

Satirical Strategies Employed on NTV's the Wicked Edition: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Comedy has long been appreciated as a powerful form of communication that not only entertains but also offers a platform for addressing serious societal challenges. The language used in comedy, particularly in satirical comedy, is essential in implicitly conveying social commentary. The *Wicked Edition* show, is known for its use of satirical language to address societal issues indirectly. This study looks into the relationship between language, satire, and social criticism, with an emphasis on the satirical approaches used in the show. The study illuminates the purposeful and intended use of satire as a powerful tool for communication, entertainment, and social criticism by conducting a thorough investigation of verbal humor, irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole. *The Wicked Edition* show skillfully employs humorous strategies to communicate essential messages, engage the audience in thought-provoking conversations, and inspire reflection on societal expectations and behaviors. The show successfully analyzes sensitive topics such as politics, government policies, work ethics, and community responses to the Covid-19 pandemic through the use of irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole. Furthermore, this study delves into the socio-pragmatic aspects of the language style employed in *The Wicked Edition* show, emphasizing on the incorporation of both monologue and dialogue structures. By employing the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), this study seeks to analyze the implicit meanings conveyed through the comedian's linguistic style.

Keyword: Satirical Strategies, Language Manipulation, Societal Critique, Hyperbole, Irony, Sarcasm

INTRODUCTION

Language use in satirical comedy performances is a multiplex interplay between pragmatics and sociolinguistics. [1] submits that language never exists autonomously but occurs in contexts and in social situations. This prompts the interaction between pragmatics and sociolinguistics, underscoring the influence of socio-contextual factors on linguistic resources and communication acts. In their research, [2] further classify pragmatics into pragma-linguistics and socio-pragmatics, providing a framework for understanding the linguistic resources available for conveying communication acts and the influence of socio-context on the interpersonal meanings conveyed in a given circumstance.

Television media, as a powerful communication channel, plays a significant role in advocating for change and manipulating language to convey opinions from specific stances [3]. The use of dialogue and monologue in the rendition of satirical comedy becomes a pivotal aspect of language manipulation in advocating for social change. Comedians, often described as watchdogs of society, use art to shed light on sensitive issues affecting the society [4]. This elucidates the role of satirical comedy programs like "The Wicked Edition" in challenging the contemporary social or political order and promoting change.

Humor, a fundamental element of satirical comedy, is a unique concept that characterizes people as mankind and flourishes well in an ambiance of freedom, enabling comedians to unleash their artistic expertise in producing jokes on social and political realities [5]. The presence of dissonance in humorous language, as accentuated by [6], becomes a defining feature of satirical comedy, underscoring the mismatch between what is said and what is actually meant, which is a digression from other types of language use.

The study of language use in satirical comedy also intersects with the speech act theory, which focuses on how speakers and hearers use language to relay intentions and meanings. [7] posits that the speech act theory highlights the nested actions in utterances, including locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Comedians similarly use speech acts to convey their intended purposes in their utterances in satirical comedy, adding another layer of complexity to the linguistic analysis of satirical strategies employed in “The Wicked Edition”.

The specific focus of this study is the creation of verbal humor by Kenyan comedian Dr. King’ori on NTV’s The Wicked Edition Show. By using conversational implicature, the comedian sarcastically ridicules injustices manifested in society with the aim of challenging the existing state of affairs and promoting the desired change. This provides a clear direction for the comprehensive analysis of the satirical strategies employed in the show, shedding light on the linguistic, sociocultural, and pragmatic dimensions of the comedic discourse.

SATIRICAL STRATEGIES IN COMEDY.

The essence of a satirical message lies in its figurative meaning, where words deviate from their conventional meaning [8]. This figurative language, characterized by the deviation from literal decoding, involves various satirical strategies, such as humor, irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, incongruity, and understatement.

Humor, as expounded by [9], comprises deliberate or unintentional actions or statements that evoke amusement and laughter. It involves the mental processes associated with recognizing and producing amusing stimuli. Irony, on the other hand, encompasses the use of words or phrases to express a meaning opposite to their literal interpretation, creating dissonance between the stated and implied meanings. This can manifest as verbal, dramatic, comic, or situational irony, each contributing to the satirical effect. Sarcasm, involves mocking and ridiculing with a witty and often contemptuous tone, serving a critical and destructive purpose.

Hyperbole, a figure of speech characterized by intentional exaggeration, is employed for critical, comic, or ironic effects, often overstating or understating certain characteristics beyond reality. Incongruity, as highlighted by [10], refers to the mismatch between what is said and what is actually meant, while understatement involves saying less than what is meant, either in the content or manner of speech. In the context of this study, the analysis focuses on three primary satirical strategies: Irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole.

Verbal humor, as a central component of satirical strategies, is explored in several studies, each adopting distinct approaches to analyze the use of humor in comedy. [11] adopted a pragmatic approach to examine the use of irony in creating humor by Anne Kansiime, a Ugandan comedian, focusing on the influence of the humorist on the interpretation of humor. In a similar way, [12] analyzed humor in a Bulgarian Tv show using a Discourse Analytic Approach, highlighting the exposure of injustices and the encouragement of critical analysis by the audience. In his study, [13] focused on stereotypes in Kenyan stand-up comedies, emphasizing the audience’s ability to infer the speaker’s intention through

satirical utterances. These contribute to the understanding of verbal humor and its socio-pragmatic implications in comedy.

Furthermore, the study of satire, as a critique of human behavior and societal vices, is informed by previous study that emphasizes the moral and didactic purpose of satire. [14] assert that satire aims to effect behavioral change and persuade individuals to refrain from undesirable behaviors, underscoring the moral and ethical foundations of satirical commentary. [15] emphasizes the cognitive skills needed to understand the implicit and explicit levels of satire, shedding light on the critical analysis and interpretation of satirical utterances. This study intends to answer the following questions: first, what is the contribution of the linguistic style of satire, incorporating verbal humor, irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole to the socio-pragmatic implications of satirical comedy in the *Wicked Edition* show? and Second, what are the socio-pragmatic effects of the satirical strategies employed in *The Wicked Edition* show, primarily in critiquing societal issues such as politics, government policies, work ethics, and community responses to Covid-19 pandemic, through the use of irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole.

The General Theory of Verbal Humor.

The GTVH, proposed by [10], provides a framework for analyzing verbal humor, particularly in satirical comedy. According to the theory, humor arises from the violation or manipulation of script oppositions, incongruities, and logical mechanisms. In the case of satirical comedy, the linguistic style is pivotal in creating humor through implicit commentary to societal norms and behaviors. Dr. Kingori, the Comedian host of *The Wicked Edition* show employs satirical language to point up the peculiar societal occurrences indirectly, thereby aligning with the principles of GTVH. By conducting an analysis of the linguistic structures and manipulation of script oppositions in the comedian's monologues and dialogues, this study identifies the specific verbal humor mechanisms at play in the show.

SATIRICAL STRATEGIES IN The Wicked Edition Show.

Satire is a literary tool used to relay criticism aiming to comment on serious societal issues in a comical manner [16], making them more approachable and understandable. The use of satire in literature and media involves several strategies, including hyperbole, irony, and sarcasm, as observed in the episodes of *The Wicked Edition* show on NTV which effectively conveys satirical messages. The following presentations outline the various satirical messages noted in selected episodes of the show.

Irony, a rhetorical device that conveys meaning that is opposite to the literal meaning, is a powerful tool in literature and media for relaying satirical messages and social commentary [17]. Irony can manifest in three forms: situational irony, dramatic irony, and verbal irony [18]. Situational irony occurs when an unexpected situation arises, while dramatic irony involves a disconnect between what the audience knows and what the characters know. On the other hand, verbal irony is when a speaker says something unexpected. In the context of *The Wicked Edition* show, several instances of irony were observed, each serving as a vehicle for satirical commentary on various societal issues.

Context 1: Politics

Host: Or what do you think when people say *they have driven the economy to the ground*? Why do you think *Kenyan politicians are obsessed with things on the ground*?

In the first example presented from the show, the host's statement about politicians driving the economy to the ground is analyzed as an instance of verbal irony. The phrase "*driven the economy to the ground*" is used to ironically imply that politicians have worsened the economy, despite the literal interpretation suggesting efforts to improve rural areas. His use of verbal irony is further analyzed through the lens of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by [19], which highlights the coincidence and contradiction

between the verbal utterance and the intended message, creating humor. The satirical nature of this irony is emphasized, as it serves to critique the deceptive actions of political leaders during election periods, targeting the Kenyan voter.

Context II: Building Bridges Initiative (BBI)

Host: Mombasa residents are now requesting the government to put some shade over the newly built 1.2-kilometre floating bridge in Likoni claiming that the sun is too hot. *I think the government could have taken action but they spoiled it by the mention of hot and bridge in the same sentence.*

The second example from the show, centered on the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) in Kenya, highlights the satirical irony in the juxtaposition of the floating bridge and the constitutional amendment clamor. The speaker's statement about the government not taking views on the architectural design of the floating bridge is analyzed within the framework of GTVH, reflecting the political context at the time and the rift caused by the BBI. The incongruence between the proposal for a shed on the bridge and the shortcomings of the BBI process serves as a source of satire, critiquing the political divisions and the government's stance on the initiative.

Context III: Alcohol

Host: Cause 2020 was truly a drinking year judging from the party songs released despite bars being closed for a major part of the year. Now, some of the biggest hit songs from 2020 are alcohol related 'ukianza na lewa pewa', 'watoto na pombe' and the demand for alcohol was so high that Kenyans pulled.

In the third example, the host's commentary on alcohol-related songs during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 is examined as a form of verbal irony. Despite the closure of bars and stringent measures, Kenyan artists continued to release alcohol-related songs, creating an ironic contrast between their actions and the public health situation. This use of verbal irony is analyzed through GTVH, highlighting the incongruity between the artists' behaviors and their role in sensitizing the public against Covid-19, thus creating humor and serving as a critique of their recklessness.

Context IV: Alcohol

Respondent: So *nmeona budangu anakunywa he is my mentor ebu acha niskie yeye huskiaje juu akakunywa hii pombe anakanga yaani suddenly anatoka from being a harsh person to anakuwa very happy.*"

Gloss: So, I have seen *my dad drink, he is my mentor*. Let me feel how he usually feels because when he *drinks this alcohol, he suddenly changes from being a harsh person to a very happy being*.

The fourth example delves into the irony present in a respondent's statement about his father being his mentor in drinking. The incongruence between the connotation of the word "mentor," the act of drinking, and parenting is analyzed as a source of satire, highlighting the comical nature of the son's decision to follow in his father's footsteps.

Context V: Bullying

Respondent: Kufua shati si kuhanda mono, *hiyo si ilikuwa rite of passage?*

Gloss: Washing a shirt is not bullying a fresh student, *wasn't it a rite of passage?*

In the fifth context, the respondent's statement about washing a shirt as a rite of passage for fresh students in

secondary school is analyzed as a form of verbal irony. The speaker's assertion that such acts of coercion and undue advantage are normalized as a rite of passage is critiqued within the framework of societal norms and the impact of bullying on students' well-being. The incongruity between the idea of bullying as a routine behavior and its harmful effects on students' psychology and self-esteem serves as a source of humor and critique. The societal context of school life and the relevant stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and the ministry, are identified as the targets of the satirical commentary.

Context VI: Mob justice

Host: There is a picture said to have been taken in Ghana. It is reported that this was a mob justice event, so the story is that after beating up the thief, *the mob noticed that he was getting weak, so they allegedly decided to get him an energy drink*. Talk of the little definition of negative energy.

In the sixth context, the host's commentary on a reported mob justice event in Ghana, where the mob allegedly decided to give the thief an energy drink after beating him, is analyzed as a form of situational irony. The speaker's comparison of this behavior to the actions of politicians during election periods, promising benefits to voters only to neglect them afterward, serves as a critique of the political class and societal attitudes towards the marginalized. The incongruity between the expected response to wrongdoing, such as handing over wrongdoers to the authorities, and the celebratory and sadistic behavior of the mob and politicians, creates a satirical commentary on societal norms and power dynamics. The targets of the satire are identified as the politicians and the impoverished citizens, highlighting the disparity between political promises and the lived experiences of the marginalized.

Sarcasm is a form of language which involves ridiculing or mocking others [20]. The speaker usually gives an incongruent response to what has occurred or has been said. The response can be expressed verbally or non-verbally. The following are excerpts from *The Wicked Edition* show exemplify the use of sarcasm as a satirical tool to critique societal issues, particularly in the contexts of politics, the Covid-19 pandemic, and alcohol consumption.

Context VII: Politics

Host: Manze that's the deputy president of Kenya William Ruto and the famous Chef Salt ~~~~~bae. Isn't it funny how this made news nasio mara ya kwanza *Dp ameonekana mahali ~~~~~akiongeza chumvi*.

Gloss: Guys that's the deputy president (DP) of Kenya William Ruto and the famous Chef Salt bae. Isn't it funny how this made news and it is not the first time *that the DP has been seen adding salt*.

Context VIII: Politics

Host: Mnataka kusema hamkuona hapo DP aliongeza chumvi kidogo? *Instead of 5 stadiums we went for 9, hapo ndio chumvi iko for those who missed this*.

Gloss: You want to say you never saw that the DP added some salt? *Instead of 5 stadiums we went for 9, that is where the lie is for those who missed this*.

In the first set of examples, the show's host employs sarcasm to mock the actions and promises of the Deputy President of Kenya, Mr. William Samoei Ruto, particularly in relation to the addition of salt and the unfulfilled promises of public stadia. The incongruent denotations of salt, associated with lies and adulteration of truth, and the figurative usage of salt in political contexts serve as sources of satirical sarcasm, critiquing the behavior of politicians and their interactions with the Kenyan voter. The use of

sarcasm in these examples aligns with [21] observation about satire as a figure of speech that often combines both anger and humor, effectively engaging with the audience in a thought-provoking manner.

Context IX: Covid-19 pandemic

Host: I think *people should be fair to the government on this*. Because you do realize *without sitting under a tree Isaac Newton would not have discovered gravity*.

Context X: Covid-19 pandemic

Host: Now one of the things that has angered Kenyans is the report that *over the Covid 19 period Rwanda has built over 20000 classrooms so that students can socially distance*. In Kenya after the same period, *the government of Kenya has trees to offer*.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic above, the show's host employs sarcasm to critique the government's proposal of allowing students to take their classes under trees as a strategy to combat the pandemic. By sarcastically referencing Isaac Newton's discovery of gravity while sitting under a tree, the speaker ridicules the government's proposal, highlighting the absurdity of the suggestion and the government's misplaced priorities. The comparison with Rwanda's efforts to build over 20,000 classrooms further emphasizes the satirical critique of the government's response to the pandemic, drawing attention to the inadequacy of the proposed measures and the need for more effective strategies. The use of sarcasm in these examples aligns with [2] sentiments that a sense of humor draws readers and listeners to understand the circumstances of society critically around them, encouraging critical reflection on the government's actions and priorities.

Context XI: Alcohol

Host: *"Now the history of Kenyans and alcohol is very rich."*

Context XII: Alcohol

Host: Nairobi news carried an article titled *'Drama as woman locks herself inside a car to avoid an alcohol blow test.....'* I believe that this was the *first-time police walishika, mlevi juu amekataa kutoa lock*.

Gloss: Nairobi news carried a story on an article titled *'Drama as woman locks herself inside a car to avoid an alcohol blow test.....'* I believe that *this was the first-time police arrested a drunkard who declined to 'unlock'*.

In the context of alcohol consumption, the show's host employs sarcasm to critique the culture of alcohol consumption in Kenya, particularly in relation to the use of the Alco blow test to detect drunk drivers. By sarcastically referencing a news article about a woman locking herself inside a car to avoid an alcohol blow test, the speaker ridicules the consequences of alcohol consumption and the behavior of drunk drivers, highlighting the absurdity of the situation and the potential legal repercussions. The use of sarcasm in these examples serves as a cautionary critique of alcoholism, drawing attention to the societal issues associated with excessive alcohol consumption and the potential consequences for individuals.

In his work, [22] highlights that hyperbole is a form of exaggerated language with the deliberate goal of making the point stated clearer. The excerpts below from 'The Wicked Edition' show exemplify the use of hyperbole as a satirical tool to critique societal issues, particularly in the contexts of alcohol consumption, government policies, work ethics, and Covid-19 measures. In each instance, the speakers employ exaggerated language to emphasize their points and provoke critical reflection on the prevailing attitudes and actions within the society.

Context XIII: Alcohol

Host: *David, ulikunywa for 27 years?* This means he *sustained the employment for people working for alcohol companies. Kuna watu walilipa school fees, juu ya David.*

Gloss: *David, you've been drinking for 27 years?* This means he *sustained the employment of people working for alcohol companies. There are people who paid school fees because of David.*

In the context thirteen, the host employs hyperbole to satirically critique the impact of alcohol consumption, particularly in relation to a character's admission of drinking for 27 years. By exaggerating the consequences of the character's alcohol consumption, including sustaining employment for alcohol companies and paying school fees for others, the speaker highlights the societal impact of excessive alcohol consumption and encourages the audience to reflect on the potential consequences of such behavior.

Context XIV: Government Policies

Host: *Now coming back home, there are talks that the government intends to introduce an unemployment tax to cushion unemployment among Kenyans* my interpretation of *this niati moving forward vitu kama pea mtoto pocket money itakuwa inakatwa direct kwa mshahara.* This is going by the notion that children of course form most unemployed people.

Gloss: *Now coming back home, there are talks that the government intends to introduce an unemployment tax to cushion unemployment among Kenyans....* My interpretation of this is that *moving forward some things like giving a child pocket money will be drawn directly from the salary.* This is going by the notion that children of course form most unemployed people.

In the context of government policies, the host employs hyperbole to satirically critique the proposed introduction of an unemployment tax, suggesting that even children's pocket money will be taxed directly from their parents' salaries. By exaggerating the potential impact of the policy on children, the speaker highlights the absurdity of the proposal and encourages the audience to critically reflect on the potential consequences of such policies.

Context XV: Work Ethics

Respondent: *Ilinifunza kitu, don't work too hard, work smart. There are different ways to skin a cat lakini end results ni skinning the cat. Kuna watu wanang'ang'ana unajua, na akifanya tu research kidogo, about what anafanya, unajua kuna internet ingia internet, huu jamaa anafanyanga hii kitu aje? What can I do to better one, two, three, four? Just research what you want to do. Be creative, find the easiest way that you can do it and work for it.*

Gloss: *It taught me something, don't work hard, work smart. There are different ways to skin a cat but the end result is skinning the cat.* There are people struggling, you know, and when they do small research, about what they do, you know there is internet search in there, how does this guy do this thing? What can I do to better one, two, three, four? Just research what you want to do. Be creative, find the easiest way that you can do it and work for it.

In the context of work ethics, the respondent employs hyperbole to satirically critique the traditional notion of working hard, emphasizing the importance of working smart and finding efficient ways to accomplish tasks. By exaggerating the idea of skinning a cat and learning outside, the speaker encourages the audience to reconsider their approach to work and embrace more efficient and creative methods.

Context XVI: Covid-19 measures

Host: *Ukichungulia nje ya darasa kesi. If learning is taken outside, it means pupils will be learning in a crime scene.*

Gloss: If you peep out of the class, it is a case. If learning is taken outside, it means pupils will be leaning in a crime scene.

In the context of Covid-19 measures, the host employs hyperbole to satirically critique the proposal of teaching under trees, suggesting that it would turn the learning environment into a crime scene. By exaggerating the potential consequences of the proposal, the speaker highlights the absurdity of the idea and encourages the audience to critically reflect on the potential impact on students and teachers.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of deliberate and strategic use of satire as a powerful tool for communication, entertainment, and social critique in the context of *The Wicked Edition* show. It provides insight into the purposeful and intended use of satire as a means of conveying essential messages, engaging the audience in thought-provoking conversations, and inspiring reflection on societal expectations and behaviors. Through this comprehensive analysis of the satirical strategies employed in the show, the study offers a much clear understanding of the verbal humor, irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole. The findings of this study provide valuable insight into the linguistic, sociocultural, and pragmatic dimensions of the comedic discourse, as a result enriching the understanding of satirical strategies particularly in the context of *The Wicked Edition* show.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of *The Wicked Edition* show reveals the deliberate and strategic use of satire as a powerful tool for communication, entertainment, and social critique. The show effectively utilizes three main strategies – irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole – to convey its messages and engage with the audience in a thought-provoking manner. Firstly, the use of irony is prominent in the show, as it allows for the veiled communication of critical messages. By implying the opposite of what is expected, the show effectively critiques sensitive topics such as politics and societal issues. The use of irony, as guided by the principles of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), allows for the creation of satire and humor while conveying cautionary messages to the audience.

Secondly, sarcasm emerges as a key strategy for mild ridicule and critique of discouraging behaviors in society. The show utilizes sarcasm to scold mildly, caution, inform, and admonish, particularly targeting negative behaviors exhibited by politicians, the government, and society members. Through the use of sarcasm, the show effectively communicates its critique of various societal issues and encourages critical reflection among the audience. Thirdly, hyperbole is employed as a tool for overstatement, aiming to emphasize the magnitude of the issues under discussion. By exaggerating statements, the show effectively draws attention to the intensity of societal issues, prompting critical reflection and engaging the audience through humor and satire.

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