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Research article

A Pragmatic Study of Visual Metaphor in Social Media Political Caricatures during the Iran-U.S. Conflict: A Relevance Theory Perspective

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ABSTRACT

With the military and political events between Iran and U.S., social media is a prominent platform to express political messages and biases by political memes and caricatures. This study aims to investigate the impact of visual metaphor on public opinion related to the Iran-U.S. conflict in political caricatures through social media. In this study, the focus is set on four types of visual metaphor, mono-modal and multi-modal metaphors from each type have been selected to study how visual metaphor is used except the last type making a total of seven samples. To investigate visual metaphor, a qualitative research has been carried out within the theoretical framework that put by Forceville (2013). The samples have been analyzed pragmatically focusing on relevance theory perspective to investigate the type of visual metaphor and to reveal the hidden message in each sample.

دراسة تداولية للاستعارة البصرية في الرسوم الكاريكاتيرية السياسية المتداولة على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي خلال الصراع الايراني-الاسرائيلي: من منظور نظرية الصلة

الباحثة بان اسعد عبود
المديرية العامة لتربية واسط

المُستخلص

في ظل الاحداث العسكرية والسياسية بين ايران وامريكا اصبحت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي منصات بارزة للتعبير عن الرسائل السياسية والانحياز السياسي بواسطة الميمات والكاريكاتير السياسي على سبيل المثال. تهدف الدراسة الحالية لدراسة تأثير الاستعارة البصرية على الرأي العام فيما يخص الصراع الايراني والإمريكي في الكاريكاتير السياسي المتداول على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي. يتم التركيز على اربعة انواع من الاستعارة البصرية. وتم اختيار نموذجين وهي احادية النمط ومتعددة الانماط من كل نوع عدا النوع الاخير من اجل دراسة استخدام الاستعارة البصرية ليكون المجموع الكلي سبعة نماذج. وفي تحليل البيانات تم استخدام المنهج النوعي باستخدام نموذج Forceville (2013). وتم تحليل النماذج بصورة تداولية مع التركيز على نظرية الصلة لدراسة نوع الاستعارة البصرية المستخدم في كل نموذج والكشف عن الرسالة المخفية فيه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية، الاستعارة البصرية، الكاريكاتير السياسي، الصراع الايراني والامريكي

1. Introduction

Pragmatics is the youngest field of language study. It offers a way of exploring the intended meaning in certain texts even if viewed from a semiotic point of view. These texts seem to have different meanings or incomplete meaning to what it really intended (Sinha, 2021, p. 30-31). Important researchers like S. Pierce, R. Carnap, and C. Morris focus on pragmatics as they study the relation between signs and how they are used. Alhamid (2026) mentions that "pragmatics explores the nature of meaning when it comes to language use, and how people perceive it in context, taking into account such factors as social context, intentions of a speaker, shared knowledge of two communicators" (p. 1154).

Before delving into "Visual Metaphor", it is worth mentioning that traditionally many theorists agree upon the idea that metaphor is used to represent an unresolved or a problematic issue in terms of something which is familiar and easily imaginable (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Later studies demonstrated that metaphor is not restricted to verbal language. Consequently, Visual metaphor is recognized as an important rhetorical device in a wide range of "multimodal communication situations" (Forceville, 2008) and depicting any complex experience in terms of a familiar one is one of the rhetorical devices in caricatures (Morris,1993).

Generally, pragmatics plays an important role in political communication. One of the important weapons for any artist in communicating messages towards society is caricatures. Political caricature is an instrument to express the reaction of the society toward a political event or a person. This instrument does not lose its importance in the modern world but rather it expands its location because in addition to the

publication of caricatures in journals or newspapers, internet caricatures have become widespread (Karmakar, Painuly & Sharma, 2022, p. 38). Recently, one of the most important political and military events in the Middle East is the conflict between Iran and U.S. Therefore, the current study deals with the caricatures related to this issue.

As for the previous studies, they have explored visual metaphors such as Plocher & Romfeld (2018) but they examine the impact of advertising on brand image by a quantitative research. Other studies focus on visual metaphor in hand-drawn sketches on Islam such as El-Falaky (2023) or deal with visual metaphor in newspaper caricature such as El Refaie (2003). Thus, these studies did not address the conflict between Iran and U.S. indicating a research gap. Therefore, the current study explores visual metaphor in political caricatures circulated on social media platforms using pragmatic approach in the analysis to reveal the hidden political messages and to find out the functions of visual metaphor and its influence on public opinion.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Relevance Theory

As a reaction and development of the classical theory of pragmatics especially Grice's cooperative maxims, Sperber and Wilson (1986) grounded the relevance theory which assumes that people try to achieve the greatest contextual effect with the least cognitive effort. Their theory deals with the cognitive side of interaction and it has two factors. The first one is the cognitive effects which is the outcome of an interaction between new stimulus and a subset of assumptions in the cognitive system. The second factor is the processing effort that the cognitive system must expand in order to achieve a satisfactory interpretation of any new information (Huang, 2007, p. 183). They present the "Principle of Relevance" which is that "every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 158). They suggest two types of the speaker's intention. The first one is "Informative intention: to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 58). The second is "Communicative intention: to make it mutually manifest to audience and communicator that the communicator has this informative intention. Communicative intention: to make it mutually manifest to audience and communicator that the communicator has this informative intention (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 61).

One of the concepts that belongs to Relevance theory is 'explicature'. According to explicature, context in pragmatic processes has an important role in communication more than resolving ambiguities or assigning references. Context free sentence meaning does not determine the truth conditional meaning fully but rather it provides set of rules that help in constraining the pragmatic processes to determine the propositional meaning of the speaker. The inferential process in which the hearer is looking for an interpretation is consistent with the presumption to derive an explicature by enriching the conceptual schema provided by the linguistic meaning. This process occurs within the derivation of implicatures or the cognitive implications intended by the speaker. The two kinds of propositional meanings are mutually constraining. In this interpretation, the explicature and the intended contextual assumptions should provide

an inferential basis for the implications derived (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). In this study, relevance theory has an important role because it explains how the viewers interpret the implied meaning in visual elements by depending on the cognitive effort. Relevance theory clarifies how some political messages in the pictures can be inferred and understood even if they are not explicitly stated.

2.2 Visual Metaphor

Traditionally, metaphor is consider as a figure of speech and is defined as the process of introducing something in terms of another. Recently, it is considered as a conceptual aspect of introducing and interpreting the world (Crystal, 1992). Before dealing with visual metaphor, it is necessary to understand cognitive or conceptual metaphor presented by Lakoff and Johnson. According to them metaphor is the transfer of meaning from one domain to another. For example, red rose which is a symbol of love its meaning has been shifted to something different which is love (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 13).

Max Black and Charles Forceville introduce visual metaphor. Forceville (2016) in "Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor", points out to "static discourses," such as pictures, paintings, and graphics, and "dynamic discourses," such as films with movement. The domestic scholar Hu (2014) defines it as "showing one object is like another by comparing two images that may be completely different" (p. 607). According to Forceville (2007), metaphor consists of two parts or elements: target or the metaphor's topic and source or "something else" used to transmit information about that target. In other words, visual metaphor occurs when something is presented visually as something else. It can be found in political caricatures, art and films (Kaplan, 1990 & Whittock, 1990).

One of Forceville (2007) contribution is his classification of visual metaphor into mono-modal metaphor and multi-modal metaphor. In mono-modal metaphor, the target and the source are presented in one mode and the focus will be on the effect of the visual structure on the cognitive comprehension. As for multi-modal metaphor, firstly, it was mentioned by Foreceville (1996, p. 148) as a metaphor in which one of the two domains (source or target) is presented in visual mode while the other one is presented in verbal. Then, Forceville (2007, p. 16) states that in multi-modal metaphor, the two domains are rendered into two different modes (written and spoken language, gestures, images, and sounds). This type is widely used in advertising.

According to Forceville (2013, p.6-9), visual metaphors are:

1. Contextual Metaphor: in this type, there is a need for background knowledge to construe a metaphor. Forceville (2013) states that "a visually rendered object is turned into the target of a metaphor by being depicted in a visual context in such a way that the object is presented as if it were something else – the source" (p.6). He adds that in this type the visual context provides the source because the context in which anything else is found determines the intended meaning. In other words, by the context metaphor reaches the target from the source.

2. Hybrid Metaphor: in this type, the source and the target are integrated physically. The viewer is able to recognize them but can't separate them. In this type, one of the elements of the visual metaphor is real and the other is metaphorical.

3. Simile: in this type, the target is compared to a source which it resembles in some way. This can be accomplished by juxtaposing the target and the source, presenting them in the same position, lighting them similarly or any combination of these ways.

4. Verbo-pictorial Metaphor: in this type, "in the absence of any contextual cues, we construe the visual element as the target, and the verbal element as the source, rather than vice versa" (Forceville, 2013, p.9).

Despite the few differences between verbal metaphor and visual metaphor, both have the same function which is the explanation of complex and abstract ideas to people. Using visual metaphor with verbal metaphor does not require a simple sensory perception but it require imagination which is known as the integration of perception with memory (Hetmanski, 2020, p. 146). Somov (2010) points out that

On the whole, concepts of visual sign systems in artworks rely upon verbal and visual sign systems that were created earlier in visual art (…). By perceiving the environment, people produce visual information on the basis of conceptual schemas. (…) Any fragment of visual information can be interpreted on the basis of conceptualization, and it gains sense due to this". (p. 476)

In visual metaphor, the main focus of the artist is adding something new or strange indirectly to the elements of the picture to gain the viewer's attention. Many techniques can be used to achieve this purpose like changing in shapes and scales that do not require verbal means since they depend on the viewer's perception. Symbolism is also used but it requires the viewer's background information (Hetmanski, 2020, p. 147).

2.3 Political Caricatures

In contrast to verbal information, Vojtasek (1981, as cited in Dugalich, 2018) points out that visual message is "faster and easier to be accepted as the truth, causes less fear" (p.190) because it requires less processing efforts to represent events that makes the viewers more likely to accept them as truthful and psychologically less threatening than verbal statements while Chudakova (2005) thinks that visual message "seems more democratic" (p. 189). Thus, one can draw conclusions from the visual message especially in political discourse like posters and caricatures. Dion (2015) believes that caricatures can communicate an intended message in less than a second and they are stronger than a poem or painting in reaching that message. Therefore, they are the short cut way in saying something like expressing a fact or a point of view on a social or political issue. Dugalich (2018) defines a political caricature as "an image that usually contains a text component. The distinguishing features of a political caricature are the actuality of facts, hyperbole and satire in the representation of iconic and verbal components"(p.160).

Andrade (2019, p. 1) believes that there are five elements that are used by caricaturists to convey their point of view:

- Symbolism: to use an object standing for an issue.
- Captions: used for clarity or emphasis.
- Analogy: a comparison between two different things that have some similar characteristics.
- Irony: indirect criticism.

- Exaggeration: magnifying a problem or a physical feature.

Accordingly, with the wide use of social media among different people of different ages in the society, political caricatures have gained an important impact because of its crucial role in conveying political messages especially in times of war or conflict such as that of the war between Iran and U.S.

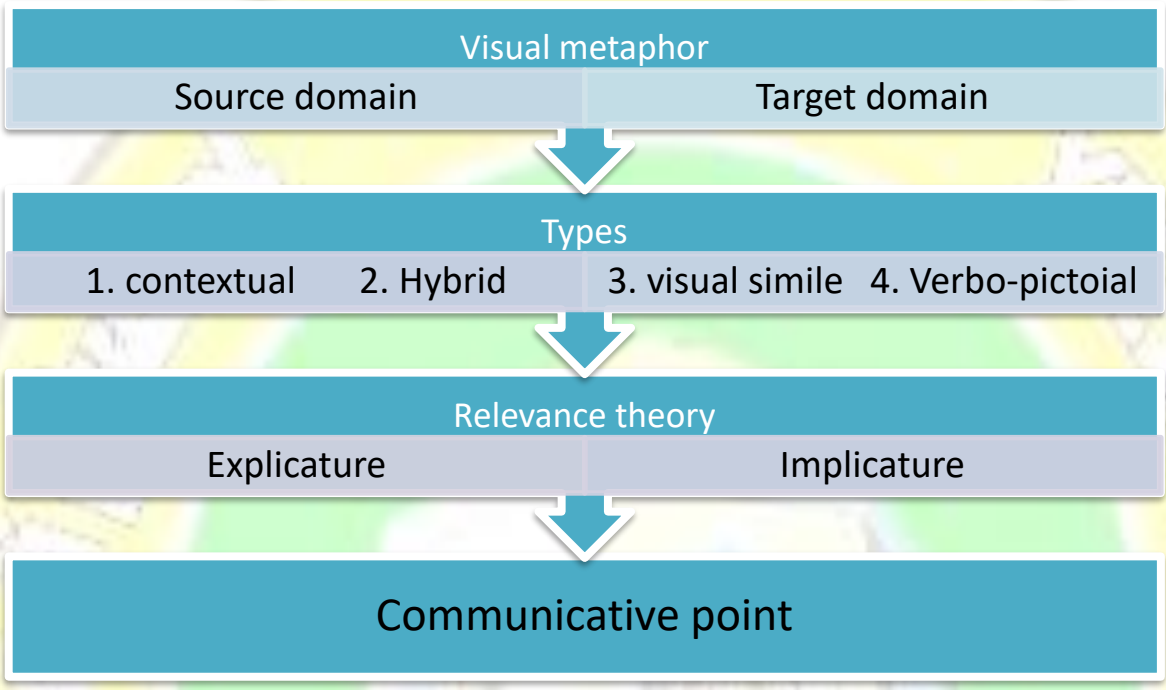
3. **Methodology, Model for Analysis and Research Questions**

In this study, a qualitative method is adopted to analyze the selected political caricatures. The qualitative method gives the researcher more flexibility in the analysis as it deals with several interpretations and focuses on the subjective ones. Moreover, the number and the size of the samples are determined by the researcher (Schilling, 2017, p. 352). The selected samples in this study are analyzed from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on relevance theory to investigate the function of visual metaphor in political caricatures and to convey the intended meaning. The analysis is based on Forceville's (2013, p.6) taxonomy of visual metaphor. According to him, there are four types of visual metaphor which are contextual metaphor, hybrid metaphor, visual simile and verbo-pictorial metaphor. In addition, he believes that metaphor consists of two parts which are target and source.

The main aim of this study is to analyze visual metaphor in selected political caricatures circulated in social media related to the Iran-U.S. conflict. It aims to uncover political messages by the visual elements that are used to influence the viewer's interpretation. The study attempts to investigate:

1. How does visual metaphor deliver political messages to the viewers in the political caricatures?
2. What are the pragmatic functions of visual metaphor in the selected political caricatures?

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework Adopted from Forceville (2013) and Sperber & Wilson (1995)



4. Data Collection

The current study focuses on the political caricatures that are circulated in social media during the Iran-U.S. conflict. Such kind of data is available and makes the researcher's work easier. The samples are chosen from the works of Carlos Latuff. He is a Brazilian political caricaturist who is interested in international issues like war and human rights. His caricatures were chosen because they are available on Instagram and because of the political focus and the relevance to contemporary events. In this study, seven caricatures are chosen because the study is a qualitative one so that the number of the political caricatures are determined by the researcher depending on the objectives of this study (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2). Moreover, saturation is achieved and using more caricatures will add nothing to the study (Saunders & Townsend, 2018, p. 488-9).

The distribution of the selected samples

Type of caricatures	Contextual	Hybrid	Simile	Verbo-pictorial
Mono-modal Metaphor	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Multi-modal Metaphor	**1**	**1**	**1**	**-**

5. Data Analysis

In this section, the selected political caricatures that are circulated on Instagram during the conflict between Iran and the U.S. in the Middle East will be analyzed pragmatically. The total number of these caricatures is seven. Two samples are presented for contextual metaphor, hybrid metaphor and visual simile. However, only one verbo-pictorial sample is included because this type cannot be mono-modal. In contrast, the first three types include mono-modal and multi-modal visual metaphors. These samples are going to be analyzed pragmatically in order to discover the political messages.

Sample (1):



1. General Description

In this caricature, there is a conflict between an eagle with American flag and a missile with Iranian flag. The eagle has some features resembling U.S. president Donald Trump.

2. Visual Metaphors

This caricature is a mono-modal because it is a drawing without any written text. The metaphor in this caricature falls under contextual metaphor. The source domain is the eagle and the missile while the target domain is U.S. and Iran or military power. The caricature visually represents the military power and readiness of Iran for war against U.S.

3. Inferential Path

From relevance theory perspective, explicature is represented by the eagle, the missile and the flags. Lattuf presupposes that the viewer infers the representation of the eagle as to be the U.S., the missile is associated with the power of Iran. His message assumes that the viewer is expected to know everything about the conflict between Iran and the U.S. without any verbal text or explanation. By implicature, the viewer notices the illustration of the political tension between them. The Iranian dominance in this war is very obvious because of the eagle that being struck by the missile which is used as a metaphor of power. The viewer need background knowledge to connect the visual metaphor of the eagle and missile to the political conflict between Iran and the U.S. Therefore, the viewer remains within moderate cognitive effort. The cognitive effect of the caricature is the recognition of the Iranian dominance in this strategic war. As a result, high cognitive effect is achieved within moderate processing effort. Accordingly, the communicative point of the caricature is inviting the viewer to recognize the Iranian dominance in this war. It is a way of persuading public opinion towards Iran against U.S. in the war. The message of the caricature depends on the context and the background knowledge of the viewers without using any written word.

Sample (2):



1. General Description

The selected caricature displays Donald Trump standing over a map with a target symbol. He holds a bag with the word “sanctions” on it.

2. Visual Metaphor

The caricature is a multi-modal because it incorporates written text. Contextual metaphor is employed because Latuff depends on the background knowledge of the political context (Iran-U.S.

conflict) and expects the viewer to infer the visual metaphor and the political message without much explanation. The red target symbol is the source and Iran is the target. Moreover, the word "sanctions" represents the source and the war is the target. The presence of Bolsonaro represents the Brazilian political support for the U.S.

3. Inferential Path

In this caricature, explicature is represented through a caricatured Trump, red target, sanctions and map. By implicature, the viewer notices that Trump represents the U.S. government and the sanctions are painted as a weapon used by the U.S. against Iran which is portrayed by the map with the target symbol. The cognitive effects of this political caricature evoke an emotional response like fear and danger. The communicative point is inviting the viewer to engage with this political message emotionally. This enhances the relevance of this political caricature and reduces the viewer's cognitive effort. Therefore, the visual metaphor is accessible. It is also impactful because it tries to influence the viewer's ideology by representing Trump as a source of violence and war.

Sample (3):



1. General Description

The caricature displays Donald Trump as a military tank moving toward Iran under Israel influence and control. The caricature contains the word "Iran" to just refer to the direction of the military tank.

2. Visual Metaphor

This political caricature is a mono-modal hybrid metaphor. Lattuf presents his message without using written text by employing hybrid metaphor. Although the caricature contains the word "Iran", the metaphor can be understood without linguistic support. It only refers to the direction of the military tank. The military tank is the source domain and Trump or the U.S. power is the target domain and both of them are

represented visually. Trump is merged with the war machine which is moving toward Iran. The word "Iran" only refers to their destination. It is not included in this visual metaphor.

3. Inferential Path

Explicature is represented by Trump merged with a military machine, Netanyahu and Israeli flag. The viewer implicates that the caricature symbolizes the American military power and its role in supporting Israel against Iran. Benjamin Netanyahu is riding this war machine with Israeli flag to suggest that Israel is directing the U.S. military power. From a relevance theory perspective, the image depends on the viewer's knowledge to understand the criticism embedded in the image. The viewer needs to connect the Israeli interests and the U.S. military power against Iran depending on his political knowledge to involve moderate processing effort and to achieve strong cognitive effects. The communicative pint is that Lattuf presupposes that the viewer's background information makes him/her able to understand the hybrid metaphor in the caricature without written explanation. It shows that he is against Israel and the U.S. Moreover, the viewer will implicate that both Israel and the U.S. are sources of danger and war.

Sample (4)



1. General Description

In this political caricature, Trump's head is merged with the world's cup. At the top, there is a burning skull with flames and black smoke. The base contains "FIFA World Cup" and the word FIFA is replaced with "Trump".

2. Visual Metaphor

This caricature is a multi-modal hybrid metaphor because Lattuf uses visual elements and verbal text to create meaning. Lattuf uses hybrid metaphor because of the merger between the visual source domain (Trump) to represent war and death and the verbal target domain which is the expression (FIFA World Cup). The black smoke resembles destruction and violence.

3. Inferential Path

Explicature is represented through Trump, skull and FIFA/TRUMP WORLD CUP. The fusion of these two entities suggests that the event is linked to the actions of Trump. Moreover, his name is written at the base of the trophy in red for emphasis and because it helps the viewer to interpret the intended meaning of the caricature and the purpose of this fusion which is criticizing the FIFA World Cup. It is associated with Trump to represent his influence over FIFA. The communicative point is inviting the viewer to infer and implicate the critical message by connecting the burning skull, the flames and Trump's features with their background knowledge of the political conflict. Latuff presupposes that the viewer has background knowledge about Trump's actions so the interpretation is achieved by inferential processing without many verbal explanation.

Sample (5)



1. General Description

This caricature presents a religious leader with three missiles marked with the Iranian flag. On the other side, there is an aggressive eagle wearing a hat with the American flag. The caricature shows a conflict between the two sides.

2. Visual Metaphor

This caricature is a mono-modal because Latuff does not use written text. The missiles presented in the caricature display strength and military power. The missiles are placed very close from the religious leader to indicate that this military power is an extension of his political identity and authority. Thus, the caricature is visual simile because the missiles (source) is compared with the strength and power of the Iranian leaders (target). Moreover, the aggressive eagle (source) represents the U.S. political system (target) and the confrontation between the missiles and the eagle (source) is compared with the conflict between Iran and U.S. (target).

3. Inferential Path

In this caricature, explicature is represented through the religious leader, the eagle, the missiles and the flags. The caricature does not explicitly imply that the leader is the missiles but it metaphorically

suggests that the viewer is able to implicate that the religious leader is strong and his strength is similar to the missiles and associated with the military power. This comparison produces strong cognitive effect with minimal effort even without using written text and the use of the Iranian and American flags reduce any possible ambiguity. As a result, high interpretation is achieved with low effort. The communicative point of this caricature is persuading the viewer that Iran and its leaders are strong in this conflict.

Sample (6)



1. General Description

In the caricature, Donald Trump is holding a document with the phrase "U.S.-IRAN AGREEMENT". An Israeli missile penetrates this document moving towards Lebanon which is ablaze with fire and smoke.

2. Visual Metaphor

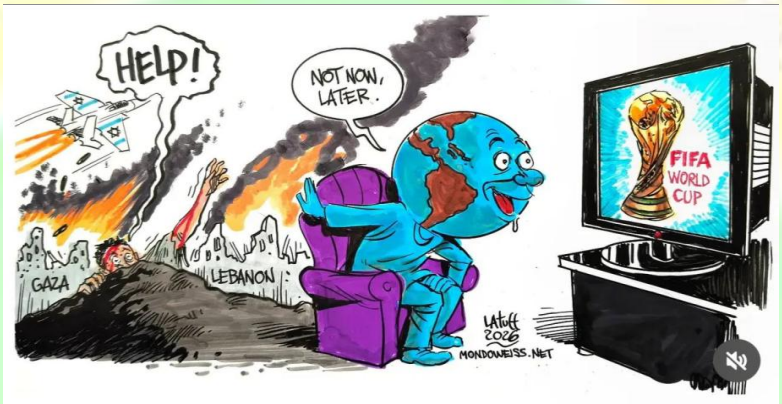
This caricature is multi-modal because Latuff uses two modes which are visual and verbal to communicate a political message. Latuff compares between U.S. – Iran agreement and the destruction in Lebanon. The target domain is the phrase "U.S. – IRAN AGREEMENT" which is presented verbally while the source domain which is presented visually is the destruction in Lebanon and the missile. Thus, the type of visual metaphor in this caricature is visual simile because it visually compares the agreement with destruction. The target domain "U.S. – IRAN AGREEMENT" is presented verbally because is cannot be understood without writing it while the source domain which is "destruction" is presented visually through the burning scene in Lebanon and the missile.

3. Inferential Path

In this caricature, explicature is represented through caricatured Trump, a missile, burning buildings and "U.S.-IRAN AGREEMENT". When the viewer links the suggested agreement by Trump with the missile which is moving towards Lebanon, it shows that this agreement is associated with violence rather

than peace. The viewer can infer that this agreement may serve certain interests that lead to destruction. The viewer can implicate that Latuff ridicules the American agreement because the military aggression does not stop. In terms of relevance theory perspective, the viewer can combine the verbal and visual information presented in the caricature. The communicative point of this inferential process is that any diplomatic agreement suggested by Trump serves war and destruction rather than peace. This meaning is not stated directly but it can be inferred through the verbal and visual information.

Sample (7)



1. General Description

In this caricature, the world is presented as a person who is watching the World Cup with the phrase "NOT NOW, LATER" and there is destruction in Gaza and Lebanon that call for "HELP".

2. Visual Metaphor

This caricature is multi-modal because Latuff uses two modes which are visual and verbal. This caricature is verbo-pictorial because the meaning is interpreted via the verbal and visual modes. The source domain is the person who is busy in watching TV. while the target domain is the international community. The world is metaphorically presented as a person interested in watching FIFA World Cup and ignoring the destruction in the world even though people are suffering and asking for help. The verbal elements have an important role in the interpretation of the caricature.

3. Inferential Path

In this caricature, explicature is represented by the world personified as a man, a TV. in which FIFA World Cup and calling for help from Lebanon and Gaza while the man responds 'Not now, later". The first element is the cry "HELP" coming from people in Lebanon and Gaza and the second element is the world's response "Not now, later". The viewer implicates that these verbal expressions eliminate any excuses for the international community. The world is not unaware of the destruction but rather it deliberately chooses to focus on FIFA World Cup. The cognitive effects in this caricature is the viewer's realization of the international community's awareness of the destruction but chooses to postpone any respond because of this entertainment event. There is minimal processing effort because the verbal cues

remove the ambiguity and guide interpretation. Therefore, the viewer does not need background explanation about this situation. The caricature is optimally relevant because it uses recognizable symbols that require little effort to interpret. The communicative point is reminding the viewers about the crimes of U.S. and Israel because the international community is busy with FIFA World Cup.

Summary Table of Visual Metaphor Analysis

No.	Description	Type of Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Intended Message / Cognitive Effect
1	Iranian missile is directed to an eagle with a hat with American flag on it.	Contextual Mono-modal	Missile eagle	Iran U.S.	Iran controls this war and victory is on the side of Iran
2	Donald Trump standing over a map with target symbol and holding a bag with the word "sanctions" on it	Contextual Mult-imodal	The red target symbol "sanctions"	Iran War	Trump as a source of violence.
3	Donald Trump is presented as a military tank moving toward Iran under Israel influence.	Hybrid Mono-modal	The military tank	Trump or the The U.S.	Israel and U.S. are sources of danger and war
4	Trump's head wearing a red cap is merged with the world's cup.	Hybrid Multi-modal	Trump	FIFA World Cup	FIFA World Cup is controlled by Trump
5	A conflict between a religious leader with three missiles marked with the Iranian flag. And an aggressive eagle wearing a hat with the American flag.	Visual simile Mono-modal	missiles	Iranian leaders	Power of the Iranian leaders
6	Trump is holding a document with the phrase "U.S.-IRAN AGREEMENT" and an Israeli missile penetrates this document moving towards Lebanon	Visual simile Multi-modal	destruction in Lebanon and the missile	the phrase "U.S. – IRAN AGREEMENT"	any diplomatic agreement serves war and destruction
7	The world is presented as a person who is watching the World Cup and neglecting the destruction in Gaza and Lebanon	Verbo-pictorial	A person	The international community	The world deliberately chooses to focus on FIFA World Cup and neglect destruction in Lebanon and

					Gaza in spite of the cry for help.

6. Conclusions

The present study has analyzed pragmatically seven political caricatures of Latuff during the conflict among Iran, the U.S. and Israel. These caricatures include various types of visual metaphors including contextual, visual simile, hybrid and vebo-pictorial metaphors. They are used by Carlos Latuff to communicate political messages about war and international relations. The first question that the current study attempts to answer is how visual metaphor delivers political messages to the viewers in the political caricatures? Latuff criticizes military aggression of the U.S. and the control of Israel. He expresses his opinion towards this war and to influence the public opinion emotionally and politically. He criticizes the political system in the U.S. and Israel and shows in his caricatures that they are responsible for war and for destroying the world. Moreover, to enhance the persuasive effect without too many verbal explanation, he sometimes depends on the viewer's background information about this conflict In some caricatures, he links between the visual elements and verbal elements for emphasis and to remove any ambiguity. Accordingly, the intended political messages are achieved by strong cognitive effects with manageable level of processing effort (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

As for the second question which is what are the pragmatic functions of visual metaphor in the selected political caricatures?, the main pragmatic function of the political caricatures of each type is persuading the public opinion that the U.S. and Israel are responsible of any destruction and even Trump's agreement does not call for peace in the world but rather for certain political interests. He continues to destroy countries around the world like Lebanon and Gaza. Latuff tries to persuade the viewers that Trump control everything in the world even the global entertainment event "FIFA World Cup". He tries to remind the people in the world that they are busy in this event and neglect the destruction in some countries like Lebanon and Gaza. Accordingly, visual metaphors are powerful tools that are used to shape the political criticism against this war and to guide the viewer's interpretation by the combination of images and verbal cues. This combination helps them to derive strong cognitive effects with minimal processing efforts.

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