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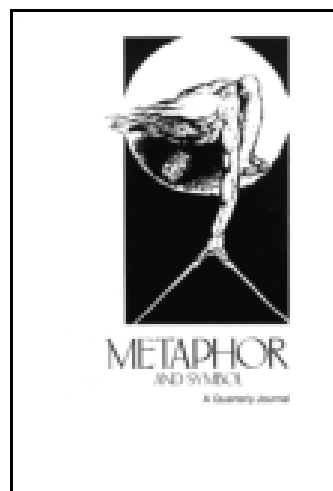
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Multimodal Fusion in Analyzing Political Cartoons: Debates on U.S. Beef Imports Into Taiwan

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This study proposes a multimodal fusion model to account for the cognitive mechanisms involving 56 political cartoons (multimodal corpus) with regard to U.S. beef import issues as reported in two dominant Taiwanese newspapers, the *Liberty Times* and *United Daily News*. Specifically, this study claims that multimodal fusion model evolves from two metonymic-metaphoric networks, i.e., related metonymic network and diversified metaphoric network, and combines the conceptual, visual, and verbal modes. Our analysis demonstrates that multimodal fusion is a significant and recurrent representation technique in the genre of political cartoon and has the cognitive function of encapsulating the abstract complex political debates efficiently with irony and humorous effect. Furthermore, our analysis shows the important role of metonymy and demonstrates how metonymies and metaphors are interwoven in the process of multimodal fusion, which underlies the metaphorical mappings of conceptual scenarios related to “*POLITICS IS GAME*” and “*POLITICS IS WAR*.” Finally, this study shows that although the critical messages and distinct stances of political cartoons in two newspapers both emerge through multimodal fusion, they are highlighted and contrasted through prominent visual features and verbal context shown in the cartoons.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to investigate the cognitive mechanisms involving political cartoons with regard to U.S. beef import issues as reported in Taiwanese newspapers, and proposes a multimodal fusion model to account for these mechanisms. We focus on the topic of U.S. beef imports because it has become a worldwide issue causing global and local concerns regarding environmental and public health problems over the past few years.

Political cartoons have been widely investigated in terms of image, metaphor, cultural context, audience response, graphic structure, and mental processing through the analysis of visual or verbal modes (Edwards, 1997; El Refaie, 2003, 2009; Morrison, 1992; Philippe, 1982; Schilperoord, 2013; Schilperoord & Maes, 2009; Templin, 1999). However, scant studies on political cartoons have deemed the conceptual mode as an important aspect to analyze and thus have not investigated how the conceptual mode interacts with visual and verbal modes through

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various representations of multimodal metaphors with regard to specific political cartoon topics. Additionally, very few studies have focused on how metonymies and metaphors are related and connected within the multimodal genre of political cartoons. To bridge these gaps, this study recognizes the importance of the conceptual mode by proposing a significant cognitive mechanism of multimodal fusion that evolves from the metonymic-metaphoric network and combines the conceptual, visual, and verbal mode. Specifically, this study examines how each mode functions in the multimodal context and how the three modes are interrelated and integrated to represent the main topic of U.S. beef imports and create an ironic yet humorous effect.

From our data, we discovered that the representation technique of multimodal fusion has the cognitive function that encapsulates abstractly complex critical messages, political ideologies, irony, and humor in political cartoons. To distinguish from visual “fusion” (Forceville, 1996, p. 143; also see Forceville, 2006) widely discussed in advertisement analysis, we propose that multimodal fusion should be defined as “when the target and the source are visually, verbally, and conceptually amalgamated.” The use of multimodal fusion in political cartoons demonstrates how knowledge can be encapsulated and condensed through the combination of conceptual, visual, and verbal modes. As Gibbs and Colston (2012) summarized significant findings on interpreting figurative meaning, we hope to “recognize the diversity of forms and semantic content that make up different tropes” (Gibbs & Colston, 2012, p. 342), thus in the multimodal discourse of political cartoons, we suggest multimodal fusion as the cognitive mechanism that not only involves the fusion process based on figurative meanings in different modes but also elaborates as to how such cognitive mechanisms work at the interactive level of metonymy and metaphor. Through our analysis, we discovered two major metonymic-metaphoric networks of multimodal fusion: (1) related metonymic network, and (2) diversified metaphoric network. In the related metonymic network, the visual image is mainly comprised of metonymies closely related to the key concept or keywords related to U.S. beef events, such as “bull” for “U.S. beef,” thus the relevant visual images, such as bullfighting, cowboys, etc., are productively used to conceptualize U.S. beef events as a (i.e., powerful/playful) bull or a personified bull; while in the diversified metaphoric network, the visual image is mainly comprised of novel metaphors that are implicitly related to the key concept or keywords connected to U.S. beef events, thus U.S. beef events are conceptualized as a rock, bomb, or net, etc., in diversified scenarios. Our findings indicate that the cognitive mechanism of multimodal fusion with the fundamental basis of related metonymic network and diversified metaphoric network is a significant and recurring representation technique in political cartoons. (For more details, see the sections “Literature Review and the Proposal: Multimodal Fusion Model” and “Data Analysis.”)

With regard to data selection, unlike the method for selecting data from various sources that was employed in previous studies, this study systematically constructs a multimodal corpus based on a collection of 56 political cartoons composed of visual and verbal modes concerning the investigated topic of U.S. beef imports as published in two dominant newspapers in Taiwan, namely the *Liberty Times* (LT) and *United Daily News* (UDN), to provide a dynamic picture of political cartoon analysis in terms of a specific issue. Following the historical timeline of the expansion of U.S. beef imports, the political cartoons in our multimodal corpus are collected from October 2009 to July 2012 from LT and UDN, which are newspapers with distinct political stances. As a result, our multimodal corpus shows that the conceptual metaphors, including “*POLITICS IS WAR*” and “*POLITICS IS GAME*,” are most frequently associated with the metonymies used to conceptualize the general aspects of the political issue of U.S. beef imports

in both newspapers. However, the distinct political stances of LT and UDN resulted in subtly different representations underlying the multimodal fusion in the political cartoons. Our analysis demonstrates that visual features contrast, for instance, between size, facial expressions, or positions, function as prominent visual cues to emphasize the critical messages of the political cartoons. We will further elaborate how the distinct political stances of the two newspapers subtly influenced the use of multimodal fusion in representing controversial debates in the political cartoons (for details, see the “Further Discussion” section).

The remainder of this study is organized in the following sections. Detailed background information with regard to U.S. beef imports in Taiwan and data collection are provided in the “Background Information and Data Collection: U.S. Beef Imports in Taiwan” section, while a brief literature review and illustration of our proposal is in the “Literature Review and the Proposal: Multimodal Fusion Model” section. The data with representative examples illustrating the process of multimodal fusion are presented in detail in the “Data Analysis,” section which is followed by further discussion in the “Further Discussion” section, and a conclusion in the “Conclusion” section.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DATA COLLECTION: U.S. BEEF IMPORTS IN TAIWAN

Background Information

Looking at the period of 2009 to 2012, we summarize the historical timeline of U.S. beef import issues in Taiwan¹ in the following three stages.

2009 Protocol: Relaxing of Previous Ban on U.S. Beef Products

A huge debate has been raging in Taiwan over the safety of U.S. beef since President Ma Ying-jeou (President Ma) and Washington signed a protocol on October 22, 2009, under which Taiwan agreed to lift its ban on U.S. bone-in beef and certain other beef products. The decision sparked controversy in Taiwan, with opposition parties, including the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)² and civic groups led by the Consumers Foundation and politicians, contending that imports of high-risk beef products could put consumers at risk of mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE). However, the Department of Health (DOH) assured the public that strict measures (i.e., the “three controls” and “five certifications”) had been effective at keeping potentially hazardous U.S. beef out of Taiwan. The economic affairs minister assured the public that effective measures were implemented and the public misgivings about the high-risk parts of U.S. beef imports were unfounded.

¹In this section, we summarize the main issues from online news reports in *Taiwan News* and *Taipei Times*, the representative English news media in Taiwan, in order to provide an accurate English translation of the issues concerning U.S. beef imports.

²DPP is the opposition and the dominant party of the Pan-Green Coalition. DPP is widely classified as the liberal party in Taiwan due to its strong advocacy of human rights, Taiwanese identity, and the independent status of Taiwan.

2009 Amendment: Banning of U.S. Beef Imports in Contravention of the 2009 Protocol

On December 29, 2009, the Legislative Yuan passed an amendment to the Act Governing Food Sanitation that effectively barred U.S. ground beef, bovine offal, and other beef parts such as skulls, eyes, and intestines from access to the Taiwan market, contravening the bilateral beef trade protocol signed in October 2009. Taiwanese lawmakers passed the legislation in view of widespread concern in Taiwan that health officials had not ensured sufficient safeguards to prevent the entry of imports that could introduce BSE. Following this amendment, President Ma stressed that the new beef agreement signed in October remained effective and that the government would seek to reopen talks with Washington on issues related to beef imports, while the controversy remains due to the consideration of public health and international regulations.

2012 Amendment: New Regulations That Relax Restrictions on U.S. Beef Imports

Earlier in 2012, the Taiwanese government intensified its inspections of imported beef, resulting in the destruction or return of large quantities of beef containing ractopamine residue and subsequent dramatic reductions in U.S. beef imports. However, in March 2012, under pressure from the United States, the government announced that it would relax these restrictions. The legislature passed an amendment to the Act Governing Food Sanitation in late July 2012, opening the way for the import of U.S. beef containing ractopamine to Taiwan by setting the maximum allowable residue level of the drug at 10 parts per billion for beef while maintaining a complete ban on the drug for imported pork. On September 11, 2012, a new regulation allowing imported beef containing set levels of ractopamine took effect.

Data Collection

Following the historical timeline of U.S. beef imports in Taiwan as summarized in the “Background Information and Data Collection: U.S. Beef Imports in Taiwan,” this study constructs a multimodal corpus based on a collection of 56 political cartoons comprised of visual and verbal modes with reference to the topic in question that were published in LT and UDN from October 2009 to July 2012. As summarized by Y.-Y. Lin (2009), LT and UDN are distinct in political stances and national identifications. LT has the pro-independent political stance that reflects Taiwanese identity and localization (Tsai, 2006), aligning it with Taiwan’s Pan-Green Coalition led by the DPP and standing for a stronger position on Taiwanese sovereignty, whereas the political stance of the UDN is closer to the pan-blue coalition led by Kuomintang (KMT)³ (Kuo, 2002; M. H. Lin, 1987) of which President Ma is the chairman. Thus, UDN shows stronger support for President Ma and favors a softer policy and positive attitudes toward China (Chiang & Duann, 2007).

Table 1 presents the distribution of the political cartoons in the multimodal corpus. In total, our corpus included 36 political cartoons from LT and 20 political cartoons from UDN. In the next section, we will illustrate our proposal.

³KMT is the ruling party and leader of the Pan-Blue Coalition. KMT is generally considered as the conservative party that advocates a supportive stance for Taiwan-China relationship.

TABLE 1
The Distribution of Political Cartoons in the Multimodal Corpus

<i>Year/Month</i>	<i>LT</i>	<i>UDN</i>	<i>Total</i>
2009/10	3	3	6
2009/11	10	3	13
2009/12	5	4	9
2010/01	11	1	12
2010/02	1	1	2
2012/06	6	5	11
2012/07	0	3	3
Total	36	20	56

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE PROPOSAL: MULTIMODAL FUSION MODEL

Political cartoons, unlike advertisements, aim to expose something negative or shameful instead of highlighting the positive, to affect states of minds, beliefs, points of view, and perspectives on sociopolitical affairs, and to express a particular critical stance on the topic (Edwards, 1997; El Refaie, 2003, 2009; Morrison, 1992; Philippe, 1982; Schilperoord, 2013; Schilperoord & Maes, 2009; Templin, 1999). Typically published on the editorial or comments pages of a newspaper, political cartoons frequently use multimodal metaphors of the verbo-visual variety to “represent an aspect of social, cultural, or political life in a way that condenses reality and transforms it in a striking, original, and humorous way” (El Refaie, 2009, p. 175).⁴ Previous studies agree upon the basic features comprising political cartoons by analyzing the visual image and verbal content. However, very few studies focused on how the conceptual mode interacts and integrates with the visual and verbal modes in this genre, and nearly none of the studies have viewed the conceptual mode as being equally important as the visual and verbal modes in the multimodal analysis of political cartoons.

In addition, metonymy, which is centrally important to conceptualization and human thought, has received relatively scant attention in the study of multimodal genres such as political cartoons. Dirven (2002) points out the fact that “Jakobson (1956) was the first to pay equal attention to both metonymy and metaphor” (p. 1). However, most scholars have focused on the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, which remain problematic.⁵ Recently, scholars have agreed that the traditional distinction between metaphor and metonymy cannot be maintained, and that instead we should view metaphor and metonymy as “prototypical categories at the end points of

⁴Recent studies on multimodal metaphors concerning certain topics (Bain, Chaban, & Kelly, 2012; Bounegru & Forceville, 2011; El Refaie, 2003, 2009; Yu, 2011a, 2011b) demonstrate how metaphors are used to conceptualize specific topics or issues in a particular genre.

⁵The domain approach (Barcelona, 2002, pp. 211–215; see also Croft, 2002) views “metonymy as a cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially understood in terms of another experiential domain included in the same common experiential domain.” However, demarcating clear boundaries between domains (or domain matrices) remain difficult and subjective. The traditional approach marks the distinction between metaphor and metonymy on the difference between similarity and congruity, which has also been found to be ambiguous and limiting (Peirsmann & Geeraerts, 2006, pp. 27–72).

a continuum of mapping processes,” while metonymy-based metaphors are in the middle of the metonymy-metaphor continuum, providing an experiential motivation for a metaphor (Radden, 2000, p. 105).

This study aims to bridge the above research gaps and pinpoint the significance of the conceptual mode in political cartoons by proposing the cognitive mechanism multimodal fusion that combines the visual, verbal, and conceptual modes based on the theoretical account incorporating the analysis of metaphor and metonymy. By so doing, this study could extend the central tenets of conceptual metaphor theory⁶ (Gibbs, 2008; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003) and multimodal metaphors (Forceville, 1996, Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009) from a cognitive perspective.

As Figure 1 shows, we propose that the cognitive mechanism of multimodal fusion evolves from the metonymic-metaphoric network, which combines the visual, verbal, and conceptual modes. Through the multimodal fusion process, the metonymies and metaphors suggested by visual and verbal modes provide metonymic associations and metaphorical mappings with the main concept to present the conceptual scenario underlying the conceptual metaphor.

Visual modes, on the other hand, displays prominent visual features as visual cues to highlight the main focus, while verbal modes serve as the link to connect visual details with conceptual scenarios. The integration of conceptual scenarios, visual modes, and verbal modes thus leads to multimodal fusion, creating the ironic and humorous effect and resulting in a critical

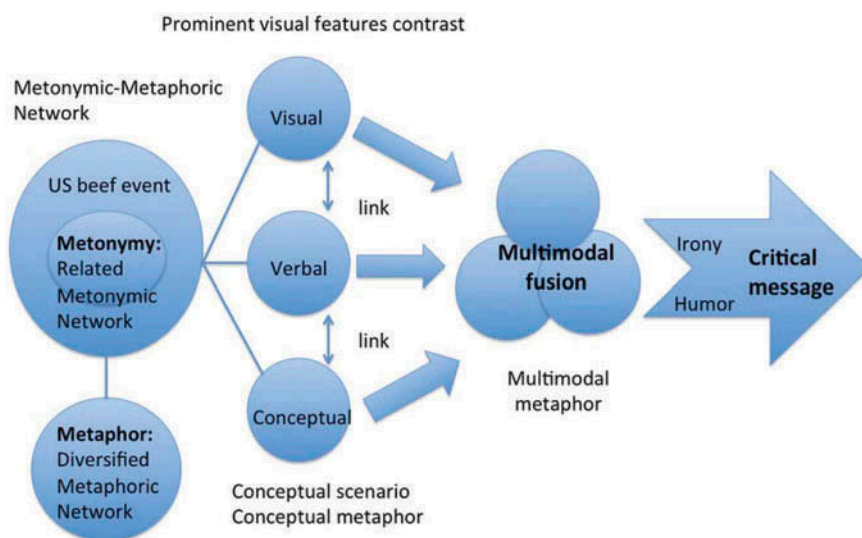


FIGURE 1 Multimodal fusion in political cartoon.

⁶Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT; Gibbs, 2008; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003) holds that metaphor is central to thought and language since it organizes human experiences through cognitive processing and structures our thinking and knowledge, thus metaphors not only structure our thinking but also have persuasive power to define reality, which influences how people frame and conceptualize certain issues.

message of political cartoons. Interestingly, we found the conceptual mode is often implicitly intertwined with the visual image combining the verbal tags. Through our analysis, we found a large number of metonymies and metaphors representing the key elements of U.S. beef events, while metonymies demonstrate the part-for-whole features in efficiently building the metonymic association between visual, verbal, and conceptual modes of multimodal fusion, and metaphors display the metaphorical mapping features in creatively linking visual and verbal context with conceptual scenarios. Thus, we propose a metonymic-metaphoric network of multimodal fusion starting with metonymies and metaphors representing the main topic that activate the conceptual scenario and then connecting the visual, verbal, and conceptual modes based on the metonymic associations and metaphorical mapping. Furthermore, we discovered two major types of metonymic-metaphoric network of multimodal fusion on the basis of our data: (1) related metonymic network and (2) diversified metaphoric network. To specify, we briefly illustrate the representative examples of each type for an overall picture.

Related Metonymic Network

The visual image is mainly composed by metonymies closely related to the key concept or keywords related to U.S. beef events, such as a “bull” for “U.S. beef,” thus the relevant visual images, such as bullfighting, cowboys, bull-chasing, bull-riding, horse-related, and beef-related images, etc., are productively used to conceptualize U.S. beef events as a (i.e., powerful/playful) bull or a personified bull. For instance, as shown in Figure 2,⁷ multimodal fusion involves (1) Visual (“wooden bull” metonymy + Trojan War settings), (2) Verbal (“Open the door, your commander’s rewards are coming”) and (3) Conceptual (Trojan horse scenario).



FIGURE 2 UDN (November 16, 2009).

⁷The quotation of the cartoons in this study is either permitted by the authors or permitted under the doctrine of fair use (Article 52 of Copyright Act: Within a reasonable scope, works that have been publicly released may be quoted where necessary for reports, comment, teaching, research, or other legitimate purpose). Each cartoon is marked with the source of newspaper and published date.

First, the verbal tag “U.S. beef” on the body of the bull indicates the bull is the metonymy for the U.S. beef import event. Second, the visual image of the gate setting resembles the famous setting in Troy, activating the conceptual mode of a Trojan war scenario. Third, the wooden horse in the original story is transformed into the wooden bull due to the relevance between the bull and beef. Therefore, the innovative metonymy Trojan Bull is represented as a U.S. beef event. As the huge wooden bull shows in the cartoon, the conceptual scenario of the Trojan horse is implicitly integrated with visual images and verbal details. To be more specific, the Trojan horse scenario is conceptually integrated with the visual shape of the Trojan bull and the verbal tag U.S. beef. The flag of the DPP waved by the person hiding in the wooden bull is the visual cue, while “Open the door, your commander’s rewards are coming” said by the soldier and the verbal tag “war of mayors election” hang on the gate are the verbal cues. Integrating the conceptual scenario, visual cue, and verbal cue together, the multimodal fusion thus efficiently conceptualizes the U.S. beef import event as the DPP’s political winning weapon/strategy to defeat the KMT in the election.

Diversified Metaphoric Network

In this network type, the visual image is mainly composed of novel metaphors that are implicitly related to the key concept or keywords concerning U.S. beef events, thus U.S. beef events are conceptualized as different objects, such as a rock, bomb, or net, etc., in diverse scenarios. For instance, as shown in Figure 3, the multimodal fusion of conceptualizing U.S. beef events involves (1) Visual (“rock” metaphor), (2) Verbal (“TIFA,” “I can finally get rid of this huge rock that was blocking my way . . .”), and (3) Conceptual (mountain road scenario).

As the visual image shows, the rock marked with “U.S. beef” is the metaphor for U.S. beef events, while the conceptual scenario is that of a mountain road. However, only a part of the



FIGURE 3 UDN (July 27, 2012).

mountain road is shown in the foreground, whereas the other mountain with the flag “TIFA”⁸ appears far in the background. Such positioning of visual features should be further examined in the context of verbal tags and conceptual scenario. In this cartoon, the man resembling President Ma is pushing a huge rock with the verbal tag “U.S. beef” off the cliff, saying, “I can finally get rid of this huge rock that was blocking my way” We understand that in the conceptual frame of the mountain road, most mountain-climbers/hikers aim to reach the top of the mountain, thus the man in the cartoon is pushing the obstacle away to reach his destination, which is conceptualized as the “TIFA” flag in the background. However, it is impossible and unrealistic to reach the top of the other mountain under his circumstances.

Interpreting the multimodal fusion of the visual details, verbal clues, and conceptual frame, we know that President Ma is aiming to sign the TIFA with the U.S. government by agreeing to sign the new protocol on U.S. beef imports (with more relaxation on the previous ban). The critical message of the multimodal fusion implicates, however, that Ma’s strategy is unrealistic and in vain. As shown in this cartoon, we believe it is crucial to analyze the conceptual scenario, visual details and verbal clues of the multimodal fusion in political cartoons in order to see the whole picture of the critical message in the cartoon.

For more details, we will provide a comprehensive analysis on how visual, verbal, and conceptual modes interact and combine to convey the critical message with more examples in the next section. To remain the intact image of the cartoons without interruption, all translation of Mandarin Chinese verbal tag will be included in our analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Related Metonymic Network: Productive Visual Images

To recapitulate, through the detailed analysis of the multimodal corpus of 56 political cartoons, this study finds that the bull, productively used as metonymy for “U.S. beef event,” forms a basis for the related metonymic network and is extended to various kinds of bull-related activities and scenarios shown in the cartoons, including bullfighting, cowboys, bull-chasing, bull-riding, horse-related, and beef-related images, etc. Consequently, the relevant metonymies in visual images contribute to our understanding of how “U.S. beef events” have been conceptualized. In addition, the visual images of a bull can represent “a huge/powerful/poor/playful bull,” through prominent visual features, such as size or facial expression contrasts. Some bulls are even visually personified as emotional human beings that can express their own thoughts through verbal tags. The highly relevant metonymies and productive visual images marked with the verbal tags thus efficiently integrate the conceptual scenario based on readers’ related background knowledge. In our data, this type of multimodal fusion accounts for 52% (29/56) of the corpus, which reveals its productivity and high frequency. In the following part, we will provide the representative examples of related metonymic network. In each example, the main elements of the multimodal fusion process, including the visual, verbal, and conceptual modes, and the multimodal fusion

⁸TIFA is the abbreviation for the “Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.” The Taiwan–United States TIFA serves as a primary platform for bilateral high-level economic and trade consultations between Taiwan and the United States.



FIGURE 4 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“bull” metonymy) + Verbal (“2010 circus performance”) + Conceptual (circus scenario) = U.S. beef event is circus bull. (LT, January 1, 2010).

concerning the main topic of U.S. beef event will be pinpointed first, and then the analysis will be elaborated.

In Figure 4, the bull marked with verbal tag of “U.S. beef” indicates the bull metonymy for U.S. beef imports. The conceptual scenario of a circus is reflected through the visual image of circus settings and the verbal tag of “2010 circus performance” on the top. However, the bull with the verbal tag of “U.S. beef” is attacking the man in the suit with the verbal tag of “Ma.” “Ma” stands for the animal “horse” in Mandarin Chinese, the surname of President “Ma,” and also the first character “Ma” of circus (the literal meaning: horse-trick-show in Mandarin Chinese). To interpret the circus scenario, we understand that the performing animals are normally tame and obedient, so the attacking-animal scene should be rarely seen. In addition, the bull generally does not perform in the circus. Thus, the ironic effect arises from the combination of the bull-attacking image and circus scenario, while the bull metonymy appears in this cartoon due to the relevance between the bull image and U.S. beef.

On the other hand, the audience seems happy with the clapping hands while the host says “Happy new year to you all” when seeing the bull-attacking scene as the circus performance. The ironic effect results from the multimodal fusion of the circus scenario, which is integrated with the bull-attacking and audience-clapping image and the verbal cue “Happy new year to you all.” This strengthens the critical message that while the U.S. beef imports issue is not going as well as President Ma would like, most people are happy about it since they resist hazardous U.S. beef being imported into Taiwan. Figure 4 shows how critical messages can be elicited and emphasized through the ironic conflict found in the integration process of visual, verbal, and conceptual modes in multimodal fusion.

In Figure 5, the visual image of the bull’s tail on fire marked with the verbal tag “U.S. beef event” indicates the fire-tail metonymy for U.S. beef event. The cowboy outfits of the man resembling President Ma and the cowboy hat with KMT symbol depicts the conceptual scenario of cowboy. Although the conceptual frame of the cowboy is often understood as an energetic cool cow-rider, the facial expression of Ma looks tensed and his leg is tied with bandages, which are



FIGURE 5 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“fire-tail” metonymy) + Verbal (“U.S. beef has its *butt on fire* and I’m going crazy too!”) + Conceptual (cowboy scenario) = U.S. beef event is fire. (LT, June 4, 2012).

not commonly associated with the cowboy frame. In addition, as the verbal tag says, “The KMT opposing group is not getting away with this! U.S. beef has its *butt on fire* and I’m going crazy too!” (The Chinese colloquial term “butt on fire” means having an urgent problem unsolved while running out of time.) Ma expresses his frustration and anxiety while riding a bull with its butt on fire. Under such circumstances, the fire marked with the verbal tag “U.S. beef import” will hurt the bull and accelerate its speed in danger, thus U.S. beef issue is conceptualized as the main reason for President Ma’s dangerous and chaotic situation.

The ironic conflict reflected from the multimodal fusion of the visual cues, verbal cues, and conceptual frame clearly indicates the critical message that President Ma is facing a serious situation since the relaxation of U.S. beef import regulations that he promoted has not been passed and is still being opposed and boycotted by the legislators in the Legislative Yuan during this period. This cartoon shows how the critical messages can be elicited and interpreted while analyzing the ironic conflict in the multimodal fusion.

Figure 6 is one of the examples where U.S. beef issue is represented by a personified bull. As the visual image shows, the personified bull with the verbal tag of “U.S. beef” on his body is the metonymy for the U.S. beef event. The personified bull is standing next to the pan-blue party (pro-government stance) and pan-green party (anti-government stance) on a small island with bones on the ground as they all seem to struggle to survive without enough food. The visual details reveal the conceptual scenario of an isolated island, which stresses both parties are facing the harsh dilemma of opposing U.S. beef import regulations. However, the bull waves a sheet



FIGURE 6 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“bull” metonymy) + Verbal (“CODEX,” “10 ppb,” “thanks god”) + Conceptual (isolated island scenario) = U.S. beef event is personified bull on an isolated island. (UDN, July 7, 2012).

toward a rescue ship marked with the verbal cues, “CODEX”⁹ and “10 ppb,” and expresses his gratefulness by the verbal tag saying, “Thank the gods . . .” with a tear falling from his eye.

In an isolated island scenario, the appearance of a rescue boat means the trapped victims will be saved. The multimodal fusion of the visual cues, verbal cues, and conceptual scenario conceptualizes the U.S. beef issue as a desperate bull being rescued, revealing the critical message that the rescue boat represents a new beef examination standard that allows the relaxation of U.S. beef import regulations, which is a relief to the pan-blue and pan-green legislators after the long-term boycott. Interestingly, the main character in the conceptual scenario of isolated islands, such as the famous Robinson Crusoe, is usually a human being. However, this bull is personified as an emotional character being rescued and stands in the center of the cartoon. Examining the isolated island scenario within the visual context of the bull’s facial expression, central position, posture, and verbal expression, the bull creates an ironic conflict that easily attracts most readers’ attention. We believe such use of multimodal fusion provides the reader an innovative, humorous, and efficient way of understanding the event.

As Figure 7 shows, the head of a bull and a leg are hanging on the office wall as hunting trophies, representing the metonymy for U.S. beef and metonymy for President Ma. The man with the verbal tags of “Ko” (on the shirt) and DPP “party leader” (on the desk) is sitting with content in his office desk with a DPP flag standing beside, whereas at the other side of the window,

⁹CODEX is the abbreviated form of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. *Codex Alimentarius* (Latin for “Book of Food”), according to Wikipedia, is a “collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to foods, food production and food safety.”

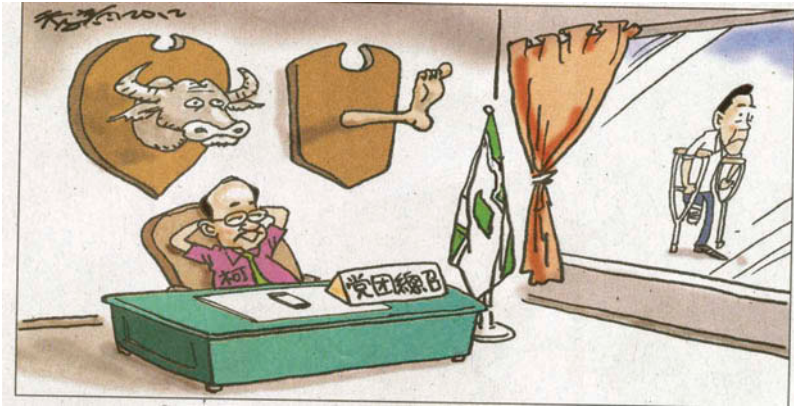


FIGURE 7 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“bull” metonymy) + Verbal (“party leader”) + Conceptual (hunting scenario) = U.S. beef event is hunting trophy. (UDN; June 16, 2012).

another man resembling President Ma, who appears to have lost one of his legs, looks crippled and unhappy. The contrast between the facial expressions of these two men and the alignment of the two trophies suggests a paralleled relationship between them and the trophies.

One of the trophies being portrayed as a leg originates from President Ma’s nickname “Brave-leg Ma,” which is a Taiwanese colloquial phrase praising how active and strong Ma is since he loves to jog. These visual and verbal cues, integrated with the conceptual scenario of hunting trophy, imply the critical message that the U.S. beef issue has been conceptualized as the victory trophy that the DPP leader won by defeating President Ma. In other words, DPP used the U.S. beef import debate to successfully oppose President Ma’s policy on U.S. beef imports and also bring down Ma’s support ratings. This example vividly demonstrates how contrasting visual features through position and facial expression help to highlight the critical message in multimodal fusion. As our analysis shows, we believe it is important to have background knowledge to interpret the accurate meanings of the verbal mode, such as when colloquial phrases or idioms are used, to fully grasp how the multimodal fusion works in political cartoons.

Figure 8 demonstrates the productive use of multimodal fusion. First, in the arrow-attacking scenario of this example, the head of the DOH official, Yang, who supports U.S. beef imports, is visually fused with the bull’s horns and a golden armored bull, indicating the “war bull” as the metonymy for Yang promoting U.S. beef imports. Second, the verbal tag, “Don’t worry! My skin is tough enough to protect you all,” is combined and integrated with the conceptual scenario of “war animals,” which are often horses that carry warriors in battle. However, the horse transforms into a bull again due to the relevance between the bull and beef. Third, the protective feature of the war animal scenario is highlighted with the arrows being shot at the golden bull with one of the arrows on the right being marked “U.S. beef imports,” thus indicating that the U.S. beef import issue has been conceptualized as attacking arrows being shot at the government.

Through the multimodal fusion of visual images, verbal tags, and the conceptual scenario of this cartoon, we perceive the critical message to be that the DOH official, Yang, is taking all the blame and criticism for President Ma and Vice-President Wu on health issues, including that on U.S. beef imports. The contrasting facial expressions of Yang’s smile and the frightening look of



FIGURE 8 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“war bull” metonymy) + Verbal (“Don’t worry! My skin is hard enough to protect you all”) + Conceptual (war horse scenario) = U.S. beef event is shooting arrow. (LT, November 1, 2009).

others ironically expose Ma and Wu’s negative attitudes in terms of avoiding responsibility and the ignorant obedience of the DOH official. The contrast in Yang’s larger head and Ma and Wu’s smaller heads also indicates that Yang has become the main target for criticism, while Ma and Wu timidly hide behind him to avoid taking responsibility. This example demonstrates the use of multimodal fusion with emphasis on contrasting visual features, such as in depicted size and facial expressions, as prominent visual cues that help to highlight the critical message.

Diversified Metaphoric Network: Prominent Verbal Cues

A wide variety of scenarios, such as bombing, fishing, rolling stones, being in offices or on highways, etc. comprise the visual images in this type of metaphoric network. Unlike previous types, the visual images are implicitly associated with the keywords of U.S. beef event, which are more diversified. In these cartoons, the U.S. beef event is conceptualized as an object (i.e., a rock, a bomb, a net, etc.), creating the novel metaphor. Thus, the verbal mode is the crucial link that establishes the relationship between the conceptual scenario and visual details, highlights the main focus, and combines the critical message underlying the verbal, conceptual, and visual modes. The verbal mode plays an important role in this type of multimodal fusion since the verbal tags are the prominent cues that enable readers to efficiently build the connection between the metaphors and the U.S. beef event and associate the verbal and visual contexts with the conceptual scenarios. In the following section, we will illustrate several examples of diversified metaphoric networks.

In Figure 9, the bomb marked with the verbal tag “U.S. beef chaos” is the bomb metaphor for the U.S. beef event. The cartoon illustrates the conceptual scenario of disarming a bomb, which is a highly dangerous and life-threatening process. However, the setting is in the office of the

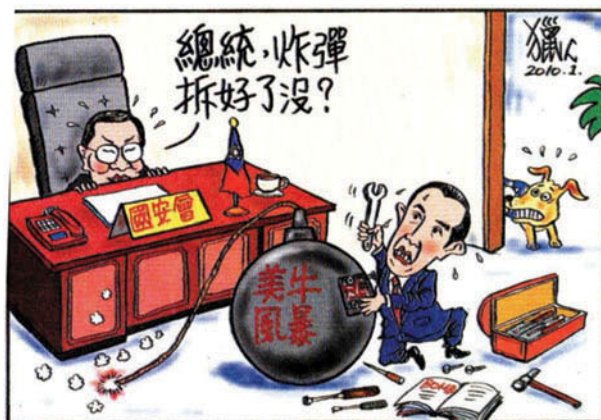


FIGURE 9 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“bomb” metaphor) + Verbal (“President, have you disarmed the bomb yet?”) + Conceptual (bomb disarming scenario) = U.S. beef event is an exploding bomb. (LT, January 7, 2010).

National Security Council, creating an ironic effect at first sight. Moreover, President Ma looks nervous and clumsy with the huge tool in his hand as he is disarming the bomb named “U.S. beef chaos,” while a government official hiding behind the desk with the verbal tag “National Security Council” says, “President, have you disarmed the bomb yet?” when the huge bomb is already on fire and may explode very soon. In this cartoon, the U.S. beef issue is conceptualized as an exploding bomb that is uncontrollable and dangerous, which will threaten national security on the basis of health and safety.

Incorporating the visual, verbal, and conceptual frame of multimodal fusion in this cartoon, the critical message is that in spite of knowing the uncontrollable danger caused by U.S. beef imports, President Ma still insists on signing the protocol and believes he can solve the problem by using ineffective protective strategies. The ironic conflict also strengthens the ignorance and weakness of how the government handles the U.S. beef import issue. The ironic effect of the critical message is also illustrated in Figure 10.

In Figure 10, the three monkeys sitting on the bench named “the Ma administration” with the verbal tags of “Ma,” “Wu,” and “Chin” representing from left to right and the caricatures of President Ma, Vice-President Wu, and Secretary Chin conveying the monkey metaphor for the Ma administration. The visual image of the three monkeys covering their ears, nose, and eyes relate to the famous “three wise monkeys” originating from ancient Chinese Confucius culture. The three monkey scenario reminds people to face the truth, stay rational, and not to listen, smell, or see anything without a clear mind. In this cartoon, the verbal information is key to interpreting the critical message in this cartoon. On the right of the cartoon, there are two men raising placards protesting “U.S. beef chaos,” “vaccine problems,” and “high unemployment rate.” One of the men pointing at the three monkeys says, “why do you act like the three monkeys when facing public criticism?” These verbal tags provide the clues to understand the ironic and critical message in this cartoon.



FIGURE 10 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“monkey” metaphor) + Verbal (“government Ma,” “U.S. beef chaos”) + Conceptual (three monkeys scenario) = Government Ma is three monkeys. (LT, January 26, 2010).

Integrating the multimodal fusion of visual images, verbal details, and the conceptual scenario, the ironic conflict pinpoints the fact that these three monkeys who refuse to face the truth are the government authority that has the power and resources to solve the problems. Moreover, the critical message underlying the multimodal fusion is that although the government is encountering serious issues resulting from their problematic policy, they still choose to ignore the facts and are reluctant to solve the problems.

In Figure 11, the broken net marked with the verbal tag “U.S. beef chaos” at the bottom is a metaphor for the U.S. beef event. Meanwhile, President Ma stands at the top saying “Little Su, hurry! Get the broken net fixed/mended for me!” to the caricature of government official Su, who looks frustrated and poor with his bare feet as he strives to fix the broken net. The verbal tag on top of his head says, “If you don’t say what is bothering you . . .” enclosed by musical symbols are from the lyrics of a sorrowful Taiwanese song. The conceptual scenario of net-fixing activity finds its origin in the Taiwanese idiom “fix the broken net,” which refers to fixing serious problems that are hard to solve. Therefore, in the net-fixing scenario, the U.S. beef import issue is conceptualized as a broken net that is difficult to fix. In other words, the problem is difficult to resolve using the government’s ineffective strategies. In this cartoon, the ironic effect is created by the contrast between Ma’s ignorant order and Su’s miserable status of fixing the broken net.

Like the previous examples, this cartoon also demonstrates how multimodal fusion is processed in conceptual, visual, and verbal modes in political cartoons. Without the cultural background knowledge of the conceptual scenario and verbal cues, we would hardly be able to comprehend the meaning emerging from the visual and verbal details. As the previous examples show, it is necessary to first identify the metonymy or metaphor for the main topic of U.S.



FIGURE 11 Multimodal fusion: Visual (“net” metaphor) + Verbal (“Little Su, hurry! Get the broken net fixed/mended for me!”) + Conceptual (broken net-fixing scenario) = U.S. beef event is a broken net. (LT, January 4, 2010).

beef event and then recognize the conceptual scenario. While interpreting the multimodal fusion of verbal, visual, and conceptual modes, having access to background knowledge and cultural reference of the multimodal context is also crucial to achieving full understanding of the critical message, the irony, and humor conveyed.

In view of the conceptual mode in political cartoons, we believe it is necessary to identify the conceptual scenarios and conceptual metaphors of all the cartoons in our multimodal corpus to have a better understanding of the general pattern and distribution of the conceptual scenario and metaphorical content in the data from our multimodal corpus, which will be discussed in the next section.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Conceptual Scenario and Conceptual Metaphor Identification

In each political cartoon, the multimodal details comprise a conceptual scenario of the source domain. Each scenario is involved with its metaphorical mappings through various elements, such as people, objects, roles, relations, and status. Based on the scenario identification through the prominent multimodal features in each political cartoon, we can identify the major conceptual metaphor by analyzing the conceptual content using the “*POLITICS IS Y*” template to show

which aspects of “*POLITICS*,” while the target domain are mostly mapped by specifying Y, the source domain, in each political cartoon. As a result, we found the conceptual metaphors, including “*POLITICS IS GAME*” and “*POLITICS IS WAR*,” are most frequently used to conceptualize the general aspects of the political issue of U.S. beef imports in both newspapers. Through the analysis of the multimodal corpus, we discovered that the most often identified scenarios, which account for 31% in LT and 35% in UDN, are “bull/animal-related” activities of the “*GAME*” domain, such as bullfighting, bull riding, bull-chasing, cowboys, and circus scenarios. Tables 2 and 3 list the most frequently identified scenarios in LT and UDN in the corpus.

In these scenarios, “bull” image is the most-frequently used metonymy for the U.S. beef imports event, while other characters, including President Ma or government officials, play different roles in each scenario and interact with the bull (e.g., by being attacked by the bull, riding the bull, playing with the bull). Focusing on the topic of U.S. beef imports, these political cartoons conceptualize the complex political debates as novel representations of human–bull interactions or entertainment to convey critical messages with irony and humor. The high frequency and productive use of bull metonymy and relevant scenarios provide the fundamental basis of “related metonymic network” in multimodal fusion. Overall, the “intensive” interactions between metonymies and metaphors shown in our study indicate the metonymies and metaphors are interwoven in the creation and realization of political cartoons to achieve the humor or ironic effect serving as the function of political cartoons.

TABLE 2
Bull/Animal-Related Scenarios of the GAME Domain in LT

<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Incidence</i>
Bullfighting	2
Bull riding	2
Racing	1
Carriage	1
Cowboys	1
Horseback jumping	1
Bull chasing	1
Circus	1
Strip show	1
(Total/Percentage)	11 (31%)

TABLE 3
Bull/Animal-Related Scenarios of GAME Domain in UDN

<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Incidence</i>
Bullfighting	4
Cowboys	1
Gambling	1
Hunting	1
(Total/Percentage)	7 (35%)

The second most often identified conceptual scenarios, which account for 14% in LT and 10% in UDN, are relevant to “war” such as bombing, arrow-attacking, tank-attacking, post-war meeting, and Trojan horse scenarios. These metaphorical mappings of the defending side, attacking side, retreating side, or negotiating side in war-related scenarios clearly show different stances and the conflict between the government and other political parties. The victory or defeat status in war scenarios also indicates the consequential effect of the issue of U.S. beef imports.

Through the scenario identification process, we analyzed the conceptual content to understand how politics is conceptualized through the major metaphors in political cartoons. We generalized that the major metaphor, “*POLITICS IS GAME*,” underlies the most often identified bull/animal-related scenarios, whereas the major metaphor, “*POLITICS IS WAR*,” underlies war-related scenarios. The result indicates that the political issue of U.S. beef imports is mainly conceptualized through the “*GAME*” and “*WAR*” domains in political cartoons in LT and UDN.

Besides the war-related scenarios, we also found a wide variety of conceptual scenarios including an isolated island scenario, office scenario, mountain road scenario, three monkeys scenario, broken net-fixing scenario, disaster scenario, highway scenario, and emperor scenario, etc., in the other cartoons. In these cartoons, the conceptual scenarios were mainly comprised of novel metaphors, which are creative yet unproductive, revealing the innovative feature of political cartoon. We believe such diversity of scenarios provides the basis for diversified metaphoric network in multimodal fusion.

Multimodal Fusion and Political Stance

Different Targets of Bull Metonymy in the Same Scenario

In this section, we will show how distinct political stance leads to subtle differences in multimodal fusions and critical messages within similar conceptual scenarios. In our corpus, the bullfighting scenario is the conceptual scenario that appears most frequently in the “*GAME*” domain in LT and UDN. As Figures 12 and 13 show, the image of a bullfighter wounded by a bull appears similarly at first sight. However, the bull and bullfighter metonymy in Figure 12 and Figure 13 each stand for different things.

In Figure 12, the cartoon illustrates that President Ma is under serious attack from the KMT, with the verbal tag “authoritarian leadership” on the falling clothes of the bullfighter and the other verbal tag on the bull, “KMT legislative representatives with regard to the issue of beef imports,” showing that KMT legislators, who are supposed to be supporting President Ma, chose to oppose U.S. beef imports instead. The KMT legislators are depicted as the destructive and powerful bull that stabs President Ma’s back with its horn, warning him that his “authoritarian leadership” may lead to fatal results. However, in Figure 13, the targets are the DOH and the United States. The cartoon illustrates that the DOH official (the bullfighter) is being attacked by the bull of the United States, while a DOH official still claims, “Don’t worry, we will carry out strict inspections (of U.S. beef imports)” in order to put consumers at ease despite being under serious attack from the powerful United States.

As mentioned earlier, the comparison between facial expressions is a prominent feature in political cartoons. In Figure 12, President Ma, as the bullfighter, is wounded and looks shocked and frightened, while the attacking bull looks firm and determined with its eyes closed. This



FIGURE 12 LT (January 2, 2010).



FIGURE 13 UDN (October 25, 2009).

contrast shows that the KMT legislative representative is powerful and steadfast in opposing the issue of U.S. beef imports and fighting against President Ma. In Figure 13, the facial expression of the DOH official, looks painful yet ignorant, sharply contrasts with the confused and frightened look from the mother and daughter shopping in the beef section. This contrast implies that the DOH's assurances are weak and ineffective at restricting potentially hazardous U.S. beef from entering the country.

The size comparison arises from the enormous size of the bull and the small bullfighter, which is a recurring image in our corpus used to indicate the unequal power relationship and threatening status of the U.S. beef import issue. In Figure 12, the comparison between the enormous and

powerful bull and relatively small bullfighter illustrates that the opposing KMT and Ma have a serious difference of opinion on U.S. beef imports, whereas the injury scene represents the conflict resulting from this divergence. The underlying critical message is that LT not only attacks Ma's incompetent leadership but also emphasizes Ma's policy on U.S. beef imports being so problematic that he cannot even gain support from his own political party. However, in Figure 13, the relative sizes of the huge bull and small bullfighter represent the unequal power relationship between the United States and Taiwanese government. In our corpus, this power relationship is mainly highlighted in the UDN. From the perspective of political stance, since the UDN is closer to the government's political stance, it sympathizes with the government's decision and its criticism by emphasizing the power of the United States, implicating that the government is in fact helpless, being forced or threatened by the powerful U.S. on the U.S. beef imports.

These examples demonstrate how different targets of the same metonymy (i.e., bull and bullfighter metonymy) in the same scenario may lead to different representations and critical messages in politically distinct newspapers. Our analysis shows such subtle differences can be found in the contrast between visually prominent features, such as facial expressions and size.

The Personified Bull in Different Scenarios

The results show that the personified bull is a recurring element in related metonymic networks of multimodal fusion in our corpus. The personified bull image has been productively represented as a rich, superior, dominant person, extending from the prototypical image of the powerful bull in some scenarios. Although the personified bull metonymies all represent U.S. beef, distinct political stances and critical messages can be elicited through the interactions between the personified bull and the other characters in the cartoon, as Figures 14 and 15 show.

In the carriage scenario in Figure 14, the visual and verbal details show the personified bull "passenger" sitting comfortably on the couch marked "U.S. beef," smoking a cigar in nice clothes,



FIGURE 14 LT (June 10, 2012).



FIGURE 15 UDN (October 27, 2009).

being served with his legs crossed, representing the typical image of a rich and powerful tycoon. The caricature of the coachman indicates that the target is President Ma, who looks bossy, mean, and emotionless while waving the whip to control the carriage, whereas the exhausted and suffering animals pulling the carriage are personified as KMT legislators. In Figure 15, the personification of the bull is also the main element of the scenario. However, President Ma and the DOH are represented as passive and helpless participants in this cartoon, whereas the bull is personified as the dominant dealer who has piles of chips marked with the verbal tag of “military procurements, diplomacy, and economics” in front of him.

In Figure 14, the comparisons between the different facial expressions and contrasting states of the rich passenger, bossy coachman, and tired carriage animals imply the complex power relationship between the United States, President Ma, and KMT legislators. Under pressure from the powerful United States, President Ma actively controls the legislative issues by forcing KMT legislators to cooperate with him, hoping to pass the amendment and relax the ban on U.S. beef imports. The comparisons in Figure 14 highlight the critical response to the firm stance of President Ma, revealing his ignorance and insistence on relaxing the U.S. beef import ban as per U.S. hopes.

In Figure 15, the facial expression of the dealer is serious and determined as he points at the person lying on the gambling table presenting as the chip with the verbal tag “consumer” next to his head. The contrasting size between the huge figure of the dealer and small figure of the consumer emphasizes how consumer health is threatened by U.S. beef imports from the powerful United States. Sitting behind the consumer, the DOH official as the gambler showing his empty pockets, claims, “To be honest, we hardly have any chips . . .” with a helpless look on his face.

The comparison between the states of the consumer as the chip and the DOH official as the gambler implies that the DOH is sacrificing consumer health in its negotiations on U.S. beef imports. Interestingly, the facial expression of the onlooker, who resembles President Ma, shows that he is helpless and depressed upon seeing the gambling scene. The critical message can be

understood only by comparing the contrasting states of the dominant dealer, small consumer, helpless DOH official, and President Ma, which reflect the passiveness of the government under pressure from the United States. Such a comparison also strengthens the political position of the UDN that President Ma is as passive, helpless, and innocent as the consumers in facing the issue of U.S. beef imports. Unlike Figure 14 in which LT presents President Ma as the “active controller” in the central position of the cartoon, Figure 15 presents Ma as the “passive bystander” in a relatively peripheral position. Such different representations of President Ma subtly show the contrasting position between LT’s harsh criticism of President Ma’s manipulation and full responsibility for U.S. beef imports and UDN’s depiction of an innocent President Ma.

These examples indicate that, although political cartoons in both LT and UDN use multimodal fusion mechanism to achieve the effect of humor or irony, different perspectives and critiques of LT and UDN are revealed through their comparisons of similar objects, namely the personified bull and President Ma. Our analysis also shows that the complex power relationship can be simplified and highlighted through sharp contrasts and comparisons through prominent visual features and verbal details in the cartoon.

CONCLUSION

Through the detailed examination of multimodal corpus, i.e., 56 political cartoons concerning the issue of the U.S. beef event in Taiwan, this study has discovered several distinguishing features of political cartoons, summarized as follows.

First, our analysis demonstrates that the cognitive mechanism of multimodal fusion with the fundamental basis of related metonymic network and diversified metaphoric network is a significant and recurrent representation technique in the unique genre of political cartoon. The representation of multimodal fusion demonstrates how abstract and complex political debates can be encapsulated and condensed through the combination of conceptual, visual, and verbal modes in political cartoons. We believe that the metonymic-metaphoric network of multimodal fusion naturally exists in the genre of political cartoons due to its cognitive function of encapsulating complex knowledge and critical messages efficiently with irony and humorous effect, which are the characteristics unique to this genre.

Second, this study shows the important role of metonymy in the multimodal context of political cartoons, and demonstrates how metonymy and metaphors are interwoven in the process of multimodal fusion. Specifically, this study shows how metonymy-metaphor interaction has been realized in the multimodal genre of political cartoons through the cognitive mechanism multimodal fusion, which has evolved from metonymic-metaphoric networks. In related metonymic networks, relevant metonymies represented in visual images are found frequently and are productively used to conceptualize the main event through prominent visual features, such as a huge bull or a fierce bull conceptualized as the metonymy for the U.S. beef event. Most importantly, these metonymies often lead to the metaphorical mappings of conceptual scenarios related to “*POLITICS IS GAME*” and “*POLITICS IS WAR*.” Therefore, the metonymies and metaphors cannot be separated in the creation and realization of political cartoons. In addition, in diversified metaphoric network, shown as the second type of metonymic-metaphoric network in our study, verbal mode serves as the prominent cue and crucial link that highlights the main focus and connects the main topic with visual image and conceptual scenario. We believe these two types of

multimodal fusion evolving from metonymic-metaphoric network not only naturally underlie the genre of political cartoon but also the other multimodal genres combining visual, verbal, and conceptual mode.

Third, previous studies found many political metaphors draw heavily and systematically on the language of sports and warfare (Gibbs, 1994, p. 140; Semino & Masci, 1996); however, very few studies explore the use of conceptual metaphors of politics in multimodal mode. By examining our multimodal corpus, we discovered that “*POLITICS AS GAME*” and “*POLITICS AS WAR*” are the most identified metaphor used in political cartoons. This study proves that the abstractness of politics is preferably and productively conceptualized through “*GAME*” and “*WAR*” domains in visual, verbal, and conceptual modes.

Fourth, although the critical messages and distinct stances of the political cartoons in LT and UDN both emerge through multimodal fusion, they are highlighted and contrasted through prominent visual features shown in the participants in the cartoons. The contrast between prominent visual features, including comparisons and contrasts between facial expressions, depicted sizes, states, positions, and materials as well as highlighted by visual and verbal details, helps clarify the complex power relationships and the distinct political stances of the newspapers. In particular, we believe the prominence of size contrasting resonates with the primary metaphor, “*SIGNIFICANCE IS SIZE*,” by emphasizing the importance of certain figure or event through the larger size in political cartoons.

In conclusion, this study shows that the novel conceptualization and abstract reasoning of political cartoons has been realized through multimodal fusion on the fundamental basis of metonymic-metaphoric network connected by metonymic associations and metaphorical mappings of various conceptual scenarios and metaphors. For further studies, we hope to explore the interpretation process from the perspective of political cartoon readers on the basis of our findings in this study. Through the investigation of the relationship between mental processing of the readers and multimodal fusion, we hope to broaden the scope of interdisciplinary figurative language studies on unique multimodal genres, such as political cartoons, and shed light on the interface between figurative language and multimodality.

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