Speech Acts on Memes:
A Pragmatic Study of Graduation T-Shirts of Graduands

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Abstract. Memes are linguistics tools for communication. Their powers in the domains of communication, general discussions and writings from mainstream news media to digital media attract attentions. That, understanding their pragmatic effect becomes necessary, especially in today's digital world. This paper offers a pragmatic study of memes on graduation T-shirts of graduands. It specifically framed to ascertain how speech acts are humorously realised through memes. Memes are communication tools common at all levels in society; it is a powerful means of communication by civilisations. It communicates messages of valuable quality, which call for pragmatic interventions to make explicit certain shrouded issues. The paper formulates two objectives – discuss the pragmatic power of memes in communicating messages, and identify the kind of speech acts the memes contained. Guided the paper, is perlocutionary Act, the third act of John Austin's (1962) Speech Acts Theory. The paper, however, is descriptive in nature, and analysed memes (graduation T-shirts of graduands leveled with different inscriptions). The data of the study were sourced from the WhatsApp chats of the graduands of 2023/2024 session of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria. The data were selected based on the acts the memes performed. One of the findings reveals that the studied memes performed different speech acts – persuading, enlightening, inspiring, warning, convincing and compliments which communicated wearers' state of minds (memory, emotion, and personality) and the forces behind their elevation to the present status (graduation). Another finding reveals the depth and richness intersection between memes and humour in communicating meanings beyond the lens of laymen.

Keywords: Pragmatics, meme, humour, and Speech Acts.

1. Introduction

The main thrust of this paper is to situate memes in terms of their supposed pragmatic power in communicating meanings in implicit and explicit ways. Meme and humour are linguistic tools which convey meanings in systematic ways. The intersection

between humour and meme in the domain of pragmatics is paramount; it calls for attentions from scholars to situate the relevance of terms from linguistics standpoint. They are powerful communicative tools that exist across cultures and civilisations. Because they exists in all cultures, they are used in everyday communications in order to wide range of communicative acts. Despites their communication, variation in term of cultures have made them (memes and humuors) resist precise definitions (Prodanović, 2022), that some have viewed them as trivial communicative artifacts of ridiculing individuals or situations. Of their potency in field of communication, this understanding of the terms denigrates the terms to the dismal edge. As tools of communication, memes and humuors are not restricted to domain of linguistics alone, they can be approached from other disciplines – medicine, psychology, history, philosophy, anthropology, and literary, using lots of different theoretical frameworks to situate their relevance.

Exist a lot of studies on memes and humour. These studies dwell mostly on the internet memes, and most of them were conducted from the purview history and literature. From historical purview, humour was considered a plain ridiculous, characterised as debased and denigrated act use only by the ignorant and foolish. It holds no valuable substances, only showcases the doers' state of minds. From literary perspective, humour, perfoms wide ranges of functions, chief among – a corrective tool of social anomaly. Chapman and Foot (1996) state that Jonson (1599) was one of the first notable littérateurs who suggests that humour is a means of social corrective, a means of criticism of the follies of mankind. Later on, Moliere and Swift likewise used humour in form of satire mirroring the social foibles and hypocrisy of seventeenth and eighteenth century Western society. Returning to more modern times, the values placed upon memes and humours are clearly reflected in the domain of linguistics and communication. They are used to communicate different acts and emotions in sensible ways using series of theories. Of all their relevance in communicating sensible feelings in a systematic ways, there is no doubt a dearth of researches from pragmatic point of view dissecting the power of memes and humuors.

2. Defining the Concepts of Humour and Meme

Meme and humour are two related, but independent linguistic phenomena. Though varied in terms of meaning and focus, they are means of communication among people of different cultures, civilisations and status (Samuel, 2020). Memes and humours, as discursive practices are powerful media through which information of sensitive value are communicated in pragmatic ways. In recent years, these linguistic phenomena have become the focal of researchers from different parts of the world using different theories to situate their topicality in human's lives (Kaan & Monday, 2025). As multifaceted phenomena, memes and humours have resisted scholarly attempts to be pigeonholed into one discipline and definitions. They are wider and complex concepts which depend largely on the types of text and context at hand. As linguistic tools, memes and humours are treasures which need to be used and protected for of the roles they play in communication; they are cultural artifacts laden with meanings that improve humans' lives positively.

Humour, as one discursive practices, its purposes are to break the monotony, boredom and tedium that language users experienced while communication; it extents meanings in distinct ways. Humour, as a distinct way of communication, pays prime to context. It is on this basis Simpson and Mayr (2010) explain that humour pays credence to speakers' environment and intentions. In congruity with Simpson and Mayr (2010), Samuel (2020) avers that depending on the environment and intentions comes in many forms and

guises – puns, witticisms, jokes, anecdotes, slapsticks, parodies, sarcasms and satires. In same vein, Sinkeviciute (2019) views humour as a conversational behavior like teasing, banter and putdowns aim at attracting attentions or comments from the public. Contrary to some researchers views that humour is a debased and denigrated means of communication used by ignorant and foolish. As a social practice, humour it is one of best linguistic vents through which social ills are mitigated. Ali and Hussain (2024) substantiate the fact that humour plays roles in community building and help reveal peoples's state of minds by allowing them humourously state the degree of their relationship with other peoples (relatives, friends, community members, colleagues, and even adversaries).

Corroborating the relevance of humour in human existence, Chapman and Foot (1996) establish that possessing a good sense of humour is regarded as 'healthy and desirable', for it enables peoples communicate valuable messages, experiences, and feelings in subtle ways. Linguistically, humour can be in verbal and image (meme) forms. The intersection between memes and humours underscores that messages of valuable senses could be communicated through the infrastructure of memes and humours. Meme and humour convey information of high sensibility in ideal ways. The information they convey exhibit different communication acts using array of resources to encode messages. On this background, Denisova (2019) states that memes being tools through which humours are constructed, operate within social structures to communicate meanings in implicit or explicit ways.

Like humours, memes are also powerful tools for communication, their exigencies in the domains of linguistics and communication, academic as well as general discussions and writings, from mainstream news media to high-ranked peer-reviewed journals attract attentions. That, understanding their pragmatic power becomes necessary, especially in today's digital world. At this point, memes is a broad concept that subsumes humours, for it is a platform through which humours can be virtually mediated or communicated for different purposes. Appropriating Dawkins' (1993) standpoint, memes refer to any images with texts. By this definition, humours being tools of communication could be mediated in different forms (image or verbal). Central to this paper is the power of memes to communicate meanings in humouristic ways. Borrowing from Wiggins (2019) memes are potent communicative tools that explain situation in different ways, including such examples, like "slogans, catch phrases fashion, learned skills, and so on". This equation is apt, as it situates memes as linguistic tools that express meaning in diverse manner, humour inclusive. For its linguistic and cultural power of mediating meanings of higher values, scholars like (Dawkins 1976, 1993, 1999 and Bakhtin, 1984) view it as practical medium of communication laden with messages of different undertones.

In this regards, Dynel (2021) explains that memes being devices of communication, transmit information, knowledge and experience in more pragmatic sense than verbal expressions. Abdurrahman et al (2025) cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) that "… verbal communication can never be completed or through without mentioning the non-verbal communications like painting, images and colour." However, Bakhtin (1984) affirms the cultural power and communication of memes that they can produce, reproduce, distribute, and receive texts of various kinds from different genes. This view establishes that memes are anything ranging from a single word, graphic, song, to video. Milner (2013), in another development, underscores that memes, as communication tools, provide insights into how "everyday" media texts intertwine with realities.

They exposes social reality – individuals' psychological and social values. It is on this account Dawkins, the pioneer of memes studies, in his seminal book, *The Selfish Gene,* published 1976 establishes that memes resemble *gene* in structures, distribution, survival, productivity, and growth, that it passes valued information and ideas between individuals and generations in subtle ways bearing context in minds. This point scores Denisova (2019) and Goriunova (2013) that memes convey different meanings, differ from iconic images, and are never fixed symbols, stories or icons, but interactive resources that depict individual's cognitive state. For Denisova, memetic expressions are context bound, they are meaningless if perceived outside their context. Samuel (2020) reinforces that memes are dynamic in their natures, they manifest daily social happenings and dynamic nature of live "without adapting to the constantly changing conditions of the social world, the value or usability of knowledge will diminish and meme will die".

The above submission conceptualises and situates memes as discourses which align with time and culture. They herald the rapid permeation of ideas in forms of written texts, image, or some other cultural units (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Memes are devices of ideology, they are words of arts and part of multimodal outlets of linguistics which create meanings explicitly. These meanings sometimes need no guidance from interpreters or experts. It is on this note Milner (2016) affirms that memes bring forth situations to fore, they make caricatures of persons, situations, and events they portray. At the same vein, Victoria et al. (2023) describe memes as visual rhetoric meant to cater for the needs of people in a simple way since they are images of various sizes that contain inscribed messages and icons. While to Wittgenstien (1961) memes, like words, do not have fixed meanings; their meanings are derived from the circumstances, hearers' background knowledge and immediate conditions of the act of communication. They are visual outlets of communication conveying high worded messages in lighter tunes performing different "speech acts" – verdictives, exercitives, commisives, behabitives and expositives (Austin, 1962). The mentioned "speech acts", on their rights, perform function of different magnitudes, as Ezekulie & Ifeoma (2023) explained, the functions are determined by "definite social context".

Ezekulie & Ifeoma further explain that verdictives as speech act are concerned with giving a verdict by a jury through reckoning, appraising and judging; exercitives by right are concerned with using powers, rights, or influence situations. Acts that fall within the purview of this category include appointing, voting, ordering, advising, warning, etc; commisives, one of the tiers of speech acts, deal with utterances for commitment. These acts typically include promising, undertaking, declaration or announcement of intention to do things. The behabitives, as the name implies deal with attitudes and social behaviours manifested in acts such as apologizing, congratulating, commending, condemning, cursing, condoling, and challenging. The expositives, the last tier, are utterances that classified into argument or conversation, such as I reply, I argue, I concede, I postulate, etc. These acts (expositives) are often use to explicate situations or explains speakers' state of minds as in the case of the memes below:

3. J.L Austin's Roles of Context in Meanings Construction

Simply put, pragmatics studies meaning from contextual point of view. It deals with the study of text used by people in context (Yahaya et al., 2023). Linguistically, context is everything about meaning and text, without which words, expressions and images are

nothing (Blommaert, 2005). It concerns with linguistic and nonlinguistic factors in determine the meaning of a text. The term context could be traced to the work of anthropologist, Malinowski (1923, 1935) while studying the language of Trobriand Islands, whose inhabitants lived mainly by fishing and gardening. The language of these people is called Kiriwinian. The coinage of the term was necessary in order to give vivid pictures of the holistic situation of what transpires in that environment (Trobriand Islands), because the Kiriwinian language was very pragmatic, often difficult to understand the message conveyed without knowing what was going on among the interlocutors (Gellner, 2004). Taking into cognisance, the appropriateness of context in meaning-making process, it is right to say that it is a soul of a text. This view is supported by the argument that all meanings function within a context (Firth, 1935; Fillmore, 1975, 1982, 1985).

It is on this background, Austin (1962) uses the term 'felicity condition' to express his view about context. Felicity conditions are those situational facts required for utterance to be considered not only meaningful, but also effective. With the concept of exercitives, Austin (1962) demonstrates that meaning of a sentence cannot be fully explained by one criterion, i.e., the propositional/descriptive content it expresses. Austin also emphasises the importance of describing the total speech act in the total speech situation in which the language users employ the language: the speaker utters a sentence and performs a speech act to the hearers.

Stressing the relevance of context in meaning-making, Hymes (1974) says context is the soul of every text, it includes everything one can think about a text be it setting, participants, purpose, structure of the text, tone and moods of the interlocutors and discursive events, the medium through which the discourses are constructed, the environment and genre where the text holds. Halliday (1978) substantiates that context helps identify meanings of a text or utterance, as it is a lens through which meanings are seen; it involves whole of environment in which a text unfolds and other nonverbal goings-on.

4. Review of Related Studies

Shifman's (2014) research marked a turning point in meme scholarship by offering one of the first systematic empirical analyses of internet memes as humorous digital artefacts. The study utilised qualitative content analysis to examine a large corpus of popular internet memes sourced from different online platforms. Methodologically, Shifman analysed recurring patterns in meme structure, themes, and stylistic features. The study was theoretically informed by memetics, multimodality, and cultural discourse analysis, allowing memes to be conceptualised as socially situated texts rather than isolated jokes. The findings showed that humour is central to meme circulation, enabling users to express opinions, construct identities, and comment on social and political issues. Shifman's work contributed a widely accepted definition of internet memes and established analytical tools that remain central to contemporary meme research.

Milner (2016) examined the role of humour in political meme culture, focusing on how ordinary users participate in public discourse through humorous remix practices. The study employed digital ethnography, involving sustained observation of online communities, alongside discourse analysis of political memes and comment threads. This methodological approach captured both the textual features of memes and the social interactions surrounding them. The theoretical framework of the study was participatory culture theory,

which views digital platforms as spaces that encourage user creativity and civic engagement. Milner's findings demonstrated that humour in memes lowers the threshold for political participation, allowing users to engage critically with power structures through satire, parody, and irony. The study highlighted memes as influential tools of political communication rather than trivial online content.

Dynel (2016) investigated humorous memes from a pragmatic and cognitive perspective, focusing on how meaning is inferred in online communication. The study adopted a qualitative discourse-pragmatic method, analysing image macros and other humorous digital texts. The theoretical basis of the analysis was Relevance Theory, which explains communication as an inferential process driven by contextual assumptions and cognitive effects. Using this framework, Dynel (2016) demonstrated that meme humour depends heavily on shared background knowledge, intertextual references, and cultural assumptions. The findings emphasised that memes are cognitively demanding texts that require active interpretation, reinforcing the idea that humour comprehension is shaped by social and cultural competence.

Wiggins (2019) conducts a study titled, *The Discursive Power of Memes in Digital Culture*. The study tilts more on the discursive power of memes in social media. Wiggins explains that memes are discursive tools of high sensibility, as they contain and disseminate information readers in quintessential ways. He describes them as cultural artifacts which address real-world events in subtle ways. They can be used to construct different ideologies – persuasion, hegemony, legitimisation, and criticism. The study situates memes aptly as communication tool pervasive to all cultures.

Yus (2023) in a study entitled, *Pragmatics of Internet Humour* establishes that humour is a paramount linguistic tool which language user use to construct meanings, unlike classical readings of the term, it conveys meanings in pragmatic ways by evoking people to think critically before meaning could be negotiated. Yus (2023) authenticates that humour is a scientific communication tool, and its meaning is context dependent. He says humour does not lie in the discourse itself, but in how that discourse is inferred and contextualised. It stems from the discourse creator's strategy, which leads the audience to engage in a specific process of interpretation and contextualisation of the humorous discourse, possibly yielding the desired humorous effects.

Again, Sunday and Bamgbose (2021) in another paper titled, *A Pragmatic Analysis of Humour Strategies and Functions in Jenifa's Diary and Professor JohnBull* investigates how characters in Jenifa's Diary and Professor JohnBull tactically relate with a view to accounting for the manifestations of humour, the humour strategies deployed and the functions that the humorous utterances serve in the sitcoms. The paper employs Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory, where eight excerpts from sitcoms were drived and subjected to pragmatic analysis. The paper establishes based on the status of the participants, humour serves many roles as in identifying of the participants, their status, education, politeness or otherwise.

In another study, Kaan and Yecho (2025) titled Contextual Investigation of Tiv Verbal Insults as Humorous Comments explains that context and humour are two different linguistic tools that the Tivs adeptly craft insults. They explain that the insults may positive of negative depending the manner, place, time and the personality utters the utterances. The study was guided by Salvatore Attordo's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), the data of the study were derived from two Tivs speaking communities – Gboko and Katsina-Ala of Benue State. One of the findings of the study concludes that insults are integral part of Tiv

language, but not insults have detrimental effects, because some, based on their context are mere praises.

5. Uniqueness of the Study

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that humour and memes have been examined using diverse qualitative and mixed research methods, including semantic analysis, surveys, interviews, discourse analysis, ethnography, and multimodal analysis. Theoretical frameworks range from linguistic humour theories to sociological, pragmatic, cognitive, and multimodal theories. For instance, Shifman's study (2014) examine a large corpus of popular internet memes sourced from different online platforms using Multimodality and Cultural Discourse Analysis. Milner (2016) examined the role of humour in political meme culture, focusing on how ordinary users participate in public discourse through humorous remix practices. The study employed digital ethnography, involving sustained observation of online communities, alongside discourse analysis of political memes and comment threads. Dynel (2016) investigated humorous memes from a pragmatic and cognitive perspective, focusing on how meaning is inferred in online communication. The study adopted a qualitative discourse-pragmatic method, analysing image macros and other humorous digital texts. Wiggins (2019) conducts a study that focused on the discursive power of memes in social media. Yus (2023) research examined Pragmatics of Internet Humour and established that humour is a paramount linguistic tool which language user use to construct meanings. Also, Sunday and Bamgbose (2021) investigated how characters in Jenifa's Diary and Professor JohnBull tactically relate with a view to accounting for the manifestations of humour using Impoliteness Theory. Finally, Kaan and Yecho (2025) investigated Tiv Verbal Insults as Humorous Comments, explaining that context and humour are two different linguistic tools that the Tivs adeptly craft insults. However, none of these studies offers a pragmatic analysis of memes on graduation T-shirts of graduands using perlocutionary Act, the third act of John Austin's (1962) Speech Acts Theory.

6. Conceptual Framework

Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics is concerned with how meanings are communicated through signs (memes, pictures, graphics, and texts) taking into cognisance the context in which these signs are used. The focal point in pragmatics is meaning in real situation. This study adopts Speech Act Theory, a pragmatics theory developed by J.L. Austin (1956), and further redefines by John Searle (1969). The theory accounts that each time that utterance, expression or image is use, it denotes acts of different categories. The paper employs this theory for its prims in handling the analysis of different acts constructed on the memes that fall within the scope of this study. However, of all the acts of Speech Acts Theory, Perlocutionary Act anchored this paper.

Perlocutionary Act premises that any speech or expression has one or two effects on the interlocutors. It either serves the purpose of persuading, enlightening, inspiring, warning, convincing and complimenting, or commanding, etc. Substantiating the above position (Oishi, 2006 and Ezekulie & Ifeoma 2023) state that perlocutionary act is performed by producing a text or expression to achieve certain effects on the hearers. Perlocutionary acts are, on the other hand, demonstrators as can be seen in the memes below.

7. Methodology

The data for this study comprised six different memes (T-shirts of graduands) derived from the graduands of the Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria. The data were chosen based on the acts they communicated. A critical at the data reveals that the memes contain different semiotic modes – text, image, colour, posture, gaze and so on. These modes are very crucial in communicating and understanding speech acts. They also guided the researchers in selecting and analysing the selected memes. As many as twenty-seven different memes were collected from the graduands' T-shirts, containing different semiotic modes. The data was grouped based on the speech acts they contained or performed. Out of the twenty-seven memes, six were selected for analysis. The remaining twenty-one, had fall within the ambit of the selected six memes analysed below. The data were compartmentalised into different speech acts they portrayed: criticise, persuade, enlighten, command, appreciate, and praise .The data spanned the period of December 2021 and February 2022, a period which marked the graduation of the set of students provided the data of this study.

8. Data Analysis and discussion

Figure 1

Criticises Negative Behaviours of some Family Members towards their Nibbling

A picture of a T-shirt with inscription that reads, ***EVEN WITH EVIL UNCLES, I STILL GRADUATE.***

The meme above communicates in a subtle and humouristic ways the inner feelings of a graduand, who criticises or abuses her uncles for not maybe contributing in any way for her study, especially after passing hurdles in her journey to freedom (graduation). The illocutionary force of the text is perceivable, as it has dual effects. One, it functions a warning and criticism to a general public that uncles or any persons, who are endowed to help their siblings, should do so as a matter of urgency. Such helps would in one way or the other assist in actualising the set goals of the recipients. Secondly, it implies that, the student in question was blessed with rich uncles, but none ever cares to know how she coped with internal and external challenges faced on campus – registrations, lectures, feedings and transports. The text also states the kind of relationship that exists between the student and her relatives. It

implicitly condemns the actions and nonchalant attitudes of some uncles towards the progress of their nieces and other family members. It also presents the student's state of mind that she attends to a rarified position (becomes a graduand), a position which many other youth of her age wishes to attend, but prevented by one or two social barriers.

Figure 2

Commands for Hard work and Perseverance to Achieve Goals

The meme above (Figure 2) presents a picture of a graduand who wears a T-shirt with inscription in capital letters that reads**, *I CAME, SAW E CHOKE, BUT I ...* By** displaying the bold text on the T-shirt, the graduand presents certain illocutionary acts. The acts are glaring – the graduand crosses bumps before she could attend to that. It again expresses that she came from a state to the Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina for her bachelor degree. Bearing context in mind, the text has humoristic undertone, as it expresses in a comic sense how the graduand battled with life on campus. The word "choke" here connotes "hardship and frustration" meaning that for one to emerge victorious, they must discomfort themselves and undergo series of disappointments. The moral power of the text can either be patient or a call to hard works as it motivates people, particularly students to exert more efforts in their academic pursuit that victory comes after hardship. The text, if approached from another context, may evoke interpretations different from the ones suggested above. It also suggests that academia is an environment full of frustrations and disappointments, since it houses people from different pedigrees, one must in one way or the other be offended by others doings.

Figure 3
Commands Parents to Invest in the Education of their Wards for a Better Tomorrow
The inscription the meme beneath carries praise. The graduand has explicitly sung the song of praise to her mother for sponsoring her education to the level of a degree. The graduand expresses her gratitudes and appreciations to her mother by telling the world that the success was not hers, but her mother, without which her registration and other bills would have not been settled. A text of this kind motives other parents, mothers especially, to sacrifice all they possessed to ensure their wards are properly educated. Notwithstanding,

apart from the text *"Mama Made It",* the posture of the graduand shows satisfaction, power and joy for becoming a graduate. This paralinguistic sign states outwardly, the psychological state of mind of the graduand as being contended with her new position and the sacrifices that her mother made in liberating her. However, considering the magnitude and pragmatic of the text, *"Mama Made It",* it explains that the graduand was singlehandedly sponsored by mother, without possibly some help from her father or other members of the family. Examining the text from critical lens, the graduand chides fathers for not investing on the education of their daughters, rather they allowed mothers with all the burdens of education and moral behaviours.

Figure 4

Has Double Speech Acts: Praise and Criticism

At the front of the meme (T-shirt) two phrases are conspicuously written, the first one reads "**FROM COMPUTER SCIENCE**" the second **"TO COMPUTER VILLAGE".** The first one maybe termed as praise, where the graduandt expresses that he studies computer science, a course which he loves so much and proud of. The second phrase maybe termed a criticism towards our society. Covertly, the construction may be derogative connoting that the graduand hails from a remote society, where knowledge of computer is scarce or not valued at all. On the other hand, it may be taken as a call on government agencies and other stakeholders to do the needful by ensuring this course (computer science) receives proper attentions that computer villages are built in all nook and crannies of the nation to offer opportunities – education, business, job and security to the teeming youth of the nation.

Again, apart from the discussed illocutionary effects, however, the meme is laden with other associated meanings, which are context driven. If taken to another environment,

the meme may generate lots of interpretations. For example, the second phrase may as well be taken as a perfomative act that represents the department the graduand graduated from. It expresses that he loves the course he studies passionately to the extent that the general public should know that. The phrase **"TO COMPUTER VILLAGE"** may be referred to a market in Otigba, Ikeja, and the capital of Lagos State, Nigeria, where information and communications technology (ICT) accessories are sold. Notwithstanding, the meme, brings to notice of all that the graduand is committed to practicing his learnt trade as a mean of earning a living, a practice which is anchored by the Government policy that graduates should after graduation practice their expertise to reduce total reliance on white colour job.

Figure 5

Expresses Compliments

Taking into cognisance the context in which those memes were used, it is obvious that the texts present the psychological disposition of the wearers. On their performative power, the texts state that the wearers' are sturdily contended with their new positions (graduation). The first meme presents the wearer as a God fearing being, who surrenders life and all other engagements to the God. The clause **"I HAVE GOT 99 PROBLEMS, BUT GRADUATING AIN'T ONE"** shows that the student has graduated, not because she was intelligent enough, but because the almighty God has ordained it that way. Though, she had lots of problems that militated against her graduating with a better class of degree, by graduating with whatsoever class, she was grateful. The second meme, equally, represents the wearer's state of being. It expresses that she was contented with her performance in all the examinations she has taken. She vouched on the intelligence that she was "UNBOTHERED" of all it may cause. It may also be reckoned that the graduand has accomplished a purpose, a very big one that deserves celebrations. That the illocutionary force of the texts manifold – compliment, attestation and devotion. The expressive and relational power of the memes are not hidden, they persuade students of all categories, apart from trusting upon their intelligence, they should also believe on the power of God in their academic voyage.

9. Conclusion

The findings of this study have established that memes, like verbal means of communication are laden with high worded messages of different magnitudes in a lighter tunes. They authenticate the fact that memes are units of cultural transmission meant to imitate social happenings by emphasing or de-emphasing their importance. As tools of communication, memes communicate different speech acts – identities, personality, status and ideologies, etc. This explains that memes are not mere texts (inscriptions) that graduands append on graduation attires for decoration purposes, but emblems for keeping hopes and memories alive. They however explicate graduands' affections or otherwise toward their programmes like course studied, relationship with family members in the course of the programme, how the graduands lived with the coursemates, and the relevance of the courses to their wellbeing. Looking at the above memes, it is apparent that meanings are the products of many modes. It is no longer realised solely through words, but through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources: images, text, colour layout, gas, posture, context, and their systematic arrangement. This position authenticates Victoria et al. (2023) claim that memes are visual rhetoric meant to cater the needs of people in a simple way, in such a way that words alone cannot do. Meanings conveyed through combination of different semiotic resources are more vivid and concise; they enthrall viewers to dig out for connotative meanings. Lastly, the findings accentuate the supremacy of context in the field of communication and linguistics, the meaning dissected from the above memes are contextual and homouristic. When approached from another context, the meanings may conflict the ones negotiated above. It also showcases the interconnectedness between meme and humour. Both meme and humour are modes of communication aim at expressing acts in elaborated ways, than ordinary words can do. Memetic communications are often accompanied by humour, and humour moistures communication.

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