

Social Media Cartooning: Visual and Multimodal Metaphors in Iraqi Newspapers Cartoons

Asst. Prof. Hayder Tuama Jasim Al-Saedi

University of Misan, College of Basic Education, Department of English

hayder_tuama@uomisan.edu.iq

Received Date: 28/1/2025,

Accepted Date: 4/3/2025,

Published Date: 1/6/2025

Abstract:

The current study aims to investigate the visual and multimodal metaphors by the use of metaphorical elements in cartoons that focus on social media networking. Thirty-two cartoons, drawn by well-known cartoonists, are gathered from the Iraqi newspapers. They were selected and classified based on their themes. All the details of these cartoons are taken into consideration. They are analyzed and interpreted using the metaphorical concepts based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Then, they are analyzed by using Forceville's (1996) pictorial metaphor and Sobrino's (2017) Multimodal Metaphor Approach. The findings reveal that the cartoons showed different visual/ pictorial and multimodal metaphors. They addressed different themes in satirical manner. In conclusion, the verbal text played a crucial role to make the multimodal metaphors dominant in the gathered cartoons that are relevant to social media.

Keywords: social media, visual metaphor, pictorial metaphor, multimodal metaphor, cartoons

الكاريكاتير في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: الاستعارات البصرية والمتعددة الوسائط في رسومات الصحف العراقية

أ.م. حيدر طعنه جاسم الساعدي
جامعة ميسان\ كلية التربية الأساسية

تاريخ النشر: ٢٠٢٥/٦/١

تاريخ القبول: ٢٠٢٥/٣/٤

تاريخ الاستلام: ٢٠٢٥/١١/٢٨

الملخص:

المبرانية التداولية هي دراسة المبادئ والعمليات التداولية الكامنة وراء الاتصال من خلال الكمبيوتر (CMC) تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى بحث في الاستعارات المرئية ومتعددة الانماط من خلال استخدام العناصر المجازية في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية التي تركز على شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي. اثنين وثلاثين رسماً كاريكاتورياً، رُسمت من قبل رسامي كاريكاتير مشهورين، من الصحف العراقية. عينات البحث تم تصنيفها بناءً على موضوعاتها. يتم أخذ جميع تفاصيل هذه الرسوم الكاريكاتورية بعين الاعتبار. تم تحليل وتفسير المفاهيم المجازية لفظياً بناءً على نظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). ثم تم تحليل الرسوم الكاريكاتورية باستخدام الاستعارة التصويرية (Forceville, 1996) ومنهج الاستعارة المتعددة الانماط (Sobrino, 2017). تكشف النتائج أن الرسوم الكاريكاتورية أظهرت استعارات بصرية/تصويرية ومتعددة الانماط مختلفة في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية التي تم أخذ عينات منها. لقد تناولت مواضيع مختلفة بطريقة ساخرة. وكشفت الاستنتاجات أن النص اللفظي لعب دوراً رئيساً في جعل الاستعارات المتعددة الانماط هي المهيمنة في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية التي ركزت على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الاستعارات الصورية، الاستعارات المتعددة الانماط، الكاريكاتير

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36317/kja/2025/v1.i64.18623>

Kufa Journal of Arts by University of Kufa is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

مجلة آداب الكوفة - جامعة الكوفة مرخصة بموجب ترخيص المشاع الإبداعي ٤.٠ الدولي.



1. Introduction

Social media is considered popular in the Arab world in general and Iraq in particular. The social media users prefer Facebook platform excessively more than the other platforms. This does not mean they ignore the use of the other social media platforms. For this reason, many social media users who do not interact too much in reality, they use these platforms as a means to express their notions and ideas to let the others see how they think and how they want to be perceived. This led to different viewpoints among the users. This made it a fertile ground to implant different ideologies among social media users not just virtually, but in reality too. Alahmadi (2022) states that social media platforms negatively have an impact on face-to-face interactions, the relationships among family members, someone's self-esteem and mental health, how it contributed to the theft of the intellectual property. As an Iraqi, social media apps caused different social issues such as launching lies, fake news, blackmail, murder, and rumors especially on Facebook. It affected real-life interactions prompted discussions about these issues in reality. It led the researchers, scholars, and mass media users explore the negative impacts of social media platforms in their works. For instance, cartoonists shed light on the topics about social media in their cartoons using the trending news that concern these issues in their daily talks. Iraqi newspapers adopted the works of cartoonists who address social media platforms in their cartoons. Cartoonists used visual and multimodal modes to depict different social and political issues related to social media platforms.

The current study aims:

1. To investigate the visual and verbal elements that contribute to the recognition of metaphors in cartoons focusing on social media platforms.
2. To investigate whether these metaphors are visual or multimodal.
3. To identify the sub-types of the visual and multimodal metaphors and how they are recognized.

Based on the aims of this study, the researcher strives to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the themes that are portrayed in the sampled cartoons?
2. Do the cartoons show positive or negative connotations of using social media platforms?
3. What are the visual and multimodal elements that are perceived in the sampled cartoons?
4. What are the visual and multimodal metaphors in the sampled cartoons?
5. What are the dominant (visual or multimodal) metaphors in the sampled cartoons?

The current study will include a review of the literature that relates to the visual and multimodal elements in different disciplines in cartoons. Then, it will explain the data collection and the theoretical frameworks that analyze the sampled data according to their sources and target domains by verbalizing the visual elements in these cartoons. Then, the sampled cartoons are classified as visual and multimodal metaphor. Finally, generalizations and conclusions will be given.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Background

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that metaphors mean understanding and experiencing one type of thing in terms of another. Metaphor is prevalent in our daily life in thought and action not just in language because our conceptual system is essentially metaphorical in nature. This means that the human conceptual system makes us perceive and understand the world by relating one thing to another. Metaphorical mapping requires two metaphorical terms; they are the target domain, which is an abstract concept and the source domain, which is a concrete concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987). A conceptual domain metaphorically generates expressions to understand another one (Kövecses, 2010). In general, Dirven (1985) reveals that an expression is

interpreted metaphorically as figurative rather than literal. To sum up, Black (1962) states that to understand a metaphor is a process to decode a token or figure out the solution of a riddle.

Imaginative products such as cartoons, literary works, dreams, visions, and myths can be understood through metaphors. In this case, metaphors are not limited to the verbal mode, but they are applied to other modes (Lakoff, 1993). In other words, metaphors can be cued in two or more modes/ modalities (Forceville, 2016). Readers need knowing what a mode is. Forceville (2009: 4) defines mode as “a sign system interpretable because a specific perception process...” and he elaborates different kinds of modes such as “(1) pictorial signs; (2) written signs; (3) spoken signs; (4) gestures; (5) sounds; (6) music; (7) smells; (8) tastes; (9) touch.”

Since there are different modes, it is important to differentiate between monomodal and multimodal metaphors. Forceville (2009:4) defines monomodal metaphors as “metaphors whose target and source are exclusively and predominantly rendered in one mode.” Pictorial/ visual metaphor is considered a monomodal when both the source and target domains are exclusively or predominantly cued in a visual/ pictorial mode (Bounegru & Forceville, 2011). The purpose behind studying visual/ pictorial metaphor is to test and refine the Conceptual Metaphor Theory to give evidence that conceptual metaphors are found in language alone (Forceville, 2008).

On the other hand, the verbal element helps recognize metaphoricality in an image although an image may stand alone to give meaning (Negro, 2015). The verbal text plays a role in recognizing the multimodal metaphors. Forceville (2009: 5) defines multimodal metaphors as “metaphors whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes.”

Cartoons are considered as a rich source for the non-verbal realization of metaphors where conceptual metaphors are portrayed in a literal way (Kövecses, 2010). In contrast to advertising, the goal of cartoons is “to expose something bad or shameful rather than to highlight

the positive” (El Refaie, 2009: 176). The current study focuses on investigating the pictorial/ visual and multimodal metaphors in cartoons related to social media.

2.2 Related Research

According to Wikipedia, “a cartoon is a type of visual art that is typically drawn, frequently animated, in unrealistic or semi-realistic style.” Cartoons are called editorial cartoons and occasionally referred to as political cartoons (Alahmadi, 2022). A political cartoon is usually illustrated in a single panel and published on the editorial or commentary pages of newspapers. Generally, cartoons address a political issue or event that happens currently in a country, Trending that happens socially, or an event involving a famous personality (El Refaie, 2009). Its purpose is the representation of social, cultural, or political aspects of life in a way in which it summarizes reality and transforms it into “a striking, original, and/ or a humorous way” (El Refaie, 2009:176). Cartoonists are considered active artistic members of societies whose unique works depict political and social incidents to imply direct or indirect criticism in a skillful or artistic way (Alahmadi, 2022).

Besides cartoons, the term “caricature represents a pictorial image of a human or a group of them. It may also be a symbolic representation of a nation, political party, idea or social issue” (Streicher, 1967: 431). It has been used as a means of exaggerating, the distinctive features of persons or things in a satirical way. It is drawn in a form of fashion that represents the scorn of human vices and their follies, and it represents an exaggeration of their distinctive features using graphic imagery. However, the term “cartoon” or “cartooning” refers to “build up” or “debunking” techniques that represent the human actors. It is “value-neutral” (Streicher, 1967). Both cartoons and caricatures are considered synonymous, but caricatures are distinct by employing exaggeration and distortion (Alahmadi, 2022). Both are usually accompanied by “speech labels” or “captions” which convey the message to the viewer briefly (Alahmadi, 2022) because understanding a cartoon needs some “extra-

textual information” (Sarceni, 2003: 36). Finally, cartoons and caricatures do not show any apparent differences since they refer to a drawing that includes “ridicule or denigration” and caricaturists refer to as cartoonists (Streicher, 1967).

Cartoons are considered as a rich field of study in different disciplines and the focus of the researchers in various fields such as journalism, media, and cognitive linguistics. Widely, they are a focus for studying the linguistic and non-linguistic elements to investigate the verbal-visual interaction that is employed by the cartoonists and perceived by the viewers (Alahmadi, 2022).

The interaction between the verbal and visual elements led scholars to investigate the semiotic elements in cartoons. Regarding Iraqi affairs, Abdulwahid (2022) investigates the underlying structures of satire in the Iraqi political cartoons that focus on the Iraqi elections campaigns. In addition, Alghezzy (2017) investigates the political cartoons in Iraqi social media platforms by employing Kress and Leeuwen’s (2006) approach. She finds out that the most prominent themes, which are addressed in cartoons, are “financial and administrative corruption, power abuse, government promises, procrastination, and electricity failure.” Al-Momani et al. (2017) shed light on the Arab Spring by employing the semiotic aspects in Jordanian political cartoons. They find out that cartoons reflect the positive themes of the public awareness of the political and national issues and resisting. Moreover, political cartoons play a role as a vehicle to shape and orient the public opinion in the social agenda (Sani et al., 2012). Finally, concerning religion, Moloney et al. (2013) explore how the processes of the religious groups are represented in selected cartoons.

Besides semiotics, cartoons are the focus of metaphor scholars to investigate the visual and multimodal metaphorical conceptualizations. Kövecses (2010) states that cartoons are considered a rich source to investigate the non-linguistic realizations of metaphors which are depicted in a “literal way.”

Negro (2013; 2014) pays attention to the metaphor-metonymy interaction in political cartoons by describing and identifying the metaphoric-metonymic source and target domains. She (2015) investigates the identification of visual metaphor by focusing on the verbal texts in cartoons. In addition, Lan and Zuo (2016) investigate the Chinese editorial cartoons about food safety based on the pictorial-verbal metaphorical perspectives by employing the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Multimodal metaphor theory. They find out different mode configuration patterns, numerous target domains of pictorial-verbal metaphors and a number of the metaphoric scenarios. Besides food safety in cartoons, Zhang and Forceville (2020) investigate the metaphoric-metonymic cross-cultural similarities in political cartoons that focus on Chinese-US conflict. Regarding Iraqi affairs in cartoons, Al-saedi (in press) explores the visual and multimodal metaphors in the cartoons that are published in the Iraqi newspaper cartoons. He finds out that different source domains are employed to address different themes that relate to the Iraqi socio-political and economic affairs.

Social media was also the interest of scholars in different disciplines. They investigate the use of social media and their impacts on family relations, children, youth, and their impact on self-esteem (Assad & Gabr, 2021; Steinsbekk et al., 2021; Daniels, 2020; Elhajjar & Ouaida, 2022; Gupta, 2021). In addition, scholars investigate the role of social media in health care and COVID-19 to describe the behavior of social media users (Okpara et al., 2021). In relation to the current study, Alahmadi (2022) investigates pictorial and multimodal metaphors in the Saudi editorial cartoons which are created by the Saudi cartoonists. The study finds out the negative use of smartphones and social media platforms on Saudi users.

3. Method

The current study investigates visual and multimodal metaphor in newspaper cartoons that focus on social media platforms. Three models are adopted and employed to investigate the metaphors visually and multimodally in the gathered cartoon. The data are thirty-two cartoons that are published in the Iraqi local newspapers and drawn by well-known cartoonists. Different social and political affairs are addressed in these cartoons. Applying the three models to the gathered cartoons made the researcher classify and sample the cartoons according to their source domains in which they help to identify the metaphorical concepts.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory is applied to verbalize all the elements of the cartoons and take all the details in consideration. Forceville's (1996) pictorial metaphor framework is employed to identify the metaphorical concepts and decide whether they are marked as pictorial/ visual metaphors or not. Sobrino's (2017) approach is applied to identify whether the cartoons are recognized as pictorial/ visual or multimodal and what multimodal metaphorical types are used in the sampled cartoons to determine the themes that the cartoonists want to convey to their viewers.

Forceville (1996) suggests four subtypes to identify the pictorial/ visual metaphors. The first term is pictorial metaphor with one pictorially present term (MP1) or contextual metaphor (Forceville, 2008). MP1 is rendered when the target domain is present, but the source domain is unambiguously suggested by the pictorial context. The second term is pictorial metaphor with two pictorially present terms (MP2) or hybrid metaphor. MP2 is rendered when both the domains are present and merged and fused into be a single entity without paying attention to the pictorial context. The third term is the visual or pictorial simile where both the source and target domains are present and juxtaposed. When one of the domains is rendered verbally and the other is rendered visually, the metaphor is conceptualized as verbo-pictorial (VPM). Eliminating the

text from the visual causes the disappearance of one of the domains. Consequently, it does not show any metaphorical conceptualization.

Three concepts are adopted by Sobrino (2017) to identify and mark the multimodal metaphors. They are multimodal metaphonymy, metaphoric amalgamation, and metaphoric chains. The interaction between metaphor and metonymy refers to metaphonymy where metonymy is integrated in either the metaphorical source or target domains. There are four variants of multimodal metaphonymy to mark a visual as multimodal metaphonymy. they are “a parallel metonymic expansion in both metaphorical domains, a parallel metonymic reduction in both metaphorical domains, metaphonymy scenarios, and multiple source-in-target metaphonymy.” Another concept is multimodal amalgamation which requires donor and receptor metaphors where the materials of the receptor metaphors are taken from the donor metaphors. There are four subtypes of multimodal metaphorical amalgamation. They are multimodal single, double, multiple-source metaphoric amalgams, and double-target metaphoric amalgams where one donor metaphor to two receptor metaphors. Finally, the multimodal metaphoric chains are a series of conceptual domains are gathered where the target domain of a metaphor is considered as a source domain to a subsequent metaphorical mapping.

4. Data Analyses and Results

The gathered data were analyzed by verbalizing the visual items and taking the verbal texts in consideration. This section includes two parts. The first part analyzes the selected cartoons using Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) model. They were sampled according to the themes that are dealt in the selected cartoons for the current study. Eight themes were listed below to focus on the role of social media platforms in life and their effects on the society. The next section analyzes the selected cartoons using the two other models; Forceville (1996) and Sobrino’s (2017) model to identify whether the selected cartoons are visual or multimodal.

4.1 Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Model

4.1.1 Rumors

Social media websites and apps have become a means to post rumors which cause interaction among their users. This social issue addressed by the cartoonists in their works. Cartoon (1a), by Amir Okasha, views two red-sleeved hands, captioned with a question mark which denotes to anonymous, holding a bucket, captioned “rumors,” in Arabic, pouring Arabic characters in a funnel where it denotes to Facebook logo to an ear of a young boy. It connotes the doer of spreading rumors in social media platforms in general and Facebook in particular. They are received by young men and adolescents.

It can be conceived the conceptual metaphors: FACEBOOK IS A FUNNEL, RUMORS ARE A CONTAINER OF FACEBOOK CONTENT, FACEBOOK USERS ARE A CONTAINER/ RUMORS' RECEIVERS, and RUMORS SPREADER IS AN ANONYMOUS USER.

Cartoon (1b), by Mohammed Thalab, views a blender, captioned “rumors,” full of social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp, twitter, Youtube, and Gmail. A red hand presses the green button with a finger to run the blender. Again, the red hand is for anonymous users who launch rumors in social media apps. In general, the cartoonist depicts the scenario of making a cocktail drink in a blender to portray launching rumors using social media apps. Making a cocktail drink needs to mix the material such as fruit, milk and so on to get the product (e.g. a fruit juice, milk shake, etc.).

It can be perceived as the metaphorical conceptualizations: RUMORS ARE A COCKTAIL DRINK, A BLENDER IS A CONTAINER, RUMORS SPREADER IS A COCTAIL MAKER, and SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE COCKTAIL MATERIALS (FRUIT).

Cartoon (1c), also by Mohammed Thalab, views Twitter logo as a windup bird toy with a winding key on the Twitter's back. A green hand, captioned with “rumors” in Arabic, is about to rotate the key. It can be

perceived that hidden or anonymous hands which manage the content of Twitter by launching rumors.

It can be conceptualized the metaphors: TWITTER IS A WIND-UP BIRD TOY, RUMORS ARE A GREEN HAND, A GREEN HAND IS AN ANONYMOUS USER WHO LAUNCHES RUMORS.

TO sum up, it can be conceived of the metaphor in all the three cartoons: RUMORS SPEADER IS AN ANONYMOUS USER.



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2453 (b) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2829 (c) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2441
Figure (1): Rumors in Social Media

4.1.2 Lying News

Using social media apps obsessively caused spreading fake and lying news in purpose of ideological intentions. This issue made the cartoonists portray it by depicting the social media apps to spread lies and fake news. The first cartoon (Figure 2a) depicts “the carrot and stick” approach to portray social media apps launching fake news. It views WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram respectively personified riding on the back of a man whose eyes seem closed. WhatsApp holds a stick and a paper, captioned “Fake News,” is hanging with a string at the end of the stick. The man extends his hands trying to catch the paper.

The “carrot and stick” is used metaphorically and depicted in caricatures and cartoons to express combining a reward and punishment.

We used to watch on TV a donkey or horse riders in races hanging a carrot in front of it to keep it running and urging it forward to reach the destination. The winner is the donkey or horse rider who is relaxing on its saddle and holding the end of the baited stick.

It can be construed that social media apps are the donkey riders which take the users as a saddle to ride and keep them running behind the fake news which is represented as a carrot where they think they are rewarded.

In this case, it can be conceived of the metaphorical conceptualizations: SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE AN ANIMAL'S SADDLE/ BACK, SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE ANIMAL RIDERS, THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS FAKE NEWS, and FAKE NEWS IS CARROT that the social media users run after. To sum up, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE CARROT AND STICK APPROACH that keep the users busy in spreading and receiving fake and lying news.

The next cartoon, (Figure 2b) by Oda Alfahdawi, depicts the fictional character and protagonist of children's novel *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by the Italian writer *Carlo Collodi* in 1881. Pinocchio is a modern toy who dreams to become a real boy. Its nose grows long when he lies. In this cartoon (Figure 2b), It views a doctor - patient scenario where someone sits on a chair addressing a doctor wondering in Arabic through the speech bubble "Doctor..when I use social media my nose gets longer."

It can be construed that the social media apps are platforms to launch lies. In this case, it can be conceptualized the metaphors: LYING IS LONG NOSE GROWING, SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE PINOCCHIO, LYING IS THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA.

Facebook is considered the most common platform used in Iraq. It is used for advertising, socializing, news, and so on. Besides its positive use, Facebook has become a virtual environment for launching lies and rumors, to serve political ideologies, to influence the public

opinion, and to destabilize socio-political and economic security in the country by recruiting electronic armies which are called “electronic fly.”

The next cartoons (Figures 2c -g) shed light on Facebook which depicted to portray lying or fake news. In Figure (2c), the cartoon, which is verbally captioned “Lying News,” views Facebook as stove and a yellow sleeved hand, which represents the yellow mass media (Al-Saedi, in press), adds more wood to keep the fire lit. The right side of the “F” is depicted as a chimney where black smoke covers someone who represents the users of Facebook.

It can be construed that Facebook is a means of launching lying news by the yellow mass media which represent the politicized or ideological mass media. The black smoke denotes to deceit the users of Facebook trying to ignite the socio-political situation in the country.

In short, from this cartoon, it can be perceived the metaphorical conceptualizations: FACEBOOK CONTENT IS LYING NEWS, A YELLOW-SLEEVED HAND FOR POLITICIZED MASS MEDIA, POSTING IN FACEBOOK IS FIRE IGNITION, and FAKE NEWS IS BLACK SMOKE.

In the same vein, in Figure (2d), the cartoonist views a conversation between a personified Facebook and someone who yells saying through a speech bubble “When will you stop lying?” and the personified Facebook replies “You, humans who lie.” It can be perceived that Lies are associated with Facebook which is a result of the worst use of this platform by launching lies to serve ideological and political interests to change or act the public opinion. To sum up, it can be conceived of the metaphorical conceptualizations: FACEBOOK IS A PERSON and LIES LAUNCHING IS FACEBOOK USE.

Instead of saying lying news, the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri depicts the words “fake news” using the typo-pictorial design of the “F” logo of Facebook in his cartoon (Figure 2e). Therefore, it can be conceived of the conceptual metaphor FAKE NEWS IS FACEBOOK.

The last two cartoons (Figures 2f and g) depict “ANGEL AND DEVIL ON SHOULDERS.” An angel, which represents conscience, is

portrayed as a human brain with two wings telling the man through a speech bubble “Don't believe him.” However, on the left shoulder, instead of devil, which represents temptation, it is noticed that the Facebook logo personified holding a trident and telling the man “Believe me.”

In this cartoon (Figure 2f), it can be perceived that the cartoonist, Oda Alfahadawi, tells the viewers that Facebook is our temptation that always lies and misleads humans by making them take the wrong decisions.

To sum up, it can be conceived of the metaphors: THE RIGHT-SHOULDER ANGEL IS A HUMAN BRAIN, CONSCIENCE IS A HUMAN BRAIN and THE LEFT-SHOULDERS DEVIL IS FACEBOOK where it became common to visualize the Facebook platform to launch lies (LIES LAUNCHING IS USING FACEBOOK).

In the same vein, the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri depicts “ANGEL AND DEVIL ON SHOULDER” in his cartoon (Figure 2g), which is captioned “Double Use.” He views an angel and devil sign symbol on the two sides of the “F” of the Facebook logo. It can be perceived that Facebook is used for good and for evil. In short, it can be conceptualized the metaphor: GOOD AND EVIL USE IS THE USE OF FACEBOOK.



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi
Issue no. 2389



(b) Addustour
Newspaper Issue no. 5073



(c) Addustour Newspaper
Issue no. 4990



(d) Addustour
Newspaper Issue no. 5461



(e) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2717



(f) Addustour
Newspaper Issue no. 5084



(g) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2716

Figure (2): Fake/ Lying News in Social Media

4.1.3 Low-Down Content

The term “low-down content” means the social media content that violates moral, social, and religious values. It has become common when the Iraqi government passed a law to chase and arrest the social media users, who are considered influencers, post this kind of content. All mass media dealt with this issue on TV, newspapers, social media platforms, and so on. The cartoonists addressed it in their cartoons.

The first cartoon, (Figure 3a) by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, is captioned “Monitoring the digital content. It shows personified social media apps; namely, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Tiktok respectively. They stop in a queue. A man, who represents the

executive authority in Iraq, opens the head of the personified Facebook searching for low-down content the same way we do in searching in a bag or sack.

The cartoonist portrays the campaigns that the government made to watch the content of social media to see the misuse of these platforms by publishing content against the country's laws and values.

To understand the essence of this cartoon, it can be conceptualized the metaphors: SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE PERSONS, EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY/ GOVERNMENT IS A PERSON, and SEARCHING IN SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING IS SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT MONITORING.

The next cartoon (Figure 3b), by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, views a man, which captioned with the word “campaign” in Arabic, uses a scissor carjack to lift a graphic design of the Arabic words “Low-down content” instead of lifting a car.

The cartoonist sheds light on the attempts by personifying the governmental campaigns to fight posting low-down content and repositioning this content to be meaningful or serious content on social media platforms.

To perceive the essence of this cartoon, it can be conceptualized the metaphors: CAMPAIGNS OF FIGHTING LOW-DOWN CONTENT IS A PERSON, SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IS A CARJACK LIFTING, LIFTING UP THE CONTENT IS A TOOL (A CARJACK), and SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IS LOW-DOWN CONTENT.

The third cartoon (Figure 3c), also by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, shows two men holding smart devices. It seems they posted something on social media. One literally represents “serious content” and the other represents “low-down content.” It views only one social media reaction sign symbol of “Like.” to the serious content. On the other hand, numerous sign symbols of “Like” and “Love” go up the device as a reaction to the low-down content which made the man look happy. However, the other man looks astonished and sad while he is looking at the numbers of reactions of the low-down content. In other words, getting

more reactions on a content means it is low-down content and vice versa.

Verbally, the Iraqi media social media users commonly say that, for example, the interaction of their posts are up. It means they get too many reactions and comments on the content of their posts and so forth. This cartoon visualizes the verbal metaphor of low-down content.

Kövecses (2010: 40) states that positive evaluation is given to upward orientation, but it is negative when it refers to downward orientation. He gives some examples which may relate to understand the essence of this cartoon; they are HAPPY IS UP/ SAD IS DOWN. In this case, the viewers perceive that LOW-DOWN CONTENT IS UP which represents HAPPY IS UP and SERIOUS CONTENT IS DOWN, which represents SAD IS DOWN. The cartoonist mocks attributing both contents to indicate how the social media users make more interaction to meaningless content and vice versa.

The last two cartoons portray the low-down content of social media in different ways. The cartoon (Figure 3d), captioned with “The content of most social media programs” in Arabic. It views a hand holds a smartphone. On its screen, two hands throw the leftovers, shoes and so on from a metal trash can. It visualizes the verbal saying of “garbage content” in social media.

It can be perceived the metaphorical conceptualizations: THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS GARBAGE CONTENT which it represents LOW-DOWN CONTENT IS AN OBJECT (GARBAGE).

The last cartoon (Figure 3e), by Ahmad Qaoud, portrays the content of social media in another way. It depicts social media websites as a wastewater pipe “sewer.” It throws a yellow wastewater which is captioned with negative terms such as rumors, frustration, chaos, lying, impoliteness, etc. A man, who denotes to social media users, raises an umbrella, captioned with “awareness,” over his head do that its dome-shaped canopy prevents him from wastewater.

It can be construed that the cartoonist portrays how the social media users prevent the low-down content. Awareness is the only way to avoid getting dirty from this content.

In short, to understand the essence of this cartoon, it is conceptualized as SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE WASTEWATER PIPE, THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS DIRTY DRAINAGE WATER (WASTEWATER) and AWARENESS IS AN UMBRELLA that avoids the social media users getting dirty.



(a) Assabah Newspaper
Issue no. 5615



(b) Assabah
Newspaper Issue no.
5616



(c) Almustaqbal Al-
Iraqi Issue no. 2861



(d) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi
Issue no. 2440



(e) Almustaqbal Al-
Iraqi Issue no. 2102

Figure (3): Low-Down Content in Social Media

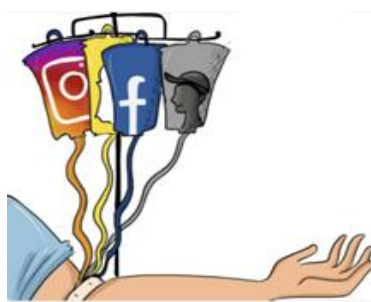
4.1.4 Hospital (Intravenous Drip)

Using social media apps and websites has become irreplaceable. It caused less socialization in reality. The cartoonists focused in their cartoons on this issue in different contexts such as intensive care in hospitals. Cartoon (4a), by Naji Benaji, which is captioned in Arabic “The social media and its effect on the society” views a medical bed where someone is laying on it and his hand is connected to bottles of intravenous drips through infusion sets. Each bottle of an intravenous drip represents a social media app; namely, Twitter, Whatsapp, YouTube, and Facebook respectively.

In the same vein, cartoon (Figure 4b) views the same context to focus on the effect of the social media apps. However, the cartoonist added other apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Clubhouse besides Facebook.

It can be conceptualized the metaphors: SOCIAL MEDIA APP/ WEBSITES ARE INTRAVENOUS DRIPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE THE PATINETS.

It can be perceived that the social media apps are mapped as negative oriented elements which are needed as intensive care to the social media users (PATIENTS). To sum up, as viewers of cartoons, it shows the need of social media as virtual world more than the need to socialize in reality.



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2472 (b) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2820

Figure (4): An Intravenous Drip in Social Media

4.1.5 Electronic Fly

Literally, the term “electronic fly” has become common in the Arab world in general and the Middle East in particular. According to Wikipedia, the term was coined to attribute automated or programed accounts on social media websites and apps. Their goal is purely political to change the public opinion, attract attention, or change the perception of browsers/ users about a specific case or issue.

In fact, it needs human subjects to do that. Therefore, they are recruited by political or governmental representatives to serve and defend their ideologies by creating propaganda in social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter).

The cartoonists addressed this term in their cartoons. Figure (5a) views a smart device (e.g. A phone or tablet) with different icons of social media apps. It is captioned on the screen “Electronic fly” in Arabic. A large fly, which exceeds the size of the smart device, looks at the screen while its legs touch it. Its head is captioned verbally with the Arabic word “sedition.” The focus of this cartoon is that the electronic fly spread disorder in social media. It causes sectarianism, turmoil and chaos among the users who are from different political and religious ideologies.

It has conceptualized the metaphors: SEDITION SPREADERS ARE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS and SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE ELECTRONIC FLY.

The next cartoon (Figure 5b), by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, views a pile of garbage and flies around it. It is captioned with an arrow “natural fly” and they say through a speech bubble “our garbage is clean!” On the right side of the cartoon, there is a man wears a suit and sunglasses holding a briefcase. He is followed by shapes of flies and captioned as “electronic fly.” The man denotes to the politician and his followers who are called electronic fly to polish the image of the politician in social media.

It can be construed that social media websites are a virtual environment for those users who are recruited to sit behind keyboards to

defend their figure trying to change the public opinion for their countries for socio-political purposes.

It has conceptualized the metaphors: POLITICIANS' FOLLOWERS ARE ELECTRONIC FLY.

The last cartoon (Figure 5c), by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, views a man holds a paper which captioned "looking for job opportunities!" in Arabic. Another man sits on a chair and there is a laptop in front of him. He puts Keyboard and through speech bubble saying with a smile "just typed unemployed electronic fly. . I received offers."

It has conceptualized the metaphors: ELECTRONIC FLY IS A CARRIER/ JOB.



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi
Issue no. 2746



(b) Assabah
Newspaper Issue no. 5481



(c) Assabah
Newspaper Issue no. 5516

Figure (5): Electronic Fly in Social Media

4.1.6 Addiction

The cartoons (figures 4a and b) depicted the intravenous drip as a source domain to shed light on the effect of social media on our real life and how they are irreplaceable by their users. It shows social media as cure or medication. However, another depiction as a source domain is ADDICTION. Cartoon (Figure 6) by Khudiar Alhumiri, shows two men

snorting white powder shaped like Facebook and Twitter logos through straws. In this case, it has conceptualized FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ARE DRUGS, THE USE OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER IS ADDICTION, and USERS ARE ADDICTS. Therefore, to understand the essence of this cartoon, viewers realize the social media apps and websites caused a social issue in reality, which is addiction to the use of these platforms and staying away in the virtual world without socializing others in reality.



Assabah Newspaper Issue no. 5140

Figure (6): Addiction to the Use of Social Media

4.1.7 Weapon

Social media websites are considered a double-edged sword. Users can use it for good or evil. The cartoonists visualize the use of social media apps as a WEAPON (Figure 7a-f) to portray its negative role in the real world.

The first cartoon (Figure 7a), by the cartoonist Ahmed Rahma, which is captioned in Arabic “Abuse of using social media apps,” depicts the social media apps (target domain) as a weapon (source domain) directed toward the society where there is an arrow signboard written in Arabic. The cartoonist views a man puts hand on his ears to avoid the noise that comes from launching a mortar shell which represents Twitter,

currently “X.” He portrays the “F” of Facebook logo as mortar and rifle. It is noticed the Facebook logo as a mortar firmed on bipod (two-legged support). It launches a Twitter shell which is represented as a mortar shell. Another man, who is in a kneeling position, holds a Facebook logo as a rifle using two hands aiming by aligning the sight using the horizontal part of the “F” as a telescopic sight and the long part as a barrel of the rifle. After lining up the rifle, the man shoots an image post which is depicted as a bullet.

It can be conceptualized the metaphors: FACEBOOK IS A WEAPON (MORTAR AND RIFLE), FACEBOOK IMAGE POST IS A BULLET, and TWITTER IS A MORTAR SHELL. In this case, it can be perceived that the worst use of social media causes destabilization in society. Therefore, it can be conceptualized SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE SOCIAL ABUSE and SOCIAL MEDIA USE IS A WEAPON DIRECT TOWARD THE REAL LIFE IN THE SOCIETY.

The next cartoon, (Figure 7b) by Ahmed Qaoud, views Facebook as a revolver (also called six shooters). The cartoon is captioned as “the brains of teenagers and naïve ones.” It shows two yellow-sleeved hands; one holds the “F” as a revolver and the left hand takes a brain shaped bullets from a pile of brains on a table. The mid part of the “F” is shaped as the barrel of the revolver where some comes out of it. It refers to shooting and about to load it again.

It can be conceived of the Metaphorical conceptualizations: “F” OF FACEBOOK IS A REVOLVER, BRAINS OF TEENAGERS AND NAIVES ARE Bullets that are launched towards the society.

It is perceived that social media platforms such as Facebook are the weapons which use the brains of its users and browsers to make conflicts leading to quarrels because most of the users who are teenagers impel their debates to lead to physical and quarrels in reality.

The next two cartoons (Figures 7c and d) view the use of smart devices as weapons to kill its users. Figure 7 c, by the cartoonist Ahmed Rahma, views a man looks frown and astonished while gazing on his smartphone since an unknown hand holding a gun with a silencer which

its barrel is instead of the front camera of his device. It can be construed as an unknown killer who targets the users of smartphones denoting to the social media users being victims of their notions on social media. It can be conceptualized the metaphors: SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE VICTIMS, SMARTPHONES ARE CAUSATION OF KILLING USERS, and A KILLER IS AN ANONYMOUS CRIMINAL.

The next cartoon (7d), by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumari, views a smartphone as a weapon instead of a gun (sniper). It shows a man teaches another man how to shoot. Through a speech bubble, he orders him using the familiar words in Iraqi Arabic the steps to shoot. The other holds a smart device to be as a sniper with aiming sight, instead of a telescope, mounted on the end of the device. The words are equivalent to the English steps when someone trains another how to shoot. It means lining up the point at which the lines cross and directly on the target of what you want to shoot. Then, he says “press OK” instead of saying squeeze the trigger. The target is the back of an anonymous man where it can be noticed a spot of dripping blood.

It can be construed that smartphones in general and social media in particular are the weapons to kill its users. In this case, it is conceived of the metaphorical conceptualizations: A SMARTPHONE IS A WEAPON and OK IS A BULLET SHOOTING, and the metonymic conceptualization A SMARTPHONE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

The next cartoon (Figure 7e), by the cartoonist Basam Farj, is captioned “peaceful.” The word “peaceful” indicates to the protests that broke out in 2019 demanding to make change in the political regime which is represented by the Iraqi parliament and the Prime Minister Adel Abdulmahdi. The protest confronted a lot of rejections which led to assassin the protestors and their representatives because of the chaos that happened.

The cartoon views the Facebook logo on the screen of a laptop on a table. A man holds a revolver while he climbs the ladder to be on the surface of the table. he asks another man, who also holds a revolver and

hiding behind the screen of the laptop, in Iraqi Arabic through a speech bubble “Do you see their lethal weapon?” A lethal weapon represents Facebook.

The cartoonist shed light on the role of the Facebook platform as a weapon to cover the news of the peaceful protest and concentrate on the assassinations of the protesters and their representatives. ideologically, their killing was justified by mass media to the “Third Party,” which was called to the unknown killers. However, the protesters accused the politicians to give orders to their forces to kill the protestors. Therefore, the protesters used Facebook as a weapon to face the sayings and accuse the political regime of killing the protestors. To sum up, it can be conceptualized FACEBOOK IS A (LETHAL) WEAPON.

The last cartoon (Figure 7f), by the cartoonist Khudiar Alhumiri, views a man taking a picture with his camera, representing mass media, where a crime scene of a man stabbed with the Facebook logo which is represented as a cleaver.

The cartoonist addresses the most important issue in the Iraqi society where the rates of crimes are high because of the Facebook posts in different social and political scopes. Therefore, numerous victims had killed because they post their social and political posts which are not accepted by family or political and religious people from different ideologies.

In this case, it can be conceptualized the metaphor FACEBOOK IS A WEAPON (CLEAVER).



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2758



(b) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2451



(c) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2455



(d) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2869



(e) Almada Issue no. 4569



(f) Assabah Newspaper Issue no. 5022

Figure (7): Social Media as a Weapon

4.1.8 Prison, Cuffs, and Shackle

In this section, the cartoonists shed light on the alienation that social media users live while browsing the social media platforms. The cartoonists depicted cages and prison to portray the obsessive use of social media apps. The first cartoon (Figure 8a), by the cartoonist Ahmed Rahma, views a man who is holding and gazing into his smartphone. A black neck collar cuff is around his neck. It is tied with chains of social media logos (icons) to his phone. Instead of iron rings, the cartoonist depicts the social media apps; namely, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter respectively as chains that do not let him set free.

They made him or her life in alienation just like living in prison or solitary.

To sum up, it can be construed that we, as social media users, are prisoned in the virtual world which is represented by the social media apps instead of socializing in reality causing alienation.

In this case, it can be conceptualized the metaphors: SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE PRISONERS, SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE CHAINS OF NECK COLLAR CUFF, SOCIAL MEDIA LOGOS (ICONS) ARE THE RINGS OF THE CHAIN. Visually, the cartoon showed the source and target domain to be SOCIAL MEDIA IS PRISON where SOCIAL MEDIA PRISON IS ALINETATION.

The next cartoon (Figure 8b) visually depicts the visualization of the story of *Gulliver's Travel* by *Johnathan Swift* in 1896. The story is about someone called *Gulliver* who fell asleep and woke up tied up with ropes by the island people of Lilliput. The cartoonist depicts the story to portray how the social media apps made the human brain tied up with these platforms. He personifies a human brain (AN OBECT IS A PERSON) wrapped with ropes which are handed by personified social media apps such as Facebook messenger, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. The put ropes to tighten up the human brain except Facebook which holds a hammer to firm they rope with a tent peg/stake.

It can be construed that our human brains are controlled and tied up with social media apps and websites where there is no escape to the real world.

It can be perceived the metaphorical conceptualizations: A HUMAN BRAIN IS A PERSON and SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE JAILERS. We can conclude that A HUMAN BRAIN IS GULLIVER and SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE PRISONERS.

The next three cartoons (Figure 8c-e) depict the social media apps as a prison or cage. Cartoon (Figure 8c) by Maher Rashwan, which is captioned in Arabic “social media websites,” views the apps such as

WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter as buildings which look built with bricks with bar windows which represent prison windows.

The next cartoon (Figure 8d), the cartoonist Bu Ali, views a cottage which looks like a cage or prison with metal bars. its walls and ceilings are smartphones where the icons of Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are the screens of the phones. Behind the bars, a kid looks frowning. He stares at a rose in front of him where he cannot catch or reach it. Around it, it represents the nature in reality where it refers to enjoying freedom.

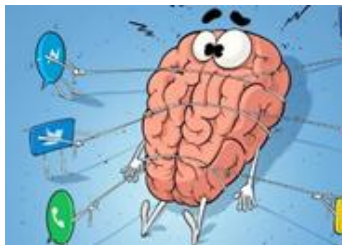
It can be perceived that social media apps are the prison to kids who do not enjoy the nature in reality.

The last cartoon (Figure 8e) which is captioned “# social media” in Arabic, views a man behind the bars on the screen of a smartphone. On the right, it can be seen the apps; namely, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and on the left, it can be seen Facebook and Instagram. Under the bars, there are six dots drawn and indicate to an unlock pattern in Android devices. It can be construed that the man needs someone to unlock the pattern to get him out to the real world since social media apps made him alienated behind the bars.

To sum up, it can be conceptualized: SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ARE A PRISON and SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ARE PRISONERS WHO CANNOT BE RELEASED TO SEE THE REAL WORLD.



(a) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2762



(b) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2827



(c) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2802



(d) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no. 2492
(e) Almustaqbal Al-Iraqi Issue no.2853

Figure (8): Social Media as Prison

4.2 Forceville (1996) and Sobrino's (2017) models

The cartoon (1a) views how the social media user is pleased to receive the Facebook content. However, without the verbal text, the target domain would never be recognized where it is 'rumors' and it is perceived as the topic of the cartoon. Eliminating the verbal text would result in the disappearance of the target domain. In this case, it is conceived the conceptual metaphor RUMORS ARE THE PELASING FACEBOOK CONTENT, which it shows a cross-domain mapping. Consequently, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial/ multimodal metaphor.

Based on the visual (pictorial) context of cartoon (1b), we, as viewers, expect seeing, for example, fruit in the blender. It is noticed a mixture of the common social media applications. The verbal text, which is 'rumors' triggers the target domain of this cartoon. Eliminating it from the cartoon context results in the disappearance of the target domain and affects its topic. In this case, it is conceived of the conceptual metaphor RUMORS ARE A COCKTAIL DRINK that the social media prefer since these rumors are in various and different topics. To sum up, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial/ multimodal metaphor.

In cartoon (1c), the target domain is also verbalized as ‘rumors.’ The pictorial/ visual context views the source domain, which is a ‘hand.’ Removing the text affects the metaphorical meaning of this cartoon. In this case, it is also marked as a verbo-pictorial/ multimodal metaphor.

In concern of cartoons in Figure (2), the stick and carrot in cartoon (2a) is adopted to portray the prevalence of lies and fakeness on social media platforms and how they affect their users. The substitute-based incongruity approach is used in this cartoon to shed light on lies on social media. Instead of a carrot, a paper is used and labeled with the text ‘Fake News.’ A human body, who represents the social media users, is replaced instead of an animal (e.g. a horse). Instead of a human rider, social media applications are used and personified where they control the users. In this case, it is conceived the metaphors ‘FAKE NEWS IS A CARROT’ where it can be conceptualized from the visual/ pictorial context of the cartoon. It is marked as visual/ contextual metaphor (MP1).

In cartoon (2b), the verbal context, which is represented by the speech of the patient, triggers the target domain that raised on social media. The visual/ pictorial context is represented by the depiction of Pinocchio’s long nose story. It triggers the source domain of ‘lying.’ Moreover, it can be the target domain to the source domain ‘LONG NOSE GROWING. It is marked as a multimodal metaphoric chains. To sum up, it can be conceived the multimodal metaphoric chain THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEIDA IS LYING IS LONG NOSE GROWING.

Both the source and target domain are present in cartoon (2c). The source domain is rendered pictorially as ‘BLACK SMOKE’ and the target domain is rendered verbally as ‘LYING NEWS.’ The visual/ pictorial context triggers that Facebook misleads its users through the posts in general, but the verbal text shows the metaphorical meaning more specifically in this cartoon. To sum up, it marked as verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

Removing the verbal text in cartoon (2d) would affect the metaphorical meaning in this cartoon. It makes the topic of this cartoon vague and it shows no metaphor. The target domain the personification of “F” logo. In this case, it can be conceptualized as FACEBOOK IS A LIAR (PERSON). Since both the conceptual domains are present, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

In the same vein, both the source domain and target domain are present in cartoon (2e). The target domain is rendered verbally as ‘FAKE NEWS’ and the pictorial context is rendered pictorially by the typopictorial design of the Facebook logo. It is conceptualized as FAKE NEWS IS FACEBOOK. It is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

In cartoon (2f), instead of a devil sign symbol, the source domain is rendered in the pictorial/ visual context. It is substituted with the target domain, which is ‘Facebook logo.’ It represents our temptation that we may never believe it. Based on Schilperood’s (2018) substitute-based incongruity, the cartoon substitute one term with another. The pictorial context of the cartoon suggests the primary term, which the target domain. In this case, it is marked as (MP1) pictorial contextual / visual metaphor.

In cartoon (2g), the source domain is rendered pictorially through the angel and evil context on shoulders to the ‘Facebook logo.’ On the other hand, the target domain is verbally rendered ‘THE DOUDLE USE’ of the social media app (i.e. Facebook). In other words, it can be conceived the metaphor GOOD OR EVIL IS FACEBOOK DOUBLE USE. Consequently, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

The topic of cartoon (3a) is verbalized and played a role as the target domain to the visual context, which shows searching for something as a source domain. In general, the cartoon shows upward and downward orientation which is CONTROL IS UP/ LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN. Controlling the context would raise it to be serious and keep it away from being low-down. Therefore, it is considered as a multimodal

double-source metaphoric amalgam. The metaphor CONTROL IS UP/ LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN is considered as a donor metaphor. Another door metaphor is SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE A CONTAINER. Both donor metaphors are assembled into the receptor metaphor which is ‘SOCIAL MEDIA MONITERING IS SEARCHING IN SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING.

Cartoon (3b) also shows multimodal metaphoric amalgams. It views the campaign to fight the low-down content in social media as a target domain of the verbal context as a source domain ‘CAMPAIGN IS A PERSON.’ It can be treated as a donor metaphor. In addition, the metaphor ‘CONTROL IS UP/ LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN’ is served as a donor metaphor. Both metaphors are assembled to make the receptor metaphor ‘A CAMPAIGN OF LIFTING UP THE LOW-DOWN METAPHOR IS A TOOL (A CARJACK).’ To sum up, this cartoon is marked as a multimodal double metaphoric amalgam.

In the same vein, the content of cartoon (3c) is also marked as a multimodal double-source metaphoric amalgam where the donor metaphors are ‘HAPPY IS UP/ SAD IS DOWN’ and ‘CONTROL IS UP/ LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN’ are assembled to create conversely the receptor metaphor ‘LOW-DOWN CONTENT IS UP/ SERIOUS CONTENT IS DOWN.’

The metaphor in cartoon (3d) is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor since the verbal context of most social media platforms play a role to give the metaphorical meaning of this cartoon. Eliminating it would affect the meaning of this cartoon. Therefore, the target domain is rendered verbally and the source is present in the pictorial/ visual context as (garbage). Removing the visual context still allows to recognize the source and target domain. For this reason, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

Cartoon (3e) shows a multimodal multiple-source metaphoric amalgams where numerous donor metaphors are conceptualized to give a full metaphoric meaning to the receptor metaphor. It can be noticed the donor metaphors such as ‘SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE AN

OBJECT (WASTEWATER PIPE)’ and the other donor metaphor is ‘THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS DIRTY DRAINAGE WATER (WASTEWATER).’ The last donor metaphor is ‘LOW-DOWN SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IS DOWN.’ All these metaphors are gathered to create the receptor metaphor ‘AWARENESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA IS AN UMBRELLA’ that people use to avoid dirty content in using the social media platforms.

Cartoons (4a and 4b) show the social media in hospital scenario where a patient is treated using an intravenous drip in his/her veins. Based on the pictorial/ visual context, it is noticed that the target domain is ‘SOCIAL MEDIA’ icons. The source domain unambiguously suggested by the pictorial context (intensive care room). It is ‘AN INTRAVENOUS DRIP.’ It is absent but it replaced by the target domain. According to the substitute-based incongruity, both the source and target domains are cross-domain. The source domain is substituted and recognized pictorially. To sum up, metaphors in both cartoons are marked as (MP1) contextual pictorial/ visual metaphors.

Cartoon (5a) shows that ‘electronic fly’ is existed to make ‘edition’ among the users of social media platforms. The verbal text plays a role to recognize the multimodal metaphoric chains in this cartoon, which requires two cross-domain mappings that are perceived one after another. It can be conceptualized the target domain ‘SEDITION SPREADERS’ from the verbal text. They are the social media users who are recruited to ‘ELECTRONIC FLY’ to spread sedition among the community members virtually and in reality. To sum up, it can be conceptualized the multimodal metaphoric chains ‘SEDITION SPREADER IS A SOCIAL MEDIA USER IS ELECTRONIC FLY.’

In the same vein, the verbal text plays a role in cartoon (5b) to recognize the multimodal metaphoric chains. Eliminating the text affect the metaphoric meaning of this cartoon and results in the disappearance of the target domain which leads to the topic of the cartoon. In this case, the metaphoric chains of this cartoon would be POLITICIANS’

FOLLOWERS ARE ELECTRONIC FLY ARE NATURAL FLY. Consequently, it is marked as a multimodal metaphoric chain.

Cartoon (5c) also shows the role of the text to recognize the topic of this cartoon. Removing it also affects the metaphoric meaning and results in the disappearance of the target domain which is 'ELECTRONIC FLY' itself. The political suggests the projectable features to recognize the source domain which is 'A CARRIER/ JOB.' It can be conceived the metaphor 'ELECTRONIC FLY IS A CARRIER/ JOB.' TO SUM UP. It is marked as verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

In cartoon (Figure 6), the visual/ pictorial context suggests that the source domain, which 'DRUGS' is absent and substituted with social media logos (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) as a target domain. Based on the approach of substitute-based incongruity (Schilperood, 2018), these two items are cross-domain items. In this case, it is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor. The metaphorical meaning is perceived from the visual/ pictorial context to be 'SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (FACEBOOK AND TWITTER) ARE DRUGS' to shed light on the addition of using social media platforms excessively.

In cartoon (7a), we, as viewers, expect to see a weapon in a battlefield. Instead, according to substitute-based incongruity, it is replaced with Facebook and Twitter logos as the target domain to realize the misuse of the social media platforms and their effects on the society. However, the source domain, which is 'A WEAPON,' is absent in this cartoon. In this case, the visual/ pictorial context triggers the metaphorical conceptualization 'SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE WEAPON.' To sum up, it is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor.

Cartoon (7b) views that the source domain, which is 'BULLETS' is substituted with human brains, which are expressed visually as the target domain 'A HUMAN BRAIN IS A BULLET.' Also, instead of a revolver, a Facebook logo is used as a target domain. The focus of this cartoon is on 'THE BRAINS OF TENNAGERS AND NAIVES' which

are visually and verbally conceptualized as ‘BULLETS’ in ‘FACEBOOK’ which is conceptualized as ‘A REVOLVER.’ The text plays a role to recognize the topic of this cartoon. In this case, it is marked as multimodal double-source metaphoric amalgam where the donor metaphors are ‘A HUMAN BRAIN IS A BULLET’ and ‘FACEBOOK IS A WEAPON’ are assembled visually with the verbal text to create the receptor metaphor ‘BRAINS OF TEENAGERS AND NAIVES OF FACEBOOK USERS ARE BULLETS OF A WEAPON (A REVOLVER).’ Without the text, we may recognize the metaphor as pictorial (MP1) metaphor. However, the text adds more to make a full conceptualization of the multimodal double-source amalgam.

Cartoon (7c) shows the replacement of a smartphone front camera with a silencer of a gun. In general, the smartphone represents the social media where people interact with and socialize. The gun with a silencer represents anonymous killers who are hired by people who do not accept criticism by social media activists. The cartoon views the substitute-based incongruity to conceptualize ‘A GUN SILENCER IS A SMARTPHONE CAMERA’ that kills social media users. Instead of a camera, as viewers, we see the silencer. To sum up, it is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor.

In the same vein, as viewers, we expect to see a weapon in cartoon (7d). We see a smart device instead aiming to kill someone. In this case, it can be conceptualized ‘A SMART DEVICE IS A WEAPON.’ To sum up, it is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor. In cartoon (7f), the same is to expect seeing a man stabbed with a cleaver; the cleaver is replaced with the ‘F’ of Facebook logo. In other words, the source domain, which is the ‘CLEAVER,’ absent and perceived from the visual context. In this context, it can have conceived the metaphor ‘FACEBOOK IS A WEAPON (CLEAVER).’ It is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor.

In cartoon (7e), the source domain, which is ‘A LETHAL WEAPON,’ is suggested by the verbal context through the speech bubble. On the other hand, the target domain is triggered visually by

showing the 'FACEBOOK' logo. Eliminating the text affects the metaphorical meaning of the cartoon. For this reason, it is conceptualized 'FACEBOOK IS A LETHAL WEAPON.' Consequently, it is marked as a verbo-pictorial (VPM)/ multimodal metaphor.

Finally, Figure (8) includes cartoons that focus on the restrictions that we make by using the social media platforms excessively. Prison, cuffs, and shackles are depicted in these cartoons. Figure (8a) shows a replacement of metal chains with social media logos. The cartoon shows the substitute-based incongruity between the metal chains, which are absent from the visual context, and the social media logos which are present in the context. It is conceived of the metaphor 'SOCIAL MEDIA LOGOS ARE METAL CHAINS' where it indicates to the restrictions that we make from using the social media platforms. To sum up, it is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor.

In Figure (8b), the visual/ pictorial context triggers the depiction of the story of Gulliver's Travel as a source domain to portray how social media controls our brains. Instead of Gulliver, the target domain is suggested contextually to represent our human brains since it is tied with ropes. According to substitute-based incongruity, both Gulliver and human brains show cross-domain mapping and they are distinct domains. In this case, it is conceptualized as 'A HUMAN BRAINS IS TIGHTEN UP GULLIVER' where we are prisoners by the social media platforms. It is marked as visual/ pictorial (MP1/ contextual) metaphor.

Cartoons (8c-e) show chains of metaphors that relate to each other. They portray social media platforms as buildings and these buildings are prisons where the prisoners are the social media users. They are locked inside the virtual world without enjoying the real world life. In this case, it can be construed the source domain 'A BUILDING' is treated as the target domain of 'PRISON.' The metaphors, in these cartoons, are conceived of multimodal metaphoric chains. To sum up, it is conceptualized as 'SOCIAL MEDIA IS A BUIDLING IS A PRISON.'

The following figures state the frequencies of the visual/ pictorial and multimodal metaphors in the sampled cartoons that relate to social

media. Figure (9) views that the multimodal metaphors are more than the visual/ pictorial metaphors in the gathered cartoons. Multimodal metaphors recorded more (21) times, but the visual/ pictorial metaphors recorded only (11) frequencies and all of them are contextual / Mp1 metaphors. The study shows that the cartoonists focused on the verbal texts to perceive the metaphorical meaning in the cartoons. Figure (10) views the frequencies of the multimodal metaphors in the cartoons. The verbo- pictorial/ multimodal metaphors recorded (10) frequencies. Metaphorical chains recorded (6) frequencies, and metaphorical amalgamations recoded (5) frequencies; (4) frequencies of double-source and (1) frequency of multiple-source amalgams. The current study did not record any frequencies of metaphonymy or metaphoric scenarios.

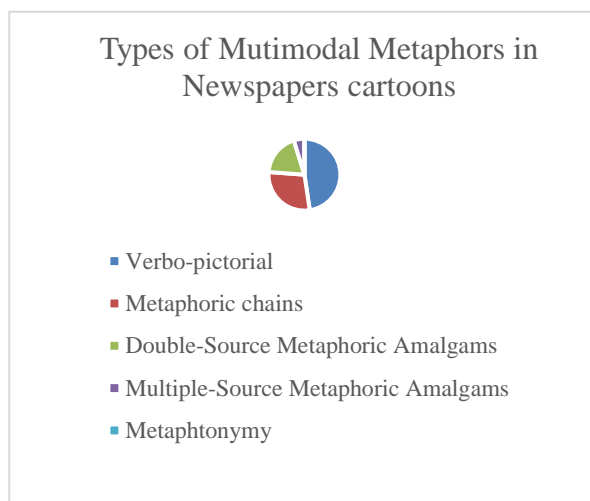


Figure (9): Frequencies of visual and multimodal metaphors in cartoons

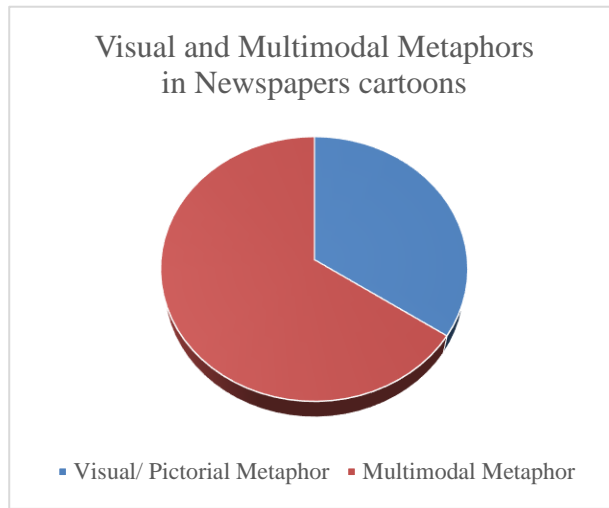


Figure (10): Frequencies of the types of multimodal metaphors in cartoons

5. Conclusions

The current study investigated the visual and multimodal metaphors in newspaper cartoons that relate to social media networking. The sampled cartoons addressed different topics such as rumors that are prevalent in social media platforms. In addition, the cartoons shed light on low-down content where it revealed negative connotations in using social media and its effects on its users. Social media considered the ground for spreading lies and fake news. The cartoons were used as a means to focus on crimes, addiction of social media, and other social issues. Consequently, the cartoonists viewed the effect of social media in a satirical way.

Verbal texts, in addition to the visual elements, played a role in perceiving the metaphorical meaning in cartoons. Those elements showed that the cartoonists used different kinds multimodal metaphors such as verbo-pictorial/ multimodal metaphors, metaphoric chains, and double and multiple-source amalgams. The verbo-pictorial/ multimodal

metaphor considered the most common one in the sampled cartoons. On the other hand, the visual/pictorial metaphor was used less with only one type, which was the pictorial (MP1/ Contextual) metaphor. The multimodal metaphors considered the dominant metaphors in the cartoons of social media. Generally, the text plays a crucial role in recognizing the theme of the cartoons by the viewers of cartoons. Consequently, the text considered as a factor that completed the metaphorical meaning of the cartoons.

- 1- Data Availability Statement: (The manuscript includes all the data used in the study.)
- 2- Conflict of Interest Statement: (The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest that could affect the content of this research.)
- 3- Funding Statement: This research was fully funded by the authors without any financial support from other entities.

References

- Abdulwahid, H. Y. (2022). Analyzing Iraqi Political Cartoons: A Semiotic Model. *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 6(1).
- Alahmadi, M. I. (2022). Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor in Saudi Editorial Cartoons Representing Social Media Impact on Saudis. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 12(5), 616-638.
- Alghezzy, K. H. (2017). The image of Iraqi politics in editorial cartoons a semiotic analysis. *lark*, 9(3), 1-10.
- Al-Momani, K., Badarneh, M. A., & Migdadi, F. (2016). A Semiotic Analysis of Political Cartoons in Jordan in Light of the Arab Spring. *Humor*, 29, 507-538.
- Al-Momani, K., Badarneh, M. A., & Migdadi, F. (2017). A semiotic analysis of political cartoons in Jordan in light of the Arab Spring. *Humor*, 30(1), 63-95.

Al-Saedi, H. T. J. (In press). The Conceptualization of Visual and Multimodal Metaphors in Iraqi Newspaper Cartoons. *Journal of Misan Researches*.

Assad, A., & Gabr, M. (2021). The uses of social media applications in Higher Education. Adapt to Survive. The role of social media, sharing and communication to ameliorate this world, 67.

Black, M. (1962). Models and metaphors: Studies in language and philosophy. Cornell University Press.

Bounegru, L., & Forceville, C. (2011). Metaphors in editorial cartoons representing the global financial crisis. *Visual communication*, 10(2), 209-229.

Daniels, J. M. (2020). The Impact of Social Media on the Self-Esteem of Youth 10–17 Years Old: A Review of the Literature. A Review of the Literature. Doctoral Dissertation, National Louis University.

Dirven, R. (1985). Metaphor as a basic means for extending the lexicon. The ubiquity of metaphor, 85-119.

El Refaie, E. (2009). Metaphor in political cartoons: Exploring audience responses. *Multimodal metaphor*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter 173-196.

El Refaie, E. (2009a). Metaphor in political cartoons: Exploring audience responses. *Multimodal metaphor*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter 173-196.

Elhajjar, Samer, and Fadila Ouaida. "Use of social media in healthcare." *Health Marketing Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (2022): 173-190. Taylor & Francis

Forceville, C. (2009). Non-Verbal and Multimodal Metaphor in a Cognitive Framework: Agenda for Research. In G. Kristiansen, M. Achard, R. Dirven, & R. Mendoza Ibanez (Eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives* (pp. 379-402). Mouton de Gruyter.

Forceville, C. (1996). *Pictorial metaphor in advertising*. Routledge.

- Forceville, C. (2008). Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphors in Commercials. In E. F. Mc-Quarrie, & B. J. Phillips (Eds.), *Go Figure! New Directions in Advertising Rhetoric* (pp.178-204). M. E. Sharpe.
- Forceville, C. (2016). Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor. In N.-M. Klug, & H. Stokl (Eds.), *Handbook of Language in Multimodal Contexts* (Vol. 7). De Gruyter.
- Gupta, S. S. (2021). A Review on the Impacts of Social Media. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Engineering & Management*, 8(6), 294-297.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford university press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. University of Chicago press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In: Ortony A (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 202–251.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago press.
- Lan, C., & Zuo, D. (2016). Pictorial-verbal metaphors in Chinese editorial cartoons on food safety. *Metaphor and the Social World*, 6(1), 20-51.
- Lan, C., & Zuo, D. (2016). Pictorial-Verbal Metaphors in Chinese Editorial Cartoons on Food Safety. *Metaphors and the Social World*, 6, 20-51.
- Moloney, G., Holtz, P., & Wagner, W. (2013). Editorial political cartoons in Australia: social representations & and the visual depiction of essentialism. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 47, 284-298.
- Negro, I. (2013). Visual metaphor and metonymy in French political cartoons. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada*, (26), 365-384.

Negro, I. (2014). Pictorial and verbo-pictorial metaphor in Spanish political cartooning. *CÍRCULO de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación*, 57, 59.

Negro, I. (2015). The role of text in the identification of visual metaphor in advertising. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 212, 309-315.

Negro, I. (2015). The role of text in the identification of visual metaphor in advertising. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 212, 309-315.

Okpara, C. V., Anselm, A. U., Felix, T. O., Omowale, A., & Gever, V. C. (2021). The moderating role of colour in modelling the effectiveness of COVID-19 YouTube animated cartoons on the health behaviour of social media users in Nigeria. *Health promotion international*, 36(6), 1599-1609.

Sani, I., Abdullah, M. H., Abdullah, F. S., & Ali, A. M. (2012). Political cartoons as a vehicle of setting social agenda: The newspaper example. *Asian Social Science*, 8(6), 156.

Schilperoord, J. (2018). Ways with pictures: visual incongruities and metaphor. In *Visual metaphor: Structure and process*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Sobrino, P. P. (2017). *Multimodal metaphor and metonymy in advertising*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Steinsbekk, S., Wichstrøm, L., Stenseng, F., Nesi, J., Hygen, B. W., & Skalická, V. (2021). The impact of social media use on appearance self-esteem from childhood to adolescence—A 3-wave community study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 114, 106528.

Streicher, L. H. (1967). On a theory of political caricature. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 9(4), 427-445.

Zhang, C., & Forceville, C. (2020). Metaphor and metonymy in Chinese and American political cartoons (2018–2019) about the Sino-US trade conflict. *Pragmatics & Cognition*, 27(2), 474-499.