A Stylistic Reading of the Satirical Import in Selected Punch Newspaper Political Cartoons

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Abstract
Failure to view stylistics as a bridge discipline linking literary criticism and linguistics communication which is fundamental to human development is a disconnect which has negatively imparted the meaning retrieval in cartoons. This is because language goes beyond spoken and written form to encompass; sign, body, grimace, gestures and the other paralinguistic forms of communication. Using the qualitative analytic method and a framework model propounded by Earl Robert Babbie (1998), which holds that systemic functional grammar "is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict and control the observed phenomenon", the study analyzed two political cartoons of *The Punch* newspaper selected using the purposive sampling technique. Findings showed that appropriate application of stylistics to cartoons is key to linguistics communication which is fundamental to human development, interaction and co-existence. The study concludes among others that cartoon should be seen as a viable and powerful tool in the dispensation of critical and sensitive message especially where the ills of the ruling power are concerned.
Keywords: Cartoons, criticism, linguistics, stylistics and systemic functional grammar.

1. Introduction
Political cartoons are used to call to order and criticize issues ravaging the society, and also to encourage and praise where necessary. The major role of political cartoons is to sanitize the society by pointing out flaws, errors and mistake on the part of the people or leaders and bring back sanctity into the society. Political cartoons speak more than the editor because there are issues which cannot be expressed in words that are depicted through cartoon characters and picture.

Often times, the functions of cartoons lie solely on comic reliefs such as; entertainment, caricature and amusement, but amidst the purgation of laughter, a deeper meaning is intended. This is the balance which cartoons are meant to strike in order not to seem playful or unserious. Political cartoons must be able to balance its comedic nature with the portrayal of the message that is subtly embedded in them. In many countries of the world including Nigeria, cartoons have an important role they play which include serving as a means of mirroring the societal ills as seen in government and the society in general. This mirroring function of a cartoon is achieved through the use of figurative language such as; mock-impoliteness hyperbole, visual imagery, symbolism, bolding, caricature, satire and many others. With these devices, the cartoonists present the political conditions and the society in general in such a manner that is entertaining, amusing and thought provoking. More often than not, some of the cartoons have either been myopically viewed by the readers who often pay more attention to the comical aspect while glossing over their discursive implications; hence, most cartoons have not been fulfilling their intended objective of serving as a mirror through which government and societal ills are viewed.

2. Literature Review
Cartoons range from comics and graphic illustrations to newspaper political cartoons found in most newspapers around the world. Cartoons can amuse, yet in addition, give social perceptions and insight on key parts of the real world. Political cartoons are an effective means through which cartoonists express their thoughts and ideas about the issues or events in a particular period in a playful manner (Becker, 1959).

The first known political cartoon dates to 1360 BC in which Ikhnaton, the father in law of Tutankhamon, is lampooned. Simple types of political cartoons have additionally been found on Ancient Greek pottery portrayals that ridiculed political leaders and praised Olympian gods (Danjoux, 2007:245). During the Roman Empire graphical inscriptions on walls mocking incompetent military commanders or public officials were also common. The invention of the printing press marked a keystone on political cartoons since it led, in Renaissance Europe, to the emergence of the broadsheet" (Danjoux, 2003: 245). Broadsheets were editorial loose-pages designed for wide circulation. By offering readers a brief and simple account on current events, they were designed for mass consumption. With the gradual incorporation of broadsheets in the 19th century American and European newspapers (Danjoux, 2003: 245), cartoonists were offered a solid professional life, a steady flow of income and a wide-ranging distribution, while accepting editorial scrutiny and production deadlines. As consequence, creativity was, by then, restricted to the serial production of graphical representations as artistic freedom fell

under the influence of larger newspaper editors (Press, 1981: 44).

2.1 Stylistics

Stylistics has been defined, described, explained and seen differently by different scholars depending on their point of elevation. David Crystal (1987) posits that; "Linguistics is the academic discipline that studies language scientifically, and stylistics, as a part of this discipline, studies certain aspects of language variation." What distinguishes it from other branches of linguistics is the focus on language variation. Geoffrey Leech (1981) posits that "Stylistics is a linguistic approach to literature, explaining the relationship between language and artistic function, with motivating questions such as "why" and "how" more than "what". This definition offers new insight that; Stylistics in a way brings linguistics and Literature together, it serves as a link between the two, also as a link between Language and artistic function. Another scholar, Henry Widdowson (1992) sees "stylistics as a branch that involves both literacy criticism and linguistics, as its morphological making suggests: the "style" component relating it to the former and the "istics" component to the latter. Stylistics therefore is a means of relating disciplines and subjects".

2.2 Tools of Stylistics

Alliteration
This is the repeat of the first consonant sound in a series of words, or the repetition of the same sounds of the same kind at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables of a phrase.
Examples: A lazy lying lion. Peter picked a peck of pickled peppers. Sally sells seashells by the seashore. Warsaw soldiers saw war.

Adnomination
This is the repetition of words with the same root. The difference lies in one sound or letter. A nice euphony can be achieved by using this poetic device.
Examples: "Nobody loves no one". Someone, somewhere, wants something.

Allegory
This can be seen as the representation of ideas through a certain form. Allegory can convey hidden meanings through symbolic figures, actions, and imagery. An example is George Orwell's *Animal Farm* which was all about the Russian Revolution. The characters stand for working and upper classes, military forces, and political leaders and the society.

Allusion
This is simply the reference to a myth, character, literary work, work of art, or an event.
Example: I feel like I'm going down the rabbit hole (an allusion to Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll).

Anaphora
This is repetition of a word which has already occurred at the beginning of a sentence in order to give emphasis or clarity to them.
Example: "Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California." (Martin Luther King).

Epiphora
This is the Opposite of anaphora. Word repetition at the end of sentences.
Example: "And that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." (Abraham Lincoln).

Antithesis
Here emphases of contrast between two things or fictional characters are made.
Example: "Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing; a confusion of the real with the ideal never goes unpunished." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Apostrophe
Directed speech to someone who is not present or to an object.
Example: "Death where is thy power"? Work on, my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught." (William Shakespeare)

Assonance
Repetition of vowels in order to create internal rhyming.
Example: "Hear the mellow wedding bells." (Edgar Allan Poe)

Consonance
Repetition of consonant sounds. Example is Mississippi.

Cataphora
Mentioning of the person or object further in the discourse.

Examples: I met him yesterday, your boyfriend who was wearing the cool hat. If you want some, here's some cheese. After he had received his orders, the soldier left the barracks.

Climax

This is the Arrangement of text in such a manner that tension gradually ascends.

Example: He was not a bad listener, a good speaker and an amazing performer.

Opposite: **Anticlimax.** Tension descends.

Charactonym (or Speaking Name)

Giving fictional characters names that describe them.

Example: Scrooge, Snow White.

Ellipsis

This is a word or phrase omission.

Example: I speak lots of languages, but you only speak two (languages).

Euphemism

Replacing offensive or combinations of words with lighter equivalents.

Example: Visually challenged (blind); meet one's maker (die)

Opposite: **Dysphemism**. Replacing a neutral word with a harsher word.

Epigram

Memorable and brief saying, usually satirical.

Example: "For most of history, anonymous was a woman." (Virginia Woolf)

Hyperbole

Exaggeration of the statement.

Example: If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times.

Opposite: **Litotes.** Understatement.

Hypophora

Asking a question and answering it right away.

Example: Are you going to leave now? I don't think so.

Irony

There are three types of irony:

Verbal (Antiphrasis) – using words to express something different from their literal meaning for ironic effect ("I'm so excited to burn the midnight oil and write my academic paper all week long").

Situational – result differs from the expectation (Bruce Robertson, a character of *Filth,* is a policeman. Nonetheless, he does drugs, resorts to violence and abuse, and so on).

Dramatic – situation is understandable for the audience but not the fictional character/actor (audience sees that the fictional characters/actors will be killed now, though the characters doesn't expect it).

Merism

Describing people/objects by enumerating their traits.

Example: Lock, stock, and barrel (gun); heart and soul (entirety)

Metalepsis

Referencing one thing through the means of another thing, which is related to the first one.

Example: "Stop judging people so strictly—you live in a glass house too." (A hint at the proverb: people who live in glass houses should not throw stones).

Metaphor

Comparing two different things that have some characteristics in common.

Example: "Love is clockworks and cold steel." (U2)

Metonymy

Giving a thing another name that is associated with it.

Example: The heir to the crown was Richard. (The crown stands for authority)

Onomatopoeia

Imitating sounds in writing.

Example: oink, ticktock, tweet tweet

Oxymoron

Combining contradictory traits.

Example: Living dead; terribly good; real magic;

Parallelism

Arranging a sentence in such a manner that it has parallel structure.

Example: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I will learn." (Benjamin Franklin).

Opposite: **Chiasmus**. An inverted parallelism.

Examples: "To stop, too fearful, and too faint to go." (Oliver Goldsmith); "My job is not to represent

Washington to you but to represent you to Washington." (Barack Obama)

Parenthesis

Interrupting a sentence by inserting extra information enclosed in brackets, commas, or dashes.

Example: Our family (my mother, sister, and grandfather) had a barbeque this past weekend.

Personification

Attributing human characteristics to non-humans.

Example: Practically all animals in fairy tales act like human beings. They speak and have traits that are typical of people.

Zeugma (or Syllepsis)

Applying a word to a few other words in the sentence in order to give different meaning.

Example: Give neither counsel nor salt till you are asked for it.

Pun

A kind of wordplay. Here are a few types of puns:

Antanaclasis – repetition of the same word or phrase, but with a different meaning ("Cats like Felix like Felix."—"Felix" catfood slogan).

Malapropism – usage of the incorrect word instead of the word with a similar sound ("optical delusion" instead of "optical illusion").

Paradox – self-contradictory fact; however, it can be partially true ("I can resist anything but temptation."— Oscar Wilde).

Paraprosdokian – arranging a sentence in such a manner so the last part is unexpected (You're never too old to learn something stupid).

Polyptoton – repetition of the words with the same root ("The things you *own* end up *owning* you."—Chuck Palahniuk).

Synecdoche

Generalization or specification based on a definite part/trait of the object.

Example: He just got new wheels. (car)

Rhetorical question

Questioning without expecting the answer.

Example: Why not? Are you kidding me?

Simile

Direct comparison.

Example: "Your heart is like an ocean, mysterious and dark." (Bob Dylan)

Tautology

Saying the same thing twice in different ways.

Example: first priority; I personally; repeat again

2.3 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Systemic functional grammar (SFG) is a model of grammar developed by Halliday in 1960. This is a branch of systemic linguistics which focuses on the broad approach to language which predominantly focuses on the choices grammar makes available to both speakers and writers. In SFG, language is analysed in three different ways (strata): semantics, phonology, and lexicogrammar. SFG presents a view of language in terms of both structure (grammar) and words (lexis). The term "lexicogrammar" describes this combined approach. This (systemic) approach enables effective categorization of variation in language use. This study based on this framework, performs a stylistic analysis of newspaper political cartoons in order to determine the intended message behind the cartoons' creation.

3. Methodology

Using the framework model propounded by Earl Robert Babbie, American Sociologist in 1998, which holds that systemic functional grammar "is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict and control the observed phenomenon." This view gives relevance to the data collected in the area of the techniques utilized in this study to accomplish the set goals. Using purposive sampling technique, the researcher collected four political cartoons of *The Punch* newspaper between 2015 and 2018 which covers the first tenure of Muhammed Buhari as an elected head of state in Nigeria. The selected four cartoons represented the four years that President Buhari was on sit and out of the four cartoons, two were selected using purposive random sampling technique due to their relevance to the goals this study is aimed to achieve, which is to foreground the double sidedness of the political leadership of the Nigerian state. So also is the quest to carry out a detailed analysis of the selected data. The selected cartoons are captioned as follows; "Osinbanjo Panel Report and the Herdsmen Killings" and "Old breed beggar and New Breed Beggar".

4. Analysis
Cartoon 1
Title: "Osinbanjo's Panel Report and the Herdsmen Killings"

Background: On the 30th of January 2018, The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights and the Ijaw Youth Council have called on President Muhammadu Buhari to implement the recommendations of Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo panel that soldiers be deployed to end the killings by herdsmen. The factional President of the IYC, Eric Omare, in an interview with *The Punch* newspaper, called on the President to heed the advice of Osinbajo's panel on herdsmen crisis. The Defense Headquarters had earlier said it had yet to get any directive on the deployment of troops in the troubled spots. But Omare cautioned that failure to implement the recommendations of the committee would only make Buhari's administration more unpopular.

Table 4.1 Non Verbal Signs/Pictorial Content

	Signs	Representation	Interpretation
1.	The bowl of lathered water on the floor	Washing	Something is being washed or cleansed.
2.	The stain on the shirt being washed	Herdsmen Killings	A shirt has been stained by Herdsmen killings
3.	Detergent labelled "Osibanjo Panel Report"	The solution to the herdsmen killings	Osibanjo Panel Report is the solution to the problem at hand.
4.	The hand holding the detergent, labelled CHDR & IYC	The Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and the Ijaw Youth Council	The ones advising the President to use the solutions provided by Vice President Yemi Osibanjo in the Panel report, to address the herdsmen killings.
5.	The man washing	President Muhammadu Buhari	The President Muhammadu Buhari is trying to solve the herdsmen killing problem.

Okata, (2019)

4.1 Discussion
Reference here is made to a report by the committee headed by the Vice President, Osibanjo on militancy. The committee recommended military action as a way of dealing with insurgency. Note that the person at the basin trying to wash the clothes is sporting *"hausa"* traditional outfit. It refers to the President who is of the *Hausa/Fulani* extraction. Worthy to note is the fact that the man at the laundry is using some form of detergent but the "herdsmen" on the shirt is clear and intact. This is could be a veiled reference to previous failed attempts to deal with the herdsmen killings. The cartoon makes mockery of futile attempts to wash off the "herdsmen killings" mania by some other means, while a report exists from the number two man of the same administration recommending a more potent "detergent" to wash off the stains. Here, the cartoon points out that Osibanjo's "solution" is the only way to peace in the New Year, 2019. The cartoon depicts that the stain of the herdsmen killings is "stubborn" as it thus far defied all other "detergents", and must require some drastic measures. This subtly mocks using other methods other than the product of a committee of the same administration in handling

the herdsmen issue. The stylistic features here include, Symbolism, Captioning and Label, Analogy, Punctuation marks, Caricature, Presupposition and bolding.

Symbolism

    a.   The first instance is seen in the bowl of lathered water on the floor.

    b.   Another instance of symbolism is seen in the stain on the shirt being washed.

    c.   Symbolism is also seen in the depiction of a detergent labelled "Osibanjo Panel Report".

    d.   The hand holding the detergent, labelled CHDR & IYC is another symbolic representation

    e.   The last instance of symbolism is in the man washing the blood stained shirt.

Import:

    i)   The cartoon symbolize that something is being washed or cleansed

    ii)   It is to imply that futile attempts have been made to quell the "herdsmen killings" problem, but to no avail, the stain is still evident and present

    iii)   It clearly states that "Osibanjo Panel Report" is the solution to the problem at hand.

    iv)   The cartoon symbolizes the ones advising the President to use the solutions provided by Vice President Yemi Osibanjo's committee Panel report, to address the herdsmen killings.

    v)   The cartoon also represents President Muhammadu Buhari trying to solve the herdsmen killing problem. The cartoon is showing the solution to the problem being faced in Nigeria.

    vi)   This implies that the report is the only reasonable and applicable solution to the "Herdsmen Killings

Captioning and Labelling is prominent in this cartoon

    i)   This cartoonist labels the detergent "OSIBANJO PANEL REPORT"

    ii)   The device is also seen in the labelling of the blood stained shirt "HERDSMEN KILLINGS",

    iii)   The cartoon is making clear to the readers what the solution to the problem is.

    iv)   It is simply to point out what the problem that is being addressed is.

Analogy

    i)   The cartoon is a depiction of the "OSIBANJO PANEL REPORT".

    ii)   The cartoonist replaces the panel report with detergent, This is found in the portrayal of a hand representing the CHDR and IYC as having the same solution, hence proffering it together.

Punctuation

The entire cartoon has only two punctuation marks. The second is more stylistic and relevant to the subject matter. TO REMOVE THE STUBBORN STAINS FOR A BETTER 2019, SIR!

Import: This use of an exclamation mark points to the fact that the CHDR and IYC are being very vocal and loud about their advice. This shows that they feel they have the right answer, and as a result, want their voices to be heard.

Caricature This is an important tool used in this cartoon to depict President Muhammadu Buhari while at the same time, not being too clear about their depiction.

Presupposition This is present as the cartoonist expects his readers to know what the Panel Report says, what the CHDR and IYC stand for, who Osibanjo is and who is being represented by the caricature.

Cartoon 2

Title: "Old breed beggar and New Greed Beggar"

OLD BREED BEGGAR   'NEW GREED' BEGGAR
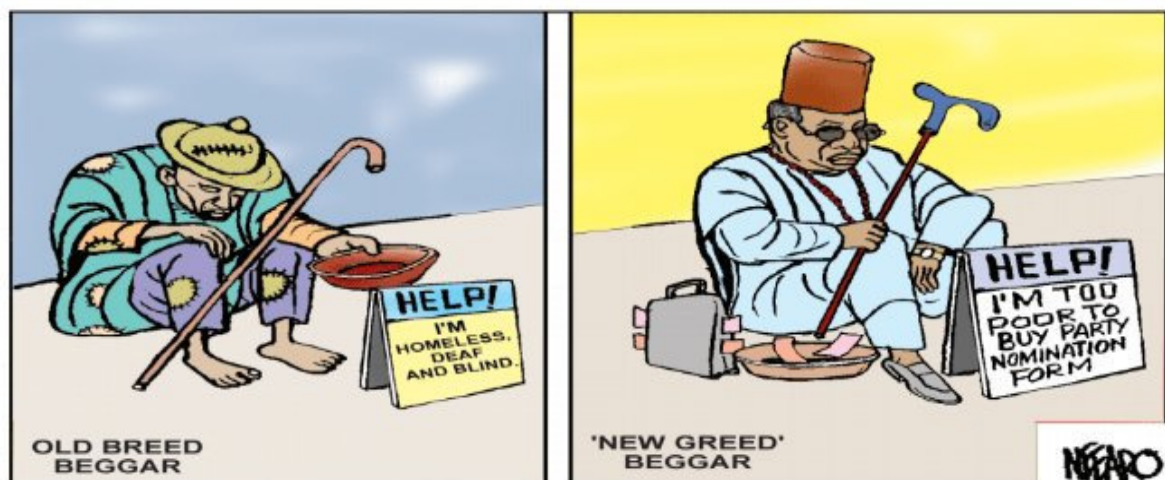
Background: it is noteworthy that prior to the 2019 elections, President Muhammadu Buhari has told the National Working Committee members of the APC that ₦45 million nomination fee is too high for him. News telegraph maintains that a member of the National Executive Committee of the party revealed that the President

"has complained to the party that he could not afford it". President Muhammadu Buhari had four years ago complained over the ₦27.5 million nomination forms for the Presidential ticket and had argued that if he had his way, he would have ensured downward review of the fees. But presently, the National Working Committee of the APC has carried out the upward review of the nomination forms to the tune of ₦45 million. While the Presidential Nomination form goes for ₦45 million, the Expression of Interest Form costs ₦5 million. The Nigerian society saw this claim as false and voids of truth, hence this cartoons' creation.

Table 4.2 Non Verbal Signs / Pictorial Content

	Signs	Representation	Interpretation
1.	The tattered clothing on the person on the left	Poverty	The individual is in genuine need of help.
2.	The well-dressed politician on the right	Affluence	Greed. The well-to-do politician who has no business begging. He is just greedy.
3.	The briefcase	Money	The politician already has money enough to buy what he wants.
4.	The polticians bowl with a few notes inside, in contrast to the other beggars bowl with nothing inside.	Injustice	The presence of the politician hinders the beggar from receiving any alms.

Okata, (2019)

4.2 Discussion

The cartoon picture on the surface, describes two types of beggars. This in actual fact distinguishes them by the use of two rhyming words "breed and greed". One may not observe the play on words, 'breed and greed'. While the first beggar looks hungry and in need of urgent help, the second "beggar" on the other hand is a well-to-do politician who has no business begging. He is simply greedy. The cartoon is also poking fun at the reported purchase of nomination form for Buhari by some individuals. It is referring to the outrageous cost of purchasing forms for nomination. Whatever angle one looks at it, begging here is highlighted as being abused by greedy politicians when they solicit for money for nomination funds, as those who are really in need and deserve help are blocked from consciousness of the society. This speaks volumes of how low the Nigerian society has descended. One beggar is out on the road because of a need. For the other, it is sheer greed. The stylistic devices used in this cartoon are; Symbolism, Enlargement, Analogy, Irony, Exaggeration, Caricature and Presupposition.

Symbolism:
   i)   It is seen in the persona of the beggar on the right side of the cartoon, he is made to appear tattered and in need of money.
   ii) Another instance of symbolism is seen in the contrast provided by the two inscriptions in front of the two beggars.
   iii) Symbolism is seen in the presence of a briefcase.

Import:
   i)   This is made to symbolize the deplorable state of affairs he is in, added to the fact that he is homeless, deaf and blind. This is meant to contrast with the rather wealthy and good looking appearance of the person (politician) by the right, implying that he is in no position to beg for money or anything as he is seemingly affluent.
   ii) It symbolizes that, politicians are greedy and pose as "beggars" so as to appear humble and in need whereas they are not.
   iii) This implies that the politician is in no need of money or anything to be begging.

Enlargement is used in the inscriptions in front of the two beggars. The writing in front of the politician appears bigger than that of the beggar by the left.

Import: This is used by the cartoonist to show that politicians posing as beggars overshadow and in a sense remove any form of attention that might be showed in the direction of the "real beggars".

Analogy This is seen in the depiction of a beggar in the manner in which he appears; homeless, blind, deaf, tattered and in need of help of any sort. It is also seen in the character of the politician who is seen to be begging for money to buy "party nomination form".

Import: This image created shows greed, and the cartoon uses this to condition the mind of the viewers to the fact that politicians are greedy.

Irony in this cartoon is quite apparent when the two "beggars" are contrasted.

Import: It is ironic as one looking as good and well dressed as the politician should not and cannot be seen sitting on the floor begging, while beside him is a briefcase with paper, which judging by the context is money, sticking out from its sides.

Exaggeration
    i)   This is found in the character of the politician.
    ii)   It is also seen as beside the politician is a briefcase stuffed with what appears to be money.
Import:
i) This is exaggerated, as no politician or person who is in need of money to buy party nomination form can be seen begging on the floor.
ii) It is exaggerated as no beggar will go begging with a briefcase of money.
Caricature This is simply the representation of the politician and the beggar.
Import: The cartoonist purposely does not mention any name; instead he represents his message with the characters he chose.
Presupposition was used by the cartoonist as he has some assumptions drawing the cartoon. He assumes that his readers know how beggars are supposed to look or how most of them look.

5. Findings

1. Appropriate application of stylistics to cartoons is key to linguistics communication which is fundamental to human development, interaction and co-existence
2. That newspaper cartons add to knowledge on the job of paper political newspaper cartoons in the parodying and mimicry of the general public, government and political condition for the country.
3. It is also an eye-opener to various readers who have seen newspaper political cartoons with little thought in regards to its semantic repercussions and also offers a crisp worldview of reasoning for those who have been seeing newspaper political cartoons as only comedy.

5.1 Conclusion

Putting into consideration the chemistry existing between the verbal and non-verbal features present in the cartoons, they serve as a viable source of data relating to politics and other spheres of the Nigerian society. Cartoon should be seen as a viable and powerful tool in the dispensation of critical and sensitive message especially where the ills of the ruling power are concerned. This is evident in the distinctive style of the cartoonist. Hence cartoon is a linguistic approach to explain the relationship between language and artistic function which often serve as a panacea to various conflict resolutions.

5.2 Recommendation

The study recommends that further research should consider broadening the scope of this study by examining cartoons from other newspapers. This will be useful as it would provide a deeper and more precise analysis of cartoons in Nigeria as a whole.

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