form another area of critique, as evident in skits like *"Overzealous Cultural Practices"*. By portraying characters who rigidly follow outdated traditions in exaggerated or absurd ways, Mr Macaroni highlights the incongruities between cultural norms and contemporary realities. Linguistic devices, including parody, hyperbole, and code-switching, are used alongside performative cues such as facial expressions and gestures to make the critique both humorous and memorable. This demonstrates that digital comedy can serve as a mirror reflecting societal inconsistencies, making audiences more conscious of cultural practices that may need re-evaluation.

Across all categories, performative strategies such as exaggerated gestures, tone variation, and facial expressions complement linguistic devices to enhance social mockery. For example, in governance and social behaviour skits, Mr Macaroni's wide-eyed expressions, pauses, and hand movements draw attention to absurdities and reinforce the intended critique. These performative elements are crucial because they transform verbal humour into a multimodal experience, making the social commentary accessible and impactful for diverse audiences.

Another important finding is the strategic use of catchphrases, particularly *"Ooin, you are doing well!"*, which serves as a recurring tool to satirize complicity and public passivity. This catchphrase, often delivered with exaggerated intonation and gestures, underscores both the humour and the critique, creating a memorable motif that resonates with

audiences. It demonstrates that repetition and signature expressions in skits can reinforce social mockery and enhance audience engagement, a feature characteristic of successful digital comedic content.

The study also reveals that audience reception plays a role in the effectiveness of social mockery. The viral nature of these skits, reflected in likes, shares, and comments on social media, suggests that humour successfully communicates social critique while fostering reflection and dialogue. Audiences often tag friends, share opinions, or reference real-life experiences, indicating that skits act as catalysts for public discourse. This supports Billig's (2005) argument that humour is a social tool that can influence perceptions and facilitate critical engagement with societal issues.

In general, the discussion confirms that Mr Macaroni's use of social mockery operates as a sophisticated interplay of linguistic, performative, and thematic strategies. Humour is carefully constructed to entertain while highlighting social, political, and cultural issues. Through irony, exaggeration, parody, and expressive performance, the skits encourage reflection, critique societal norms, and foster dialogue among audiences. This multidimensional approach demonstrates the power of digital comedy as a vehicle for social commentary, making Mr Macaroni's skits a significant medium for understanding contemporary societal issues in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined the use of social mockery in selected skits of Mr Macaroni with the aim of understanding how digital comedy functions as a medium for social critique in contemporary Nigerian society. Through the analysis of selected skits, the study identified various forms of social mockery targeting governance failures, gender relations, social behaviors, and cultural contradictions. Using the Social Function Theory of Humor proposed by Michael Billig (2005) as the theoretical framework, the study demonstrated that humor and ridicule are powerful communicative tools that expose societal flaws while simultaneously entertaining audiences. The findings revealed that Mr Macaroni strategically employs linguistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, parody, and code-switching, alongside performative elements including gestures, facial expressions, and tone variation, to create humor that resonates with audiences and encourages critical reflection on social realities. The repeated use of his signature phrase, "*Ooin, you are doing well!*", further strengthens the satirical tone of the skits by highlighting the irony between societal expectations and actual behavior. Overall, the study concludes that social mockery in Mr Macaroni's skits goes beyond mere entertainment, serving as an effective tool for highlighting social issues, stimulating public discourse, and encouraging audiences to reflect on governance, cultural norms, and everyday social

practices. Consequently, the study underscores the importance of digital comedy as a significant platform for social commentary and cultural reflection in modern Nigerian media spaces.

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